Faculty Onboarding Guidance: An Integrative Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Current faculty onboarding practices are being discussed in peer-reviewed literature across different disciplines describing a plethora of practices and outcomes. A comprehensive review of the empirical research of higher education faculty onboarding allows effective fundamentals to be incorporated into practice. This integrative literature review utilized Cooper's (1998) 5-step process: problem formulation, data collection, evaluation of data points, data analysis and interpretation, and presentation of results as well as further clarification on data collection and analysis as proposed by Callahan's (2010) six-step guide and Whittmore's (2005) four steps. The primary aim of this integrative literature review was to gather empirical evidence with regard to elements of effective faculty onboarding practices as the front-end analysis to inform initial research-based instructional design guidance for future faculty onboarding program creation and implementation. This research confirms that faculty onboarding program design and development is well served by considering the core IDT principles of systematic design, social learning, and instructional strategies. Following these principles, undergirded by IDT guidance, will support the outcome wherein participants acknowledge the value of their onboarding experiences; a success seen in the literature.

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Dedication

Dave. Asher. Eli.

You make it all worthwhile

To more adventures with my favorite people

Acknowledgements

Much harder than writing this dissertation, is to do justice to thanking all those that made this possible. I was never planning to get a PhD, but I have emerged a better person and for that, I thank you. Dave and the boys, Mom, Dad, and the siblings, Joyce, Amy, Terri-Ann, Ericka, SLV, the girls, and many MANY others. This was truly a group effort. Your unwavering love will stay with me all my days.

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This journey was not without its wanderings. It meandered through COVID, through chaos at Future Generations University, through the loss of my academic home, and wrapped up in New Zealand after a quick jaunt through Southeast Asia. I opened this laptop in places all around Blacksburg and further afield; 1701, 1709, 1723, 1744, Joyce's upper floor, the CRC, the Newman Library, the public library, the Guest House, Laura's in Moab, Hanoi, Danang, Phuket, Koh Samui, Island Bay, Raumati South.

And I wouldn't have it any other way.

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Introduction and Need for Study

Faculty onboarding is a multifaceted process with a wealth of benefits for individual faculty members and institutions of higher education (HEIs). Ross et al. (2014) refers to faculty onboarding as a "critical strategic event and one that involves significant investment of time, attention, effort, and money" (p. 728). The benefits of successful faculty onboarding include facilitating initial integration of new faculty (Bauer, 2010; Mays et al., 2022; Miller, 2021; Petrilli et al., 2022; Williams-Smith, 2017; Zink & Curran, 2018), enhancing retention rates (Crow & Sellnow-Richmond, 2023; Lowell & Exter, 2017; Sun & Simon-Roberts, 2020; Young-Brice et al., 2022; Zamora et al., 2022; Zink & Curran, 2018), and improving teaching quality (Armstrong et al., 2021; Bucklin et al., 2014; Caldwell & Rutledge, 2023; Farakish et al., 2022; Harwood & Koyama, 2022; Lowell & Yang, 2023; Mazerolle et al., 2016; Shah et al., 2020). Additionally, the academic community's wellbeing is supported through the considered selection and implementation of faculty onboarding programs and practices (Azour & McGuinness, 2023; Doyle & Tarbutton, 2023; Jaschik & Lederman, 2023; Scott et al., 2016; Vyletel et al., 2023).

Onboarding – understood within the contexts of businesses and industry – ensures socialization and orientation of new employees to more successful adaptation to a workplace. Bauer (2010) states that, "onboarding is the process of helping new hires adjust to social and performance aspects of their new jobs quickly and smoothly" (p. 1). The same is true when those new hires are academic faculty. The initial period of employment is the ideal time to create understanding of an organization and a sense of belonging for the employee. Azour and McGuinness (2023) found that implementing a year-long formal onboarding processes allowed for improved integration of new faculty members, stating that, "organizational socialization is potentially the difference between surviving and thriving" (p. 2350). Miller (2021) echoes this emphasis on the importance of faculty orientation.

New faculty orientation programs can serve as an important introduction to an

academic community. They can create expectations, provide exposure to

technical assistance, and welcome faculty members to new communities. (p. 5)

Faculty onboarding allows for an improvement in how quickly new faculty are able to navigate a

new academic environment (Mays et al., 2022; Petrilli et al., 2022; Williams-Smith, 2017; Zink

& Curran, 2018). Even when individuals have been intimately involved with the academic

environment as learners in specific content areas, those same individuals need "formal

preparation and guidance in the knowledge, skills, and procedures necessary for them to

become successful in their professional roles" (Kanuka, 2005, p. 3).

Among universities, there is a belief that onboarding programming contributes to the

retention of new faculty. "The widespread use of onboarding programs suggests that most

organizations believe onboarding to be an important component [of business practices]" (Klein

et al., 2015, p. 263). Research outside of higher education has put numbers to this belief, finding

improvements in retention when the initial integration is attended to (Hall-Ellis, 2014; iCIMS

Staff, 2020, Sharma & Stol, 2020; Ritz et al., 2023; Young-Brice et al., 2022; Grillo & Kim, 2015;

Laurano, 2015; Bowers et al., 2023; Aberdeen Group, 2012). Regarding faculty onboarding

specifically, preliminary research suggests that there is a retention benefit to successful

onboarding. Bucklin et al. (2014) spoke of faculty development and mentoring as elements of

onboarding that led directly to, "faculty retention and success in academic medicine." (p. 6).

Azour and McGuinness (2023) followed suit, calling faculty onboarding, "a critical force for

faculty retention" (p. 2350). A number of recent studies list improved faculty retention as an

important reason to establish and/or improve upon faculty onboarding programs (Crow &

Sellnow-Richmond, 2023; Lowell & Exter, 2017; Sun & Simon-Roberts, 2020; Young-Brice et

al., 2022; Zamora et al., 2022; Zink & Curran, 2018). New faculty retention being addressed

through formal onboarding programs is a welcome step to address growing concerns among

academic leadership regarding attrition of faculty (Bucklin, 2014; Jaschik & Lederman, 2023; Pearch & Marutz, 2005).

Academic faculty are hired for their subject matter expertise and often have very little teaching experience to lean on when they first begin a faculty role. Farakish et al.'s work (2022) explores this reality, noting that new faculty in their study had "no...teaching experience" (p. 113) and finding that participating in a faculty onboarding program, "led to an increase in teaching effectiveness and played a significant role in transitioning professional faculty from practitioners to educators" (Farakish et al., 2022, p. 113). An evaluative study regarding community college dual-enrollment educators reached an identical conclusion: new faculty entered with little formal training regarding teaching in higher education. When a "preparing...faculty to teach" (p. 93) program was implemented, those that took part experienced a marked increase in their confidence about teaching. Such cases demonstrate that appropriately onboarded faculty are better equipped to cross over a barrier of inexperience to teach students effectively.

With regard to onboarding practices, it is not simply enough that they are in place. Energetic consideration of how onboarding practices are implemented is critical. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) data found that employees that experienced 'good onboarding" were 67% more likely to be with the employer three years after employment began (Hirsch, 2017). This sentiment is mirrored in a seminal text of instructional design such as Merrill's *First Principles of Instruction* (2002). He counsels that "instructional design requires two major activities. Determine what to teach. Determine how to teach" (p. 294). In order for effective onboarding programs to be developed both the what and the how must be attended to.

Purpose of the Study

Current faculty onboarding practices are being discussed in peer-reviewed literature across different disciplines describing elements of the plethora of practices and the ensuing findings. Although faculty onboarding is taking place across the country and around the world,

there seems to be little agreement in the literature regarding a comprehensive definition of faculty onboarding or alignment on which practices, or elements of practices, are critical for effective faculty onboarding programs.

A significant challenge is that current research rests on inconsistent terminology. This is a challenge for practitioners tasked with designing and developing effective onboarding programs as "the use of an agreed vocabulary assists in the development of more efficient instructional design tools" (p. 292, Merrill, 2001). Current research also uses models or guiding frameworks inconsistently, with few studies citing onboarding process models. The lack of clearly discernable research-supported processes can be limiting to onboarding development professionals. Much of what passes as current research is articles that espouse expert opinion or describe a specific institution's journey with regard to faculty onboarding practice. These can be helpful starting places, but when conceptualizing faculty onboarding practices at an institutional level, it is ideal that the cited research help establish some standard practices, instead of being based on the subjective experiences of practicing researchers.

The current body of research regarding faculty onboarding practices can shed light on the limitations seen in the initial literature review on the subject. By examining the terminology used in current research, it might be possible to create a better understanding of what is meant by the term faculty onboarding. Additionally, it would also be helpful to look into the trends apparent in the literature along with any issues that can be seen. Further research into current considerations extracted from the literature could support the work of onboarding professionals in this space.

The following three research questions led this research:

RQ1 - How is faculty onboarding and related terms defined in the research literature?

RQ2 - What are the trends and issues found in the faculty onboarding research literature?

RQ3 – What important design and development considerations of faculty onboarding programs can be found in the research literature?

The integrative literature review is an appropriate mechanism for the collection, summarization, and synthesis of current literature regarding faculty onboarding practices. Through the integrative literature review, it was be possible to evaluate various definitions of onboarding and related terms, capture practices from the research, critique the findings, and generate new perspectives that will better support future faculty onboarding design and development.

Before incorporating faculty onboarding practices into a research-based faculty onboarding program, a comprehensive review of higher education onboarding implementation literature is essential. This review aims to clarify terminology, distinguish research-based practices from opinion, and establish a framework for future onboarding practices. By synthesizing current evidence, we can enhance the effectiveness of faculty onboarding programs and contribute to improved faculty preparation, integration, and professional development. Onboarding professionals need robust, clear guidance developed from current findings in literature on the practices of faculty onboarding. The primary aim of this integrative literature review is to gather empirical evidence with regard to elements of effective faculty onboarding practices as part of the front-end analysis to inform research-based instructional design guidance for future faculty onboarding program creation and implementation.

This integrative literature review will consolidate and synthesize the current empirical research creating a more comprehensive picture of current understandings, allowing for the further development of guidance of research-based faculty onboarding programs. The primary aim of this integrative literature review is to gather and critique the current empirical evidence with regard to effective onboarding practices to create the initial research- based guidance for future faculty onboarding program creation and implementation. This integrated literature review will add to the body of research regarding effective faculty onboarding practices and

allow for onboarding professionals to confidently base their work on the current research as synthesized in this integrative literature review.

Organization of the Study

This introduction to the faculty onboarding process is followed by further explanation of the need for this study and the findings from an initial literature review. An extensive methodology of this integrative literature review is detailed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 contains the research findings structured along the lines of the specific research questions followed by Chapter 5 which includes further considerations regarding the findings and research limitations at the conclusion of this integration literature review.

<center>**Chapter 2**</center>

This section contains a brief clarification of the concepts surrounding onboarding and organizational socialization. It continues with an overview of current faculty onboarding research and the needs for this integrative literature review to provide direction for future onboarding professionals.

Organizational Socialization

Wanberg clarifies that organizational socialization is "the process through which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors required to adapt to a new work role" (2012, p. 4). Within the academic discussions regarding onboarding, organizational socialization is the ultimate goal of faculty onboarding programs (Bano & Fitzgerald, 2023; Caldwell & Rutledge, 2023; Conradie, 2019). The relationship between organizational socialization and onboarding has been a subject of extensive academic inquiry within the field of organizational behavior. Despite the significant attention devoted to these concepts, scholars have encountered challenges in delineating their interconnections and implications for employee integration and performance (Chao, 2012; Klein & Polin, 2012; Wanberg, 2012; Wanberg & Choi, 2012). Onboarding practices and the related concept of organizational socialization have been studied for decades in the literature of organizational psychology. In 1977, Van Maanen and Schein wrote on the development of the theory of organizational socialization with a number of colleagues in their book of the same title. In *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Socialization*, editor Wanberg explains that organizational socialization is a broader term that includes onboarding but "more broadly encompasses the information seeking, learning, and other adaptation processes involved in socialization on the part of the newcomer" (p. 4).

Within business and industry, the term organizational socialization is not used, and onboarding has been the general substituted term for reaching the same end point. Wanberg (2012) acknowledges that terminology has gotten blurred between the two terms, which is even

more evident today, a decade later. The suggested distinction, according to Klein and Polin (2012), is that "socialization is a process that occurs within a person, whereas onboarding is the set of practices, polices, and procedures, formal or informal, put in place by managers and HR departments to help structure newcomers' early experiences and thus *facilitate* the socialization of new employees" (p. 268, emphasis mine). Even in this quote, the term used is socialization, not organization socialization, demonstrating that the terminology continues to be in flux.

The terms organizational socialization and onboarding have become interchangeable within current vernacular (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011), which has led to the current state of affairs where the term onboarding itself has a plethora of definitions, some that hold tightly to organizational socialization (Britto et al., 2018; Carlos & Muralles, 2022; Klein & Polin, 2012) and some that are far from it (Jarvis, 2008; Karambelkar & Bhattacharya, 2017; Westwood & Johnson, 2004). Within this initial literature review, the term organizational socialization is equated with onboarding in a number of articles (Ahearne et al., 2019; Bauer, 2015; Bauer & Erdogan, 2011; Bauer et al., 2007; Britto et al., 2018; Kowtha, 2018; Wiseman et al., 2022). However, a third of the studies did not use the term organizational socialization within the research at all, leading to a conclusion that some researchers might be unfamiliar with this academic term for onboarding.

Faculty Definition

With regard to this research, the faculty onboarding practices being investigated are those that take place for employees of HEIs who have instructional responsibilities. These are individuals who work for a college or university who as part of their role have those that learn from them. No distinction is made regarding what sort of HEI the individual is employed at, be it public or private HEIs, two-year or four-year institutions, liberal arts focused or research centered, US or international, etc. These differences in institutions can be dramatic and even within any specific HEI, there can be employment-type distinctions between faculty appointments such as tenured, tenure-track, adjunct, research, part-time, etc. Some of the

research in this study differentiated the faculty by employment arrangement, but for the purposes of this research those distinctions were ignored. The research findings were not limited to a particular group of faculty.

Models and Guiding Frameworks

Models or guiding frameworks are often used to guide the design and development of interventions such as onboarding. There are a number of models in circulation as starting points for onboarding program development, starting with the model put forward by Van Maanen and Schein in that first publication introducing the term organizational socialization (1997). Additional models used in faculty onboarding research are the 4Cs (Bauer, 2010), the Schrodt, Stringer Cawyer, and Sanders' faculty socialization model (2003), and Inform – Welcome - Guide (Klein & Heuser, 2008).

Van Maanen and Schein's Organizational Socialization Model (1997)

Van Maanen and Schein (1977) provided an early onboarding model based on the organizational psychology concept, organization socialization. They proposed that activities designed to create organizational socialization for new hires in an organization fit within six juxtaposed dimensions.

1) Collective vs. individual socialization processes

2) Formal vs. informal socialization processes

3) Sequential vs. random steps in the socialization process

4) Fixed vs. Variable socialization processes

5) Serial vs. disjunctive socialization processes

6) Investiture vs. divestiture socialization processes

This model continues to be used in research settings as a mechanism for assessing onboarding programs (Ataman & Kondakçi, 2016) however, appreciating the attempt at reaching outside the ivory tower, the complexity of the model limits it's direct use by practitioners for faculty

onboarding program development and delivery. Instead a popular model for application is the 4Cs.

4Cs (Bauer, 2010)

The Society of Human Resource Management Foundation's report by Bauer in 2010 is cited in almost every article on faculty onboarding found in this initial literature review. Although heavily cited, none of the articles reported following Bauer's 4C model specifically. Bauer's 4C model is a well-utilized guide for onboarding new employees, including new faculty members. Bauer gained copywrite of the model in 2010 and it can be seen as the basis for most models with regard to onboarding practices. The four steps or levels of the model are compliance, clarification, culture, and connection. These serve as both a guide to the content to be covered in the process of onboarding and as an evaluative statement regarding the depth and quality of the onboarding itself.

Compliance is proposed as the lowest level of onboarding and also the starting point. Compliance is simply "giving the basic information about policy and legal requirements" (Becker & Bish, 2021, p. 31). The model considers that an onboarding process could only include this initial stage, although Bauer (2010) confirms that in an ideal scenario, the onboarding process progresses through the four stages in order to be most effective. Compliance is followed by clarification of roles and expectations. This is an element of faculty onboarding that is practiced with some consistency, although it is also an area where faculty self-reporting indicates much is left to be desired with regard to the clarification given. The third level of the 4Cs model is culture. "Culture is a broad category that includes providing employees with a sense of organizational norms both formal and informal" (Bauer, 2010, p. 2). Connection is the fourth and ultimate level that can be achieved with onboarding, according to Bauer. The connection level aligns with organizational socialization, which is discussed in more detail in the following section. Organizational socialization, which also guides onboarding practice, focuses on this stage of the model, arguing that the goal of onboarding is to enable the new employee to be as

productive as possible as quickly as possible, which ultimately relies on the new individual's connection to their tasks and to their employment.

Schrodt, Stringer Cawyer, and Sanders' Faculty Socialization Model (2003)

With this research focused specifically on academic faculty onboarding, the model of "academic mentoring behaviors and the organizational socialization of new faculty members" (p. 17) put forward by Schrodt, Stringer Cawyer, and Sanders (2003) was of particular interest. The authors define academic socialization as "ownership, adequate information, and connectedness" (p. 24), whereas this research defines academic socialization as organizational socialization when the organization is specifically a higher education institution (HEI) focus on these three elements. Opportunities for ownership to develop could expressly value the addition of the new hire into a department, creating loyalty to the institution. Adequate information relates to a new faculty member's perception regarding the appropriateness and timeliness of information that they receive as an element of the onboarding process. Connectedness refers to facilitation towards the creation of social networks within the work environment.

Although this model's nomenclature appears to be an ideal mechanism for studying faculty onboarding practices, the direct use of the model was only found in the initial literature review in a study by Wicks et al. (2020) as a justification for introducing a social media element into a faculty onboarding program. Wicks et al. (2020) concluded weakness of the model for academic socialization that is taking place with new faculty who do not fit the traditional tenure-track four-year undergraduate institutional model. Although not clearly and directly linked, the Inform – Welcome – Guide Model proposed by Klein et al. (2015) contains a very strong alignment regarding categorization of activities critical for functional onboarding.

Inform, Welcome, Guide (Klein & Heuser, 2008).

Stemming from the evaluation of orientation practices, Klein and Heuser (2008) proposed the Inform-Welcome-Guide (IWG) framework to capture the activities that take place

within the onboarding period[1]. Further developed by Klein et. al. (2015), the Inform-Welcome-Guide (IWG) model identifies specific practices within the three categories of Inform, Welcome, and Guide. Inform activities is the largest content category wherein the employer attempts to provide all the information needed "to help newcomers learn what they need to know to be successful in their new role" (Klein & Heuser, 2008, p. 325). This includes subcategories of "communication, resources, and training" (Becker & Bish, 2021, p. 30). Klein et al. (2015) categorize a number of onboarding tasks into subcategories and sub-subcategories within the Inform category. The activities included in the Inform category are those that are familiar to most who have experienced an orientation or onboarding program, such as the completion of compliance documents and information on the practicalities of employment at the specific organization. For the Welcome category, the focus is on celebrating the new hire, creating opportunities for the individual to be introduced to colleagues, and "expressing appreciation that they joined the organization" (Klein et al., 2015, p. 265). The third category, Guide, expressly requires the appointment of a buddy or mentor to provide navigation supporting "the transition from a naive outsider to an effective insider" (Klein et al., 2015, p. 265). It is the category of Guide wherein practitioners of IWG often specialize the onboarding to align different employee roles within an organization.

Limited Model Use

The expressed utilization of any models was absent from much of the literature regarding the faculty onboarding. Few articles included the onboarding-specific models described above. Crow and Sellnow-Richmond (2023) utilized Jablin's organizational assimilation theory as a way to conceptualize improvements to the socialization of new faculty. Farakish et al. (2023) study explained the choice of activities for the faculty onboarding program in their research

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[1] Klein and Heuser use the term onboarding period which is being equated to the term onboarding for the purposes of this research.

through the use of "transformative learning, reflective practice, and pedagogical content knowledge" (p. 115). These are not formal models but are instead guiding frameworks. Regarding model use, although not often followed directly, the authors of the above models are cited prolifically, and the overall principles of the models can be seen throughout the approaches taken by the researchers in the onboarding practices as described.

Overall, most of the articles had no stated model. Many, like Lowell and Exter (2017), state that they are implementing faculty onboarding practices based on their own formative evaluation. These findings are mirrored in Miller's (2021) evaluation of new faculty orientation programs. He found that the orientation programs within his integrative literature review, "seem to be based not on intentional outcomes, but perhaps rather on a series of activities" (p. 9). This lack of clearly discernable research-supported processes is limiting the onboarding development professionals and has led to this research being initiated.

Terminology Inconsistencies

Within the initial literature review, the terms socialization, orientation, onboarding, and induction are all used to describe the practices that faculty were engaged with during their initial period of employment in HEIs. At times, these terms are used alone and at other times in conjunction with a fellow term. Some studies use the term orientation as equating to onboarding (Kaufmann & Cooper, 2020), others use the term orientation as an element of onboarding (Farakish et al., 2022), and Griggs (2022) used the two terms as equals: "orientation and onboarding" (p. 265). In the article, Wicks et al. (2020) equates onboarding with socializing using the Chao (2012) definition of the latter, i.e. "the process of acclimating to a role to meet mutual needs" (p. 544). There seems to be little alignment or agreement of terminology regarding what is meant by faculty onboarding. This is a major challenge for professionals tasked with designing and developing onboarding programs as "the use of an agreed vocabulary assists in the development of more efficient instructional design tools" (p. 292, Merrill, 2001).

Inconsistencies Limit Application

Terminology inconsistencies placing limitations on further research can be seen in the work of Mazerolle et al. (2016), Rodigues and Swisher (2022), and Ross and Dunker (2019). In Mazerolle et al. and Rodigues and Swisher's work, they refer to the onboarding practices they researched with regard to their faculty as 'formal onboarding' and 'mentoring'. It might seem plausible to infer what was included by those terms, but when Ross and Dunker (2019) conducted a literature review of seventeen studies of nursing faculty onboarding programs, they found a wide variety in what each study considered faculty onboarding. Ross and Dunker's study was conducted in one field that engaged in faculty onboarding, and they still found vast variability within what was considered faculty onboarding. It stands to reason that there would be greater variability in literature that crossed multiple fields. Therefore, for an accurate study to be conducted, great care must be taken to limit inference with regard to practices of faculty onboarding.

Mentoring is another term used throughout faculty onboarding literature (Allen et al., 2017; Bloomberg, 2022; Eisner, 2014; Griggs, 2022; Hundey et al., 2020; Kanuka, 2005; Kaufmann & Cooper, 2020; Lowell & Yang, 2023; Reid et al., 2013; Rodrigues et al., 2022; Rodrigues & Swisher, 2022; Schrodt et al., 2003). As common as it was in this initial literature review, mentoring is a practice in faculty development far removed from the initial period of a faculty member's employment. Mentoring can also take a multitude of forms, from peer mentoring to career mentoring, from formal to informal, etc. Without a detailed description of mentoring in the research report, as well as greater clarification regarding the specific elements of mentoring as an onboarding practice, the term mentoring has limited usefulness regarding guidance for future faculty onboarding programs.

Variability in Onboarding Practices

Two thirds of the studies in the initial literature review mention the connection between organizational socialization and practices put in place to support faculty onboarding. For those

articles, there is certainty that onboard practices led to the development of organizational socialization in new faculty, as defined by Wanberg (2012). That certainty fades dramatically with the later third of studies considered within the initial literature review. Kanuka (2005) speaks of mentoring as the tool for integrating new faculty and Scott et al. (2016) uses orientation as the mechanism that "assimilates faculty" (p. 15). Often, terms such as mentoring or orientation are used to describe certain activities in one research report, but would describe different activities in another report. This inconsistency of terminology adds to the limitations of current research to be called upon to support further faculty onboarding program development and supports the need for an integrative literature review to help clarify terminology around faculty onboarding.

Disparate Research Base

Besides inconsistent terminology, this initial literature review discovered faculty onboarding to be the subject of research in a plethora of different fields, published in journals with ranges of focuses. The majority of the articles were found in educational journals, but articles were found in journals for fields such as in nursing, communications, and religion, as well as within overarching pedagogy publications such as the *Journal of Higher Education* and the *Journal of Practical Studies in Education.* The *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* and *the International Journal of Designs for Learning* had two separate articles from two different researchers that were published at different times, whereas the two articles on faculty onboarding, from the *Chronicle of Mentoring and Coaching*, are both from a special topic issue in 2022. Both articles addressed onboarding, but they did so using very different methodologies. This range of appropriate publications being found across a vast research base lends itself for the need for an integrative literature review that can collect research from the variety of peer-reviewed sources, instead of being limited to the most commonly sourced arenas for the research topic faculty development.

Limited Empirical Research

A challenge to the research of faculty onboarding practices is that the majority of articles reviewed are primarily descriptive or editorial in nature. The current research surrounding faculty contains a number of program descriptions from nursing education (Schaar et al., 2015) and community college leadership (Marble & Case, 2013). There are published guiding documents regarding the operationalization of specific elements of faculty onboarding from the fields of counselling and development (Sorcinelli, 1994) and radiology (Zamora et al., 2022). There are many expert opinion pieces weighing in with their suggestions regarding the ideal way forward (Craft, 2021; Derven, 2008; Moon, 2018; Kowtha, 2018; Scott et. al, 2016). These are helpful initial areas of research, however, without evidence and synthesis the successful operationalization of their ideals has a higher risk of failure. Ross and Dunker (2019) agree with this analysis, finding that much of what they found was "based on a very limited number of research studies that are either descriptive in nature or pilot studies with small convenience samples that limit generalizability" (p. 214).

Limited Research on Faculty Onboarding

A theme that came across in the initial literature review was the stated lack of research into faculty onboarding practices. Conradie (2019) states that "where various studies outline the shortcomings of academic induction and/or make reform recommendations, but no overview of current practice (as it is reported in the literature) exists" (p. 4). Rokooei et al. (2024) published a recent study where the majority of new faculty participants stated that they had not received any faculty onboarding. The initial literature review discovered that most researchers were unaware of the other research being completed in this same area of study. Scott et al. (2016) laments that although extensive research exists on effective organizational socialization, there is a lack of such studies in an academic setting. Three years later, Baker and DiPiro (2019) note that, "a thorough literature search was performed to identify any onboarding standards of practice in the academic setting. …A single article was found regarding academic onboarding of

medical school faculty members" (p. 1234). The initial literature review for this integrative literature review did come across studies in an academic setting. The fact that the current researchers seem to find no such studies points to the need for a more thorough collection of the current faculty onboarding research in the form of this integrative literature review.

Summary of the Chapter

Based on these findings in the current literature, it is clear that a more holistic synthesis of the faculty onboarding data present in current literature is necessary in order to effectively describe functional faculty onboarding practices. Through the integrative literature review process as described in Chapter 3, it will be possible to clarify terminology more completely, while also revealing empirical and evaluative research findings while also discovering and describing effective strategies to use across faculty onboarding processes.

Chapter 3

       This chapter details the integrative literature review undertaken as the appropriate exploration into the development of guidance for faculty onboarding practices. An overarching tenant of the integrative literature review is the explicit description of the research process. The majority of this chapter contains a detailed narrative of how the research was conducted following a stated procedure developed from the work of Cooper (1998) for the overall structure, Callahan (2010) for details regarding data collection and evaluation, and Whittmore (2005) for the steps to an a priori data analysis strategy.

       Torraco (2005) reminds researchers that "readers of a literature review expect to see how the logic and conceptual reasoning of the research process was used to develop the proposed framework or model" (p. 363). To this end, this chapter begins with a restatement of the purpose of this research, an explanation of the integrative literature review methodology, and followed by the clear argument of why the integrative literature review was the most appropriate methodology to use for this research. Chapters 4 and 5 follow with findings from the research which is presented in the form of direct responses to the research questions including research-informed guidance for faculty onboarding practitioners

Purpose

       The primary aim of this integrative literature review was to gather empirical evidence with regard to elements of effective faculty onboarding practices as the front-end analysis to inform initial research-based instructional design guidance for future faculty onboarding program creation and implementation. Onboarding professionals need robust, clear guidance collected from the current research base of practices of faculty onboarding and presented in a practical manner. Additionally, this integrative literature review was engaged to create new knowledge through the synthesis and consideration of current empirical and evaluative faculty onboarding literature. This review clarified terminology, distinguished research-based practices

from opinion, and established a framework for future research and design of faculty onboarding practices.

Integrative Literature Review

Form and function distinguishes the integrative literature review from other research methodologies. Callahan (2010) characterized an integrative literature review as having a "concentrated focus on a topical area and the presence of a methodology" (p. 301). The form of an integrative literature review, while sharing overarching features with other literature review methodologies such as a focus on published research and the lack of a primary study, includes in its structure a highly detailed methods section. The integrative literature review clearly and concisely describes each step of the research process (Toronto, 2020). Those details include a clearly stated research question and purpose of the review as well as descriptive explanation with regard to the inclusion and exclusion of all data. It is through the process of filtering the data with the specificity expressed through the stated inclusion/exclusion criteria that allows for the appropriate data to ultimately be discovered from the collected initial data (Toronto, 2020). "In order for a review to be considered rigorous, a comprehensive method needs to be followed and reported" (Toronto, 2020, p. 1). By expressly stating in the integrative literature review what actions will be taken by the researcher to filter the initial collected data from the wide search, research bias is limited and rigor of the study is increased with the ability for the study to be replicated by following the described data collection and evaluation process.

Integrative literature reviews take available literature and create new knowledge through the process of synthesis. The function of an integrative literature review can go in a number of ways. The integrative literature review is able to tackle both established subjects as well as newer bodies of research. Regarding this particular research, although onboarding is not a new practice, the literature base of faculty onboarding practice can still be considered an "emerging topic that would benefit from a holistic conceptualization and synthesis of the literature to date" (Torraco, 2005, p. 364). The integrative literature review allows for flexibility regarding the

analysis (Cooper, 1998) allowing for the research findings to emerge in a more iterative process than that of the meta-analysis or systematic review process. Cooper (1988) regards the integrative literature review as a tool able to translate "abstract criteria into concrete applicable standards" (p. 105). For this research the main goal is to do exactly that, synthesize not summarize (Torraco, 2005), guidance regarding faculty onboarding practice through the abstraction of current empirical and evaluative research. Integrative literature review is the gift of synthesis and new knowledge built on primary research completed by others.

Integrative literature reviews have been used to tackle concerns similar to the ones addressed by this research such as employee turnover (Climek et al., 2022), transitioning nurse from clinicians to educators (Grassley & Lambe, 2015), program evaluation (Horne & Sandmann, 2012), transfer of training (Burke & Hutchins, 2007). Cronin and George (2023) write about the use of the integrative literature review for both the development of theory and the review of current research. In order for a research-based faculty onboarding practice to develop, it is prudent to utilize the tools of an integrative literature review to bring together definitions and elements of faculty onboarding practices from the various communities of practice and develop concrete evidence from the more abstract research findings. This intentional collection and amalgamation of current data fits within the review of current research. Through the integrative literature review, it will be possible to evaluate various definitions of onboarding and related terms, target the practices captured in the research, critique the findings, and generate new perspectives and frameworks on the topic that will better support future practice.

Conducting an Integrative Literature Review

As described earlier, an integrative literature review methodology relies on explicit clarity of the research strategy. The following section details the entire research strategy applying Cooper (1998) 5-step process: problem formulation, data collection, evaluation of data points, data analysis and interpretation, and presentation of results. Cooper's steps are the basis for the oft-

sighted work on the process of conducting an integrative literature review by Whittemore and Knafl (2005) as well as Toronto and Remington (2020). In short, an appropriately large net is cast into the available research. Data is collected, evaluated, and analyzed utilizing the research questions as guidance. Data is then extracted along themes into matrixes and iterative conclusions are drawn (Toronto, 2020).

The first three steps follow this introduction. Initial data evaluation took place at the conclusion of this chapter whereas data analysis and interpretation can be found in Chapter 4 and the presentation of results in Chapter 5. This chapter, Chapter 3, also contains discussion regarding rigor, threats to validity, and researcher reflexivity as these elements of the research process have an effect on the final dataset from which the research conclusions were drawn.

Step 1: Problem Formulation

The research strategy began with clearly stating the problem statement and the research questions addressed by this integrative literature review (Cooper, 1998).

Purpose Statement

Before incorporating effective faculty onboarding practices into research-based faculty onboarding programs, a comprehensive review of higher education faculty onboarding implementation literature is essential. This review aimed to clarify terminology, distinguish research-based practices from opinion, and establish a framework for future research and design practices. By synthesizing current evidence, we can enhance the effectiveness of faculty onboarding programs and contribute to improved faculty preparation, integration, and professional development.

Research Questions

RQ1 - How is faculty onboarding and related terms defined in the research literature?

RQ2 - What are the trends and issues found in the faculty onboarding research literature?

RQ3 – What important design and development considerations of faculty onboarding programs can be found in the research literature?

Step 2 and Step 3: Data Collection and Evaluation Processes

It is critical in an integrative literature review that the data collection process is spelled out in detail (Toronto & Remington, 2020). This allows the reader to clearly follow the process that the researcher took in order to collect the data which ultimately led to the research findings.

Callahan (2010) Guidelines. The data collection and evaluation is a most critical step in the integrative literature review as how it is conducted creates the basis for the research findings. Callahan (2010) gives a six-step guide as the "hallmark of a good integrative literature review" (p. 301). The use of this explicit data collection and evaluation process strengthens the process and therefore strengthens the findings that result from following the explicit steps.

This research report introduces an initial step added to Callahan's six steps. This initial step explicitly describes the technology tools that were engaged with in this research and what role they played in the completion of this research. This, now seven-step process is as follows: (a) technology tools engaged, (b) where the literature was found, (c) when the search was conducted, (d) who conducted the search, (e) how the literature was found, (f) the dataset, and (g) selection criteria.

Technology tools engaged. Engaging in this research at a time where there is high levels of discussion regarding how Generative AI will transform the work of researchers, this section was added to Callahan's (2010) guidance with the goal of transparency for the readers of this research. Multitudes of technology tools were utilized to produce this research, from internet providers and computer hardware to voice memo software for note taking and computer programs used to create the research report. The following statement focuses on the use cases of technology tools within the data collection, evaluation, and analysis portion of this research exclusively.

Regarding data collection, multiple electronic academic databases were used, as mentioned in the following section. Zotero, a reference management tool, was utilized for storage of both the initial citations and final full-text of the articles in the dataset. Zotero was

also used to automatically format metadata associated with the articles that was then transferred into Covidence to ease with the exclusion/inclusion process. Covidence, a web-based systematic review tool, was employed for duplicate removal, data evaluation and search flow diagramming and as the initial analysis and documentation interface. Elicit, a self-professed AI Research Assistant was utilized as a secondary search. This is described in more detail in the dataset section below.

  Where the literature was found. The search centered on the utilization of the following electronic academic databases, Education Research Complete, ERIC, Teacher Reference Center, Business Source Complete, and Scopus. These were an appropriately extensive initial search scope for the inclusion of relevant published research. Wherever possible, the keyword searches were conducted inclusively in the following fields: abstract, title, subject terms, and keywords. This allowed for focusing on the areas of the articles where it was clear that these terms were the focus of the article, limiting the collection of erroneous articles. The search strategy included limiting the database search by the date range 2013 to 2024, to peer-reviewed journals only, and those articles published in English. The date range was limited to focus the research to recent literature and from last decade inclusively, capturing both pre- and post-pandemic practices. It was unclear how COVID had affected faculty onboarding, and this date range allowed for an investigation into COVID-related adjustments in the workplace, acknowledging that those adjustments could be ongoing and may not be available in the literature at the time of this research. The search was limited to peer-review journals as the desire was to conduct the integrative literature review of research literature avoiding what could be found in the gray literature on the subject of faculty onboarding practices. English was the only language of the collected published work as the researcher was conducting this research in English, but the researcher did not restrict the search to the US-context as faculty onboarding is a global phenomenon.

When the search was conducted. The search was conducted in late September 2024 using access provided by Virginia Tech. The studies that were part of the initial search stage and the full-text stage were all discoverable and available to the researcher through the services of the Virginia Tech library system.

Who conducted the search. With the guidance of the dissertation committee and highly skilled higher education librarians, the systematic search as described in this methodology was conducted solely by the author of this research.

How the literature was found. Conducting a systematic literature search that utilizes terms that are often used in a multitude of contexts, such as the terms onboarding and faculty, required careful creation of the specific search string. There are a number of terms that are used as alternatives or substitutes for the term at the center of this research; faculty onboarding. With regard to the term (1) onboarding, the initial literature review found that the terms, (2) orientation, (3) induction, (4) socialization, and (5) organizational socialization were all used as synonyms. With regard to the term (1) faculty, nomenclature such as (2) professor, (3) college teacher, and (4) instructor were all found to be used when the research was engaging academic faculty.

To use all of these search terms independently from each other, such as a search using the terms "faculty" and "professor" and "onboarding" and "induction" would have potentially introduced a multitude of results irrelevant to this integrative literature review regarding faculty onboarding practice. For example, onboarding can be used in relation to software systems and transportation. Faculty, especially in education literature, often refers to a group of educators in the K-12 sector. These meanings of onboarding and faculty were not relevant to this research. Additionally, this integrative literature review examined research on faculty onboarding practices specifically, therefore research on onboarding in general or faculty in general was also outside the scope of this research. The most effective way to avoid the collection of irrelevant work was to search, by two or three word combinations of the five onboarding terms and the

four faculty terms. Searching only for keyword combinations such as "faculty onboarding",

"instructor induction" and all the other possible combinations of the five onboarding terms and

the four faculty terms led to the most appropriate set of initial articles. This approach allowed

for the collection of data that focused on the concept of faculty onboarding while excluding

research that utilized these terms to study aspects that were unrelated to this research question,

irregardless of the specific terms used. The complete search string can be found in Appendix A

along with the appropriate use of wildcards.

The dataset. Articles from all five databases were uploaded into Covidence. Table 1

shows the initial article totals returned with regard to each database queried with a total of 163.

Table 1

Initial Article Distribution by Database

Database Source	Articles Returned
Education Research Complete	69
ERIC	24
Teacher Reference Center	4
Business Source Complete	1
Scopus	65

As Generative AI tools are still being considered for their usefulness in all elements of

research, this research conducted a query utilizing Elicit[2] which returned 24 studies. This

resulted in a list of 24 articles presumed by the large language model to be relevant articles to

the prompt. Nine publications were excluded due to the date of the publication being prior to

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[2] Prompt was entered as follows: List empirical or evaluative articles that focus on faculty and
onboarding practices or orientation practices or induction practices or socialization practices published
since 2013.

2013. Two articles did not have faculty as participants. Four articles were already present in the dataset. This left nine studies discovered through the use of Elicit AI that were included in the initial screening. Five were included in the final dataset as four did not meet the inclusion criteria. In conclusion, utilizing Elicit AI at the data collection stage in this manner concluded with five articles that were not discovered through the database search process. With a final dataset of only 28 articles, the researcher gained a valuable percentage of data through the assistance of a large language model in this manner. With regard to research into faculty onboarding, a subject that has, at this time, very few primary research examples spread throughout research publications, the use of a large language model to track down relevant research proved helpful.

Selection Criteria. The inclusion and exclusion stage of the systematic search strategy is critical to allow the research to focus only on appropriate studies (Toronto, 2020). This process of expressly describing why studies were included or excluded is critical in the integrative literature review research report as the data analysis then only takes place with appropriate data sources. This is akin to the step in other research methods where data that was inappropriately collected or incompletely categorized is removed in order to strengthen the validity of the findings. The criteria used to select the studies to be included in this data analysis is as follows:

1. The study was published in a peer-reviewed publication, published in the last decade (2013 – 2024), and published in English.

2. The study contained primary research, or the research was explicitly evaluative in nature.

3. The study was focused on faculty onboarding or elements of faculty onboarding in a higher education setting.

Selection Process. The specificity created through the use of search strings of compound search terms[3] used in the specific databases chosen concluded with a pool of 163[4] initial studies (see Table 1). 59 of these studies were duplicated across databases and automatically eliminated by Covidence, leaving a smaller initial pool of 113 studies. After this initial data collection was completed, the inclusion and exclusion selection process took place. This screening was done in two phases. In the first phase, an initial screen of the title and abstract, the researcher was able to remove 39 irrelevant studies based on quickly identifiable exclusion criteria. These included the exclusion criteria of articles that fell outside the identified date range of 2013 – 2024, articles that had been published as editorial elements in research publications but did not contain primary or evaluative research, and articles where the research population was not faculty in a higher education institution.

Articles that could not be excluded based on title and abstract alone were included in the second, full-text screening phase. Through a closer reading of the research in full-text of the remaining 74 articles, an additional 46 studies were excluded. Reviewing the full-text articles allowed the researcher to ascertain further articles that were to be excluded. At this stage many of the articles excluded were found to lack primary research or explicit evaluative methodologies along with similar criteria from the title and abstract stage that were still included in the initial dataset. Many of the articles that were not included at this stage was due to the fact that the content of the research report did not focus specifically on faculty onboarding. A number of papers focused on areas such as the socialization of faculty as a whole or faculty development. Both are related concepts, however distinct from faculty onboarding and not the thrust of this integrative literature review. At the conclusion of the data evaluation step of this integrative

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[3] For a complete description, refer back to the `How the literature was found´ section of this chapter and Appendix A.

[4] With the inclusion of the 28 articles discovered through Elicit AI added to the 163 discovered through the use of databases, the initial n = 191.

literature review, there were 28 studies included in the final dataset. Appendix B contains the PRISMA diagram, created by Covidence.org, outlining the screening and inclusion/exclusion process[5].

Step Four: Data Analysis

Returning to Cooper's (1998) guidance, the final dataset of 28 articles were analyzed. There is no specific data analysis process required for an integrative review however most researchers use elements of constant comparison, content analysis, or thematic analysis (Toronto, 2020). As Torraco (2005) suggests, Appendix C includes the complete list of articles that were included in this review to support the data analysis work and also as reference for the reader. Data analysis is this step of the integrative literature review leads to the conclusions of the review captured in step 5. To increase the quality of the data analysis through clarification of the processes taken by the researcher, an a priori analysis plan is included (Whittemore, 2005). Whittmore (2005) suggests four steps:

Step One. Complete list of articles used in the data analysis

Step Two. A matrix of initial codes created prior to data analysis

Step Three. A matrix of emergent themes

Step Four. Research question findings

Step One is Appendix C and Step Four is addressed in Chapter Four. Steps Two and Three are described below.

A Matrix of Initial Codes Created Prior to Data Analysis

An iterative process is a distinction of the integrative literature review (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). Cooper (1998) suggests using a data analysis process including initial codes.

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[5] The data collected with Elicit AI is included as a database within this automated PRISMA chart. The specifics regarding Elicit AI large language model findings, as this was a novel step in an integrative literature review data collection and evaluation process it is outlined in full in *the dataset* sub-section of Chapter 3.

These initial codes gather each article's basic information to maintain clarity for the final research report and key terms from the research questions (Toronto & Remington, 2020). If the process becomes overly taxing, there is the danger that elements will be missed in an overly detailed matrix or missed due to an overly simplistic matrix. The correct balance is required to increase validity of the study (Russell, 2005). This process is unique to the integrative literature review process as it is more iterative than a systematic literature review and more critical than simply a narrative literature review (Toronto & Remington, 2020). Following Climek et al. (2022) who used a matrix to begin study of workplace turnover, this research used a matrix to isolate separate elements of each article, also referred to as the initial codes. Using the three research questions as a guide, each element of the matrix was chosen by the researcher to help tease out findings from the data in a manageable and time-effective way. Table 2 contains these initial codes.

Table 2

Matrix Elements – Initial Codes

Article Title

Author(s)

Year of Publication

Journal

Country of Research

Participants

Research Method or Evaluation Method

Purpose of the Article

Length of onboarding intervention

Research Instrument(s) Used

Modality of practices

Models and/or Theoretical Frameworks referred to

Terms and definitions, inferred and stated, regarding faculty onboarding

Faculty onboarding elements present and use cases

Stated Outcomes

A Matrix of Emergent Themes

Once the initial code matrix was completed, the researcher began to collect items into a matrix of emergent themes. When conducting inductive research, such as the integrative literature review, it is important for the researcher to be open to themes emerging from the research that were unexpected (Powers, 2004). This is the power of an integrative literature review. A way to organize and synthesis these newly realized themes is to create an emergent themes matrix. In the case of this research, the emergent theme matrix was a sub-matrix of the initial theme matrix. This inclusion of the emergent themes within the matrix as a whole assisted with the visualization of how the emergent themes fit with the initial codes. It also assisted in the extraction of appropriate examples for the research report. Reporting the emergent themes in a matrix is an element of Whittmore's (2005) suggestions for an integrative literature review. Table 3 lists the emergent themes discovered in this research.

Table 3

Matrix Elements - Emergent Themes

Participant Appreciation

Mentoring

Interplay between HEI HR/Faculty Affairs/specific department

Compensation

Hybridization

Retention

Program Lengthening

Program Strengthening

Role of Continuous Improvement

These themes are addressed in the responses to the research questions in Chapter 4. The research question findings, the fourth and final step suggested by Whittmore (2005) for data analysis in an integrative literature review can be found in the subsequent chapter, Chapter 4.

Step Five: Presentation of Results

The final step in an integrative literature review, according to Cooper (1998), is to present the results in a manner that is accessible. Results for an integrative literature review can be presented in a number of different ways. Those that are focused on future research theory development are often research plans whereas the reviews that are more practice-focused in nature, as is this research, the results are presented in the form of guidance for onboarding professionals. Results were presented in the following chapter with each research question addressed separately. This was followed by the draft of a guidance document, based on the research findings, designed for use by onboarding professionals to support their work.

Considering Rigor

"In order for a review to be considered rigorous, a comprehensive method needs to be followed and reported" (Toronto & Remington, 2020, p. 1). Being as explicit as possible at this stage in the process improves rigor, reduces bias, and improves the overall quality of the study at hand (Cooper, 1988; Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). Using the research questions and purpose as a guide, first the search terms and then the inclusion and exclusion criteria are described in this methodology section. This is followed by a description of the systematic search strategy process that was conducted. By expressly stating in the integrative literature review what actions were

taken by the researcher to collect the initial data and the process by which the collected data was filtered, limits the bias and increases the rigor and validity of the study. Another element of increasing rigor is through paying special attention to possible threats to validity to the study. The following sections outline possible areas of threat and the researcher's action to overcome them.

Threats to Validity

During the initial search for research surrounding faculty onboarding, editorials and theoretical papers consistently lamented on the need for further empirical research to be done (Baker & DiPiro, 2019; Byford et al., 2017; Craft, 2021; Zamora et al., 2022). For that reason, this integrated review focused solely on articles that included primary research and evaluation research with a stated methodology. This review will be an additional empirical data source for researchers to come. The limitation to primary research for this integrative literature review removes anecdotal evidence from the dataset from the beginning, which strengthens the findings in this work.

Overly Generalized

Studies for this integrative literature review hail from a number of different publications, from a number of different types of institutions, and involve a variety of different types of faculty members. However, the majority of the studies are specific in their scope from working solely with radiologists (Zamora et al., 2022) or liberal arts faculty at a religious institution (Crow & Sellnow-Richmond, 2023). It is possible to inappropriately overgeneralize from specific examples. To offset this concern, the researcher was conscientious in generalizing themes from research across the HEI spectrum.

Reflexivity

A strength of the integrative literature review is its ability to be iterative. This strength also requires the researcher to acknowledge their own iterative journey to and through this research. Reflexivity in research is the critical practice of both clearing acknowledging the

researcher's own assumptions and bias as well as expressly indicating how "personal reactions shape our research focus, approach, and interpretation" (Markham & Baym, 2009, p. 185). With this in mind, the researcher offers up the following reflexivity statement.

The researcher has been completing this dissertation on a part-time basis. Her full-time role was that of an academic administrator at a small distance program going through large shifts in the faculty body as well as a teaching modality transition. This necessitated extensive faculty development. Through her professional experiences with the challenge of instituting faculty onboarding, it became evident that faculty onboarding was an area that required more investigation in order to best support incoming new faculty in a way that allows them to be the most productive. As a PhD candidate in the instructional design and technology program, the researcher brings to this research a strong foundation of knowledge regarding best practices from that field that is sometimes overlooked in the implementation of faculty onboarding programs. This clear bias of the researcher, stated here, clarifies her stance and will also allow her to bring to this research a fresh prospective which will be advantageous to the results of this integrative literature review.

Chapter 4

This chapter presents the responses to the three research questions posed as the impetus for this integrative literature review. By design, this integrative literature review took a narrow definition of research literature including and analyzing only articles that used primary research or an explicit evaluation methodology to research a faculty onboarding practice or practices. The rationale for this choice, as stated in the introduction, was to allow the research findings to be strengthened by being gleaned from primary research without the inclusion of editorial and anecdotal evidence that often lacks rigor. All in all, 28 articles make up the dataset for this integrative literature review. Appendix C shows all the studies that were included in the review. Chapter Four responds to each research question individually. The outcomes of these results are discussed further and recommendations are made in Chapter Five.

How is faculty onboarding and related terms defined in the research literature?

(RQ1)

As stated in the introduction, the terms – socialization, orientation, induction, and organizational socialization – were all used as synonyms for the term onboarding within the initial literature review. This research question was posed to discover what was available in the literature with regard to definitions of onboarding, as having a better grasp of a shared definition of onboarding helps with the development of guidance for faculty onboarding practices. Merrill (2001) reminds us that "the use of an agreed vocabulary assists in the development of more efficient instructional design tools" (p. 292).

Definitions of Onboarding

The use of the term onboarding is a more recent addition to the faculty initial integration lexicon. In the dataset, onboarding is not mentioned in articles that predate 2019. Onboarding is not as readily a used term as that of orientation in publications on the initial integration of new faculty. Less than 60% of the articles in the final dataset for this integrative literature review even contain, much less define the term, onboarding. This is a limiting factor for the research, as

it was hoped this work would help clarify onboarding. With few examples there is limited outcomes that can be drawn. Many of the definitions consider onboarding to be a process or a program with the stated goal of imparting knowledge and/or creating social ties for the new faculty. As a whole, these descriptive statements defining onboarding lack the depth required to be considered a satisfactory definition. Table 4 contains the quotation and the citation for each definition of onboarding found in the dataset.

Table 4

Definitions of Onboarding

Definition	Citation
Onboarding is a vital process that can impact a new hire's overall experience at an organization… within the broader context, onboarding is the socialization of newcomers to the organization…Watkins (2016) defines onboarding as the process of introducing new hires to their new job, assimilating that employee with the mission, vision, values, goals, rules, procedures, and policies, and socializing the employee into the new organizational culture.	Crow & Sellnow-Richmond, 2023, p. 69 & 70
The process of imparting this person-centered knowledge to new physician members of a department can be broadly defined as onboarding	Cuaron et al., 2020, p. e395
Onboarding is a process that allows faculty to acquire the knowledge, skills, and cultural awareness to become influential members of an organization	Masaracchia et al., 2024, p. 1
A successful onboarding experience provides opportunities to better acclimate to a new environment, perform key job tasks more quickly, learn about the organization's mission and values, learn how to access resources, and determine how he or she may contribute to institutional growth and success… Onboarding of new faculty members has been referred to as "a critical strategic event…that involves a significant investment of time, attention, effort, and money. (From Ross et al, 2014)…The new onboarding tool	Baker & DiPiro, 2019, p. 1233-1235

consisted of a list of tasks to be completed by the employee, along with a list of correlating resources (ie, website and policy links) and contact information for administrative personnel

Faculty onboarding involves integrating and engaging individuals diverse in experience level and departmental role, and "socializing" them with their colleagues, departmental culture, and practices" … onboarding is commonly considered to span the first year of new employment and involves regular check-ins and support in progressing along personalized development pathways	Azour & McGuinness, 2023, p. 2350-2351
A structured orientation program to provide a roadmap to navigate the world of academia. These onboarding programs should be woven into faculty development plans to engage new educators. The roadmap should include orientation, faculty development, and formal mentoring that addresses the key faculty roles of teaching, scholarship, and service within the academic milieu.	Rogers et al., 2020, p. 345
Onboarding orientation	Groth et al., 2023, p. 212

Definitions of Orientation

Orientation is the most common of the keywords found in the dataset. Orientation was found in all but five of the articles in this final dataset. Additionally, orientation was found in the earliest articles, published in 2013, and the most recent, published in 2024. In line with the definitions of onboarding, orientation is seen as a process or a program with the stated goal of imparting knowledge and/or creating social ties for the new faculty. Unique to orientation, there is a stronger lean towards the program or process being highly structured with delineated completion tasks. This lean is not universal among the definitions with the opposite also being described. This integrative literature review contains definitions of both orientation and

onboarding terms that contradict the previous statements; onboarding described as task-centered (Rogers et al., 2020) and orientation seen as a generalized initial integration (Ross et al., 2022). Table 5 contains the quotation and the citation for each definition of orientation found in the dataset.

Table 5

Definitions of Orientation

Definition	Citation
Formal orientation [is] an organized, planned, and structured session or meeting to provide information and begin socialization for new adjunct clinical faculty	Sousa & Resha, 2019, p. 224
Didactic information about institutional policies and benefits, instruction about where to find various clinic and personal spaces, and printed or electronic material about software programs and applications	Cuaron et al., 2020, p. e395
Formal orientation endeavors to accelerate the acquisition of departmental and institutional knowledge, which helps faculty acclimate to organizational culture…Orientation is only an initial action in a longer onboarding and organizational socialization strategy, transitioning "incomers" to "insiders"	Azour & McGuinness, 2023, p. 2351
Clinical faculty orientation is a broad term used to describe any onboarding program designed to help [clinical instructors] transition to the academic setting	Ross et al., 2024, p.279
New faculty orientation (NFO) for onboarding faculty members is replete with critical information and resources	Siddiqui et al., 2019, p.1
Orientation to promote competence and successful transition from expert nurse to novice [clinical instructor]	Ross et al., 2022, p. 24

| Novice clinical faculty members must be supported in their transition from expert bedside clinician to novice clinical educator through robust orientation programs. | Ross & Dunker, 2019, p. 210 |

Definitions of Induction

A total of three articles in the final dataset used the term induction. Induction was used by itself without the terms orientation or onboarding present in the research report. The definitions of induction align with the general thrust of the descriptions of onboarding and orientation: a process or a program with the stated goal of imparting knowledge and/or creating social ties for the new faculty. This lack of overlap in terminology between induction and onboarding and orientation was unique to the term induction. With both orientation and onboarding, the terms were often found within the same research report;with induction this was not the case. It is critical that further literature research regarding onboarding include the term induction as there is valuable data to be gleaned from studies that use this alterative term. Table 6 contains the quotation and the citation for each definition of induction found in the dataset.

Table 6

Definitions of Induction

Definition	Citation
Induction is the supportive introductory stage for new employees to settle quickly into their job and soon become active and efficient workers (Foot and Hook 2011)….induction refers to a highly structured formal program for [early career faculty] (Wong, Britton, and Ganser 2005) and can be defined as exposure to something unknown… (Mish 1986)	Mishra et al., 2022, p. 137
Induction program - provide comprehensive developmental support to beginning education professors in their first three years of full-time work at an institution of higher education. (p.384) "The Induction System includes three components: (1) a day-long symposium designed to provide	Selke et al., 2021, p. 373

information and experiences to assist beginning education professors with key areas of the professorial induction process, (2) professional association mentoring in which ISNP participants are matched with experienced ATE members in the same or a similar field, and (3) asynchronous online preparation and ongoing support for ISNP mentors." (p.373)

Lack of definitions for socialization in dataset

Although organizational socialization and socialization were used in the keyword search, the presence of articles that used these terms as synonyms for onboarding was limited. Using the stated inclusion criteria, that of including only articles that focused on onboarding or an element of onboarding specifically, led to very few articles being left in the final dataset that used these terms. The only description of socialization could be found in Wicks et al.'s work (2020) where they use the phrase "faculty socialization or onboarding" (p.544).

Conclusions from RQ1

What can be concluded from this study of definitions within the dataset for this integrative literature review is that a clear definition is still elusive within current research. Instead, research tends to focus on various aspects of the challenge of faculty onboarding and gloss over the need for definitional terms. Some use a related term, a synonym, as a generalization of what is being studied. Some researchers use the opposite tack and attempt to define by describing the content or elements of the faculty onboarding practices, including content, timing, and persons involved. Some refer to faculty onboarding as a program, process, or tool and others refer to it by the outcomes said activity was designed to elicit. Still others, in an attempt to clarify a concept with no clear definition, use a combination of the above tactics. Unfortunately, each of these approaches creates room for interpretation by the reader and onboarding professionals, and not the clarity a stated definition would bring.

Crow and Sellnow-Richmond (2023) were mindful of the need for definitions. Their work included a number of definitions of terms including an acknowledgement that, "Without

defined processes in place, both new hires and key stakeholders will have difficulty during the onboarding process…The institution must define what onboarding looks like and determine which offices are responsible for implementation" (p.82). A lack of a clear definition is an issue in the faculty onboarding literature. Further trends and issues are discussed in the response to Research Question 2.

What are the trends and issues found in the faculty onboarding research literature? (RQ2)

The following response to RQ2 discusses trends in the literature which include the research methodologies and research tools used, a discussion regarding the recent increase in faculty onboarding research literature, the pervasiveness of that research, as well as a positive trend in the stated acceptance of the value of faculty onboarding, including its role in retaining faculty. The response to RQ2 continues with a discussion of the issues in the research, namely a lack of consistent use of specific learning theories, a lack of reports focused on global faculty, and a perceived lack of faculty onboarding programs by participants in the faculty onboarding research.

Trends with Regard to Research Methodology

Researchers chose to address faculty onboarding research using both quantitative and qualitative tools. The most common approach was to design and execute a study that included both quantitative and qualitative elements. Table 7 displays how the articles in the dataset were spread across these two research methodologies. There was an even mix of qualitative and quantitative research within the dataset with regard to faculty onboarding practices.

Table 7

Research Methodologies

Research Methodology (n=28)	Exclusively	Predominately
Quantitative	0	15

There were no exclusively quantitative studies and Swaim (2017), Laari (2022), and Crow and Sellnow-Richmond (2023), were the only three exclusively qualitative studies. Swaim conducted a multi-case study. Swaim and Crow and Sellnow-Richmond utilized semi-structured interviews as their sole qualitative research instrument. In conclusion, this dataset shows a trend in the research towards the inclusion of both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools which leads to a more rounded understanding of a phenomenon such as faculty onboarding

Trends with Regard to Research Instruments

Trends in the research methodologies leads to a discussion of the research instruments used in those studies. The research instruments used ranged in type and were often used in conjunction with other tools. The following describes first the evaluative research instruments in more detail, followed by a description of each of the instruments, survey, semi-structured interview, and pre-test post-test, used in the primary research articles.

Evaluative Research Instrument Trends

Evaluative research was included in this integrative literature review as evaluative research methodologies have similar goals to those of this integrative literature review; shedding light on research-based faculty onboarding practices. The final dataset only included four evaluative articles out of the 28 total. Three of the articles used literature review (Dahlke et al., 2021; Rogers et al., 2020; Ross & Dunker, 2019) and the fourth performed a descriptive analysis of institutional website information (Miller, 2021).

Primary Research Instrument Trends

The majority- 86% of the articles in the final dataset - contained primary research results. They used surveys, semi-structured interviews, and pre-test post-tests as research instruments, with a variety of tools being used in isolation and together with other research tools. Figure 1 displays each type of research instrument that was used in the primary research

graphing which tools and how often were used in isolation, which in conjunction and how often with other instruments. The following sections speak to each of these tools individually including how they were utilized in the dataset for this integrative literature review.

Figure 1

Research Instruments Type and Use Cases – Primary Research Only (n = 24)
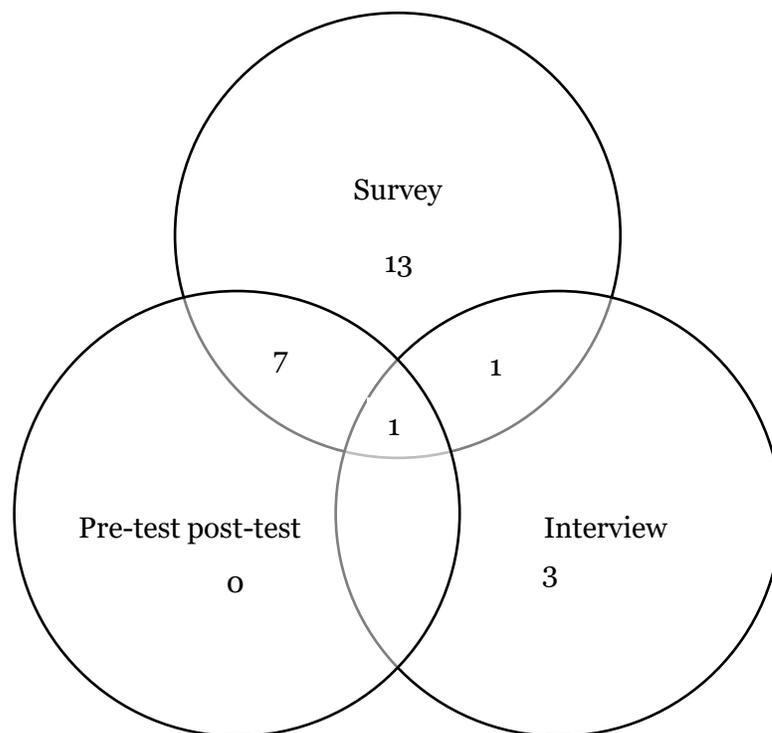
Survey Research Instrument. Surveys are a popular data collection tool and the most common research collection tool in this dataset. A survey is simply a questionnaire completed by the participants of the research study. Likert scales, open-ended question types, and free text options were commonplace in this dataset. Surveys are used to collect both qualitative and/or quantitative data, which was the case for many of the articles in this dataset. When appropriate, using a previously created survey gives validity to the subsequent studies findings and lends credence to the survey tool which was the case for three studies in this dataset. Groth et al. (2023) took advantage of the Nursing Faculty Satisfaction Survey to

perform a pre-test post-test regarding the onboarding quality improvement project they investigated. Cox et al. (2021) used a 40-item survey of the characteristics of orientation programs "developed based on Morin and colleagues' surveys" (p.273) and Sousa and Resha (2019) who took advantage of the *Needs Assessment Survey for Topic Inclusion in a Guide to Orientation* instrument initially created in 2002 by Seal-Whitlock in their own research on the same topic. The main drawback of using a previously created survey instrument is that the aim of the original survey does not align exactly with the novel research agenda. That is why, in each of these cases, the researchers added in author-created items to gain a more complete picture in their research. With regard to the remaining survey use cases, they were all created by the research team for the research that was undertaken in the reported study. As mentioned in the introduction, there are negligible standardized research instruments with regard to faculty onboarding. Therefore, it is understandable that the majority of the surveys used would be created by the researchers to gather information regarding elements of faculty onboarding practice.

Semi-structured Interview Research Instrument. Semi-structured interviews are those conducted between the researcher and the participants where the interview style contains a general thrust, but the conversation is only semi-structured with, at most, a few standardized questions. All of studies that utilized semi-structured interviews produced qualitative results. In some research, semi-structured interviews were used exclusively as was the case with Laari's work with recent nurse educators in Ghana (2022) as well as Crow and Sellnow-Richmond's research describing the personal experiences with onboarding of faculty in their institution (2023). Semi-structured interviews were used in conjunction with surveys by Farakish et al. (2022) to investigate a newly created faculty onboarding program. The solitary case study in the dataset contained, "participant [semi-structured] interviews, participant journals, and researcher observations of participant teaching" (Swaim, 2017, p. 2262) all in an effort to help capture the experiences of onboarding faculty.

Pre-test post-test Research Instrument. The pre-test post-test is a practice where a survey or examination is administered to the participants prior to the intervention and also administered after the intervention, with the differences then measured. As shown in Figure 1, the pre-test post-test research instrument was only used in tandem with a survey instrument as elements of the pre-test post-test instrument were imbedded into a larger survey tool. As an experimental research instrument, pre-test post-tests lend themselves to quantitative data collection and the use of statistical analysis. Pre-test post-test interventions were utilized in seven of the articles in the final dataset. Five of the articles presented quantitative data along with the results of the pre-test post-test. Masaracchia et al. (2024) was the only study to achieve a statistical significance finding, but that finding was only in one category of their survey of perceived support for faculty in transition. All in all, the usefulness of pre-test post-test to give statistically significant results was not an asset in this dataset. The quantitative studies referred to their findings as having "demonstrated a significant decrease in anxiety and increase in self-perceived competence" (Ross et al., 2022, p. 28) or having a "median increase in the overall level of comfort" (Young-Brice et al., 2022, p. 349).

Trends with Regard to Quantity and Timeliness of Published Research

Within the date range, limited by the inclusion criteria to the years 2013 through 2024, there was a marked increase in publications at the later part of the range. There was a solitary study from 2013 and the next chronologically was from 2017. The rest of the studies, 26 out of 28, were published between 2019 and 2024. This shows a steep upward trajectory in primary research studies being conducted on the subject of faculty onboarding practices. It also indicates that a larger amount of research is being conducted at the time of this research report with two of the 28 studies being ones that were published in 2024 with the fourth quarter of the year not even considered for this research as it fell outside the date range. There is an expectation that more research into faculty onboarding practices will be published in the near future adding to the research findings useful to the faculty onboarding practioner.

Anecdotally, when conducting the initial literature review, there was a surge of research published on faculty onboarding in 2013 which was one of the rationales for including 2013 as the start of the date range for this integrative literature review. During the inclusion/exclusion process of this integrative literature review, all but one of those articles was excluded from the final dataset. This finding is evidence that the majority of research on faculty onboarding practices that is found in the recent research base did not use primary research as their basis for published results, which is part of the rationale for conducting this particular integrative literature review.

Trends with Regard to the Diaspora of Publications

Research on faculty onboarding practices is being published in a number of different publication arenas. The 28 articles in the final dataset were found in 22 different publications. Table 8 is a list of the publications included in this dataset.

Table 8

List of Journals in the Dataset (n=22)

Academic Radiology
Action in Teacher Education
American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education
Clinical Simulation in Nursing
Community College Journal of Research and Practice
Cureus
Journal of Communication & Religion
Journal of Formative Design in Learning
Journal of Higher Education Theory & Practice
Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning
Journal of Nursing Education
Journal of Oncology Practice
Journal of Practical Studies in Education
Journal of Research Development in Nursing and Midwifery
MedEdPORTAL

Medical Education

Nurse Educator

Nursing Education Perspectives

Teacher Development

Teaching and Learning in Nursing

Teaching and Learning in Nursing

The Qualitative Report

This widespread publication field could be seen as a boon as it allows for those who refer to only certain publications to have as good a chance of coming across useful data with regard to faculty onboarding. Research-led practice is difficult to build upon when it requires data collection across a vast number of fields. Emerging research tools that take advantage of improvements in artificial intelligence, such as large language models, may make this current concern less of a burden, as researchers could use them to search a wide swath of publications just as easily as a narrower one.

Majority in Nursing, Medical and Educator Publications

Almost 70% of the articles in this integrative literature review came from medical or nursing publications. Nursing education is especially well represented in this dataset with almost 50% of the articles coming from nursing education journals and the *Nurse Educator* being the best represented journal with 5 articles in the final dataset. Education journals produced articles for this final dataset. Faculty are educators and so research on this population would be found in education and educator journals. This research continues to show that research into faculty onboarding practices is taking place in higher education institutions of all types and is being published in a variety of peer-reviewed journals.

Trends in Valuing Faculty Onboarding Practices

A salient trend in this dataset is the acknowledgement of the overwhelming benefits of faculty onboarding by participants in the research. Clarification regarding the perceived value of faculty onboarding practices continues to be illuminated through these research findings.

Participants of the programs researched reported gratitude, connection with the institution, and confirmation of time well spent (Baker & DiPiro, 2019; Farakish et al., 2022; Luckenbach & L'Ecuyer, 2023; Wallach et al., 2019; Wicks et al., 2020; Young-Brice et al., 2022). Conversely, faculty who did not receive onboarding practices reported role ambiguity and other negative stressors due to a lack of guidance (Laari, 2022; Crow & Sellnow-Richmond, 2023). Importantly, the findings confirm that the benefits of an onboarding practice outlast the initial integration period and have an ongoing positive influence (Farakish et al., 2022; Groth et al., 2023; Luckenbach & L'Ecuyer, 2023; Mee et al., 2019; Mishra et al., 2022; Rogers et al., 2020; Siddiqui et al., 2019; Young-Brice et al., 2022).

Specifically with Regard to Retention Mitigation

Retention continues to be a concern and a motivating factor in faculty onboarding research. This integrative literature review included examples of researchers looking to limit burn out (Cuaron et al., 2020; Wallach et al., 2019) and other factors that lead to a lack of retention (Luckenbach & L'Ecuyer, 2023; Masaracchia et al., 2024; Rogers et al., 2020; Young-Brice et al., 2022). Azour and McGuinness (2023) felt retention was such a critical element of the research that they placed the term in the title of their research report, *From Great Resignation to Great Retention: Orientation as a First Step in Engaging Faculty Well-being,* and Groth et al. (2023) reported a 100% retention rate of participants within their roles at the conclusion of the research as one of their findings.

Lack of Consistency in Theoretical Frameworks Utilized

The dataset confirmed that research conducted with regard to faculty onboarding practices maintains little consistency regarding theoretical frameworks applied. There are some trends present in the final dataset for this integrative literature review regarding theoretical framework. The most common finding was that the presence of a guiding principle was not stated. Table 9 shows the primary research articles grouped by theoretical framework, or lack thereof.

Table 9

Theoretical Framework/Journal Counts – Primary Research only (n = 24)

Model/Framework/Thrust	Count
None stated	7
Learning Theory – Adult, Cognitive Apprenticeship, Transformational	4
Socialization/Transition/New Faculty Orientation Model/Novice to Expert	6
Organizational Internal Standards	5
Professional Association Standards	2

A reliance on learning and change theories allows for more application in a new program but only ten studies utilized either of those groups of theories. Within those ten, there was little agreement on an appropriate framework within those two large categories of frameworks. The major categories of theoretical frameworks were those that dealt with the process of transition or those that were couched as organizational or professional standards. The research completed without a theorical framework, or utilizing organizational/professional standards make practice generalizability challenging as it is difficult to parse out how to apply the findings to a novel environment.

Lack of Global Faculty Onboarding Research

There are approximately 1900 universities across the globe (*World University Rankings 2024*, 2023) and each of them have or will take part in faculty onboarding practices of some type. Disappointingly, only two articles within the final dataset had non-US researchers and participants. The findings of these two studies fell on the outer edges of faculty onboarding experiences. Laari (2021) found no faculty onboarding in his study of Ghanian nursing faculty

whereas Mishra et al. (2022) wrote at length regarding the outcomes of the federally mandated faculty onboarding practices of new education faculty in India. The hope was that this integrative literature review would be able to add to a globally informed guidance for faculty onboarding professionals, but with only two non-US studies considered the global relevance is limited.

Lack of Faculty Onboarding Programs

What complicates the study of faculty onboarding practices is the real or perceived lack of faculty onboarding practices in institutions of higher education writ large. Within the 28 studies in the integrative literature review, multiple articles bemoan a lack of faculty onboarding in general as reported by their participants. Laari (2022) and Crow and Sellnow-Richmond (2023) both reported that none of their interview participants (n=12) acknowledged experiencing a faculty onboarding program. Two larger studies, both of clinical nursing programs, both with over 100 participants, found that approximately 70% of participants reported a lack of faculty onboarding (Hansbrough et al., 2023; Ross et al., 2024). The four evaluative reviews of faculty onboarding practices included in this integrative literature review all found a scarcity of onboarding practices in the various areas they were specifically evaluating (Dahlke et al., 2021; Miller, 2021; Rogers et al., 2020; Ross & Dunker, 2019) with one finding 70% of respondents stating that they received no onboarding at all (Ross et al., 2024).

Bringing in new faculty to institutions of higher education is taking place with CUPA-HR[6] stating increases in faculty employment for 2022 and 2023 (*Higher Ed Workforce Trends*, n.d.). This stated lack of faculty onboarding could be due to the confusion regarding terminology and what the researchers and participants expect faculty onboarding practices to include. In a review of new faculty orientation in medical schools across the US and Canada the survey respondents confirmed that 70% of programs had some sort of orientation program but the

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[6] College and University Professional Association for Human Resources

research concluded that there "was little evidence of 'best practice'" (Chauvin et al., 2013, p.185). This example highlights the disconnect between what is offered by the intuition and the perceptions of the faculty themselves. It also underscores the concerns from RQ1 regarding the outcomes from a lack of clear definitions of terms in this space.

Conclusions from RQ2

Although not an overwhelming number of recent studies exist, those that have been completed have done so by using a multitude of different research methodologies and tools. The case use of each tool brings a more complete answer to the question of researching this subject, as well as more complex questions of learning and change. The majority of studies take advantage of a combination of qualitative and quantitative tools to create more rounded conclusions. Researchers and onboarding professionals can use these findings as reference when considering their own future forays into faculty onboarding practices. Trends are positive with regard to the amount of primary research being done and that research is being completed in a variety of fields, which is to be expected as faculty onboarding practices are an element of all academic areas. There are some limitations for the onboarding professional with regard to taking advantage of this research; the lack of a consistent framework makes replication of outcomes more of a challenge, there are still very few faculty onboarding programs being studied, and a lack of global examples limits worldwide applicability. However, it is possible to stand on the finding that participants of this research agree that practices that support the initial integration of faculty have considerable value.

What are the important design and development considerations of faculty? (RQ3)

Design and development considerations from the literature with regard to faculty onboarding programs were seen at a number of different levels. With regard to a starting point, there are a number of learning thrusts and theories to consider with regard to faculty onboarding practices. The research literature also contained guidance regarding specific faculty onboarding practices including who could be involved with the design and development, the

inclusion of mentoring, the use of compensation, as well as indications on strengths regarding length and modality of a program. A further consideration came in the form of an expectation of continuous improvement within the design and development. This response to RQ3 includes a note regarding the absence of any substantial effect of the COVID pandemic in the literature. The following takes each of these considerations and expands upon them.

Learning theories Support Faculty Onboarding Practice Development

Although a lack of the use of frameworks or theories is an issue addressed within this integrative literature review, some examples of learning theories at work were present in the literature. Cognitive apprenticeship theory (Collins, 2005), Kolb's experiential learning theory (1984), and "theories of transformative learning...reflective practice...and pedagogical content knowledge" (Farakish et al.,2022, p.115) are all learning theories that came through from the research literature. These are useful to highlight as utilizing learning theories in the design and development of any instructional design supports research-based decisions, while utilizing learning theories frames the practices in a way that allows for their use as a guide for further design and development of faculty onboarding.

Interplay with Faculty Development and Department needs

A further consideration guided by the research literature is to consider how to involve various members of the higher education institutional team to be a part of the faculty onboarding practices. In this way both the institutional faculty development goals and the needs of the particular work group or department will be addressed. It is this particular tension that requires a team effort (Azour & McGuinness, 2023). Chavin et al. (2013) reviewed medical school onboarding programs and found that over 70% of onboarding programs were organized by a higher education institution administrative body, namely, the faculty development staff or the Office of Faculty Affairs. However, the majority of articles in this dataset were conducted by academic faculty with very little representation of faculty development professional among the authors.

For research-based design decisions to be implemented it is critical to include both key administrative bodies and key faculty. Chauvin et al. champion this approach when in 2013 they called for "movement toward a multilayered (e.g., department, school) distributed model of multiple sessions over time" (Chauvin et al., 2013, p.189). An example of this is the move toward mentoring as a central pillar of faculty onboarding that is addressed more fully in the RQ3 response. The other movement that has been easing the burden of this more complex consideration of faculty onboarding is the use of hybridization of the program itself, a practice common within the research literature.

Hybridization

The mechanism in which a practice is operationalized can be characterized as its modality. A common element of modality is to note if the practice took place in-person or online or contained an element of both, which is referred to as a hybrid approach. Table 10 contains the spread of approaches with a hybrid program of some ilk being the most common.

Table 10

Stated or Inferred Modality

Modality	Count
Hybrid	14
In-Person	6
Online	1
Unknown	7

What elements of the practices that used which particular modality was not uniformly collected in the dataset, but the insistence on the benefits of a hybrid program was present. When Miller performed his evaluation of faculty onboarding programs in 2021, "nearly a fifth of the programs included an on-line component" (p.7) or would have been considered hybrid as it

is assumed the balance of the program was completed in person. This integrative literature review has reported hybrid faculty onboarding practices at 50%, much higher than Miller's findings. It might seem that the hybrid practices were a response to the COVID pandemic, which was in play during the period of research contained in this integrative literature review and was therefore a temporary change. This is not the case as described in a section below, (see: *COVID is not a factor in research*)..

Ideally, when delving into hybrid practices, there is some clarity on what the elements are included. In the case of a hybrid practice, these articles mentioned a combination of elements that were in-person and online, but a detailed description was not made available for most of the examples. Some mentioned an in-person orientation and then an online resource site (Masaracchia et al., 2024; Crew et al., 2023; Farakish et al., 2022; Mee et al., 2019). Some mentioned the in-person portion with email support (Groth et al., 2023), or "online self-directed work" (Hansbrough et al., 2023, p.194). Ross et al. (2024) and Chauvin et al. (2013) both mentioned that multiple modalities such as print, digital, web, oral, synchronous, asynchronous, didactic, and roleplay were present in the evaluation of clinical faculty onboarding programs they researched.

This large variation with regard to the operationalization of hybrid programs signals that faculty onboarding programs do not need to be limited by modality and can instead first focus on the fundamentals of learning design basics and team composition, utilizing the modality that works best to achieve those needs:

> We share this work in hopes of being able to demonstrate a new faculty onboarding framework that leverages both asynchronous learning in conjunction with in-person gathering for the purpose of creating a model pedagogy that emphasizes the importance of belonging". (Crew et al., 2023, p.244)

Continuous Improvement as a Consideration

Evidence of the tenant of continuous improvement can be found in the large number of articles. Mainly those that are studying practices that utilized previous offerings as the frameworks or guides for the novel elements (Baker & DiPiro, 2019; Crew et al., 2023; Cuaron et al., 2020; Masaracchia et al., 2024; Mee et al., 2019; Siddiqui et al., 2019). This shows a commitment to a re-examining of practices and the outcomes of those practices with the goal of improvement. The most recent article in this dataset, Masaracchia et al. (2024) suggests introducing "a process to continually improve onboarding processes with the intent to affect faculty satisfaction and to impact culture, retention, early efficiency in clinical areas, and longer-term effectiveness in all academic missions" (p.11). Continuous improvement could be brought forward as a consideration in design and development by those in faculty onboarding roles with iteration being supported by research.

Mentoring as a Key Element

Mentoring is a related concept within faculty onboarding practices. It was found to be present in faculty onboarding practices in the initial literature review and continued to saturate this dataset. Within the data, mentoring is seen as a key element of faculty onboarding (Dahlke et al., 2021; Groth et al., 2023; Selke et al., 2021; Young-Brice et al., 2022). Mentoring was a major theme that came out of Selke et al.'s (2021) work. It was the primary subject of the evaluative research on faculty onboarding performed by Dahlke et al. (2021). Mentoring was an added element in the quality improvement project researched by Groth et al. (2023) and part of the the Teaching Excellence Program (TAP) Young-Brice et al. wrote their 2021 work on. Those who studied faculty onboarding practice change found that adding mentorship as a faculty onboarding practice bolstered the program including improvements to participants positivity surrounding their onboarding experience (Baker & DiPiro, 2019). Some of the suggestions regarding implementation of faculty onboarding practice is to focus on intentional and well-structured mentorship (Dahlke et al. 2021; Cuaron et al., 2020; Ross & Dunker, 2019; Sousa &

Resha, 2019). Crew et al. (2023) suggest "assigning experienced faculty mentors" (p. 244) in the role of mentor as adequate support is a requirement of this key element of faculty onboarding practice. Mentorship is considered critical by many with Ross et al. (2024) going as far as to state that, "mentorship is a critical determinant of whether novice clinical instructors are prepared for their clinical education roles" (p.281). Cuaron et al. (2020) echo this sentiment stating that mentorship is "the most important element in the post-intervention assessment by new physicians. (Cuaron et al., 2020). All of the articles referenced in this section were published in the last five years, showing the growing importance mentoring is having in the research.

Additional Compensation

Compensation structures were discussed in three of the articles in this dataset. All three had been published in the last two years. Two were found in *Nurse Educator* and one in an education journal, *Journal of Higher Education Theory & Practice*. which lends credence to compensation elements being a newer trend in faculty onboarding practices. Ross et al. (2024) conducted a descriptive review of 113 clinical nursing faculty onboarding programs and found that there were a number of different compensation arrangements accounted for in the programs studied reflecting that, "more than half of the participants were paid for attending clinical orientation [and] 7 had orientation counted as part of their teaching time" (p. 280). Hansbrough et al.'s study of a similar population (2023) found that respondents mentioned that they were given additional compensation for onboarding in other elements of their nursing roles but not with regard to becoming faculty. Crew et al. (2023) wrote of a stipend, "equivalent to three credits" (p.242) given to new faculty acknowledging the additional duties that new faculty were expected to take on which included preparing their new courses, attending the faculty orientation events and completing the "training and onboarding activities in an asynchronous new faculty onboarding Canvas [course]" (p. 242). A trend not found in the initial literature review, additional compensation for participation in faculty onboarding is a developing practice

in this integrative literature review and worth consideration in the continuous improvement of faculty onboarding practices within higher education institutions.

COVID is not a Factor in Research

The COVID pandemic took place within the timeframe of this integrative literature review's dataset. Reference is made to the pandemic in a few of the articles but there is no indication that decisions made within the faculty onboarding practices researched were direct responses to this global phenomenon. References to the pandemic were found in articles published after 2022. Some mentioned how COVID restrictions affected the onboarding practices themselves by temporary transitions to virtual meetings (Azour & McGuiness, 2023; Young-Brice et al., 2022). Others found the pandemic a research outcome limitation (Ross et al, 2022; Luckenbach & L'Ecuyer, 2023; Ross et al, 2024). Masaracchia et al. (2024) mentioned changing employment trends, which they attribute to the pandemic, as the impetus for their study. There were a number of comments regarding the effects of this world-shaping event within the faculty onboarding literature, but it was not credited for decisions made in the faculty onboarding research itself. This integrative literature review data did not contain evidence that COVID was a consideration in faculty onboarding research in research published prior to September 2024.

Conclusions from RQ3

Design and development considerations are critical to the work of onboarding professionals. The data from this integrative literature review contains a number of guides for those struggling to find a research-based path for faculty onboarding practices. The considerations range from the utilization of learning theories, the need to include both the institutional leadership and the department-level personnel, the opportunity to consider including mentoring and additional compensation within a program that could span a longer time horizon taking advantage of appropriate asynchronous support.

CHAPTER 5

Higher education continues to experience changes small and large. What continues to be constant is the value that faculty members add to their HEI and to the broader academic community of educators across the country and around the world. The empirical research literature surrounding effective faculty onboarding practices is sparse even as the importance of the initial integration of faculty continues to grow in importance. This research was the first integrative review of research findings regarding the practices of faculty onboarding. Conducting research of this ilk falls near the systematic review section on the West and Martin (2024) continuum.

Instructional Design and Technology (IDT) is a practioner field. The systematic integration of new faculty members into higher education institutions represents a critical workplace learning challenge – one that naturally aligns with the expertise of Instructional Design and Technology (IDT) practitioners. IDT professionals routinely design comprehensive workplace learning experiences across various sectors, bringing established frameworks for analyzing learning needs, designing targeted interventions, and measuring learning outcomes. This alignment between IDT expertise and faculty onboarding needs is particularly relevant as higher education institutions seek more effective ways to integrate new faculty members. This research further strengthens this connection by revealing how learning theories, a cornerstone of IDT practice, have proven valuable in successful faculty onboarding programs (Farakish et al., 2022, Ross et al., 2022, Sousa & Resha, 2019, Swaim, 2017).

The under-utilization of learning theories and other principles of instructional design in this current research shows that there is a growing need for onboarding professionals to utilize the tools of instructional design in their work. Overall, the learning environment elements of cognitive apprenticeship (Collins, 2005) could be seen in a number of the productive onboarding programs. This study was an initial comprehensive look at what can be learned

regarding the design and development of faculty onboarding practices from the investigation of recent primary research.

Faculty onboarding professionals are being tasked with creating, maintaining, and reimaging onboarding programs as the landscape of higher education changes. This research confirms other work by IDT professionals that utilizing the principles from our field is vital to creating robust and productive onboarding programs (Rabel & Stefaniak, 2018; Lauby, 2021).

Faculty members will continue to be added to the ranks of employees at HEIs and onboarding professionals will continue to be tasked with supporting the initial integration of these valuable human resources. Ideally those onboarding professionals are able to lean on appropriate research-based guidance to lead the decision making in the area of design and development of programs. This integrative literature review on faculty onboarding practices was a timely glimpse into the current understanding of faculty onboarding practices that support effective initial integration for these valuable members of the workforce of higher education institutions. The conclusion from this research adds to their ability to make research-informed decisions.

It is advisable for onboarding professionals to lean on the principles of instructional design and technology to design their programs as it has been seen in the primary research reviewed in this integrative literature review that when those principles are followed, the outcomes are resilient. This integrative literature review made it possible to glean those major themes and considerations. This update to the evidence surrounding faculty onboarding practices is a robust outcome for this integrative literature review. This particular research report is a tool that can be used by onboarding professionals both as a collection of current evidence and information regarding faculty onboarding and by utilizing the guide found in Appendix D. Chapter 5 of this dissertation concludes this integrative literature review with a restatement of the findings which create Appendix D, and the research limitations experienced in the creation of this integrative literature review.

The Three I's of Initial Integration

It is helpful to summarize the findings from this integrative literature review into an easy to remember mnemonic; the three i's of initial integration. The three i's are involve, interactions, and information, with each foci described in more detail below. These three elements - involve, interactions, and information - align closely with core IDT principles of systematic design, social learning, and instructional strategies. Each focus is described in more detail below, with particular attention to how IDT frameworks enhance their implementation. Appendix D contains the graphic created as a guide for onboarding professionals to utilize in their work.

Involve

The systematic approach to learning design, a cornerstone of IDT practice, emphasizes the importance of stakeholder analysis and involvement (Merrill, 2002). When designing or redesigning a faculty onboarding program it is advisable to involve a team of invested personnel from across the campus. While upper-tier administrators, faculty development teams, and department-level leadership are essential stakeholders, IDT professionals can serve as valuable partners in structuring the learning experience. Their expertise in needs analysis and systematic program design helps ensure that onboarding objectives align with institutional goals. Additionally, when the development team includes these groups, guided by IDT principles, there is less likelihood that critical elements of onboarding will be neglected.

Interaction

IDT's strong foundation in social learning theory (Bandura, 1986) provides a framework for designing meaningful faculty interactions. Much of the work of a faculty member relies on social interactions: those with students, other faculty, and the public. Onboarding programs could also include other opportunities for interaction, both formal and informal, allowing for the acculturation of new faculty members to develop. Through the lens of IDT, these interactions can be intentionally designed to support learning outcomes. Structured mentoring activities, sometimes compensated, represent the application of social learning principles in practice. IDT

frameworks help ensure these interactions are purposeful, scaffolded, and aligned with learning objectives rather than merely social occasions.

Information

Initial integration of faculty includes critical information for the new employee requiring careful attention to how information is presented, sequenced, and reinforced - core competencies of IDT practice. Research supports addressing this need through situated cognition (Brown et. al, 1989), which emphasizes matching learning experiences with authentic work contexts. This IDT principle guides decisions about hybridization: modeling in-person tasks through live demonstrations while delivering asynchronous content through appropriate distance learning methods. Knowledge transfer, a critical element for onboarding programs, benefits from IDT's systematic approach to objective writing (Schunk, 2012) and content sequencing, ensuring information is both accessible and actionable.

Faculty Onboarding Guidance

Appendix D contains the guidance document flyer illustrating the elements that an onboarding professional could keep in mind when planning and executing a faculty onboarding program. Following these principles, undergirded by IDT guidance, will support the outcome wherein participants acknowledge the value of their onboarding experiences; a success seen in the literature.

Limitations to the Research

With any research endeavor there will be limitations to the reach of the research. Some of the reflexivity concerns are mentioned at the end of Chapter 2. At the conclusion of this research, a number of limitations from the dataset itself are brought to light.

Lack of Appropriate Data

Faculty onboarding research is a growing field. The lack of data represented by this small dataset and the continued finding that faculty self-report a lack of faculty onboarding is further proof that the research base needed to make research-based decisions with regard to faculty

onboarding are not using faculty onboarding research, and are possibly using research from other fields or relying on anecdotal evidence. Much of what was cited in the initial literature review as far as research in faculty onboarding in fact originated in sources outside of primary research data. The aim of this integrative literature review was to see what could be found within the tight scope of primary research and evaluative data on the subject of faculty onboarding specifically. With that scope defined, the number of articles, 28, that were subject to analysis in this review was small. This is appropriate for an integrative literature review, however if there had been more articles to include the conclusions could have been richer.

Inclusion Criteria

As noted, the research around faculty onboarding is not captured in clear and concisely bounded criteria. Due to this reality certain limitations were required to stay true to the research questions. The researcher excluded articles that required interpretation by the researcher as to whether or not the article focused on faculty onboarding. This process was subjective, and it is possible that some of the data that was excluded due to seeming to be inappropriate was intended by the researchers to refer to faculty onboarding. It is possible, for instance, that their choice of terminology was imprecise, causing their work to be excluded from this integrative literature review.

Similarity with Orientation and Induction

RQ1 details the outcome in the research regarding a continued lack of definition of onboarding and related terms. RQ1 concludes that the research showed very little critical and consistent differences between the use cases of faculty onboarding, faculty orientation, or faculty induction. Without a clear distinction, the researcher concludes that at this time, utilizing research regarding faculty orientation or faculty induction could be considered equivalent to that regarding faculty onboarding. Furthermore, it is unadvised to rely solely on faculty onboarding research or guidance, as that would lead to the neglect of resources in the body of research that, at this time, is utilizing one of these other terms.

Confusion regarding Pre-test post-test

An additional note regarding pre-test post-test research instrument in this dataset. With regard to its use in medical research, it is expected that the pre-test post-test population will be different individuals as it would be unethical in much of medical research to apply a strict experimental intervention/non-intervention design to the participants. This practice of using different populations for the pre-test and the post-test did take place in three of the studies all of which were published in medical or nursing journals where this practice is commonplace (Baker & DiPiro, 2019; Cuaron et al., 2020; Masaracchia et al., 2024). The remainder of the studies that used the pre-test post-test tool kept to the social science norm of utilizing the same person in both pre and post-test data. This small difference between the use of the pre-test post-test illustrates the difficulty for faculty onboarding research findings to translate across various journal genres as the norms for data collection and reporting can differ greatly between fields even when the subject matter overrides these field specifics. Without the care taken to create bridges between research findings in different fields, it is very possible that critical research findings would be ignored due to the conclusions being written up in an unfamiliar manner or using research tools that are not common across domains.

Future Research

This research was limited by the number of primary studies regarding faculty onboarding practices present in the current literature. Ideally future research would focus on primary research helping to create a more robust basis for further application. This could start with an expert review by onboarding professionals, within design and development research, of this guidance document which would incorporate further expertise into a future document. This could be followed by a series of primary studies incorporating the findings from this research into a faculty onboarding program and investigating the outcomes.

Design-Based Research Opportunities

The guidance document from this study could serve as a foundation for design-based research, a methodology frequently used in IDT to iteratively improve educational interventions. This could begin with an expert review by both onboarding professionals and IDT practitioners, followed by systematic implementation studies that examine how different design elements affect faculty integration outcomes. As performance improvement is a core principle of instructional design (Richey et al. 2010), these studies could track program effectiveness through multiple iterations, documenting how specific design decisions influence faculty success metrics.

Learning Analytics and Program Evaluation

IDT's systematic approach to program evaluation could inform longitudinal studies of faculty onboarding programs. By applying IDT evaluation frameworks, researchers could examine not just whether programs are effective, but which specific design elements contribute most significantly to faculty success. This could include analyzing how different implementation variables affect learning outcomes and faculty integration across various institutional contexts. The research could also look at how different onboarding professionals implement these and other recommendations into their programs and how the various implementation variables affect the outcomes for new faculty at those institutions. These could be purely observational research or incorporate elements of action research or further design and development research as all three methodologies add to the primary research base.

Integration with Broader Faculty Development

Understanding how faculty onboarding fits within comprehensive faculty development efforts presents another rich area for IDT research. IDT professionals regularly design learning ecosystems that support continuous professional development. This expertise could inform research into how onboarding programs can better connect with ongoing faculty development initiatives. Particular attention could be paid to:

- The design of mentoring programs using IDT principles of scaffolded support

- The role of technology-enhanced learning in supporting faculty development

- The application of adult learning theories to faculty development programming

Institutional Context Studies

The diversity of higher education institutions presents an opportunity to study how IDT principles can be adapted for different contexts. Future research could examine how institutional characteristics (size, location, funding arrangements) influence the design requirements for effective onboarding programs. This research could help develop flexible IDT frameworks that can be adapted across different institutional contexts while maintaining core pedagogical effectiveness.

A more in-depth look into how the make-up of the academic administration responsible for faculty development adds or subtracts to faculty retention and productivity, within the larger context of the HEI in general could be an avenue for future research. HEIs of course differ is size, location, funding arrangements, and in a plethora of other ways. Future research into how those institutional differences feed into faculty onboarding practices would also add to the research base on this subject.

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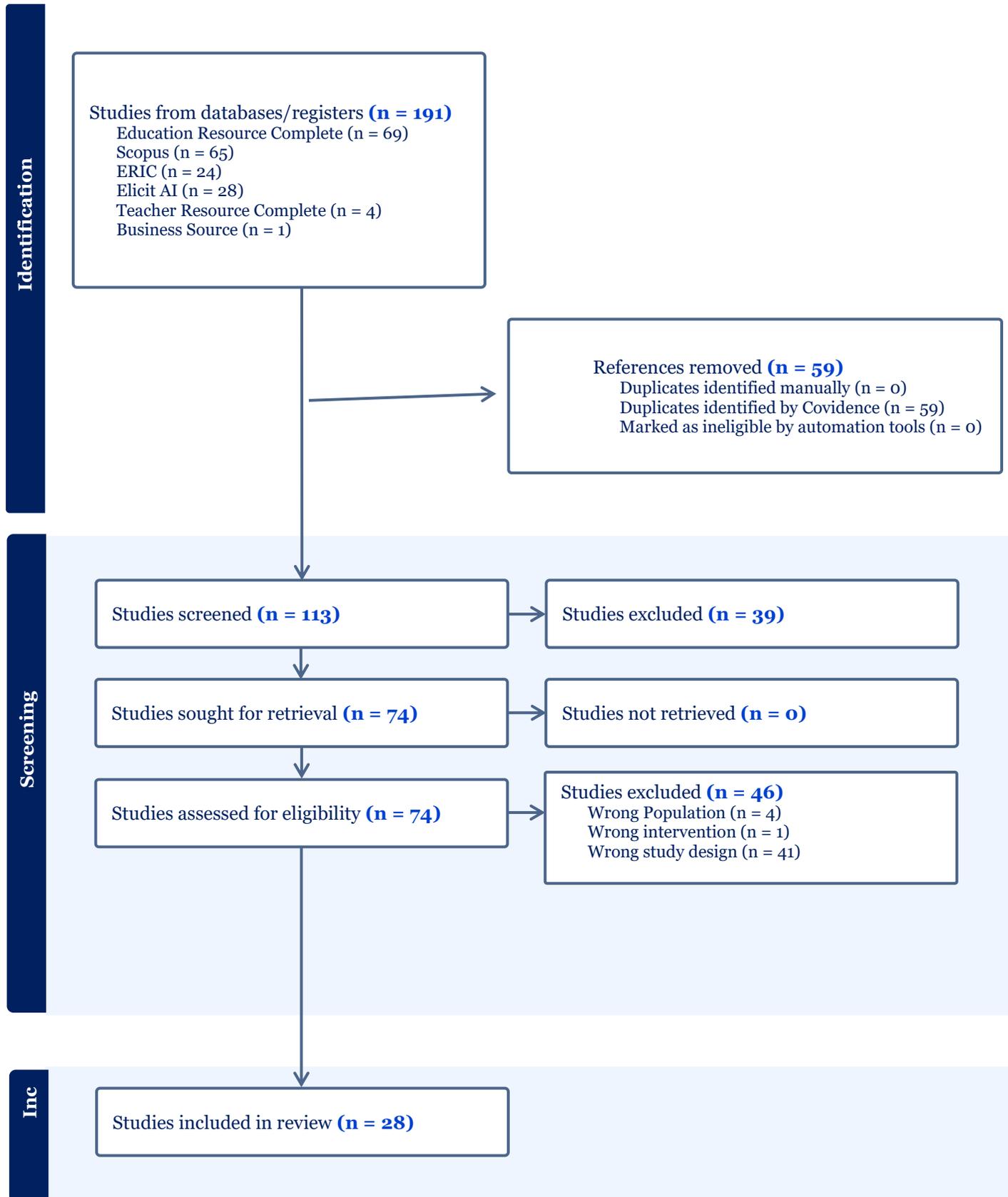
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Appendix A

Search String   "faculty onboarding" OR "instructor* onboarding" OR
"professor* onboarding" OR "college teacher* onboarding" OR
"faculty orientation" OR "instructor* orientation" OR
"professor* orientation" OR "college teacher* orientation" OR
"faculty induction" OR "instructor* induction" OR "professor*
induction" OR "college teacher* induction" OR "faculty
socialization" OR "instructor* socialization" OR "professor*
socialization" OR "college teacher* socialization" OR "faculty
organizational socialization" OR "instructor* organizational
socialization" OR "professor* organizational socialization" OR
"college teacher* organizational socialization"

Appendix B

Studies from databases/registers **(n = 191)**
    Education Resource Complete (n = 69)
    Scopus (n = 65)
    ERIC (n = 24)
    Elicit AI (n = 28)
    Teacher Resource Complete (n = 4)
    Business Source (n = 1)

References removed **(n = 59)**
    Duplicates identified manually (n = 0)
    Duplicates identified by Covidence (n = 59)
    Marked as ineligible by automation tools (n = 0)

Identification

Screening

Studies screened **(n = 113)**

Studies excluded **(n = 39)**

Studies sought for retrieval **(n = 74)**

Studies not retrieved **(n = 0)**

Studies assessed for eligibility **(n = 74)**

Studies excluded **(n = 46)**
    Wrong Population (n = 4)
    Wrong intervention (n = 1)
    Wrong study design (n = 41)

Inc

Studies included in review **(n = 28)**

Appendix C

Table of Articles Used in the Integrative Literature Review

1	Azour, L., & McGuinness, G. (2023). From Great Resignation to Great Retention: Orientation as a First Step in Engaging Faculty Well-being. Academic Radiology, 30(10), Article 10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acra.2023.06.007
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Appendix D

Initial Integration

i Involve
- Include upper-tier administrators, faculty development teams, and department-level leadership
- Emphasize stakeholder analysis and involvement and the use of IDT principles
- Consider including IDT professionals and subject-matter experts

- -

i Interaction
- Focus on social learning theory
- Formal and informal opportunities for interaction: purposeful, scaffolded, and aligned with learning objectives
- Consider a structured mentorship element

- -

i Information
- Pay careful attention to HOW information is presented, sequenced, and reinforced
- Matching learning experiences with authentic work contexts
- Consider online repository with guidance

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3 i's of onboarding

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