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Mentor Principals' Perceptions About a Mentoring Program for Aspiring Principals

A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by

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May 2013

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Dr. Pamela Scott

Key Words: mentor, intern, protégé, principal, leadership, tacit knowledge

ABSTRACT

Mentor Principals' Perceptions About a Mentoring Program for Aspiring Principals

by

Steven Nicholas Barnett

The purpose of this study was to assess the perceptions of principals who serve as mentors for an internship program for aspiring principals at East Tennessee State University. Each mentor was interviewed to gather information about the internship program, the benefits of mentoring in the program, and what the mentors may have learned about their tacit knowledge as a result of the experience. Mentors and the professors in the Educational Leadership Policy Analysis department at ETSU may benefit from the findings as the design of the school leadership program continues to advance.

Mentoring is an important component of training for aspiring and beginning principals because interns learn on the job in a supportive environment where they can take chances. Mentors also learn from the experience of being a mentor. The literature reviewed for this case study supported the need for standard-based mentoring programs. The ISLLC standards are an excellent example of standards that are used to provide structure and coherence for mentoring programs.

Positive and negative outcomes for the mentor were reviewed to support the research. Leadership and the change process were also reviewed to support the importance of the mentor's role in the process we call mentoring. Several themes emerged from the

analysis of data provided by mentor principals about mentoring aspiring principals.

Mentoring resulted in reflection about the decisions the mentor makes during the day while explaining procedures to the intern. It was also found to be an experience that works best when a positive relationship is developed between the mentor and the intern; often leading to a relationship that lasts long after the internship is over.

Principals examined their understanding of tacit knowledge and the possible ways tacit knowledge could be taught to their intern.

DEDICATION

This case study is dedicated to my wife Kristin and my sons Cade and Jacob. Each has patiently supported me over the years while I work to serve the families of the schools where I have served as principal.

I am also dedicating this study to my two older brothers Joseph and Jon Barnett. Thank you for living out the work ethic our mother and father modeled for us being men that can always be counted on to do what is right.

It is dedicated to my father-in-law Ken Souder, for continually encouraging me, providing sound advice when I was deciding which doctoral program to attend, and for judging me by the content of my character and not my potential income when I began dating his daughter over 25 years ago.

A special dedication is due to my professional mentor, Robert Moss. Robert was the principal at Jefferson Middle School in Oak Ridge, Tennessee for over 24 years. He hired me as the vice-principal at Jefferson in 1998. Over the next 2 years I learned so many important lessons about instructional leadership and the maxims that keep everyone in the organization focused on student achievement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the principals who participated in this study. I truly enjoyed the experience of getting to know each of you and the insights you shared. Your professionalism and wisdom makes each you a credit to our profession.

I want to thank my committee chair Dr. Eric Glover for his guidance and encouragement during this journey. I would also like to thank my committee members Dr. Cecil Blankenship, Dr. Virginia Foley, Dr. Pamela Scott for their encouragement and feedback along the way.

I would also like to thank my editor Travis Scott for his expertise.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Elementary and secondary school principals face many challenges as they begin their careers. Aspiring principals need support systems to assist them as they develop the necessary skills to become viable candidates for administrative positions. Some candidates choose not to become principals because the difference in pay for established teachers compared to increased demands of time and responsibility of the principalship are not attractive enough to influence the teacher to take on the added responsibility. Stress causes some to avoid becoming principals and contributes to the decision by some beginning principals to return to the classroom (Villani, 2006).

Many educators who become principals or assistant principals make the move from classroom teacher to the position. Others may move from the classroom to a central office position such as curriculum coach or attendance coordinator. These jobs give the educator an opportunity to experience the service side of leadership with responsibilities that support the work being done in the classroom. These are examples of jobs where educators can feel safe as they learn more about leadership (Weingartner, 2009). However, these experiences do little to provide practical experience that will help educators make successful transitions into principalships. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012) projects the number of educational administrators needed to fill job openings in elementary and secondary schools to grow from 230,600 in 2008 to 250,400 in 2018. That is an increase of 19,800 qualified administrators that will be needed to fill positions.

When one reads the Interstate School Leaders License Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders, the main theme is clearly written into each of the six

standards (Lindley, 2009). The words “*promotes the success of every student*” are written into each standard. This is the expectation for every principal. Of the routes that one can take to the principalship, a program that includes an internship component with a mentor who is currently a successful principal appears to be the best option (Young, Sheets, & Knight, 2005). When an aspiring principal enters a mentoring relationship, he or she gains the opportunity to share responsibility with a practicing principal. As the intern works with the mentor in the school setting, opportunities to take-on leadership roles will develop as the mentor and intern move through the stages of the learning process (Young et al., 2005).

East Tennessee State University has developed a partnership with several school systems in northeast Tennessee that provides a professional mentoring program for aspiring principals. As a mentor for this program, the opportunity to work closely with an intern gave me firsthand experience and the opportunity to observe the strengths and weaknesses of the program from other mentors and interns. Mentoring is defined as a professional relationship in which an experienced person assists another in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the less-experienced person’s professional and personal growth. Mentors listen and learn as they share knowledge and technical skills with interns (Daresh, 2001). Mentors need training and a clear set of goals to complete clear objectives with the intern. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLCS) (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008) were developed for the purpose of providing common standards for training and evaluating school principals. Clear goals will support the work of the school district while keeping

the mentor and intern focused on work that will help the intern develop skills that are necessary to be successful as a school administrator (Weingartner, 2009).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore perceptions of practicing school principals in relation to their work as mentors for aspiring principals. Data that mentors learned about themselves during the mentoring process were gathered and analyzed. The process mentors use for sharing this tacit knowledge that has helped them perform their job duties with their interns was also analyzed.

Research Questions

The following questions were developed to examine ways in which principals value their service as mentors for aspiring principals:

1. What are the difficulties experienced in mentoring aspiring principals?
2. What do mentors perceive as the strengths and weaknesses of an internship program?
3. What do mentors believe they contribute to the mentor and intern relationship?
4. How do mentors believe they benefit from their participation in the mentor and intern relationship?
5. What do the mentors learn about the tacit knowledge that they use to perform their work responsibilities?

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the knowledge base for professional educational leadership mentoring programs and how the process impacts principals who participate as mentors. This study presents insights gained by veteran principals concerning the principalship and the knowledge and skills they perceived to be important for success as a principal.

Scope of Study

A qualitative research study was conducted by interviewing eight practicing school principals who are participating as mentors for interns in an administrative endorsement internship program. The purpose of the interviews was to gather information concerning the mentoring program conducted by East Tennessee State University and the mentors' perceptions about what mentors gained from their roles as mentors in the program.

Definition of Terms

Mentoring refers to a combination of demonstrating leadership practices and observing, assessing others, and coaching (Daresh, 2001).

Protégé refers to a person who is in receipt of mentorship (Daresh, 2001).

Intern refers to someone who works in a temporary relationship with a mentor to learn the job of principal by performing administrative duties (Lindley, 2009).

Tacit Knowledge refers to knowledge that a person has obtained through experience and is difficult to teach others because the knower may be unaware that she or he has that

knowledge (Busing, 2003). An example of tacit knowledge is the knowledge an experienced principal has about effectively administering the discipline code in a school.

Statement of Researcher Prospective

Mentoring has been an important factor in my career as a teacher and principal. A veteran teacher mentored me when I began my teaching career and served as a mentor for new teachers in two school systems. A successful veteran principal mentored me during my 2 years as a vice-principal, an experience that was invaluable to my subsequent success as an elementary and middle school principal in three separate school systems in Tennessee. I served on two separate occasions as a mentor for the State Department of Education in the Beginning Principals' Academy and currently mentor an aspiring principal for East Tennessee State University's Education Leadership Preparation Program.

The study is limited to the eight of a possible twelve participants in the case study and their perspectives gained through the experience of mentoring an administrative intern for two years.

Overview of Study

Principals need effective mentors to help them learn practices that will enable them to be successful principals. Mentors provide a safe environment where interns are encouraged to lead instructional teams and leadership committees under the influence of and guidance of a successful school leader. According to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) 2003, principals often learn how to perform their complex

multilayered tasks once they are in position and have no prior preparatory experience. Formal mentoring programs in the southeast United States typically include internships that only require the intern to observe the work of others. Most do not require the mentor to be formally trained by a university or district and leave it up to the interns to self-select their mentor (SREB, 2005). East Tennessee State University developed relationships with local school districts, provides ongoing training for mentors, and requires an intensive, active internship.

Chapter 1 described the rationale for the study. Chapter 2 contains a review of literature related to internships for aspiring principals. This includes information about specific programs, the use of the ISLLC Standards in the internship, leadership, and how change relates to the internship. Chapter 3 contains a description of the ethical protocol, procedures and methodologies used to collect and analyze the data. Chapter 4 presents the data that were collected and findings from the research. Chapter 5 includes the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter is a review of the literature that is related to mentoring of aspiring and beginning school administrators. The first section is a review of the research about mentoring programs for aspiring and beginning principals. That is followed by a section about how the mentoring process has positive and negative effects on the mentor and the intern. This is followed by an explanation of tacit knowledge and how it is acquired. The fourth section is a review of how leadership skills, as they are defined by the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium standards, are learned. These changes occur as the relationship develops between the mentor and the intern. The last section is a review of literature related to the change process that develops during mentoring relationships.

Mentoring Programs

The vast majority of principals worked as teachers and completed an advanced degree before moving into the school leadership position. The new principal is left to learn leadership and management responsibilities with varying degrees of support. Mentors selected by agencies such as universities or state departments of education work with aspiring and beginning principals to guide interns as they begin the difficult and multifaceted job of the principalship. The mentor's main responsibilities include guiding the intern while managing the school and leading the staff and stakeholders to attain goals and objectives that will make the school successful (Lindley, 2009). The mentor and

intern learn from shared experiences. However, the experience may be negative or positive depending on the relationship between the intern and mentor (Long, 1997).

Several state departments of education, including Tennessee, have training programs for newly hired principals (Villani, 2006). The Tennessee Department of Education's Beginning Principals Academy has been used to train principals since 1986. This 2-year program provides training two times per year in Nashville as well as ongoing mentoring. Mentors are not from the same district as interns and are active principals who have demonstrated the ability to lead schools that make positive gain scores on state achievement tests.

One of the weaknesses of the Beginning Principals Academy is the distance that some principals must travel. Distance limits the ability of mentors to meet with interns, thus limiting the relationship and the mentoring experience. According to Hall (2008), another common weakness of mentoring programs is the uncertain role of the mentor. Mentors are often picked for service because of their record as successful principals, with no regard for their ability as prospective mentors.

East Tennessee State University's Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis (ELPA) program for administrative endorsement in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 12 includes an internship of 540 hours. According to internship guidelines (ELPA, 2010) the internship includes guidance from a trained mentor as the aspiring administrator spends 100 hours in each of the following settings: elementary school, middle school, high school, central administrative offices, and community agencies. The intern explores regular education and special education aspects of administration in each setting. Interns also serve 40 additional hours in settings that will

help them understand diversity in the school and community (ELPA, 2010). The intern completes a self-assessment based on ISSLC Standards and works with the mentor to develop a professional growth plan.

The program also provides an intern supervisor who is committed to providing support for the intern and mentor during the 2-year relationship. Mentors work directly with interns in specific educational settings and provide support for the intern by arranging internship experiences such as developing a master schedule at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. SREB (2003) made a recommendation for school districts and universities to work together to select and train prospective principals. This would improve the pool of applicants for administrative positions by requiring recommendations for entry into the programs.

Iowa State University (ISU) provides a graduate program for training principals that includes a field-based mentoring program. Students begin their training in a cohort of up to 20 people. The cohort method is used to help foster a support system that will develop the ability to work in close relationships with others. Students then continue the behavior they learn in the cohort in their schools (Walker, 2006). Interns spend 400 hours with mentors, including elementary principals, secondary principals, and special education supervisors. Mentors are selected from highly respected administrators in the student's home district or neighboring districts. A coordinator from ISU facilitates the mentoring experience and provides support to interns and mentors.

Southworth and Doughty (2006) described the British approach to training school leaders. The National College for School Leadership was founded by the British government in 2000, focusing on leadership training and the belief shared by the leaders

of the National College that school leaders should impact the communities in which they serve. They wrote about the importance of providing training for interns that is responsive to the stages of leadership training. Some of these stages include meeting professional qualifications, change from within a school with the help of mentors, development of leadership style, and system leadership. Southworth and Doughty (2006) examined the importance of knowing the community, the needs of the school in which the intern is working, and the ability to manage the resources of the school while staying current with research and best practices in the profession. One of the reasons the training school was developed was to replace the 40% of current school administrators who were eligible for retirement in the next 5 years in England.

A similar situation exists in the United States. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012), the United States will need over 19,000 new administrators for our elementary and secondary schools by 2018. Krug (1993) indicated the need for internships and mentoring programs to be included in training programs for new principals. He said the requirement that an internship, residency, or apprenticeship is required in many other professions before a professional license is awarded.

Young et al. (2005) have developed a framework of 25 mentoring components. The framework is intended to provide information in a structured manner that mentors and interns can use during the four stages of mentoring. According to Zachary (2000), there are four stages of mentoring: preparing, negotiating, enabling, and closure. This is an example of structure that can be applied to a mentoring program for principals and teachers. Clear structure throughout the program provides the guideposts for mentors and interns to expect as their relationship grows over time.

Researchers have analyzed the positive and negative outcomes presented in numerous studies. Hansford and Ehrich (2006) performed a structured review of literature on mentoring programs for principals and described the positive and negative outcomes they found in research literature. Positive outcomes for mentors were reported in 16 studies. Some of the outcomes include professional development, opportunity for reflection, and networking. Negative outcomes for mentors were found in 19 studies. Lack of time to perform mentor related duties was the most commonly mentioned negative outcome. Problems relating to poor personality matches were the second most common reason for negative outcomes.

Braun and Carlson (2008) describe the Principal Residency Network (PRN) in Rhode Island. The goal of PRN is to train aspiring principals who are committed to reforming schools. The program uses ISLLC standards to train mentor principals. Mentors use the standards as a guide for setting up activities for interns that will provide a wide range of experiences for interns.

The Southern Regional Education Board (2005), with funding provided by the Wallace Foundation, studied the effectiveness of principal internship programs. According to their research, less than 15% of internship programs studied require interns to lead school improvement activities that involve mathematics or reading and language instruction. Less than one third of the programs require the intern to demonstrate leadership in curriculum alignment to standards. SREB has recommended stronger relationships between universities and school districts to improve the internship experience.

Alsbury and Hackman (2006) reported their findings from a 2-year study of the

Iowa Administrative Mentoring and Instruction Program. The program was designed to support administrators at elementary, secondary, and superintendent levels. Their data supported the belief that the most important part of internship programs is the relationship between mentor and protégé. The amount of time mentors and interns work together was found to be an important variable that can make the difference between an experience in which more learning occurs and an experience in which less learning takes place due to limited interaction between the mentor and intern. Secondary principals reported having less time to spend with interns than elementary principals and superintendents.

Lee et al. (2006) described strategies for the mentoring process. These strategies included ongoing communication, planning, organization, and sharing professional knowledge. The authors also stressed the importance of maintaining balance in the mentor and intern relationship. This balance has helped the mentor provide feedback to the intern through active listening and observation. The intern found the best way to accomplish tasks is with the support of the mentor instead of simply completing simple tasks that could be done by an assistant.

Cunningham and Sherman (2008) reported that interns in administrative preparation programs spend the vast majority of their time dealing with discipline issues instead of developing necessary skills that involve instructional leadership in the school. The authors suggested that more time should be spent developing instructional leadership skills. Orr (2006) was also critical of traditional leadership programs for not preparing beginning principals to be instructional leaders. An additional criticism was the process universities use to select applicants for their programs. Positive trends cited by the author

include more rigorous application processes and alignment to the ISLLC standards combined with internships that have experiences designed to develop instructional leadership and school improvement at some universities.

Peer coaching is a form of mentoring suggested in the literature for beginning administrators. Rich and Jackson (2005) recommended that new principals ask a more experienced principal to coach them during the beginning years of the principal's experience. The more experienced principal should ask questions that encourage the new principal to reflect on his or her practices. They also suggested that the mentor and intern would benefit from the reflection that occurs as a result of the relationship.

According to Daresh (2004) mentoring has two processes. The first is the identification of true mentors for beginning principals. The mentor needs to spend time teaching the intern about policies and procedures as he or she provides support and feedback. The second process of mentoring explained by Daresh is the socialization development that occurs when an intern reflects about her or his leadership experiences with their mentor. The mentor guides the aspiring or new principal as they develop their belief systems and help them understand their commitment to the job of administrator by asking guiding questions.

Positive and Negative Effects of Mentoring

There are positive and negative elements contained in these relationships for both interns and mentors. One of the weaknesses Daresh (2004) noted concerning mentoring programs is the selection of mentors based on availability instead of skill and training. Mentors and interns can be harmed by the mentoring process. Crow and Matthews (1998)

listed time constraints, inadequate planning, bad matches between mentor and intern, and insufficient numbers of mentors for minorities as some of the deficiencies of mentoring. Peters (2008) added that there is a shortage of mentors for principals in urban districts. One reason given is the faculty turnover in larger urban districts. Because it takes time to develop relationships, staff turnover undermines the time that mentors can spend with protégés. When principals are moved from one school to another in the system or leave for a different position the intern may have to adjust to another mentor. Because mentoring takes considerable time and there are stages in the process, changing mentors can have a negative effect on the development of the intern.

Ehrich, Hansford, and Tennent (2004) stated that the mentoring process has positive and negative consequences for the mentor. Four benefits were cited for mentors. Collaboration and networking, reflection, professional development, and personal satisfaction were found to be common benefits. They also cited negative consequences associated with the mentoring process including personality conflicts and time constraints.

Crow and Matthews (1998) stated that mentoring is an important part of the training process for beginning principals. They recognized that mentoring has been a part of the training process for administrators in an informal manner before formal mentoring programs were established. Principals stated that mentors were their main support that guided them in their growth as effective school leaders.

Mentors have a responsibility to train interns to resolve problems on their own instead of depending on the mentor or the mentor's practices. The intern must develop leadership practices that fit his or her personality and the personality of the school she or he serves (Barnett, 2004). When mentors demand interns to complete tasks the way the

mentor wants it done with no opportunity for reflection, the intern will not develop his or her own leadership practices. According to Cottrell (2010) the mentor gains at least as much from the mentoring relationship as the intern does through the process of reflecting about the experience of the intern.

Erdem and Aytemur (2008) and Trubowitz (2004) provided some insight for potential mentors. These include the ability to build trust between the mentor and intern as one of the most important skills for a mentor to possess. They also believe it is important for a mentor to understand pitfalls that need to be avoided. When one party in the relationship does not trust the other, it can have negative consequences for the mentor and the intern. It would be better to end the relationship than to allow it to continue without trust.

Tacit Knowledge

Tacit knowledge is a term first used by Michael Polanyi (1962) when describing information we hold in our memory that is abstract and useful for making decisions. It was defined by Polanyi (1962) as “knowing a thing by relying on our awareness of it for the purpose of attending to an entity to which it contributes.” (p. 602). Tacit knowledge is important for school administrators because they have to make decisions that do not always have a clearly objective basis. They rely on tacit knowledge to choose the best response to fit a specific problem.

Muth, Bellamy, Fulmer, and Murphy (2006) described tacit knowledge as less credible than other types of knowledge because it is not collected in a systematic way. This knowledge develops through professional experience and professional practice. As

information is accumulated while we work in an organization, there is a difference between skill and knowledge but most people use these two words with no distinction between them (Lazaridou, 2009). Principals usually gained information while performing the actions they carry out as a function of their responsibility. Skills and knowledge can be gained on the job or by study in the college setting. The intern gains tacit knowledge as he or she experiences the various activities that take place each day.

Tacit knowledge is important for administrators because it relates to how a person understands the context of the situation and applies the necessary skills and knowledge to make decisions (Zachary, 2000). Lazaridou (2009) refers to this as the ability to see knowledge at a higher level than skills or knowledge that can be learned in the classroom. Because tacit knowledge is personal the question can be asked; how a mentor teaches an intern the tacit knowledge he or she possesses (Bussing & Herbig 2003; Dinur 2011). Can tacit knowledge intentionally be transferred from a mentor to an intern?

According to Kempster (2006) tacit knowledge can be developed during apprenticeships. This qualitative study included interviews with business directors. The directors all saw leadership development as a gradual process that occurs as an employee experiences scenarios that require decision making. Leaders also described others who had positively influenced their development as leaders in their field.

Principals need to be equipped with specialized skills and knowledge to carry out the various responsibilities required to perform their complex duty (Lazaridou, 2009). On-the-job training, formal education classes, internships, observing others, and personal experiences are some of the ways we acquire knowledge. Learning knowledge and using knowledge are similar processes in that we change knowledge as we use it and it is

filtered through our personal experience and our individual brain wiring. People cannot tell you what they have learned from experience. The process of using intellectual knowledge changes that knowledge into practical knowledge that is needed to perform the variety of duties in the workplace (Medina, 2008).

Brockmann and Anthony (1998) studied tacit knowledge in the context of planning. They include the idea of the collective mind in organizations in their study, referring to the combined knowledge of the employees in a company. They describe tacit knowledge as work related practical knowledge. It is comparable to intuition but different in that tacit knowledge is developed through experience while intuition is a choice made without formal analysis.

Allen (2009) described tacit knowledge as a higher order process that develops knowledge that cannot be expressed by those who possess it. It is used to make decisions in organizations, but it is rarely documented because we don't know how to express this kind of knowledge. Brown-Ferrigno and Muth (2004) wrote about the significance of internships providing genuine learning activities for interns. Interns will need that authentic experience that involves some risk for tacit knowledge to be developed.

Fink and Meierewert (2005) studied how explicit and tacit knowledge are used in international business. Employees from international businesses who participated in the study reported that on-the-job experience allowed them to use different ways of thinking to deal with business clients. This tacit knowledge could only be gained through experience, if possible under the guidance of a more experienced worker or mentor.

Germain and Quinn (2005) studied the difference between tacit knowledge of veteran and beginning principals. When they compared novice and more experienced

principals, both groups drew on previous experience but veteran principals were able to draw from greater context. The lack of context results in the novice principal viewing situations differently than more experienced principals. It appears from the review of literature that tacit knowledge can only be developed through on-the-job experience.

Leadership Development

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO, 2007) developed the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLCS) in 1996 to create a set of standards for school leaders. The standards were revised in 2007 by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration. Reference citations were added to the document that support each standard with empirical data and craft knowledge. As these standards have been adopted by states and university programs for training educational leaders, the focus for principals has changed from that of a manager to an instructional leader. The skills needed to lead instruction are different than the skills needed to manage a school facility. The ISLLC Standards are based on valued outcomes rather than tasks. They stipulate the learning success of every child and they shift the major responsibility of the principal from management to leading learning and continuous school improvement (Murphy, 2002).

Leadership involves developing people within the organizations. Maxwell (2005) describes the difference between teaching and developing others. When mentoring, one should seek to develop the intern by “using organizational goals for individual development,” (p. 232). The mentor should continue to grow while developing others. “The greatest enemy of learning is knowing,” (Maxwell, 2007, p.184). When the mentor

models continuous growth, employees in the organization observe the ongoing habit of learning demonstrated by the leader, creating a culture in the organization that everyone is expected to continually learn.

Leadership is defined by Northouse (2007) as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p.3). Copland (2001) makes the point that leadership in schools is not the sole responsibility of the principal. A possible opportunity for an educator who aspires to become a principal is to work as an assistant principal. Mentoring and internship occur in this position, though the roles from one setting to another vary depending on system and school expectations (SCORE Focus Groups, 2010).

Beginning principals need support from mentors and ongoing staff development to meet the demands of the job. Cottrell (2010) describes a process he calls circular coaching as a method of the mentor setting up experiences for the intern with successful people from different professions because the behaviors that make a person successful are common in all professions. The intern and the mentor learn from the experience when the intern reports back to the mentor. This time of reflection is just as important for the mentor as it is for the intern. Dunaway, Bird, Flowers, and Lyons (2010) studied responses from 160 principal interns. They report that interns learn more when given the opportunity to learn by working on activities that require their contribution, instead of observing others. They also recommend to mentors the need for interns to be placed in leadership and management activities.

ISLLC Standards

The ISLLC Standards provide a framework of common expectations that college professors, school district administrators, mentors, and aspiring principals use to develop and measure performance expectations (Barnett, 2004). Boeckman and Dickinson (2001) asserted that training based in model standards should be a requirement for certification as an educational administrator.

The ISLLC Standards were developed in 1996 to influence and help guide field based learning through structured internship experiences for aspiring principals. The standards were revised in 2008. The six standards provide a framework for universities to prepare competent candidates for all formal leadership positions in education. The standards directly highlight teaching and learning while supporting the learning environment for students (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). The six ISLLC Standards are (p. 14):

Standard 1: An education leader promotes the success of every student by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders.

Standard 2: An education leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Standard 3: An education leader promotes the success of every student by ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

Standard 4: An education leader promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Standard 5: An education leader promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Standard 6: An education leader promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Johnston, Walker, and Levine (2010) studied schools that made excellent improvement. One of the key factors noted for the rapid improvement in achievement is when aspiring principals have been given opportunities to learn from successful principals. The five leadership behaviors they identify in their study are also identified in the ISLLC Standards. The behaviors are:

- Ensuring rigorous, goal and data driven learning and teaching. ISLLC Standards 1 and 3
- Building and managing a high quality staff aligned to the school's vision of success for every student. ISLLC Standard 2
- Developing an achievement and belief based school-wide culture. ISLLC Standard 4
- Instituting operations and systems to support learning. ISLLC Standards 4 and 6
- Modeling the personal leadership that sets the tone for all student and adult relationships in the school. ISLLC Standard 5

The ISLLC Standards were used to document progress on a portfolio assessment tool used to measure growth graduate students made during a 2 and 3 year internship as part of their master's degree program in educational leadership. Miller and Salsberry (2005) used student made portfolios based on the six ISLLC Standards to qualitatively

measure what students learned during their professional training program. Portfolios from students who completed their degree in a traditional university training program and a cohort style program at the same university demonstrated similar growth and professional achievement, according to the analysis.

According to Weidner (2007) the ISLLC Standards were developed by the Council of State Chief Officers for the purpose of “increasing expected and measurable performance of school leaders grounded in the knowledge of teaching and learning” (p. 17). Aspiring principals take a professional examination to acquire their license as a beginning administrator in most states. The assessment is developed by the Educational Testing Service and is based on the ISLLC Standards Shipman & Murphy, 2001).

Mentor and Intern Relationships and Change

The change process is an important element of the current educational climate of reform. Principals and aspiring principals need the skills to navigate the change process in their schools. Performance contracts for principals and the new evaluation model adopted beginning in the 2011-2012 school year by the State of Tennessee, as a result of First to the Top legislation, have resulted in change at every school in the state. Aspiring principals need the capacity to understand first and second order change to be successful leaders (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Reeves, 2009). First order change occurs in small steps over time. This is the change that we all experience and adjust to by relying on previous experience and knowledge. Second order change causes a significant move away from the way things were previously done, creating a new norm. The First to the Top Act (Tennessee Department of Education, 2011) resulted in second order change

when the State Department of Education in Tennessee mandated a new evaluation system for teachers and principals who work in grades pre-kindergarten through 12 public schools settings.

According to Reeves (2009) leaders set the direction of professional development and school improvement planning. Both activities are related and require ongoing change in the school. Mandated change by governing bodies also has influence on the direction of professional development and school improvement plans. The leader must review data and determine the training that needs to be scheduled that will bring about positive changes in the school. The leader must work to develop an improvement plan that is achievable and includes the necessary support systems to bring about change. These activities are also supported by ISLLC standards 1 and 2.

Beyer and Ruhl-Smith (1998) examined responses of principals who work in the Detroit, Michigan metropolitan area to questions concerning their leadership style and how it affects change in their school community. The authors stated it is necessary to change the way principals are trained. The authors cite the need for research about what principals believe is important concerning their duty to lead instruction before they can be change agents. Their research indicates that a move away from managing and organizing to goal-directed leadership with ongoing training is necessary for change to occur. They also reported principals need to be willing and equipped to reach out and build partnerships with universities and other community agencies to improve their school's performance.

Muhammad (2009) wrote about the importance of mentoring school employees by members of the staff who are responsible for leadership that will bring about positive

change in the school. New staff members will either isolate themselves or attach themselves to a group if an official mentor is not assigned. Official mentors should be trained to work with interns and have a clear understanding of what the intern needs to learn to accomplish the goals of the school.

The Center for Association Leadership (2006) studied a sample of organizations that met seven criteria to find out what makes these organizations successful. The seven criteria were: a customer service culture, alignment of products and services with mission, adaptability, alliance building, data-driven strategies, dialogue and engagement, and a chief financial officer who seeks the best ideas for the organization. Each of the organizations was also financially successful for a minimum of 20 years with more than one CEO. One finding was the way these organizations share leadership responsibility. This sharing of responsibility supports change over time, stimulates the growth of less experienced leaders in the organization, and stimulates pragmatic behavior.

The principal plays a key role in the improvement process. There are several leadership dynamics that can be taken into account when researching the role of the principal as a leader in school improvement. Some examples include the principal's beliefs about change and innovation, understanding and implementation of assessment tools, and the training principals receive in graduate school. Educational leaders use assessment to improve instruction and performance, including the academic performance of students. The principal plays a key role in the improvement process. The principal who uses assessment to guide decisions concerning school improvement will lead the development of a more meaningful improvement plan for faculty and staff to implement, rather than the principal who does not make decisions based on assessment data (Perez,

Uline, Johnson, James-Ward, & Basom 2011).

Beyer and Ruhl-Smith (1998) examined principals' responses to questions about the impact of their leadership styles on change in the school community. The authors cited research that principals need to believe in their duty to lead instruction before principals can be change agents. The authors said it is necessary to change the way principals are trained.

The evaluation for principals has moved towards a standards based developmental rubric. A standards based rubric makes use of clear expectations that are developed to provide a guide for the evaluator and the administrator. These are often developmental in nature, with the expectations for performance becoming more complicated as the administrator gains experience. The North Carolina Principal Evaluation Process developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (2008) is an example of a standards based rubric that is based on seven leadership standards. Developmental in design, veteran principals are expected to perform at a higher level than beginning or developing principals. For example, a beginning principal is expected to adhere to the legal requirements for teacher evaluations, but the minimum expectation for veteran principals is to create a process for providing formal feedback to teachers concerning the effectiveness of their instruction and ways to improve instruction.

Kleckler and Loadman (1999) presented their findings from 168 principals from Ohio who returned the Inventory of Change in Organizational Structure survey. The survey was sent to 306 principals who lead schools that are undergoing self-designed restructuring. Survey results included several statistical comparisons of the data including gender differences, years of experience, and demographic differences. Results of the

principal surveys revealed mixed opinions from principals. Some were not in favor of the changes but agreed to go along with the grant because they believed change was inevitable.

Rayfield and Diamantes (2006) provided examples of what makes the principal's job desirable and what makes it less attractive. The study was designed to explain some of the reasons fewer teachers are interested in seeking the leadership position. The authors provided a review of literature about the expansion of the principal's responsibilities. As responsibilities expand traditional duties remain in the job description. The study was quantitative, designed to gather information about attitudes through surveys from principals who are currently practicing. Several positive and negative changes that have occurred in job responsibilities were identified through an analysis of the data. The analysis of data provided by secondary principals indicated dissatisfaction with the ever growing demands of the job. For example, secondary principals perceive the expectation that they must be experts in several areas. The increase in the number of federal and state mandates that require supervision by the principal is an increase in responsibility that principals view as unsatisfying. An opportunity for aspiring principals to intern with proven educational leaders could help aspiring principals more effectively make the transition to administrators.

Kempster (2006) argued that leadership and management are learned through experience. People develop leadership skills as they work with groups of peers, developing leadership as others begin to define the individual as a leader because of their ability to manage added responsibility. Leadership qualities develop as the individual works with and emulates leaders in the organization. This relates directly to the mentor

and intern relationship because of the way adults learn from others and develop their own leadership styles.

Enomoto and Gardiner (2006) studied the importance of teaching interns to understand the importance of social roles. This study of eight mentors and interns found the least effective approach to pairing mentors with interns happens when the intern stays with one mentor throughout the internship. The researchers found the best internship model to be when the intern works with a facilitator who schedules internship hours for the intern with several mentors in a variety of school settings to provide a range of experiences beyond the work setting of the mentor.

An example of a mentoring program that provides a variety of experience with experienced mentors via email is the National Principal Mentor Certification Program. Experienced principals and beginning principals are eligible to participate in this program (Shen, Cooley, Ruhl-Smith, & Keiser, 1999). Surveys were used to gather information from 417 graduate students about their perceptions of their educational leadership programs. Many of the respondents said a teacher could successfully move into the position of principal with training limited to the experience they gain while teaching. The authors made an argument against field-based programs for educational leadership based on the principle that school leaders need to be trained in best practices at universities.

Contemporary principals use research to make leadership decisions that change the goals and objectives of their schools. Saha and Biddle (2006) conducted research in the United States and Australia about how principals use research to guide instruction. As a result of their research, the authors have confirmed that principals do use research knowledge to make innovative changes in their schools. They interviewed 120 principals

from primary and secondary schools to gather the information for their study. The interviews included various questions about research knowledge.

The first question concerned the pressure principals feel from external environments to be innovative and how that pressure impacts their decision making. More than half of the principals interviewed indicated moderate to strong pressure to innovate while one quarter indicated pressure to avoid innovative changes. Principals were asked how they felt about innovation and only 5% of American principals and none of the Australian principals stated unfavorable opinions about innovation. About 75% of principals' opinions of innovation were either mildly or strongly favorable.

Lastly, principals were asked what strategies they use to decide how and what innovations to use. The responses were put into five categories. The two most popular categories were *consults and decides* and *leads group to a decision*. The least popular was *decides unilaterally*. The last question discussed in this article asked principals to describe a recent innovation and how the teachers responded to the innovation. About 85% of the innovations were successful from the beginning or after a short period of resistance.

According to Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2004) the process that aspiring principals experienced during the internship was about transformation. Because the vast majority of principals worked as teachers, the process is a transition from the teaching culture with a narrower classroom view to that of an administrator with a broader view of the school. The change process that occurs includes new language, skills, perspective and accountability (Cooner, Quinn, & Dickman, 2007). The opportunity to observe and work with successful principals is a key component of the transformational process for aspiring

principals.

At least 35 states have adopted and used ISLLC Standards to guide principal preparation and evaluation (Kaplan, Owings, & Nunnery, 2005). Principal preparation programs have included ISLLC Standards in their training programs at universities all over the United States. The Tennessee State Board of Education adopted the Tennessee Learning Centered Leadership System in October 2010. The policy requires university programs that train students to become educational leaders to use Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS) as the foundation of their training program. The TILS are similar to ISLLC Standards. Performance contracts and evaluations for principals are also based on goals and TILS competency indicators. The Tennessee Learning Centered Leadership System requires field experience be aligned to standards and take place during fulfillment of the total curriculum.

The use of ISLLC Standards is a clear move away from managerial and administrative duties that principals have traditionally performed to the role of instructional leader focused on student instruction (Kaplan et al., 2005). According to Kaplan et al. (2005) there is a correlation between principals who have a mastery of ISLLC Standards and high achievement in the schools they serve. The standards clarify the list of responsibilities a principal might perform while leading the school. The list is not inclusive, but it places the leader's focus on professional practices that support student achievement (Murphy, 2002).

In 2011 the Tennessee State Department of Education was awarded a competitive grant from the United States Department of Education. One of the requirements of the grant was a change in the way teachers and principals are evaluated. Beginning with the

2011-2012 school year, all principals are evaluated on a yearly basis. The evaluation is a five-point scale that is based on the TILS standards. Evidence must support work as a mentor, for aspiring or beginning principals, for a principal to receive a score of 5 on any standard (National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, 2011)

Summary

Mentoring is an important component of training for aspiring and beginning principals because interns learn on the job in a supportive environment where they can take chances. Mentors also learn from the experience of being a mentor. The literature reviewed for this case study supports the need for standards based mentoring programs. The ISLLC standards are an excellent example of standards that are used to provide structure and coherence for mentoring programs.

According to Weingartner (2009, p. 61), “Mentoring is the process by which an individual with knowledge and skills in a field willingly shares advice and support with a beginner.” The mentors interviewed for this case study received 16 hours of training from a Southeast Region Educational Board (SREB) trainer before they began mentoring an intern (SREB, 2010). Support from East Tennessee State University professors was also an important ongoing support system provided by the university.

Positive and negative outcomes for the mentor were reviewed to support the research. Leadership and the change process were also reviewed to support the importance of the mentors role in the process we call mentoring.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

This qualitative case study is based on perceptions of eight mentors for eight aspiring principal interns in a single internship program requiring 540 internship hours over the course of 2 school years. The administrative endorsement internship program is a bounded system; it is defined by set guidelines for the mentor and intern relationship (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Interviews were conducted with mentors to gather data. The responses of mentors offered valuable information about perceptions of the mentoring program, personal growth of mentors, and the relevance of the mentoring experience for the intern. Chapters 1 and 2 presented an overview of the study and a review of related literature. This chapter describes data collection procedures, interview protocol, selection of participants, and strategies for analyzing data.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this case study was to identify perceptions of eight principals who are serving as mentors in a program for aspiring principals at East Tennessee State University. Selected mentors were interviewed during May and June of 2012 to gather data for this research study. The following research questions guided the researcher through the research process:

1. What are the difficulties experienced in mentoring aspiring principals?
2. What do mentors perceive as the strengths and weaknesses of an internship program?
3. What do mentors believe they contribute to the mentor and intern relationship?

4. How do mentors believe they benefit from their participation in the mentor and intern relationship?
5. What do the mentors learn about the tacit knowledge that they use to perform their work responsibilities?

Data Collection Procedures

Following is a description of the process used to investigate the perceptions of school principals who are serving as mentors for aspiring principals in an internship program for graduate students who are seeking endorsement as beginning administrators. The case study method was used to investigate the phenomenon of mentor and intern relationships from the perspective of the mentor. Interviews were the primary source of data for this study.

Purposeful Sampling

Purposeful sampling was used to gather data for this study because this study is specific to principals who were mentoring in a specific internship program administered by the ELPA Department at East Tennessee State University.

According to Snape and Spencer (2003), “qualitative methods are used to address research questions that require explanation or understanding of social phenomena and their contexts” (p. 5). This case study was designed to investigate perceptions held by mentors of aspiring principals committed to completing a 540-hour internship in a bounded system with specific completion requirements and expectations. According to Creswell (2002) whenever a case has specific criteria that must be accomplished to meet the requirements of the program it is bound by these requirements. The ELPA program

requires 540 hours of internship that includes specific experiences at each level of elementary, middle, and secondary education. An interview guide was developed to outline the research topics that would be covered during each interview. Follow-up questions were asked to gather additional information via conversations that occurred during the interviews in order to clarify information that was provided as a result of the five original research questions in the interview guide. Active listening was also used to clarify responses during the interview.

Recruiting Protocol

The superintendents of 12 principals participating as mentors for Zephyr Cohort of East Tennessee State University's Educational Leadership Program were contacted by mail with a description of the study and a request for permission by this researcher to contact the mentors in their school system. The superintendents of eight mentors granted permission for the researcher to contact the mentors in their systems. The superintendent of one school system with three possible participants did not respond to two written requests for permission. The superintendent of a final possible participant did not recommend one mentor for inclusion in the study because it was the mentor's first year in the position of principal. After receiving permission to contact possible participants, the researcher contacted the eight mentors by email and each agreed to participate in the study. Appointments to review informed consent paperwork and discuss the research study were made by telephone. The meetings were held at the individual participant's school unless the participant wanted to meet at another site.

Interview Guide

The Interview Guide was developed for use in face-to-face recorded interviews. The semistructured approach including structured and less structured questions for the interview as described by McMillan and Schumacher (2006) was used to conduct this part of the research. Semistructured questions are open ended questions that provide enough structure to keep the respondent on topic while allowing individuals to answer the question by describing their own experiences and feelings. This approach was used to keep the responses within the framework of the research questions while allowing the participant to provide personal perceptions that were not influenced by the prejudices of the researcher.

Interview Logistics

Because mentors were current principals or system-wide administrators, the setting was the school or administrative office where each mentor serves. Interviews were scheduled at a time and day that was convenient for the participants and were recorded and transcribed for analysis of data. The relationship between the researcher and the participants was that of interviewer and respondent. The researcher asked questions and documented the responses of the participants for the purpose of this research. The participants are also school principals and mentors for aspiring principals. In return for their participation in the case study, participants had their input effectively documented about an important topic impacting principal training and retention.

Ethical Protocol

This study was submitted for approval by the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) after gaining approval for this research study from my dissertation committee. This was necessary to ensure the ethical protection of all subjects who were interviewed for this study. Because the internship program for aspiring principals is a function of East Tennessee State University's Educational Leadership Program, permission from the department to conduct the research was also necessary. The superintendents of each school system with mentors participating in the internship program were contacted by letter requesting permission to contact mentor principals in their school systems. After receiving permission from the superintendents, 8 mentors in the program were contacted via email. The email included a description of the study and a request to conduct interviews with the mentors at their place of employment. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. To ensure confidentiality of participants' responses, each participant was assigned a pseudonym. Responses were documented in a way that did not reveal the identity of the respondent. Participants were identified by name, and it was made clear that participation was entirely optional. The topic of this study would not be considered sensitive. The data that were generated through this case study does not appear to have any potentially harmful consequences for participants or this researcher, and the information gathered during this case study should provide information that will help future cohorts of mentors and protégés during the mentoring process.

Data Analysis

Interviews were recorded on a digital recorder and transcribed to text via computer for further analysis. The text was coded by themes that emerged. The constant comparative analysis method of Strauss and Corbin (1998) was used to code the tape recorded interviews. Four steps were followed while analyzing the data. The first step was to analyze and code one interview. The interview was labeled with appropriate codes that emerged. The second step in the process was to compare the remaining interviews and label them with codes from the first interview while analyzing the interviews for additional codes that were not labeled in the first interview. Each interview was compared because each participant in this case study has a similar experience. By comparing words, phrases, and sentences, results were coded based on relating characteristics and themes that emerged (Boeije, 2002). As themes emerged, new codes were added to explain what the participants intended to communicate.

The next step was to put coded information into an Excel spread-sheet for further analysis based on the emergent themes. The spreadsheet allowed analysis of data by providing an organized chart of themes.

Quality and Verification

Member checks and an auditor were used to increase validity and to ensure the quality of the research. An auditor was hired to compare the research findings with the typed transcripts to validate the correctness of the findings. A copy of the individual participant's transcript was given to each participant to review for accuracy and meaning. The member check involved a second appointment with each participant to review the

transcript for any changes or clarification that might be needed. This step in the process helped to establish validity. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study before or during member check for any reason.

The findings of the study may only be generalized to the East Tennessee State University internship program for aspiring school principals. The study was limited to the eight participants in the case study and perspectives they gained through the experience of mentoring an administrative intern for 2 years.

Summary

The methodology that was used to complete this case study was described in this chapter. First, the research methods used to conduct the study were described; second, the purpose for conducting the study and the research questions were described. The third section described the procedures for collecting data, while the fourth section describes the sampling procedure that was used. The fifth, sixth, and seventh parts of this chapter addressed the interview guide, interview logistics and the ethical protocol. The eighth section describes how data were analyzed. Finally a description of how member checks and an auditor were used to increase the validity of the study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore perceptions of practicing school administrators in relation to their work as mentors for aspiring principals. Individual interviews with eight administrators from east Tennessee and western North Carolina were conducted after the administrator's superintendent granted permission to contact the administrator. Data about the mentoring process and information that mentors learned about themselves was gathered and analyzed. The process mentors use for sharing tacit knowledge that has helped them perform their job duties with their interns was also analyzed. The eight administrators were interviewed in the spring of 2012. The researcher asked the following questions to examine the perceptions of mentors about the mentoring process developed by the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis program at East Tennessee State University:

1. What are the difficulties experienced in mentoring aspiring principals?
2. What do mentors perceive as the strengths and weaknesses of an internship program?
3. What do mentors believe they contribute to the mentor and intern relationship?
4. How do mentors believe they benefit from their participation in the mentor and intern relationship?
5. What do the mentors learn about the tacit knowledge that they use to perform their work responsibilities?

Each interview was conducted in the school system central office or a school office that was available for the participant to meet for the interview. The participants were given a written description of the study and asked to sign an informed consent form. The participants were reminded that participation in the research was voluntary. Each interview lasted about 30 to 60 minutes. A digital recording of each interview was made and transcribed. Each participant received a copy of his or her transcript to verify validity. The data were analyzed to see what themes emerged from the open ended questions about mentoring and the mentoring program conducted by the ELPA department at ETSU. One goal was to develop themes about what mentors gain from the mentoring experience. Participants were given a pseudonym and the names of their schools and school systems were not included in this study to protect their identity.

Participant pseudonyms are listed in Table 1:

Table 1

Participants in the Study

Participants	Gender	Years in Administration
Participant 1- Stella	Female	6
Participant 2- Sharps	Female	14
Participant 3- Brooklyn	Male	9
Participant 4- Tee	Male	7
Participant 5- Coe	Male	5
Participant 6- Ultra	Male	9
Participant 7- Isabella	Female	21
Participant 8- Johnson	Male	9

Themes

Analysis of interview transcripts from eight mentors indicated nine themes about mentoring and principal training at East Tennessee State University. These themes were: (a) reflective nature of mentoring, (b) relationships, (c) tacit knowledge, (d) mentors of mentors, (e) benefits for the mentor, (f) use of the ISLLC Standards, (g) variety of experiences, (h) program strengths, and (i) program limitations.

Reflective Nature of Mentoring

Several mentors spoke about the reflective nature of mentoring associated with the relationships that are developed with the intern.

Coe, a principal with 5 years of experience, spoke about how he is reminded to continue to do the basics that are important for the school. He stated:

I remember the fact that the mentee would ask a lot of questions led me to think that there really were a lot of steps that went into this decision or went into this action that maybe I didn't consciously think about. But, her level of questioning sort of brought that to light for me. Because in my mind, I went from A to B, but her questions revealed there were lots of little intermediate steps between those things.

Sharps described how mentoring has helped her reflect and realize the things she doesn't share with staff and teach them because she takes it for granted they already know. "I've learned more about that, about myself. I realized, you know, you can't always do that. It's just your way, and that isn't always better either. So, really, I've reflected and learned more than they have, I'm sure. "

Ultra expressed a similar perception about how mentoring causes him to reflect about why he makes decisions. He stated:

I think that it's been beneficial for me in the aspect that there's just some things that you do that you just take for granted and that you just naturally do and you don't really think about why you do them. Having someone that will ask a question as to why I would handle it this way, or why would you do it that way, is good from a self-reflection standpoint. Just having an opportunity to kind of self-reflect. Before, when I first started out and I didn't have an assistant, there wasn't really, unless I was contacting another colleague as a sounding board, there was no one really there to question why I was doing anything.

Isabella learns about her own style of leadership by mentoring. As she mentors aspiring principals, she reflects about her own leadership style as she learns about leadership from the professors at ETSU and the interns. She explains:

Each person that I work with I learned something from, every aspiring leader. I learned about different styles of leadership. Mine isn't the best; I'm not the perfect model. I also learned from the people at ETSU lots of things about leadership, about how to work with that group of people. I think just those people and working with ETSU and having that relationship with them was just powerful.

Johnson states how mentoring an aspiring principal forces him to be a reflective practitioner while providing an opportunity for the intern to analyze the decision making process. He explains:

I'm having reflection myself, honestly, on what I do know, how I'm working with the school, the responsibilities that are underneath my domain. With that, I think for them it's giving them an opportunity to also learn about a safe ground or, I guess, a safe area where they can think about this is a decision I would have made and what could have been the consequences there. Number 1, it is a reflection piece for me because I'm thinking more intently about every decision I make. I think one of the first things is it's helped me to stop and refine my practices. I am more methodical when I am making a decision. As a principal, you are faced with a multitude of decisions every day. Some of them are very quick and some of them are very easy. Some of them are not as easy. I think it's help me stop and think about every decision that I make and the impact. When you're training others from that perspective, it makes you more aware of that and the job that you're doing. Secondly, this is something we've discussed briefly, just the reflection. I am much more reflective, and I can see where I started several years ago and where I am now. The reflection piece is entirely different. I used to be one of those that just jumped right in and had a conversation. I now find myself sitting back, and I listen to all the different perspectives before I even respond. I think it's made me a much more powerful administrator because I am hearing their perspectives, and instead of me just jumping in and trying to fix it and patch

the problem, what I'm doing now is I listen to the source of it. A lot of times that is a teachable moment.

Johnson continued with an explanation of how reflection helps him understand why he makes decisions. It has changed the way he communicates with the faculty in the school he leads as well. He states:

I'm always trying to do the why first. It's also helped me in the mentoring process because I'm putting that out there first, so they understand why I'm making a decision or why they're doing this project or why this circumstance turned out the way it did. We're getting to the meat before, so that way there's an explanation and a framework built for them instead of just do it and later on I'll explain why or have the purpose more defined. To me, that has been a teachable point for me.

Relationships

Another theme mentors expressed is the importance of relationships in mentoring. Helping interns understand how to develop relationships is important to Stella, who explained:

The other thing is teaching them how to develop relationships and helping them understand that there are five ways which people are motivated, and teaching them how to align the motivation to the individuals so they can get the maximum amount of growth out of each person. You can't do that without individual relationships. I spend a lot of time teaching them how to bite their tongues, hold back their opinions, and build relationships.

She continued to explain how some professional relationships lead to the development of trust. Trust allows you to give the intern opportunities to experience growth because principals are able to delegate responsibility to the intern they would not delegate without trusting the intern. She explains, "If you don't ever give them an opportunity to take a risk, to make the wrong decision, then they won't ever make decisions and they can't experience growth."

The importance of understanding that it takes time to develop relationships was mentioned by Isabella. Opening car doors for students during morning arrival is an example of how she demonstrated the importance of serving others. Some of the faculty did not understand why she asked them to open doors for students. Given time and her consistent model, she explains the change that occurred, “But then what happened over time is people understand you’re the real deal or not. They started helping with those things. I think that those experiences are all really vital. I think they helped the people that I mentored understand what your role is.”

Isabella continued, “I think people that are aspiring to be leaders need to know and understand that it’s not having this position; it’s about really knowing the work, the nitty-gritty work of what it’s like to be in a classroom and what it’s like to support teachers. Build leaders in those teachers so that they can lead themselves and they don’t need you hanging over top of them.”

Tee explained his belief that it is important for the mentor to take the lead in setting the tone for the mentor and intern relationship. He stated, “I try to mentor them in that way that they’re comfortable. I want to build that relationship, whether it be ETSU interns or my people through the process.” He also spoke about the importance of encouraging the interns to take the initiative to communicate with the mentor due to the amount of time principals spend carrying out their responsibilities. He said:

Of my two interns, one takes more initiative to be in contact with me than the other. I’ve had more contact with that person. I don’t think that any principals necessarily want to not deal with them. Just as a building-level principal, life gets busy. If they’ll just shoot me an email or call me or something like that, it’s not a problem.

Brooklyn describes what he believes is an important aspect of the relationship demonstrated by his intern. “I think that she realizes that it’s not a position that’s high and aloft, but it’s a position that enjoys being in the classroom getting to know the kids, getting to know the families.”

He also spoke about the importance of supporting the development of the relationship between the intern and the faculty. He explains:

There are a lot of questions that come in. Who is this new person? What is it that they’re trying to accomplish? Is this person going to put different sanctions on the school? How involved is this person going to be? But, you, as the stable factor in your school, can wash a lot of that out and just put that person out there as an extra set of hands, an extra resource.

Coe reflected on how his professors at ETSU used Sergiovanni’s *Moral Leadership* to support the value of relationships in the role of principal. On the importance of developing relationships, he said:

Every year, that value is affirmed over and over again. It doesn’t matter how much you know, how good you are at interpreting the data, how efficient you are in writing School Improvement Plans if you can’t relate to the people who are working with you and communicate with them that you care about them and that we’re on the same team, working toward the same goal, then empower them to partner with you. I don’t think you’re going to be very effective in the long-term. I just think that relationship piece is fundamental to this work.

Stella said she has learned a lot about relationships during her career and from her mother. Aptly put, “People are important, so listen to them. “

Tacit Knowledge

Tacit knowledge refers to knowledge that a person has obtained through experience and is difficult to teach others because the person with tacit knowledge may be unaware that she or he has that knowledge. An example of tacit knowledge is the knowledge an experienced principal has about effectively administering the discipline

code in a school. The mentors described examples of their own tacit knowledge and how they may pass their tacit knowledge along to their interns. Brooklyn's perception of how he developed tacit knowledge included the following:

I think you pick up things along the way from other people. Sometimes you pick up your tacit knowledge just by being an observer. I think that's critical, especially being a principal. You have to observe, and you have figure out what it is you don't know and then you have to put that into something that becomes your day-to-day. The question is how you share that knowledge with somebody who's new, who's coming in, who really doesn't know. For you, it's kind of just been your normal, everyday routine. How do you step back and stop and say, okay, these are why I do the things I do? It causes you, within that tacit knowledge, to be more of a reflective practitioner. I don't know how you share that knowledge. It just kind of happens. It's what make you, you. And you hope that some of that is picked up along the way in your mentor/mentee relationship. I guess it's never anything that you stop and discuss. That's one of those things that just takes time. Everything that I do is established from years past, and, sure, I'd like to think that I'm into a routine now, but it's taken me years to establish.

Johnson stated that reflective times in the mentoring process are times when tacit knowledge can be developed in the intern. He explained:

The reflection piece, when I actually sit down with them because a lot of times if it's a task that we're assigned or even a decision that's made, I always like to stop when we get a brief moment, and we'll sit down. I will pose a question to them. Why did I make that decision? Then we talk about the different ramifications or the different positions or the different ways it could have been accomplished. But why it was accomplished in this means, or why I gave that answer to that decision.

Johnson continued this discussion with a process that he referred to as seeking the why answer for what we do. He said, "I'm always trying to do the why first." He said it is one of the strengths of his school system because leadership development is emphasized by teaching interns and teacher leaders to question their practices and explain why each decision is made. Johnson said:

We're getting to the meat before, so that way there's an explanation and a framework built for them instead of just do it and later on I'll explain why or have the purpose more defined. To me, that has been a teachable point for me.

Tee explained how he provides interns with tasks and projects that are meaningful to help develop tacit knowledge. Some of the activities include running summer school, working with the schedule, and other activities that cause the intern to be reflective. His goal is to prepare the intern to become as comfortable as possible with the responsibilities of running a school. He stated:

My goal would be for them to be as prepared as possible. They'll never be fully prepared, or I don't think they will be. I try to reflect on that and try to have those conversations. Like anytime we go through something, A) ask them what they would think, and then B) ask them what questions they have of me and how did I get through that process, what were the steps involved in that. It goes back to, what we've already talked about, the trust in the relationship.

Stella explained the difficulty in knowing how tacit knowledge is actually taught to interns. Her perception is that it takes time for the intern to develop knowledge through experience. Speaking of tacit knowledge, she said:

I don't know if I pass it along, or if it's just a skill that they develop as they're moving along. Initially, you can see that you have to do it every day, a couple of times a day. Then a year into it, it's like, they've got it. They know how to interact with folks to motivate them, to tap into it. And they know how to filter out unnecessary information, even the personal attacks. I don't know that I've necessarily passed that along, but I see their style matching my style.

Ultra described tacit knowledge as something that is best developed through experience and conveyed to others through reflective practices. He stated:

I would say that everything is more experiential based, based off of experience and just... It's not something I necessarily think about... Other than when someone's asking me a question, then I'm doing some self-reflection on it, and then, I'll be like, well, it's because I know. Sometimes it's your gut feeling, and sometimes it's based off of prior experiences.

Sharps explained how she uses personal stories from her years of experience in education to understand her own tacit knowledge and convey that knowledge to her interns. She explained:

I tell them things like, if a parent emails me and it's really something that you're going to have to email something sensitive about their child, I pick up the phone, and I have them in. I don't start an email quarrel.

Sharps continued to speak about the importance of authentic experience to demonstrate the tacit knowledge she has gained. She tries to use real examples about the nuances of the principalship like placing teachers on teams together to create an effective teaching team. She explains:

They're teaming because together they are a great team because the kids get some of each style. A kid who's in one room, they can really respond to this style, and they may not respond to the other. At least part of their day is in a real comfort zone.

Isabella expressed some of the things that she learned about her own tacit knowledge. She thinks she has always had this ability to judge the character of others. As she said, "I have a good barometer of people." She says of herself:

I'm a real people person, and I watch how people react, and I watch body language, and I know when I've shut somebody down, and I know I can fix it. I think that the fact that I will almost be self-deprecating in order to help somebody else. I didn't realize that about myself. I didn't know that I did that until other people would tell me that, you know, you have mercy. It's good to have mercy when people make mistakes or they do things that are not right, and I never would have thought of myself as a merciful person. I think that I probably am and also empathetic. But, when I've gone through a process with somebody and they still don't get it, I don't have a problem saying, we're done with this. I hope that's what tacit knowledge is – those things that I intrinsically do, and I do my job.

Johnson uses actual scenarios with his intern to initiate thinking about the possible outcomes that could occur from a list of options. Instead of providing an answer and explanation for a problem, he chooses to ask the interns what they would do and why. He explains:

I want to get their responses first. Then I try to use that as a teachable moment. I think it's not only helped and refined my reflection practices; it's also making me a better teacher because I think the principal should be an instructional leader and whether it's working with the teachers, but also working other administrators.

Mentors of Mentors

Four of the mentors referred to their own experiences with their mentors. Mentors learned practices from their mentors that they still use to perform their responsibilities today. Stella reflected on some of the things she learned from her mentor. About her mentor she said:

She just was phenomenal about giving people what they need without them even knowing that she did it. The best piece of advice that she gave me is, you'll know that you're a successful leader when everything that you have envisioned is happening and no one gives you credit for it. They all think they did it on their own. That's when you're successful.

Another mentor who learned important lessons about how a principal should interact was Isabella. She recalled working with one of her mentors opening car doors in front of the high school where was working. She said, "I remember I was out front opening car doors, and I learned that from my principal. He was always outside. He was always out front. He was always very visible."

Coe stated that his mentor was his principal when he worked as an assistant to the principal. He explained how the combination of having a strong mentor, excellent graduate school classes, and on-the-job experience helped him learn practices that eventually led to his appointment as a principal in the same school system. He reflected:

I was beginning the leadership program at the same time that I started a job called Assistant to the Principal, which did not require an administrative endorsement, but a lot of the tasks were administrative in nature. I was working under a very effective leader who was able to guide me through not only my day-to-day work but as I was learning about things in these classes, we would have dialogue about that. I think my mentor, mentors, plural, enjoyed the program as much as I did. They would enjoy, okay, so what are you learning about in this class because they wanted to be...it was like they were going through the program all over again. They wanted to be current and benefit from that as well. That was the ideal situation because it was real-world, but it was in tandem with the academic piece.

I remember, so well, sitting in class, and as we're learning these things thinking, that's exactly what my principal does, that's exactly how my principal would have handled that.

Tee reflected on his time as an assistant to the principal and the importance of the long-term professional relationships that were developed with his mentors and continue as he serves as a principal. He explained:

To this day, though, I've been in this role for 5 years now, I still have those people that I contact that still serve as my mentors in some ways and ask questions. It may not be how I would end up making a decision. There was this one person; I would call her and say, okay, put your middle school principal hat back on, and she would. We'd go through scenarios, and she'd give me input, and I respect her greatly. Does that mean a hundred percent of the time I go with what she says? No. I think it's important that you build those relationships beyond just the mentoring. That it's long-term that you have that network of people that you can go to because you're going to be faced with decisions regularly that you probably need to at least get some people's input either to support the direction you're already going or maybe to make you think in a little bit different way.

Sharps, a principal of 14 years, explained how her relationship with her mentor grew from her time as an assistant principal under a mentor principal and continued when she became a principal of another school. She stated:

I used to really get put out when my mentor said, if you're going to talk to me, you're going to need to walk with me. And now I find myself going... They'll want to tell you something, you've got to come with me because I've got to walk to get to a place. My mentor was great at data. She showed me how to do everything, everything that you could do with data. She showed and shared. She let me do lots of things, but she never let me touch the books, the finances. She didn't tell me one thing about it. So, my first day, I went, I don't know what an internal, I don't know what a site-base is, and she said, I need to come over. She will tell you she wished she had allowed me to at least have dialogue about budget, about finances, and I've heard more people say that they didn't have experience with that.

Isabella reflected on how the process of being a mentor reminded her of her mentors. She commented on the positive and negative examples her mentors modeled during the process of carrying out their responsibilities. She said:

Really, this whole process really made me think about the people that mentored me. I learned so much from them, but it made me think about it. I've had models of things that I would definitely emulate and do again. Then, I've also worked for people who I would never do some of the things that they did. I learned that this process made me think about that and really reflect upon what kind of leader I want to be.

Benefits for the Mentor

A third theme that developed is the benefits that mentors perceive they received from mentoring aspiring principals. Many participants expressed benefits of being a mentor.

Stella explained how mentoring inspires her to read more and research best practices so she can teach these practices to her intern. She stated:

I think where I benefit is it keeps me on my toes. It keeps me reading and researching so that I can be an exemplary mentor to them, but also just so that I can have a general dialogue about what they're reading in their class. They really want you to know what they're learning. I think that's the benefit I really get. And then seeing them become successful in leadership roles.

Coe explained how mentoring makes him a better listener who asks more questions. He also said it helped him become more reflective in planning activities for the intern. He said, "I would, between our meetings, design activities and questions and pull resources based on what they had told me, and seek to understand where the mentee was in their journey."

Brooklyn describes the benefit of intrinsic motivation he feels from seeing an intern develop. He stated:

For the sake of sounding corny, it just makes you feel good to know that you're doing something worthwhile for another professional. You're helping somebody. There's a lot intrinsic motivation that goes along with that. In term, you know that that person is going to then help children. That kind of centers us back to why we got into this to begin with.

Sharps explained how mentoring caused her to evaluate her own practices and eventually led her to realize she needed to become a better delegator to help others in her school develop leadership skills. She said:

I grow more than they do in the program, because I realized during the mentorship how little I delegated. I realized with a principal in the county, who was very dominant in her personality that when she wasn't at the school, and I did a SACS visit, how they didn't know how to do some things because she didn't delegate enough. And in the mentorship program is how I realized that about myself.

Use of the ISLLC Standards

The ISLLC Standards were a theme in the research that several mentors described as a useful tool for developing an action plan for their relationship with the intern and self-evaluation for the intern.

Stella described the ISLLC Standards as a real benefit to the program. She explained:

We use the ISLLC standards, and I think that was a real benefit. When we evaluate them each semester, we talk about their progress on the ISLLC standards and also where they still need to grow. And then we develop an action plan from that point to say, here are some experiences I feel like that you still need in order to accomplish this standard, so that when you finish the program, you're ready to walk into a principalship. That's the thing that I think, I felt like we stayed very close to the ISLLC standards.

Coe described how he and the intern used the ISLLC standards to identify what the intern perceived as areas for improvement through their time together. He also explained how interns are able to use the ISLLC Standards to design internship experiences that are uniquely based on their needs. He stated:

We spent an entire semester on taking that ISLLC standard that she felt was not a real strength for her and translating that into real-world of school. How do we use data? How do we make decisions? How do we conference with teachers? One

question just led to another, and we used that ISLLC self-assessment as a jumping-off point. But really, the intern decided how deep we were going to go, which direction we were going to take.

Ultra reflected on the use of the ISLLC Standards as a key part of the evaluation process for the intern. He said, “When we’re doing the evaluation components of what they’re working on and what they have done self-assessment wise.

Isabella explained the importance of helping the intern find the meaning behind the ISLLC Standards. Her perception of the standards is that they are general guidelines for the intern and mentor. She stated:

It’s a good place to start, but sometimes they don’t understand the standards. Sometimes I have a difficult time understanding the standards. I know that they have trouble understanding what that means, and I don’t think I’m the only person that is confused about them at times. But making things more real, more meaningful, more purposeful, so that they can go out and they can actually use it.

Tee referred to the ISLLC Standards as useful for self-reflection and planning activities for the intern. He uses it with the intern to help develop individual goals that are unique to the intern. He said, “They may have goals that they would really like to work on some component of that to develop personally.”

Johnson uses the ISLLC Standards with the intern to develop a plan for growth through goal setting from a self-assessment. He uses the standards for short term and long term planning. One of his goals is for the intern to learn how the standards fit together.

He stated:

One of the things we look at is different responsibilities that fall underneath what that administrator does every day or within the school year. We look at that, but then also, where they rate themselves. We look at actual, manageable tasks that they can complete that will reflect those ISLLC standards and how they do. Does this fit under this ISLLC standard or this one. They’re getting to see how they all mesh together, which is really nice because you can see who’s learning that very quickly. Sometimes it’s clear that it fits into one, but once they see that, they

started saying, this could be two, three, and five or something like this. They're beginning to see the inner-related nature of the ISLLC standards and how there's just not one area that it distinctly falls within. We do use that to guide us though.

Variety of Experiences

Several mentors described a variety of experiences. Each mentor had opinions of what is important for the intern to learn during the internship experience. Their perception about what is important for interns to learn represents several of the responsibilities principals manage during their work year.

Johnson describes the importance of providing a variety of experiences for the intern that includes procedures and working with people. He also wants to provide opportunities that will help the intern have a holistic view of the system.

He stated:

I think just a plethora of responsibilities that fall underneath an administrator. There's no way to see them unless you're actually in their shoes and with them from day-to-day. One of the things that I try to do is if I'm going to give them an opportunity to complete a task, I want to make sure that it's not just a busywork or copying job or just a simple project. I want them to see this is a project, these are the ramifications or these are the consequences or the things that you need to deal with. This is how it's going to affect the students. This is how it affects the teachers. This is how it affects the procedures. This is your relation with the central office on this. I try to get them not to this is a project, but look at the big picture.

Brooklyn explained how the mentor has to help the intern navigate through the internship experience while keeping focused on valuable experiences. He said the internship should include time with local government agencies that impact education and education leadership. For example, his intern is doing some of her internship hours with the county manager because the county government where he lives is the funding body

for education. He said this experience is valuable for learning about the budget process.

He stated:

And we're saying to the county commissioners, these are what each individual school finds important and find valuable and prioritizing the budget and then going back and having those conversations with the principals. It's allowed me to see a different side of the budget process. She's getting a different experience so that hopefully when she graduates and she's put into a position of leadership she can then take the experiences, and even the connections and the networks she's made as teacher, and use that and give service back to our district.

Isabella said about providing experiences for interns, "That's like one of our main responsibilities in life to support other people so they can move forward." She also said the intern and mentor should develop a plan together that includes a variety of experiences, "but making sure that it's meaningful. Many of the people that we mentor don't even have a plan in their head as to what they want to do."

Isabella explained the importance of teaching the intern to understand how things should be done through planning and actually doing them. She explained:

Wouldn't it be great to have that person plan the entire meeting with your help? And assign roles and then have them actually do that meeting. I think that would be invaluable to a new principal. I wish somebody had done that for me, because I never really saw that. I think that you have to instruct if you want to really move forward. I think that's a great question for a mentor to ask an aspiring leader. Are you willing to do the hard work in your job, not just the stuff that you want to do? Those are things that can really... Those are tough things to do. I think unless you do it and you're willing to do it, it's really hard.

Stella talked about making sure the intern understands that the details are an important part of being successful. She said, "It's the little things that polish people. But when they leave you, you hope that they can walk into an interview, be able to answer the questions, and present themselves in a professional manner."

Coe delegates activities that develop the ability in the intern to look at the big picture while understanding the details that support the vision of the school. He provided an example of a project he recently delegated to his intern. “An example is she put together a video presentation for our volunteers. That’s something she’ll have to coordinate and do those types of things as a principal too. It needs to somehow connect to the work that they’re going to do.”

Ultra explained his belief that it is important for the interns to understand their areas for future growth and communicate this with him. He said, “I think it’s a joint effort. I really am dependent on them to know kind of what they still need to do.” Referring to his style of providing experiences, he continued by saying “Just making them a part of the process and then giving them shadowing opportunities at the different levels have been valuable too.” He also mentioned summer planning as a good time to work with his intern.

Sharps described several experiences she plans for the intern. The budget process is something she states every intern should experience. She stated:

We have an internal, and we have site-based [budget]. I spend some real time, and I said, you can take nine or ten courses, and it’s never going to be like your expectation of dealing with it. I tell them some things like, money has to come in and go out the way it’s came in. If it’s for students, it has to go out to students.

Sharps discussed the importance of providing opportunities for the intern to interact with parents. She said, “I love having them on parent conferences. I think of all the things that happened with [intern’s name] was seeing how to handle difficult parent situations.” She continued by discussing what activities she is willing to allow an intern to experience. She includes advice from personal experience:

I'm willing to allow them to call a parent if their child needs to be picked up or if they need to tell them they didn't get their work, and they're going to need to work on it in the office. I'm willing to allow them to help a teacher with a problem if it's simple enough. I've tried to teach them how to handle little things like: A) don't over react, (B) everything that sounds like it's a zero tolerance aren't. Be really careful not to over react. Call a fellow principal or a central office supervisor if you're in doubt.

Tee explains how he tries to keep the focus of the internship experience on instruction while providing a variety of leadership experiences.

I try to provide them a wealth of opportunities where they can grow as educational leaders. We try to keep the focus as much as possible on student-learning and making decisions that are going to impact student learning. Now there are times you just have to do managerial and administrative things.

Providing an opportunity to observe teachers and practice using the evaluation rubric is an example of the experience he wants the intern to experience. He said, "We even actually did some of our observations at the beginning with teachers who agreed to do this, we would do it together."

Johnson reflected on his belief that interns should learn to be reflective and question their decisions to avoid what he called the pitfall of trying to know everything. He stated:

A lot of times, especially for a new administrator, not knowing everything, but if you actually think about the why before, it's going to help you become more reflective and you're going to see the different perspectives ahead of time. It will help you to build your framework of knowledge and your decision base in a stronger manner.

Program Strengths

All of the mentors had positive things to say about the ETSU internship program. Several of the mentors expressed their perception that the program provides a high level of rigor.

Johnson discussed the advantage the interns from ETSU get from working in elementary, middle, high school, and the central office. He said, "It's very advantageous for them to actually be in and working in all those different areas, at the elementary, the middle, the high, central office, all those different areas because they get a different perspective." He continued by adding an advantage of the program is the way that the projects, tasks the interns complete, and discussions in class are all based on real-life experiences.

Brooklyn reported the student, intern, and mentor centered nature of the program as a strength. He discussed how the use of the *Strength Finder Program* was an effective tool for understanding how his strengths matched those of his intern. He also said the number of hours the interns are required to complete is a positive attribute of the program. He discussed the number of hours:

I think that if the mentorship hours were cut in half or reduced even by 25 percent, it would limit that. It would definitely limit that opportunity to earn some of that cultural clout, to pick up on some of those idiosyncrasies that you will find with a mentor and a mentee. There are a lot of things that are unsaid that just kind of happen and you just have to pick up on them. It's nothing that you could pick up in a 25/40-hour internship. Even an 80-hour internship.

Tee discussed how the requirement of the ELPA program that internship hours be served in all levels of the school system, from elementary through high school and the central office, is something that adds value to the program. He continued by discussing his perception that the variety promotes a holistic view of the school system. He said, "I think it's vital that you have a good understanding of the big picture or as best you can so that whatever level you're in, how that works with the other levels or is impacted by them. I think that's a big advantage."

Stella explained how using leaders from the community as guest speakers in the ELPA classes is a strength for the program because it helps the interns understand what is “actually occurring” in education. She said it is motivating for the interns to hear from current practitioners and professors who have practical experience.

Coe echoes Stella’s perception, “A lot of the professors associated with that program right now are recent practitioners, which I think is a huge strength.” He also discussed how he appreciated the level of communication he received from the professors at ETSU in terms of guidance about what types of activities are appropriate for completing the 540 hours of internship.

Ultra discussed his perception that the opportunities and experiences each intern receives and the variety of experiences offered within the school levels are valuable. He reflected on his time as a beginning principal and said, “I went through a program that didn’t have that [number of hours]. I had to do some extra, once I was on kind of a probationary license starting out. I would’ve valued that experience a lot more.”

Sharps explained her perception that the interns come to their placements ready to learn. She stated a strength of the program is that the interns begin their internship early in the program, so they come to their placement ready to learn with few preconceived notions. “They are totally open. They’re just drinking it in and making notes.” Sharps explained how the flexibility of the program is positive for the interns. She stated:

A strength of the program too is that there’s some ability for them [interns] to schedule their hours. They can make sure that they get to it when it’s more purposeful for them... That’s my perception is they’re really getting to kind of tailor-make that or mold that.

Isabella discussed the support she received from the professors at ETSU and the open communication and willingness to hear new ideas from the university staff as one of the positive attributes of the program. She explained:

They were very open to accepting anything that we could add to their program. That's a great thing, because sometimes you have a certain way you're going to do business, and you don't change or fluctuate from it. They really were very willing to modify, adapt, or revise things, so that they were taking on our information, and we were learning from them as well.

Brooklyn also included communication as a strength for the ETSU internship program. He said, "The strengths are, of course, the communication. I know that I can pick up the phone at anytime and I can talk to my intern's cooperating professor." He discussed his perception that the professors provide personal service:

For a school that is that big and that well-known, that renowned, it's nice to have that one-to-one personal communication. I really did, going through the program, get to know all the faculty members in my program real well. I felt like somebody there. I didn't feel like I was just a number.

Program Limitations

A theme that emerged from the research is the perceived limitations of the internship program. Time is one of the limitations of the program that was also a strength. The 540 hours of internship time are discussed by several of the mentors.

Tee discussed the 540-hour requirement. Though he also said the hours required provide an impressive level of rigor, he has observed the difficulty interns have finding meaningful internship hours at each level. He stated:

I think for the interns it's probably challenging for them sometimes to get in at certain levels. One of my interns works at the elementary level. She's had trouble getting high school hours just because I'm here at the middle school, and she's there at elementary and then getting her high school hours. In talking to the high

school, the principal there experiences the same problem - they're away, the lack of contact with them.

Johnson explained the difficulty of mentoring someone who does not work in the same building as you. He said, "I think another aspect of that are not only those day-to-day interactions, but then also making sure that they have a meaningful experience, where someone's with you from the start to the end." He also explained the difficulty he has providing "realistic view of all the issues that we deal with day-to-day" due to the restriction of time with the intern during the work day.

Isabella also discussed the need for the intern to work in the same building as the mentor. About time with the intern she said, "I think the person mentoring them really needs to spend a lot of time with them helping flush that out. They don't know enough at the beginning to know what to look for."

Stella described limited time with her intern as an obstacle. Concerning the limited amount of time she has to work with her intern she said, "I think the thing that I struggle with is making sure that I have adequate time to answer their questions and to have them shadow and mentor and really get the real meat of what a principal's day looks like."

Isabella described time with the intern and the selection process used to place interns with mentors as limitations of the program. She said:

I think that 540 hours is, when you're working, whether you're an administrator or not, is a huge amount of time. Also, the selection process [for placing interns]: I'm not sure I understand the whole selection process. I think it would be good to understand and know how people are chosen.

Coe described limited time as the biggest limitation. He discussed the limited amount of time to provide meaningful experiences for his intern because she does not work in the building with him. He stated:

I think time is probably the biggest challenge, both for the mentors and the mentees. Often times, I think the mentoring situation is one that takes place sort of abstractly, maybe outside the school day, after school, in the summer.

Ultra described the difficulty of trying to arrange experiences for an intern who does not work in the same school with the mentor. The added difficulty of trying to help schedule meaningful experiences elsewhere is a limitation. He said:

But to try to help them get experiences at other levels tends to be a little bit more challenging, because you're kind of caught up in your own little world, and then you're trying to make point of contact for them.

A second limitation Ultra described from working with his intern is the perceived inconsistencies in the work that is completed by separate interns. While one intern performs work at a high level, others may do less to get the same credit. He explains:

Sometimes it appears, and maybe I'm just getting more venting from the attendees, but sometimes it appears that there's a disconnect with what's happening with what the expectations or follow-through from the university is to the students and interns. I think that there's... They require a lot of them, but yet the follow-through with them tends to be lacking. So, I think some people recognize that early, and they start compromising their experiences. People are not getting equitable experiences because of maybe what appears to be their lack of follow-through or accountability. Yeah. Sometimes it doesn't always appear that the left hand knows what the right hand's doing.

Stella stated the importance of having a contact person in the program who can answer questions the intern has about the tasks to be completed. She explained, "I think they just need that confirmation that they're on the right track, because as principals we just take them on whatever ride we're on." She discussed another possible limitation is

the inconsistency between the work the interns complete during their internship. She observed:

This is in any organization, you struggle with that you have 10% of the people sitting in your class who are going to do it to the nth degree because they have that intrinsic motivation to be an exemplary leader. But they see there are some folks in their cohort that are maybe not working at the same level and sometimes getting the same grade or acknowledgement or credit when their work may not always be reflected. And I think within their cohort, because they communicate with one another, they figure out, in order for me to get credit for this, I have to complete things at this level.

Sharps described the need to “continually clarify the program’s expectations” for the intern as a barrier. She would like a bulleted list from the university to help her guide the experience for the intern.

Isabella added to the theme that the expectations for the intern and mentor need to be clarified, “The person that I’m mentoring now, my role wasn’t really defined very well.”

Tee perceived difficulty with scheduling experiences for his offsite intern as a limitation of the program. He explained, “Again, with them being offsite, it’s a very difficult scheduling problem.” He continued:

I have two current interns and unless they contact me or I contact them directly, I’m not in regular contact with them. I like to be able to have a lot of conversations and perhaps some of that’s my fault and responsibility for not scheduling those type things, to have that with them regularly. I do know they also work.

Summary

Several themes emerged from the analysis of perceptions mentor principals have about mentoring aspiring principals. Mentoring causes conversations to occur between the mentor and the intern about the decisions made by the principal. This is a reflective

activity that works best when the mentor and intern develop a positive relationship; often leading to relationships that last long after the internship is over. Principals examined their understanding of tacit knowledge and the possible ways tacit knowledge could be taught to their intern.

The mentors described ways they benefit from mentoring an aspiring principal and discussed the variety of experiences they believe are important for the intern. The use of ISLLC Standards as a tool for mentoring was investigated. Perceptions about program strengths and limitations were discussed.

Mentors provided recommendations for future internship experiences that included more time onsite with the mentor in his or her place of employment.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore perceptions of practicing school administrators in relation to their work as mentors for aspiring principals. Individual interviews with eight administrators from east Tennessee and western North Carolina were conducted after permission to contact the administrators was granted by the administrators' superintendents. Perceptions about the mentoring process and information that mentors learned about themselves during the mentoring process were gathered and analyzed.

Analysis of interview transcripts revealed the perceptions of administrators about their experiences serving as mentors for aspiring principals. Nine themes were identified after interview transcripts were scrutinized and coded. The 9 themes were: (a) reflective nature of mentoring, (b) relationships, (c) tacit knowledge, (d) mentors of mentors, (e) benefits for the mentor, (f) use of the ISLLC Standards, (g) variety of experiences, (h) program strengths, and (i) program limitations. Recommendations for future practice were also developed from the research.

Research Questions

Research question 1 was: What are the difficulties experienced in mentoring aspiring principals?

Mentors experienced the obstacle of finding adequate time to work with and develop a working relationship with the intern to develop meaningful experiences. Half

of the participants described having difficulty scheduling experiences for interns at grade levels outside of their school category. The ISLLC standards provide an opportunity for educational planning and goal setting with the intern (Lindahl & Beach, 2009). The standards are already used by the interns for evaluation, but some mentors did not use the standards for planning internship experiences for the intern. Mentors who did not use the standards could have benefited from using the standards to plan activities and develop goals for interns. Three mentors remarked that it was difficult to communicate with the person who was overseeing the internship program possibly due to a change in the second semester from one supervisor to another. One principal recommended the person who oversees the interns should be one of the full-time professors in the ELPA program who could track the cohort throughout their internship and class time.

Research Question 2: What do mentors perceive as the strengths and weaknesses of an internship program?

The mentors interviewed for this study remarked that time with the intern was a limitation. The common theme that emerged with mentors who have an assistant principal is the desire for job imbedded internships. The mentors expressed feeling disconnected with interns who were not working in their building when compared to interns who work in the same school with the mentor. Another difficulty that emerged was the perceived inconsistency of the work required by interns in different settings. This perception appears to come from conversations mentors had with interns about their internship experience.

The mentors described the 540-hour internship requirement as a strength of the program. The rigor that accompanies completing 540 hours of supervised work in the

elementary school, middle school, high school, and central office is one aspect that sets the program apart from less rigorous preparation programs for educational leadership. The quality of the professors at ETSU is another strength cited by the participants. Several mentors mentioned that many of the professors are recent practitioners in the field of educational leadership, retiring from the principalship or central office responsibilities. The use of current practitioners as adjunct faculty in the program was also listed as a strength.

The ability for interns to design an internship with the guidance of their mentors that will provide experience in the areas in which the interns need to grow is a positive attribute of the internship program identified by mentors.

Research question 3: What do mentors believe they contribute to the mentor and intern relationship?

Mentors described a variety of experiences they were able to develop and provide for the intern. These included the ability to provide a holistic view about how the school system functions, budgeting process, developing personal goals, and providing practical experiences for interns.

Six participants described how they teach the intern by reflecting on their own practices and by reviewing scenarios that occur during the day. Several spoke about the difficulty of providing meaningful experiences for interns, but this also reflects the presence of planning for experiences. Many of the participants spoke about asking the intern questions with the desired outcome of teaching the ability to be reflective about one's practices. This could also be phrased as the ability to interpret their experiences (Eriksen, 2004). This outcome was reciprocated for the mentors when they reflected

about their practices while discussing with their intern why they choose to make certain decisions.

Research question 4: How do mentors believe they benefit from their participation in the mentor and intern relationship?

The mentor and intern experience can lead to positive changes in the personal and professional characteristics of each individual in the relationship (Gallbraith, 2003). Participants described several benefits that result from working with an intern. Several mentors reported reflecting about their practices as a result of mentoring. Participants also described an improved ability to listen and remember to ask “why questions” before making decisions. Mentors described how mentoring prompted them to be better listeners, and they were more apt to read professional literature to prepare to share best practices with their intern. Mentors expressed an improved ability to delegate responsibility. Mentoring has been verified to lead to positive career outcomes (Wu, Turban, & Cheung, 2012). Mentors also experienced positive feelings that result from helping someone else improve professionally and the desire to continue to learn.

Research question 5: What do the mentors learn about the tacit knowledge that they use to perform their work responsibilities?

Experienced principals have the ability to convey the mission and goals for the school through their actions, developing relationships, and leadership capacity (St. Germain & Guinn, 2005). The nature of tacit knowledge is difficult for the mentors to describe. It appears to be part of how successful principals carry out their responsibilities without having to think about the written goals. Tacit knowledge may be what separates an effective professional level principal from an ineffective principal. The quality of the

tacit knowledge learned may be more useful, pertaining to relationship building to accomplish tasks. When asked about tacit knowledge, a common theme among mentors was relationship development. Participants learned about their tacit knowledge through reflecting about their practices with the intern. Reflecting on practices with their intern to provide examples of leadership experiences was a common way mentors tried to teach tacit knowledge to their intern. The research question brought about responses from four of the mentors about their own experiences as an intern. Their experience in job imbedded internships with experienced mentors left a lasting impression that influences their current practices and how they worked with their intern. Mentors also provided examples of how the reflective process of reviewing real scenarios taught them about their personal style, strengths, and weaknesses.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to assess the perceptions of principals who serve as mentors for an internship program for aspiring principals at East Tennessee State University. Each mentor was interviewed to gather information about the internship program, the benefits of mentoring in the program, and what the mentors may have learned about tacit knowledge as a result of the experience. Mentors and the professors in the Educational Leadership Policy Analysis department at ETSU may benefit from the findings as the design of the program continues to advance.

Mentoring is an important component of training for aspiring and beginning principals because interns learn on the job in a supportive environment where they can take chances. Mentors also learn from the experience of being a mentor. The literature

reviewed for this case study supported the need for standards based mentoring programs. The ISLLC standards are an excellent example of standards that are used to provide structure and coherence for mentoring programs.

Positive and negative outcomes for the mentor were reviewed to support the research. Leadership and the change process were also reviewed to support the importance of the mentors role in the process we call mentoring. Several themes emerged from the analysis of data provided by mentor principals about mentoring aspiring principals. Mentoring resulted in reflective practices between the mentor and intern. It was also found to be an experience that works best when a positive relationship is developed between the mentor and the intern often leading to relationships that last long after the internship is over. Principals examined their understanding of tacit knowledge and the possible ways tacit knowledge could be taught to their intern.

The mentors described ways they benefit from mentoring an intern and discussed the variety of experiences they believe are important for the intern to experience. The use of ISLLC Standards as a tool for mentoring was investigated. Perceptions about program strengths and limitations were discussed. Mentors also provided recommendations for future internship experiences.

Recommendations for Practice

Internships have proven to be a valuable component of training for aspiring school administrators and an important professional development activity for professional level principals who mentor aspiring principals. The mentors in this study shared their

perceptions about the internship program. The following recommendations were made based on the research.

The mentors perceived several possible ways the mentoring program at ETSU could be improved. The recommendations vary from one mentor to another based on their personal experiences with mentoring.

Coe expressed his belief that the program is “on the right track.” His recommendation involves bringing the mentors together at the end of internship cycle to discuss the program and provide feedback about what went well and what did not. He explained:

As the next step, if I could suggest something to the leadership there it would be that the mentors that are associated with each cohort actually sit down and start to develop some activities that we know would be worthwhile for that group, and do that collaboratively. I think when you bring the group of mentors together, the types of activities, discussions, resources that you think this crew needs to be introduced to will be much more powerful if you could do that as a group. So, each mentor comes with their mentees self-assessment and we sit down as a group and say, okay, with this particular cohort, these maybe are some common strengths, common areas of need, let’s work together to create some really powerful experiences for these people. It would give them [ELPA] a warehouse of activities and resources and things that have worked really well with each cohort that can be balanced or tweaked.

Ultra’s recommendation is to make sure the activities interns are completing are of high quality. He expressed a perception that the hours could be monitored by the mentor more effectively if the intern works with the mentor in the same school. He also has a concern that some interns are participating in activities of less quality simply to complete their hours. He stated:

I think that the experience is strength, but they have to be careful that it’s not a weakness as well, because I think that people are just trying to get hours any way that they can. They’re not always quality experiences. I think they would benefit more from maybe even having fewer hours with a more set standard of

experiences versus having larger quantities of hours. I think that's what I've seen with some of the interns is I see where some of them are starting to make compromises just to get it done. I mean that's job imbedded mentoring right there. That is the best experience possible.

Isabella is another mentor who recommends placing the intern with the mentor in the same school when possible. Release time for the intern to stay with the mentor for full days is another option. She explains:

I think spending more time with somebody onsite, whether it's at a school or central office, or whatever. I think it's vitally important. You know, being prepared to have them involved in tough situations that maybe you're a little bit unsure of how to handle because they're going to be faced with that.

She continued with a recommendation for how the 540-hour internship could be organized to accomplish her first recommendation:

Five hundred forty hours in a different way and maybe provide that, use that time to have people working together onsite several times a month throughout a school year, so you can actually see the things that go on when you open school and the things that happen right before a break, what happens to kids and families, and the things that happen at the end of school and the work that you do in summer-doing something different with that 540 hours. Best experiences are job imbedded.

Tee recommended a job imbedded experience for interns. He said his own experience as an assistant to the principal provided the time and relationship with a mentoring principal to develop the practices necessary to lead a school. He explained the concept of assistant to the principal as follows:

It's still a teacher pay, but they're an administrative intern. That's not the title, but that's essentially what they are. They know going in on the frontend that it's for, at most, a given timeframe. Then they may go to a different school. They may go back to the classroom. They may be given an administrative opportunity. It really gives you an opportunity to go in great depth.

Coe said his own internship experience at ETSU was excellent. He recommends a return to the days when one professor followed a cohort through their internship,

providing feedback to the interns and mentors. He expressed the benefits of this approach the following way:

From the very beginning we had this one individual who went with us through the entire program and could then talk with the other professors and say, okay, this is what their experience has been, this is what they know, this is where I would gauge their level of understanding. Because she had been basically following us through the program, I just felt like it was much more beneficial for all of us.

Recommendations for the University

- Meet with mentors at the end of the internship cycle to gather a list of activities that mentors for future cohorts can use to develop meaningful experiences.
- Develop a list of approved activities that can be revised as new internship experiences are defined.
- Allow mentors to interview interns before the relationship begins.
- Assign a full-time internship supervisor who would help mentor the interns through their 540-hour internship.

Recommendations for School Systems

- Consider placing interns in the same school with their mentor when possible.
- Several mentors spoke of the difficulty interns have meeting the time requirements of a rigorous internship. They describe the best practice as giving the intern the opportunity to experience job imbedded leadership internship. An example is the assistant to the principal, which provides administrative assistance to the principal while providing an opportunity for an aspiring administrator a paid internship. School systems should consider funding for paid internship experiences to promote the development of educational leadership within the

school system in collaboration with rigorous programs such as the ELPA program at East Tennessee State University.

Recommendations for Future Mentors

- Use the ISLLC Standards to develop structure for the internship experience.
- Use the ISLLC Standards as a guide for personal professional development planning.

Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this study was to assess the perceptions of principals who serve as mentors for an internship program for aspiring principals at East Tennessee State University. Eight professionally licensed principals from east Tennessee and western North Carolina who served as mentors for graduate students who aspire to be school principals were interviewed for this study. The following are recommendations for future study:

- The principals who were individually interviewed for this case study could be interviewed as a focus group to develop more information about the internship experience from the perspective of the mentor.
- Because only principals were interviewed, the interns could be interviewed as a focus group to answer questions that were developed from the perceptions of the mentors.

- Research comparing aspiring principals who experienced rigorous internships with over 100 hours of internship hours to those with fewer than 100 hours of internship.
- Quantitative research comparing the number of years in the principalship for principals from different internship programs such as the ETSU internship and the Tennessee Beginning Principals' Academy.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Letter to the Superintendent of Schools

Superintendent of Schools (Name)

Address

Street

City, State, Zip Code

Date

Dear (Name):

I am currently a doctoral student in the department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at East Tennessee State University. Consequently, I am conducting a qualitative research study central to the perceptions of principals in Northeast Tennessee and Western North Carolina who served as mentors for aspiring principals through the internship program at East Tennessee State University. The researcher will ask the interviewees questions related to their role as a mentor for aspiring principals and specifically what the mentor learned from mentoring. Data collected from the interviews will be used to develop a theoretical framework summarizing the perceptions of what each mentor learned about the mentoring process while working with the intern. I plan to contact (Names) to ask their permission to interview them for the study.

With your permission, I would like to conduct (Number) confidential interviews at the (School Sites). In order to ensure anonymity, the participants will not be referenced in the study. When my project is complete, you will receive a copy of my research conclusions as an affirmation of the excellent training aspiring principals are receiving through the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis program at East Tennessee State University.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to permit me in expanding the knowledge base related to high quality leadership training for educators who aspire to be principals. If you should have any questions or concerns, we can discuss those at your convenience. You may contact me by phone at XXX-XXX-XXXX(mobile), XXX-XXX-XXXX (home), or email at barnetts@XXXXXX.org.

Please notify me of your permission to conduct three confidential interviews at each of the aforementioned schools by returning this letter with your signature. For your convenience, I have enclosed a self-addressed stamped envelope.

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Steve N. Barnett
Graduate Student
Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
East Tennessee State University

Appendix B

Letter to the Participants

Principal (Name)

Date

Dear (Name):

I am a doctoral student in the department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at East Tennessee State University. Consequently, I am conducting a qualitative research study with the purpose of exploring perceptions of practicing school principals in relation to your work as mentors for aspiring principals. Data about what the mentors learn about themselves during the mentoring process will be gathered and analyzed. The process mentors use for sharing knowledge that has helped them perform their job duties with their intern will also be analyzed. Your superintendent of schools, (Name), has granted approval for me to contact you to ask if you are willing to participate in my qualitative research study.

Within the next several days, I will be calling to request a confidential interview with you in regard to your experience as a mentor for an aspiring principal intern.

You will receive a transcribed copy of the interview to verify accuracy of its content. A pseudonym will be given to each participant to ensure confidentiality of the information shared within this study. When my project is complete, you will receive a copy of my research conclusions in an effort to make a contribution to your learning community.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to contribute to the knowledge base with regard to a high quality mentoring program and related academic programs.

Sincerely,

Steve N. Barnett
Graduate Student
Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
East Tennessee State University

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

Spring 2012

Please read carefully the following Informed Consent specifics and sign this form if you fully give your permission to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this Informed Consent for your personal records.

Researcher: Steve Barnett

Graduate Student, Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
East Tennessee State University

XXX-XXX-XXXX (office), XXX-XXX-XXXX (home), or XXX-XXX-XXXX (mobile)

Dissertation Title:

Mentor Principals' Perceptions about a Mentoring Program for Beginning Principals

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is to explore perceptions of practicing school principals in relation to their work as mentors for aspiring principals. Data about what the mentors learn about themselves during the mentoring process will be gathered and analyzed. The process mentors use for sharing knowledge that has helped them perform their job duties with their intern will also be analyzed.

Request for Participation: The researcher requests your voluntary participation in this study. Your participation is strictly voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Additionally, you have the right to withdraw your words from this study at any time.

Research Method: The researcher will interview principals in Northeast Tennessee who served as mentors for aspiring principals through the intern program at East Tennessee State University. The researcher will ask the interviewees questions related to their role as a mentor for aspiring principals and specifically what the mentor learned from mentoring. Data collected from the interviews will be used to develop a theoretical framework summarizing the perceptions of what each mentor learned about the mentoring process while working with the intern.

Duration of Research Participation: You will participate in one individual interview during the spring or summer of 2012 that will last approximately 45 – 60 minutes.

Confidentiality: Your name will not be used on the digital recording, on the final printed transcript, or in the final research report. Only the researcher will know of your participation in this study. The digital recording and corresponding transcripts will be

secured during and following the data analysis of this study; these items will be secured in the researcher's home office for five years per IRB guidelines.

Method of Recording Interview: The researcher will digitally record your interview to ensure complete accuracy of your responses. The digital recording will be secured during and following the data analysis of this study. The recordings will be secured in the researcher's home office for five years per IRB guidelines.

Right of Refusal: You may refuse to participate in this study at any time.

Right to Withdraw: You may withdraw from this study at any time. You may withdraw your words from this study at any time.

Feedback and Benefits: You will receive a copy of the study's research conclusions to review. The benefit of your participation in this study is to share with colleagues and university professors what you learned about the mentor and intern relationship. This information could be used to strengthen the internship program for aspiring principals.

Copy of Consent: You will receive a copy of this Informed Consent for your personal records.

Permission to Quote: Your words may be used in the final research report to clarify or further explain a component of the theoretical framework. The researcher will not identify the source of the quote. In addition, the researcher will take precautions to ensure that there are no identifiers within the body of the quote.

Signature of Voluntary Participant

Date of Participation

Signature of Researcher

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

Interview Preface

- I. Introduction to the study and welcome participant
 1. Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. The purpose of this study is to explore perceptions of practicing school principals in relation to their work as mentors for aspiring principals. Data about what you learned about yourself during the mentoring process will be gathered and analyzed. The process mentors use for sharing the tacit knowledge that has helped them perform their job duties with their intern will also be analyzed. The data from this study will be used in a dissertation and your participation will remain anonymous. This interview session should take about one hour. Do you have any questions before I turn on the recorder?
 2. Ask the participant to sign the informed consent form.
 3. The interview questions will begin.
- II. Main Interview Questions for Mentors
 1. What are the difficulties experienced in mentoring aspiring principals?
 2. What do you perceive as the strengths and weaknesses of the internship program?
 3. What do you believe you contributed to the mentor and intern relationship?
 4. How do you believe you benefited from your participation in the mentor and intern relationship?
 5. What did you learn about the tacit knowledge that you use to perform your work responsibilities?
- III. Conclusions
 1. Any additional questions?

2. Turn off the digital recorder.
3. Thank the participant for her or his participation in the study.

VITA

STEVEN NICHOLAS BARNETT

Personal Data	Date of Birth: December 19, 1967 Place of Birth: Johnson City, Tennessee Marital Status: Married
Education	Public Schools, Johnson City and Elizabethton, Tennessee East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee Bachelor of Arts in Special Education 1992 University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee Master of Science in Education 1996 Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, Tennessee Educational Leadership, Ed. S. 2000 East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee Educational Leadership, Ed. D. 2013
Professional Experience	1993- Middle Grades Teacher, Knoxville Adaptive Education Center, Knox County Schools, Knoxville, Tennessee 1993 to 1996- Lead Teacher of Students with Emotional Disturbance and Behavioral Disorders (K-12), Roane County Schools, Kingston, Tennessee 1996 to 1998- Extended Resource Teacher for Students with Intellectual Disability and Autism, Oak Ridge High School, Oak Ridge, Tennessee 1998 to 2001- Principal and Vice Principal, Jefferson Middle School, Oak Ridge, Tennessee 2001 to 2005- Principal, Valley Pike and Emmett Elementary Schools, Sullivan County Schools, Blountville, Tennessee

2005 to Present- Principal, Towne Acres Elementary School
Johnson City Schools, Johnson City, Tennessee