Carol's Portrait: The Lasting Effects of Early Career Mentoring

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Abstract

Through portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997), the author creates a word portrait of a veteran teacher's beginning career mentoring experiences. The portrait illuminates long-term effects of the teacher's early career mentoring experiences on her teaching practice as a now veteran teacher. The study concludes that the teacher's early career mentoring experiences helped shape her 25 year teaching career. Three themes emerged from the portrait and may offer insights for current mentors in developing mentoring practices and programs: (a) an invitation to develop a mentoring relationship, (b) supportive mentoring actions, and (c) mentors as models. The study concludes with recommendations for mentoring practices and for teacher education and school district mentoring programs.

Introduction

The first years of a teacher's career are filled with many challenges and are often difficult, so much so that many teachers leave the profession within the first few years (Howard, 2003; Ingersoll, 2002; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Jambor, Patterson & Jones, 1997; Kopkowski, 2008; Stern, 2003). Many researchers have investigated how mentoring helps support beginning teachers and often helps them overcome difficulties in their practice (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, 2003; Huling-Austin, 1990, 1992; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Little, 1990; Moir, 2009; Moir & Gless, 2001; Odell, 1987; Strong, 2005; Wang, Odell, & Schwille, 2008).

Much of the research on mentoring beginning teachers has focused on reducing attrition, the mentoring process, and benefits of mentoring (Cochran-Smith, 2006; Cockburn, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2001, 2003, 2005; Heller, 2004; Howard, 2003; Huling & Resta, 2001; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Odell & Huling, 2000). However, I have not been able to find studies that examined the long-term effects of beginning teacher mentoring on teacher practice over the years.

For this study, I asked: "What are the long-term effects of a beginning teacher's mentoring experiences on practice as a veteran teacher?" This research question was addressed through the use of portraiture.

Definition of Mentoring

Multiple descriptions of mentoring can be found in the literature. Galvez-Hjornevik (1986) suggested the term mentor means "teacher, coach, trainer, positive role model, developer of talent, opener of doors, protector, sponsor, and successful leader" (p. 6). This definition implies that a mentor is someone capable of taking on many roles. Odell and Ferraro (1992) suggested the focus of mentoring beginning teachers is to provide support and guidance, facilitate professional growth, and promote teacher retention (p. 200). Enerson (2001) noted that the word mentor, which historically was a noun, has now shifted to a verb (p. 8). She observed that from this shift the reader understands that mentoring "is an activity having even less to do with showing others what we can do than with helping them perceive what

they can do" (p. 8). Enerson explained that this change in language brings into focus how mentoring has come to mean a process that is focused on the learner (p. 8). Daloz (1999) focused on the needs of adult learners involved in mentoring relationships where the aim of education was to develop the whole person rather than focus on specific knowledge or skills with the hallmark of good teaching being to provide care (p. xix). Roberts (2000) described a phenomenological review of essential attributes of mentoring, and would add two additional components to the preceding definitions of mentoring: a teaching-learning process and a reflective practice (p. 151).

Review of Relevant Research on Mentoring

Feiman-Nemser (2003) commented, "By most accounts, new teachers need three or four years to achieve competence and several more to reach proficiency" (p. 27). She studied three well-regarded induction programs asking the mentors, principals, and new teachers to reflect on the question, "What exactly do new teachers need to learn that they could not have learned before they began teaching?" (p. 26). These identified categories of themes were related to teaching to the needs of the students, not just from the textbook; understanding and incorporating the required teaching standards into their instruction; and, understanding detailed aspects of instructional strategies (pp. 26-27).

Heller (2004) endorsed a mentoring model in which "mentors, supports, and scaffolding should be in place all along the way toward becoming a competent and consummate teacher" (p. 7). He looked at many parts of pre-service and beginning teacher practices. Heller examined differences between his own professional development practices and those of a social worker, who described an ongoing process of professional development that included sitting down with her supervisor and discussing her cases and other possible approaches. Heller compared this experience to his own less positive experience as a teacher of having his supervisor "walk into my classroom, take a bunch of notes, and then put a final document in my mailbox" (p. 70).

Carver (2004) stated that often beginning teachers "initially believed that acknowledging the problems they experienced in the classroom was akin to committing professional suicide" (p. 59). She emphasized the need for new teachers "to feel safe as learners" (p. 59).

Participants in the beginning teacher professional development program Carver evaluated cited the benefits of the program as learning "new classroom tips and strategies, the opportunity to troubleshoot common problems, a chance to learn from other participants' strengths, or spending time getting to know one another" (p. 59). Carver reported that high levels of trust and a clear separation of what Heller (2004) called "supervision" versus "evaluation" were needed to enable a member of the administrative team to join in the meetings.

Combined, these studies help describe potential benefits of mentoring from the point of view of beginning teachers who were just entering the profession or were relatively new to the profession (typically having served for less than five years). However, fewer studies have examined the early mentoring and induction experiences recalled by now-veteran teachers, probing for what they learned from their early career mentoring experiences. This paper presents one portrait of how mentoring of one early career teacher, Carol, affected her practice over her entire career and is from a larger, unpublished, study of mentoring practices used with beginning teachers. Through portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997), veteran teachers' stories about their early mentoring experiences shed light on how those experiences affected their practice over many years.

Theoretical Framework

Telling stories is how we make meaning of our experiences (Bullough, 2008; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1994). Sharing stories is a sharing of self in relation to others. The role of social interaction in facilitating learning was studied by Vygotsky (Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002). Vygotsky's work described how in relationship we "can rediscover mastered knowledge, ask new questions, and explore new avenues of inquiry, which creates the ability to discern deeper and more nuanced meanings from the material being revisited (Vygotsky, 1978)" (Cardwell, 2002, p. 76). Telling our mentoring stories is a way of learning from our experiences and having our audiences learn by integrating these experiences with their own. According to Jalongo and Isenberg (1995), teacher stories are significant in the teaching-learning process (p. xxxi). Teacher stories draw out other stories,

help clarify a professional perspective and then lead to insights into the meaning of teaching (Jalongo & Isenberg, p. 10).

Witherell and Noddings (1991) suggested that narrative and dialogue are powerful aspects of reflection and can provide opportunities for the development of relationships and the foundation for ethical action (p. 8). They used stories to describe how knowing and caring are woven in an intricate design and how "stories call us to consider what we know, how we know, and what and whom we care about" (p. 13).

Portraiture Methodology

Portraiture was used as a way to capture mentoring stories by allowing the researcher to integrate the participants' answers to prescribed probes used in the study with the researcher's observations, interactions, and discussions with the participants – the blending of art and science. In portraiture the researcher's voice is present through her or his own understanding and experiences of the setting. Chapman (2007) echoes the visibility of the researcher in portraiture to "produce a full picture of an event or person that tells as much about the subject as it does about the researcher, or portraitist" (p. 157).

The portrait presented in this paper is from a longer word portrait that has been excerpted due to its length. A word portrait is shaped by dialogue between the researcher (portraitist) and the participant (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 3). The focal components of context, voice, and relationship from which the emergent themes surfaced, and the aesthetic whole, the portrait, was written gives a glimpse into the participant's early career mentoring experiences.

A portrait is "designed to capture the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context, conveying the perspectives of the people who are negotiating those experiences" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 3). The interviews, which began with prepared questions, were tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher. My reflections each time I interacted with the teachers, visited their schools and transcribed the interviews became what Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis call the "Impressionistic Record" (p. 188). The Impressionistic Record was where I recorded ongoing observations

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and reflections from the interviews and observations as they were happening, and later as I reflected on my interviews and observations. Often, as I listened to the tapes during transcription, questions would puzzle me or a perspective would emerge that I would want to consider the next time I interacted with the participant or visited the participant's site. For example, as I listened to the tapes I wrote down questions I had about what the participant had said, and I wrote notes about tone of voice and recurring themes I heard. I also noted in the Impressionistic Record things I saw happening in the school setting, interactions the participant had with others, and details about the artifacts I collected. By constantly reviewing and reflecting on the notes in my Impressionistic Record I was also able to develop an action plan for future visits by drawing out points and themes to investigate further.

According to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, a critical difference between the methodology of portraiture and ethnography is that "ethnographers listen *to* a story while portraitists listen *for* a story" (1997, p. 13). Portraiture, with its emphasis on wholeness, relationships, voice, authenticity, and listening for a story captures a ripe blend of science and art. The analysis was contained within the process of forming, shaping and writing the portrait.

After applying the essential features of context, voice, relationship, and emergent themes separately to the portrait, the portrait was shaped one more time, applying these essential elements in developing what Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis called the aesthetic whole.

Using notes recorded in my Impressionistic Record, the interviews, site visits, listening to the tape recordings, and completing the transcriptions of the tape recordings provided a rich backdrop from which to begin the shaping of the word portrait. Using the multiple aspects of each lens – context, voice, and relationship – allowed an initial fleshing out of emergent themes for each participant in the larger study. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) described the five aspects of emergent themes that are applied in constructing the portrait:

> First, we listen for repetitive refrains that are spoken (or appear) frequently and persistently, forming a collective expression of commonly held views. Second, we listen for resonant metaphors, poetic and symbolic expressions that reveal the ways actors [participants] illuminate and experience their realities. Third, we listen for the

themes expressed through cultural and institutional rituals that seem to be important to organizational continuity and coherence. Fourth, we use triangulation to weave together the threads of data converging from a variety of sources. And finally, we construct themes and reveal patterns among perspectives that are often experienced as contrasting and dissonant by the actors [participants]. (p. 193)

Through this layering of the data and application of multiple strategies, such as interviews, observations, and site visits, triangulation occurs.

In the development of the aesthetic whole the tensions of blending art and science are encountered. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) state that the motivations that guide portraiture are to "inform and inspire, to document and transform, to speak to the head and the heart" (p. 243). Critiques of portraiture (English, 2000; Hackmann, 2002) as a methodology open a dialogue about how to explore the many facets of paradox in portraiture, such as the presence of the voice of the researcher and the search for what Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) call "goodness" (p. 9). This ability of portraiture "to embrace contradictions, … to document the beautiful/ugly experiences that are so much a part of the texture of human experiences and social relationships" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005, p. 9) offers a glimpse into the reality of the paradoxes that exist in educational settings. The portrait of Carol that follows was developed and analyzed in this manner.

Study Process

Carol was one of those selected for the study which included 10 candidates who were: veteran teachers who had taught for at least five years; had been mentored; and who could recall stories from their early career mentoring experiences. Four candidates who met the study qualifications participated in the larger study.

Carol completed the initial screening interview, which took about 30 minutes, and two additional interviews. It was not possible from the initial screening to determine the nature of the mentoring experiences, nor whether these experiences were formal or informal arrangements. Thus, two additional interviews each lasting two hours or so were conducted

based on interview questions and probes. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Participant checks were completed to ensure accuracy of data.

In addition, I observed participants on four to six occasions in their classrooms and schools, and often met with them following the observation. More than 60 hours were spent in interviews, observations, discussions, and transcriptions for each participant. The participants' responses to the interview questions and probes, their own stories of how they entered the profession and of their teaching and mentoring experiences, and information from my observations and Impressionistic Record, were woven into individual word portraits illuminating the participants' mentoring stories. The following are excerpts of one of the portraits from the study – the portrait of Carol, a 25-year veteran teacher (all the names used in the study are pseudonyms).

A Portrait of Carol

Upon arrival at the school I noted it had a well-used but maintained-with-care look. As I walked to the main office to check in, I saw that someone had taken time to create a beautiful arrangement of fall flowers which greeted me at the door. I rang the doorbell to be admitted into the hall outside the school office and announced myself over the intercom. As the door buzzed open for me, I noticed the hallway was getting dark. I saw the lights on in Carol's room, and as I walked in she was busy tidying up from the end of the school day. We chatted as she finished up and then she invited me to have a seat at the table at the back of the classroom. As I sank low into the primary student sized chair, I remembered my years of teaching Kindergarten from these tiny chairs and reflected about the perspective one has as an adult from this height of chair. The room seemed larger than when I first came in. It was a great vantage point from which to see how full of life Carol's classroom was. There were posters and decorations everywhere on the walls and boards. There was an orderly arrangement of student desks surrounded by an area for small group work, a computer center, and large bulletin board display area. The huge wall of windows on one side of the classroom looked out onto a beautiful fall scene of trees, vibrant with shades of green turning red, orange, yellow, and brown.

As we began the second interview, focusing on the stories she had chosen to tell about her mentoring experiences as a beginning teacher, Carol smiled and reminded me that it was more than 25 years ago when she first began teaching. Carol pointedly said that both stories she would relate were from the same mentor, another first grade teacher. She explained that the reason she had chosen these two stories is because in one her mentor provided an impetus for Carol to search for her own, different approach, and in the other, her mentor was a model who Carol mirrors today. As Carol began to tell her first story, I made a note in my Impressionistic Record about how animated Carol was; her hands moving as she talked; how many details she included and how she seemed to be at ease as she leaned in at our first grade sized table.

The Dot System Story

Carol had been hired to come in each afternoon to relieve Mrs. Royal. When she was hired her relationship with Mrs. Royal was not formally established as a mentor-mentee relationship, but their relationship soon took on this character. Carol explained that she felt that, because Mrs. Royal had been teaching in the school and in that very classroom for so many years, and since Carol was a beginning teacher, it was clear to her that she was the subordinate to Mrs. Royal. Their relationship began with this unspoken arrangement. Carol explained that, because Mrs. Royal had been teaching for so many years, and Carol was only teaching during the afternoons, she decided to use Mrs. Royal's system of classroom routines and management. Carol explained that she also felt it was less confusing for her students not to have to change routines, procedures or classroom rules each day.

As a new teacher, Carol had been experiencing a few difficulties in classroom management and had tried to discuss the difficulties with her mentor. Mrs. Royal encouraged Carol to just continue using her management system and the students would come around. Carol continued setting up her story by describing how she tried several times to have conversations about classroom management with Mrs. Royal, and how each time her questions were met with Mrs. Royal's advice to just continue using her system and all would work out. Carol's own developing philosophy about classroom management was

challenged by Mrs. Royal's advice to just continue using the system she had developed and which was already in place.

Mrs. Royal's classroom management system was well-known in the school. It was called the "dot system." She displayed a large chart with each student's name right next to the classroom door and the chart was posted for the entire school year. Mrs. Royal conveyed her assessment of each student's academic progress and conduct using a colored dot system. There were gold, silver, blue, and white dots. Gold was for outstanding, followed by silver for superior; blue for satisfactory; and white was the color demarking unsatisfactory progress. After students earned a certain number of gold dots they received a special trophy that Mrs. Royal made herself. The reputation of these trophies was known throughout the school community. The reason white dots were dreaded by her students was because, when they were given, the student had to go to the chart and put a white dot on top, covering up one of the coveted gold dots.

Carol described how she had been having a problem in managing a particular student's challenging behavior. When she tried to talk with Mrs. Royal about this problem, Mrs. Royal told Carol that this student never gave her any trouble. I made a note in my Impressionistic Record about Carol's tone of voice and facial expressions as she relived the memory of Mrs. Royal saying that this student never gave her any trouble. Carol described how even after all these years she still clearly remembered how she felt after a particularly trying afternoon with this same student challenging her time and again. Carol continued setting the scene describing how the student had been really pushing the limits all afternoon and had been warned several times saying, "That afternoon, I just lost it and I said, 'Alright Don, give yourself a white dot.' So all of a sudden, after one white dot he was the perfect little guy."

This event was pivotal for Carol. She described it this way, "I made a snap decision to put the power of the white dot to work to bring the student's behavior back in line." She described him as changing his behavior immediately and being very compliant after having to cover one of his gold dots with a white dot. Carol said she watched closely for some sign

that he was bothered by the white dot next to his name on the chart that was displayed for all to see, but she saw no such sign. The problem was, it did bother Carol.

Carol described how each afternoon she would walk into the classroom and there on the chart by the door was the white dot she had given Don. She described this experience as the beginning of a journey of self-discovery, challenge, and change. The result of her work and reflection about the dot system caused her to examine what it was that she did not like about it. From this self-study and reflection, she created a new classroom management tool that exemplified her own philosophy about how to help students develop self-managing practices. Carol stated she felt that as the teacher she was charged to help her students grow, not only in self-control but also in self-esteem.

As Carol explored her uneasiness with the dot system, the focus became issues of self-esteem, optimism, and believing that each day we should start fresh and renewed. Carol described how she went on to create a different student self-management tool that was kept by each student and not displayed on a chart. Carol continued explaining that another key part of her philosophy about student self-management was that she really wanted students to understand the choices they made and why their choice was being scrutinized and evaluated as needing to change. Carol said that she didn't believe there was much dialogue with the dot system. She wanted her students to dialogue about their self-management choices and to understand the array of choices they could have made in any particular situation.

The Stomped Bug Story

Carol's second story was one in which she described Mrs. Royal as the "hero." Carol related how she could remember Mrs. Royal telling her many stories of the formidable power teachers have to model actions that define life-long values for students. As a mentor, Mrs. Royal believed this power was found in the simplicity of actions that are lived out in our classrooms each day.

Carol described Mrs. Royal as a master teacher of science. She would gather the children every day, sitting around her on the carpeted area of the classroom floor, and read amazing

stories from scientific discoveries, facts, and experiments. The lesson each story held was brought to life through Mrs. Royal's dramatic storytelling methods, and then the lesson's objective was sharply focused by having the children apply the stories to their own discoveries. Carol enjoyed watching Mrs. Royal teach science and stopped in often in the morning, before she relieved Mrs. Royal, to observe. The story began one afternoon as Carol was teaching a social studies lesson. During this lesson one of Carol's students was more focused on a bug crawling on the floor than in following her lesson presentation. Carol walked over and stepped on the bug, smashing it firmly saying, "We don't need to pay attention to the bug. Focus here on me, we are learning about social studies. I don't want you paying attention to the bug."

A few mornings later, Carol was enjoying watching Mrs. Royal teach a science lesson when a student noticed a bug crawling on the carpet area where they were seated. The student got up and promptly walked over and stomped on the bug with assured authority. Carol immediately saw herself in her student's actions. Mrs. Royal stopped reading and with a stricken look on her face (and to Carol's dismay) began a stern commentary on the beauty, preciousness and inter-related nature of all life forms and how could this student have killed one of our fellow creatures with such an assured stomp. Carol's description of the student's reaction to Mrs. Royal's words painted the picture of an almost slow-motion effect. The student's face slumped from his proud smile following the killing stomp to a look of deflation. Carol described how he seemed to melt back into his spot on the carpet.

Mrs. Royal's lesson for all her students, included in that moment of deep reflection for Carol, was our individual responsibility for respect of all life forms – even bugs. The unintended additional lesson for Carol was the power of teachers in modeling behaviors for their students, reinforcing what Mrs. Royal had previously discussed with her. Carol described how she reflected on this event and how it changed how she acted from that moment on. The very next opportunity when a wayward spider was found in the classroom, Carol was very conscious of what she had learned from Mrs. Royal. She explained to her students that the spider needed to be in his home outside and she gently took the spider and put him outside the window. Carol said that now any wayward bugs that are found in the classroom present not only opportunities to discuss many science concepts such as habitat

and ecosystems, but are also a reminder of what she learned from this story, the formidable power she had to model values in action to her students. Carol's openness to self-reflection on her own attitudes, actions, and the power of her attitudes and actions to be models for her students continued to be a central focus of her educational philosophy. Carol summarized by saying, "It is amazing at this grade level what you say, and what they remember and do."

<p align="center">**Discussion of Carol's Portrait**</p>

Carol's portrait reveals how some of her mentoring experiences and the stories of those experiences were still shaping her practice 25 years later as she related them to me. Her portrait demonstrates how, in remembering the experiences and having an opportunity to reflect upon her memories of the experiences, she saw connections to her current approaches, thoughts, philosophies, and practice.

The major themes discerned from Carol's portrait were: (1) an invitation to develop the mentoring relationship, (2) supportive mentoring actions, and (3) mentors as models. These themes are discussed separately in the following sections.

An Invitation to Develop the Mentoring Relationship

Carol's portrait reflects her memory of how Mrs. Royal's role as mentor was not clearly established by the administration, or even by Mrs. Royal, but just happened. It is possible that, due to the nature of the position as a job-share and Mrs. Royal's years of experience and long-time service in the school, her sense of agency in the classroom diminished the need for this discussion. Carol being assigned to the position without a discussion about being mentored by senior faculty raises questions about the clarity of roles that may need to be addressed when beginning teachers work with senior faculty. How are mentoring assignments made? Are best practices of mentor education, mentor discernment, assessments of key mentoring skills such as communication, and knowledge of students and curriculum being used? Has a potential mentor genuinely discerned they want to serve as a mentor to a beginning teacher?

These questions may help school leaders determine how to educate those who wish to serve as a mentor. Boreen, Johnson, Niday and Potts (2009) citing Odell (1990) described how choosing one's mentor is often the most effective way to achieve "mutual regard" (p.11). In addition to the manner in which the invitation to enter into a mentoring relationship is made to a beginning teacher, there are also considerations of assessing the mentor's skills in communication, knowledge of curriculum content and developmental age and stage of the students, and a willingness to open one's practice to the questions of a beginner. The lack of invitation or clarity about their mentoring assignment Carol described may also point to the importance of examining how mentors are selected and partnered with a mentee. Mentor education and then discernment about the mentoring role may lead to a refined mentor selection process along with a more open invitation to the mentee to be involved in the mentor selection process.

Supportive Mentoring Actions

Beyond common courtesies in getting to know one's mentee are the larger topics of building trust and the conceptual frameworks of mentoring. The scope of this paper does not allow for a discussion of these complex topics in detail, but conceptual frameworks of mentoring programs such as style of mentoring approaches are key to effective and supportive mentoring actions. Boreen et al. (2009) describe an overview of the approaches a mentor might use in a coaching stance such as: mentoring through conferencing, questioning, mirroring or modeling reflection (pp. 40-53). Clear communication styles and skills (Cowin, 2012) and mutual understanding of the mentoring process by both the mentor and mentee may offer an opening for trust to grow.

Carol's first mentor story about using a student management system (the dot system story) that she had reservations about, and not feeling as if she were able to enter into a conversation with her mentor about her concerns, has implications for developing the dynamics of the mentor-mentee relationship. If a mentor embodies a spirit of willingness to have his or her own practice observed, and even assessed, through the eyes of the mentee, will the relationship be strengthened? Can a mentor's openness to accepting that not all of her practices will be adopted by her mentees be a key factor in the discernment process that

a mentor uses to decide to become a mentor in the first place? Or, is the mentor to transfer her knowledge in a paternalistic style to the mentee, where the mentee becomes a clone of the mentor? (Freire, 1997, p. 324).

This story had deep meaning for Carol in her own development of her classroom management practices. After reflection on her beliefs and practices, Carol took action to use a different approach to classroom management and child guidance. Her own action research in developing a new classroom management approach was based on her philosophy of wanting her students to reflect on what they were doing and not just be told what to do, and for students to have the opportunity for a fresh start each day. Could a willingness on Mrs. Royal's part to discuss Carol's concerns about the dot system have led to a different outcome for Carol's feelings of concern for the white dot on the chart she gave her student? Might such an attitude have given Mrs. Royal pause to think about her own approach?

Mentors as Models

Carol's second mentor story about the power of a teacher to model values in action for her students occurred in the context of seeing herself in the actions of one of her students, the death-dealing stomp of a bug that had found its way into the classroom. Carol's telling of the stomped bug story, and her reflection on how her student had done what she herself had done, furthered her resolve to reflect on her own attitudes and actions and the power she holds to model for her students. The collegial respect, Carol still holds today for Mrs. Royal's advice that teachers are powerful models for their students was brought to life by the learning she experienced first-hand in the stomped bug story. Guyton and Hidalgo (1995) found that such collegial support aided in teacher development (p. 41). In Killian and Wilkins' (2009) study with pre-service teachers and their mentors (cooperating teachers), specific mentoring characteristics such as not having to have the mentees "duplicate their practices" (p. 71); being able to "resolve difficult issues at early stages"; giving "corrective objective feedback before problems escalated"; and using a "turn taking" approach" (p. 72) to teaching time were found in the most effective pairings.

Carol's stomped bug story, though it happened years ago, has served her well in reminding her that each day she is a powerful model not only to her students but to all those in her learning community. A mentor's ability to reflect on their own practices and supporting philosophies is important in serving as a model to a beginning teacher. This story could be shared with mentors and used as a case study for further discussion and analysis by mentors of their own experiences as a model for students, mentees, and ultimately those in their learning communities. Carol's story could serve as an opening of a dialog between mentors and mentees about values, and modeling the values one holds.

Stories of Experience, Reflection and Change in Practice

Carol's portrait reveals the importance of her mentoring and teaching experiences and how her reflections on these experiences brought about long-term changes in her practice. Carol explained that, through participation in this study, many other memories of her beginning teaching days had come flooding back to her and she was continuing to make connections between her experiences and how they shape her practice today. Schön's (1983, 1987, 1991) work focused on the importance of reflection and reflective practice. Mattingly's (1991) research on narrative reflection posits that telling stories is a way for us to make sense of events and experiences (p. 235). During our interviews and discussions Carol was often reflecting as she told her stories or answered questions, and was still seeking to make sense of what had happened to her in current reflection on her practice as both a teacher and mentor to beginning teachers. Meyer (1995) suggests the stories that were important in one's formation as a teacher are retold and remain meaningful (p. 276). Carol commented several times during our interviews that she was reflecting on what she had just told me and continuing to question her formative experiences in light of her current practice, especially with the beginning teacher she was currently assigned to mentor.

Conclusions and Implications

Establishing the Mentor-Mentee Relationship

Carol's portrait raises areas for consideration in planning a mentoring program for beginning teachers. Design aspects such as an invitation to develop a mentoring

relationship, supportive mentoring actions, and mentors serving as models may offer a starting point for the design process. Preparing a mentor education program to assist mentors in understanding their roles, assisting potential mentors in assessing their mentoring skills, and then in discerning their fit for mentoring could be initial components of a mentor's choice to enter into a mentoring relationship. A well-defined process of invitation between mentor and mentee to enter into a mentoring relationship could then be designed and implemented. A system for ongoing assessment of the mentoring relationship could be put in place. For example, how is the relationship developing and is there compatibility between the mentor and mentee in the first weeks? Periodic check-in points could be set up to continue to assess the development of the relationship. To continue to enhance mentoring relationships a mentoring program could be designed with continued education of mentors in how to assess their own effectiveness and utilize ongoing feedback from the mentee. An acknowledgement in the early stages for both mentor and mentee that not every mentor assignment will develop into a successful mentoring relationship may be an important beginning step in the establishment of a mentoring relationship.

Carol's portrait demonstrates how mentoring relationships may evolve in unintended ways. Because Carol was a less-experienced teacher coming in only in the afternoons to relieve Mrs. Royal, and the classroom had been Mrs. Royal's classroom for years, Carol did not feel free to establish a different classroom management system. As a beginning teacher, Carol felt she needed to go along with the more established teacher's routines, procedures and classroom management style even though there were aspects that made her uncomfortable.

Supportive Mentoring Actions

Mentors can be supported in their roles by having access to ongoing education, support, time for reflection on their own practice, and time for reflection on their mentoring practices. Time to consider, reflect upon, and answer the mentee's questions, especially questions about the mentor's practices, are key supportive mentoring actions. A stance of openness to questions about their practices can facilitate successful mentoring communication. Mentees also need to assess and reflect on their communication style. A

mentee's awareness about possible communication style conflicts may be honed through education in how to communicate about their needs with their mentors, always assuring that the mentee's questions are asked in a respectful way that honors the growing trust in the mentor-mentee relationship.

When Carol tried to discuss potential classroom management concerns, she did not feel Mrs. Royal was interested or open to a discussion of a different approach. Other beginning teachers may feel this way too in their new positions. In my work, student teachers have often told me they feel like a guest in their cooperating teacher's classroom; and, because they are such novices, feel this same tension regarding how to ask questions about practices they observe. It is also possible that had Mrs. Royal been more open to self-examination and reflection about her own practice in using the "dot system," Carol would have been supported in developing a practice of student management rather than just adopting her mentor's system. It is also possible that Carol could have benefited from assessment and education in her communication style or patterns.

Considerations for Teacher Education and School District Mentoring Programs

The study demonstrates how mentoring experiences, and reflection on those experiences, can have long-term effects on teacher and mentor practice. Teacher education programs could be structured to ensure that pre-service teachers learn what to ask for from mentors and from mentoring programs as they begin their first years of teaching and by offering research-based courses to mentor teachers in assessment of mentoring skills and development of mentor best practices such as communication styles and skills. Teacher education researchers working in partnership with school districts could study effective mentoring practices, and design mentoring coursework based on research which could strengthen both university teacher education programs and the mentoring programs school districts use.

Carol's portrait provides an examination of the complexity of human experience and interaction involved in mentoring, as well as the long-term effects mentoring can have on practice. There is a need for further study of the long-term effects of mentoring of beginning

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teachers on both teaching and mentoring practice. Such studies better help us design mentoring programs, which positively affect mentoring and teaching practice over time.

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