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# Mentoring in the learning community: Problematic practices and outcomes of initial implementation of formal mentoring programs in two New Hampshire public school districts

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MENTORING IN THE LEARNING COMMUNITY: PROBLEMATIC PRACTICES  
AND OUTCOMES OF INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION OF FORMAL MENTORING  
PROGRAMS IN TWO NEW HAMPSHIRE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire

In Partial Fulfillment of

The Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In

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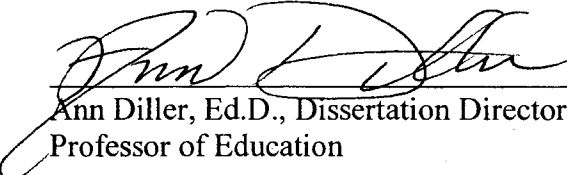
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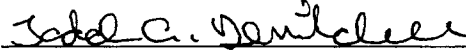
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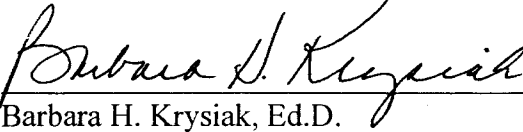
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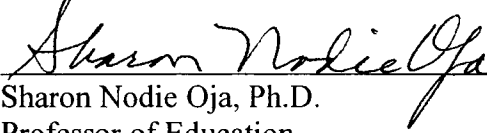
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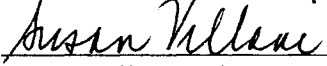
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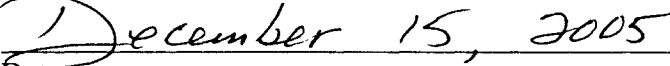
  
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## DEDICATION

To my husband, Dick, and my children, Alex and Katy  
For your unwavering love and support  
on this long journey.

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## ABSTRACT

### MENTORING IN THE LEARNING COMMUNITY: PROBLEMATIC PRACTICES AND OUTCOMES OF INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION OF FORMALIZED MENTORING IN TWO NEW HAMPSHIRE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

By

Pamela A. Miller

University of New Hampshire, May 2006

This qualitative study uses a grounded theory methodology to examine how seven teacher mentors in two formalized New Hampshire public school mentoring programs conceptualize their roles and what happens to that conceptualization as they go through their first year of mentoring. The findings suggest that mentors, who have a history of engagement in buddy support, have difficulty shifting their conceptualization of supporting new teachers from the directive practices characteristic of buddy support to the relational practices that characterize “learning-focused” mentoring. Simply having a formal mentoring structure does not ensure such a shift. In fact, a number of major drawbacks to mentoring were observed. In addition to data collected from the two public school mentoring programs, anecdotal data of three participants in a New Hampshire state pilot mentoring program (Project ACROSS) are also examined and discussed in order to illuminate program structures that may lead to professional development for both mentor and mentee. In conclusion, I propose an approach to mentoring where all teachers engage in co-mentoring and the learning community supports new teacher development rather than having a single mentor take on the sole responsibility.

## PROLOGUE

*The Skin Horse had lived longer in the nursery than any of the others. He was so old that his brown coat was bald in patches and showed the seams underneath, and most of the hairs in his tail had been pulled out to string bead necklaces. He was wise, for he had seen a long succession of mechanical toys arrive to boast and swagger, and by-and-by break the mainsprings and pass away, and he knew that they were only toys, and would never turn into anything else. For nursery magic is very strange and wonderful, and only those playthings that are old and wise and experienced like the Skin Horse understand all about it.*

*“What is REAL?” asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender. . . . “Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?” “Real isn’t how you are made,” said the Skin Horse. “It’s a thing that happens to you when a child loves you for a long, long, time . . .” The Skin Horse went on to relate his knowledge from experience about what it means to be real. “It doesn’t happen all at once,” said the Skin Horse. “You become. It takes a long time. That’s why it doesn’t often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair had been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don’t matter at all, because once you are Real you can’t be ugly, except to people who don’t understand. . . .”*

*The Velveteen Rabbit or How Toys Become Real  
By, Margery Williams (1922)*

Like the Skin Horse, mentors have traditionally been older, wiser individuals who have knowledge from experience to impart to others. In education, the mentors are usually veteran teachers who take the novices into the fold and show them the ropes. Traditional mentors often share resources, provide technical information, give advice and provide insights into the school culture as well as offer their friendship. The knowledge generally flows in one direction, from mentor to mentee, and the goal is to ease the mentee’s transition into teaching.

As formalized mentoring programs begin to take hold in education, a relational conception of mentoring is beginning to emerge that is based on an ethic of caring. Relational mentorships foreground mutuality and co-learning. In these mentorships, the mentor and the mentee come together as partners to share knowledge, raise questions and co-construct knowledge about teaching and learning. In the process both mentor *and* mentee become better teachers. How do these two very different conceptualizations of mentoring play out in practice?



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION TO THE DISSERTATION

...When the final bell rings this school year and students across the nation head out the door for summer vacation, too many of their teachers will also be leaving the classroom – permanently.  
*-Tapping the Potential, (n.d.)*

#### Research Questions and Methodology

As mentoring in schools is examined, we discover that there are different types of supportive structures being put into place that are termed ‘mentoring.’ These structures range from informal buddy support to formalized district-wide programs and the benefits can vary from the security of companionship to the advancement of instructional skills. I hypothesize that mentors’ understanding of and expectations for mentoring will have an impact on their mentoring practice and its outcomes. One part of this understanding is how mentors conceptualize their roles as mentors; the other part is how their conceptualization may be affected by the experience of mentoring when they participate in formalized mentoring programs. I am interested in taking a closer look at the development of mentors’ role conceptualization. Thus, my primary question for this dissertation research is as follows:

- How do teacher mentors in formalized public school mentoring programs conceptualize their roles and how do their mentoring practices change over the first year of mentoring?

Since it is suggested that mentoring can result in the professional development of teachers and improve teacher quality, I also explore the mentors' and mentees' perceived benefits of mentoring. Therefore, my second research question is as follows:

- How do mentors and mentees benefit from the first year mentoring relationship between experienced teachers and new teachers?

A qualitative grounded theory methodology as outlined in Strauss and Corbin (1998) was used to examine the development of the mentoring process over the first year of participation in a formal mentoring program. Seven mentors and their mentees representing elementary, middle and high schools from two New Hampshire school districts were chosen to take part in this study. The requirements for selection were as follows: 1) mentors are mentoring first year teachers 2) mentors are first time mentors in a formalized mentoring program and, 3) participants are recommended by the program facilitator because they likely to engage in the interview process and be open to sharing their experiences. Six female mentors and one male mentor were selected; four mentees were female and three mentees were male. The mentor-mentee pairs consisted of the following: four female mentors with female mentees, two female mentors with male mentees and one male mentor with a male mentee. The objective was to identify key phenomena that contribute to mentor development and to generate theory that leads to a better understanding of mentoring practices and outcomes. The flexible qualitative methodology that was used allowed me to explore concepts and themes that emerged

through interviews, journals and mentor-mentee conferences, all of which are sources of data that were generated from this study.

Because all mentoring does not produce the same result, and diverse structures comprise the mentoring practices in schools, questions arise as to how we can identify the mentoring structures that produce quality outcomes for teachers and how we might learn to develop and implement these structures in our schools. It is my hope that this investigation into how mentors come to understand their roles will help to illuminate our understanding of the structures of high quality mentoring that advance teacher learning as well as the circumstances that contribute to their development.

Rationale for This Study: Issues of Teacher Retention and Teacher Quality Have  
Increased The Focus on Mentoring in Schools

The U.S. Department of Education estimated that 2.0 to 2.5 million public school teachers will be needed between the 1998 and 2008 school years (more than 200,000 annually) due to a growing teacher shortage (Darling-Hammond, 2000 as cited in Bradley and Loadman, 2005). Ingersoll (2001) suggests that these shortages are largely due to the turnover of newly certified teachers who are leaving the profession three to five years into their careers, as opposed to teachers who are retiring after many years in the profession. Furthermore, it is the most talented young teachers who are leaving and the reasons they most often give is that they are overwhelmed and do not feel supported (Gonzales & Sousa, 1993; Gordon, 1991; Schlechty & Vance, 1983, Slaybaugh & Evans, 1995/1996; Smith, 1993). Odell and Ferraro (1992, as cited in *Tapping the Potential*, n.d.) found the retention of new teachers to be more positively correlated to the quality of

the first teaching experience than to prior academic performance or the adequacy of their teacher education program, thus the issue of new teacher support seems to apply to new teachers regardless of their preparation experiences.

For many years the difficulties faced by beginning teachers, generally those with three or less years of experience, have been reported in the literature along with a lack of support systems to help them transition into teaching (Koestier & Wubbles, 1995; Lortie, 1975; Rogers & Babinski, 1999; Veenman, 1984). With limited experience, or no experience at all, beginning teachers are reportedly unprepared to handle the realities of teaching. The report by the Alliance for Education, *Tapping the Potential: Retaining and Developing High-Quality New Teachers*, states that it may take three to seven years for new teachers to “reach proficiency” (*Tapping the Potential*, n.d., p. 2). The first years of teaching appear to be critical in determining future success. Chapter II of this dissertation examines the literature on the transition into teaching along with existing theories that suggest how transition experiences impact teacher development.

In recent years, individualized guidance and support of a beginning teacher by a veteran teacher, known as “mentoring,” has begun to emerge as a possible solution to the problem of teacher retention and is often embedded in comprehensive programs of teacher induction.<sup>1</sup> In 2004, over thirty states reported initiatives of new teacher

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<sup>1</sup> New teacher induction programs, although often equated with mentoring, refer to a variety of support structures used to ease the transition into teaching that may, or may not, include mentoring. Induction elements can include any or all of the following: orientations, workshops, classes, professional networks, electronic support, standards-based assessment, mentoring, and release-time for planning and/or observation. There is great variability in what constitutes new teacher induction, although mentoring is the most common component (*Tapping the Potential*, n.d.). The term “induction” is often used synonymously with the term “mentoring,” possibly because mentoring is generally a key component, and this can be confusing. It is the intent of this dissertation to focus on

induction and fifteen states mandated and funded induction for all of their new teachers (*Tapping the Potential*, n.d.).

When research studies reminding us that teacher quality often impacts student performance began to emerge within the last decade, these studies prompted an even closer look at mentoring support as a way to improve teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 2000; *Doing What Matters Most; Teaching for America's Future*, 1996). Furthermore, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2002 has now moved the issue of teacher quality into the forefront by requiring that every student be taught by a “highly qualified teacher,” a rating based upon teacher certification and/or demonstration of competency in his or her content area and grade level.

Since it has been reported that induction with mentoring can improve the retention of new teachers and the teacher quality of both the mentor and mentee, the need to understand and promote well-designed mentoring practices has intensified (Ballantyne & Hansford, 1995; Educational Testing Service, 2004; *Tapping the Potential*, n.d.; Ward, 1986 as cited in Zimpher & Rieger, 1988; Whitaker, 2000). No longer are mentoring programs that support new teachers with “buddies” who aid in the day-to-day survival by relating school practices considered to be sufficient; “quality” mentoring now focuses on improving teaching skills in an effort to retain high quality teachers who can impact student achievement (Ganser, 2002a; Hargreaves and Fullan, 2000; *Tapping the Potential*, n.d.). The concept of new teacher support has changed; the expectations for mentoring now go beyond the transition into the school culture.

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mentoring support, as opposed to comprehensive induction and the term “mentoring” will be used to refer to the activities of the mentor-mentee relationship.

### Diverse Conceptions of Mentoring

The various conceptions of the mentor role that have been evident in western traditions stemming from origins in ancient Greece through more recent applications in business and education settings are outlined in Chapter III. For example, conceptions of mentoring range from informal relationships focused on passing down knowledge from an experienced mentor to a novice mentee, to relational conceptions where the mentor and mentee form a partnership for mutual inquiry, discovery and co-learning. Mentoring roles traditionally have been defined in the literature as: guide, sponsor, patron, advisor, expert, role model and surrogate parent (Levinson, 1978; Lyons, Scroggins, & Rule, 1990; McIntyre & Brinton, 1998; Merriam, 1983). However, Zachary (2002) claims that mentoring has shifted from the traditional “product-oriented model characterized by transfer of knowledge, to a process-oriented relationship involving knowledge acquisition, application, and critical reflection” (p. 28). It is the process-oriented model of mentoring that now defines mentoring as an activity that results in teacher professional development.

Along with the emergence of new expectations for mentoring there now appear to be not only inconsistencies in what mentoring is understood to be, but also in how it is practiced. It is my assumption that the mentoring practice will be affected by the mentor’s role conceptualization. To date, there has been little empirical evidence reported on the conceptual development of mentoring: what mentors need to know and be able to do, how the mentoring role evolves, and what factors enhance/hinder its development (Athanases & Achinstein, 2003; Little 1990, as cited in Giebelhaus & Bowman, 2002; Hawk, 1986-1987).

The recent focus on mentoring to improve teacher quality has prompted the use of a number of qualifying terms to describe mentoring characterized by process-oriented models.<sup>2</sup> The term ‘learning-focused’ mentoring, as described in Lipton and Wellman (2002), will be used in this dissertation to refer to mentoring practices that facilitate teacher professional development for both the mentor and mentee. This “learning-focused” conceptualization of mentoring is introduced in Chapter III where it is contrasted to the more traditional conceptions that still characterize some mentoring relationships (Jaccobi, 1991). In this dissertation I will suggest that the co-existence of traditional conceptions and learning-focused conceptions of mentoring can present a challenge for the implementation of learning-focused mentoring practices in schools. In concluding Chapter III I suggest a relational conception of mentoring that I find most promising for meeting the needs of teacher professional development *and* supporting new teachers.

#### *Conditions of “Effective” Mentoring: The Need to Examine Outcomes*

In Chapter IV the conditions that the literature associates with a relational learning-focused model of mentoring are explored. The essential elements of formalized mentoring that are considered to be “effective” (provides teacher support and professional development) are the facilitation of reflective inquiry, critique of one’s teaching practice and confrontation of one’s assumptions about teaching and learning -

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<sup>2</sup> Chapter III presents a review of current literature that uses qualifying terms, such as ‘learning-focused’ mentoring to describe “process oriented” mentoring that focuses on the professional development of both the mentor and mentee.

and these features are often absent in traditional models such as buddy support (Furlong & Maynard, 1995; *Tapping the Potential*, n.d.; Tomlinson, 1995; Zeichner, 1992).

I am particularly interested in how mentors negotiate the difficulties of what they often perceive to be paradoxical roles of support and challenge.<sup>3</sup> I am also interested in how the roles of support and challenge relate to the development of mutual reflective practice in the mentorship. It has been suggested that “critical nurturance” may be crucial to advance the professional skill of both the mentor and mentee (Bloom, 1995; Daloz, 1983; Morgan, 1996; Thies-Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1987; Yost, 2002).<sup>4</sup> If mentors simply pass on what works for them, programs might tend to stifle the innovation or implementation of new approaches on the part of new teachers (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004, as cited in *Tapping the Potential*, n.d.). Furthermore, it has been reported that some practices characteristic of buddy support can actually produce harmful results and may be worse than no mentor at all (Head, Reiman, & Thies-Sprinthall, 1992).

### Qualitative Research Design

Chapter V outlines the qualitative research design used to explore my two research questions. Seven beginning teachers and their mentors from two New Hampshire school districts were followed over the 2003-2004 school year in order to study how mentors conceptualized their role, what influenced their conceptualization and whether or not

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<sup>3</sup> The term ‘support’ refers to mentors befriending, informing, encouraging and motivating their mentees while ‘challenge’ refers to the mentor practice of questioning assumptions, introducing conflicting ideas, promoting critical reflection and professional discourse.

<sup>4</sup> Morgan (1996) uses the term, ‘critical nurturance’ to refer to mentors’ roles to challenge and support, which she claims to be paradoxical roles. The “paradox of critical nurturance” is discussed in detail in Chapter IV.



their understandings changed as they participated in a formalized mentoring program in their respective school districts. Since this study explored mentoring in different school settings (elementary, middle and high schools), it allowed for the exploration of contextual influences on mentoring conceptualization and practice as well as the influences of individuals' attitudes, experiences and beliefs.

### Grounded Theory Methodology

A traditional systematic grounded theory design as outlined in Strauss and Corbin (1998) was used to examine mentoring practices over the course of the 2003-2004 school year. A semi-structured interview protocol was used that addressed issues of mentoring that I identified in my prior review of the literature. Using the constant-comparative approach, a defining element of grounded theory in which data analysis is ongoing and informs the direction of the study, interview questions were tailored and revised in order to follow the emergence of concepts and patterns that characterized the mentoring relationships. This allowed for the development of general understandings that resulted from the individual experiences of all participants.

A constructivist approach to grounded theory, as presented by Charmaz (2002), was also used to reflect the interpretations of the researcher as well as the participants.<sup>5</sup> In this respect, field notes were written to capture my own thoughts as I interviewed each participant and analytical memos were written to facilitate a deeper understanding of concepts and themes that emerged as data were analyzed. These documents helped inform subsequent data collection and interpretation. In addition, open-ended journal

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<sup>5</sup> Charmaz (2002) contends that "(a) multiple realities exist, (b) data reflect the researcher's and the research participants' mutual constructions, and (c) the researcher, however incompletely, enters and is affected by the participants' world."

responses were used to allow the participants to contribute information that highlighted their personal experience.

In keeping with the constructivist approach, each mentor-mentee story was written to integrate the data and arrange them into themes that highlighted each mentor's individual experience within the framework of the concepts that emerged. These stories became the working data from which my final analysis was constructed. It was anticipated that the use of multiple perspectives to analyze the data would result in a deeper understanding of the reality of first year mentors. On the one hand, I expected that uncovering common circumstances and their patterns of impact on mentoring could provide information for the implementation of mentoring in similar structures; on the other hand, I also believe that a focus on an individual's particular experience can provide a deeper perspective opening up new ways to view the data.

### Findings and Implications of the Research

Chapter VI describes the two participating school districts' mentoring program structures, development and initial implementation processes in order to bring to light the districts' objective to create a mentoring program that goes beyond buddy support and provides for the professional development of both mentors and mentees. In each district, veteran teachers had served as informal "buddies" in the past where new teachers were assigned a "buddy" who served as a source of information and moral support. It was now expected that both mentors and mentees would benefit from the new formalized mentoring program by improving their instructional skills as a result of working together to examine teaching and learning.

Although this study revealed that the two participating school districts had varying degrees of commitment and support for mentoring, the patterns and practices of mentoring that resulted were found to be relatively consistent between the two districts; but not representative of the outcomes expected. Chapter VII reveals some of the challenges that the initial implementation of a learning-focused formal mentoring program presented in the Elmwood and Westville school districts and how the common patterns and practices of mentoring that developed affected the mentors' role conception. The common patterns I found included: 1) More directive "advice giving" and answering questions than facilitation of reflection; 2) A focus on social/emotional and procedural support and little attention to curriculum/instruction; 3) No reported classroom observation; 4) Less and less mentor-mentee contact as the year went on; and 5) No ongoing mentor training.

Chapter VIII describes the common mentoring practices that were evident at the end of the school year and summarizes the perceived benefits of mentoring, as well as the surprising number of drawbacks to mentoring that were discovered. The benefits included: 1) Mentee feelings of security; 2) Mentor reflection on classroom management; and 3) Mentor-Mentee expanded repertoire of ideas and activities. The drawbacks stemmed from: 1) Insufficient resources to support mentoring; 2) Role conflict/confusion; and 3) Mentor-Mentee stress.

It has been suggested that the successful implementation of learning-focused mentoring will result in improved teaching skills for both mentor and mentee, while studies of traditional mentoring reveal a one-way flow of information from mentor to mentee where only the mentee may benefit. The findings of this study indicate that,

although there were some perceived benefits to mentoring, the mentoring relationships showed no movement beyond traditional practices and the outcomes did not appear to have enhanced teacher learning for mentor and mentee. The drawbacks to mentoring that were found may help illuminate how the contextual factors in which mentoring occurs (both program structures and school culture) can impact the mentor's understanding of his or her role.<sup>6</sup>

Chapter VIII also examines how the two school districts evaluated their mentoring programs and how the findings impacted their plans for future program development. What they learned and, more importantly perhaps, what they did not learn from their evaluation process can shed light on appropriate program evaluation that includes both standards-based data and also satisfaction-based data.

#### The Inclusion of Anecdotal Data: Insight into Quality Mentoring Structures

Using theoretical sampling, data were collected from two additional mentors who were participating in a mentoring program sponsored by New Hampshire's Department of Education, Project ACROSS (Alternate Certification Routes with On-going Support Systems) in addition to participating in the Elmwood School District program. Initially, Project ACROSS mentors were not a part of my dissertation study; however, when it became apparent through the interview process that their mentoring was noticeably different from that of the mentors who were participating in this study, I decided to widen my circle of participants in order to investigate the reported differences and what might account for them. These data are reported in Chapter IX; they are presented separately

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<sup>6</sup> The implications of mentoring drawbacks are discussed in Chapter X.

from the original findings because Project ACROSS mentors did not participate in this research process to the same extent as the seven original mentors. Furthermore, participation in Project ACROSS provided mentors with a different context for conceptualizing mentoring.

Also included in Chapter IX are data from a single interview with an informal mentor who did not participate in any mentoring program. I used these data to further illuminate the findings concerning the role of classroom observation. This informal mentor and mentee, like those in Project ACROSS, observed each other in the classroom, which appears to have had an impact on the outcome of mentoring. These data are included in this dissertation because a comparison of the mentoring outcomes provides a basis for explicating the findings of this study by providing insight into what may be needed to move mentoring beyond buddy support.

A number of researchers indicate that novice teachers may be ready to deal with the challenge of questioning assumptions and practice during the second semester of the school year, however studies also reveal that this often doesn't happen within the first year of a mentoring relationship (Ben-Peretz, 1991; Dunne & Bennett, 1997; Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; McNally & Martin, 1998; Thompson, 2000; Timperley, 2001). The findings of this study confirm those studies that report mentees' reluctance to challenge their practice in first-year mentorships. This study found that the mentors did not facilitate their mentee's critical reflection on instructional practice; the mentoring did not move beyond providing buddy support. However, the examination of Project ACROSS data and that of the informal mentor revealed that those mentors did facilitate

both the support *and* challenge of their mentees' instructional practice and this appeared to lead to learning-focused outcomes.<sup>7</sup>

### Conclusions and Proposed Hypotheses

Chapter X presents “coding paradigms” to map the mentoring processes found in the original study as well as those found in Project ACROSS.<sup>8</sup> These models highlight mentoring practices within each program structure and illuminate what may be necessary to implement learning-focused mentoring that results in teacher professional development.

In the analysis process, major concepts and themes were identified and a core category was determined, in this case, the mentor's conceptualization of the tasks and activities that they believed did and did not constitute appropriate support. The interrelationship of the core category with other emergent categories is discussed in terms of its relationship to the mentoring strategies and outcomes that resulted.<sup>9</sup> A comparison of the findings from the original research design and those from Project ACROSS are discussed in order to support the claim that mentors who come to mentoring with traditional mentoring experiences need to be able to shift their conceptualization of mentoring to include

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<sup>7</sup> The comparisons between Project ACROSS mentors, the informal mentor and mentors in this dissertation study along with the implications for the implementation of learning-focused mentoring are presented in Chapter X.

<sup>8</sup> Strauss and Corbin (1992) suggest that the major data categories be laid out in a visual model to demonstrate the interrelationships of the data categories to the central phenomenon. This model is termed a “coding paradigm.”

<sup>9</sup> In Chapter X the core category of support is outlined to indicate its centrality in relationship to the categories of history, context of school culture, and context of the mentoring program and how it impacts the mentoring structures and outcomes.

learning-focused objectives in order to move mentoring beyond buddy support and result in professional development that improves teachers' pedagogy. Furthermore, the context of mentoring: the school culture and the mentoring program, is discussed to suggest how contextual structures might play an essential part in facilitating the conceptual shift from 'buddy' to 'mentor.'

### Paradigm Shift: A New Vision for Mentoring

The dissertation concludes with a synthesis of the findings to formulate a vision for re-conceptualizing mentoring as a systematic approach to teacher collaboration where all teachers would become "mentors" and a learning community would support induction into the profession. This research study points to the drawbacks of having veteran teachers take on the sole responsibility of supporting new teachers in a culture where learning-focused objectives are expected. Clearly, the need for comprehensive teacher induction with many avenues of support is evident. I suggest that when the context for mentoring includes the structures of a learning-focused mentoring program set within the collaborative structures of a learning community where all staff engage in reflective inquiry and conversations focused on the continuous improvement of teaching and learning, new teacher support will be embedded in on-going professional activities and all teachers will benefit with continuous improvement of the quality of teaching and learning.

## CHAPTER II

### TRANSITION CHALLENGES: THE NEED FOR BEGINNING TEACHER SUPPORT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The oldest myth about teacher preparation still prevails – that newly certified teachers are fully prepared for the rigor and complexity of classroom instruction . . . Newly certified teachers, however bright and capable, are just ready to begin the meaningful learning that occurs during the first few years of true professional engagement.  
- Sheila W. Moran (1999, p. 211 as cited in Jonson, 2002)

#### Introduction

Studies that report the challenges faced by beginning teachers generally examine their experiences in the first one to three years of teaching. This chapter reviews the literature that explicates the many problems that beginning teachers encounter as they enter their teaching careers and how the challenges they tend to encounter can affect beginning teachers' induction into the profession. In doing so we find that, as noted in the quote above, beginning teachers are often expected to be ready to meet the same challenges and carry the same workload as veteran teachers. Often, beginning teachers with limited experience or no experience at all are unprepared for what they must face, and they are left to figure it out on their own through trial and error strategies. The resulting stress and frustration this creates, compounded by a school culture of isolation, is what leads many potentially talented teachers to leave the profession, and those who do stay may not get the support needed to fully develop their teaching skills. If mentoring is to support teacher development as an answer to the "sink or swim" approach to entering teaching, then an examination of the issues new teachers face and their potential impact on teacher



quality as well as teacher career satisfaction will help to promote the development of effective mentoring programs.

### New Teacher Transition: “Reality Shock”

The transition from student-teaching to being a beginning teacher in charge of his/her own classroom has been described as “trying,” “traumatic” and even “painful” (Rogers & Babinski, 1999).<sup>10</sup> Veenman (1984), in a review of the international literature twenty years ago, reported difficulties of beginning teachers that are still being reported today and addressed in pre-service training (Koestier & Wubbles, 1995). Veenman described the new teacher experience as “reality shock” and noted similar references in English and German literature: “transition shock,” “praxisshock” and “reinwascheffekt.” He reported, however, that the term, “reality-shock” does not adequately describe the beginning teacher’s first year because it “suggests that it is only a very short shock . . . like a swimmer who must acclimatize to cold water” (p. 144). Veenman contends that “reality shock” is an “assimilation of a complex reality which forces itself incessantly upon the beginning teacher, day in and day out” (p. 144). In fact, the transition from pre-service teaching to the first year of career-teaching has been described as the most difficult transition, cognitively and emotionally, on the continuum of teacher development” (Steffey, Wolfe, Pasch, & Enz, 2000).

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<sup>10</sup> The term, “beginning teacher” generally refers to a wide variety of teachers who are newly employed and are in their first one to three years of teaching. They may have a range of backgrounds and experiences, from a Bachelor degree with a student teaching experience to a Masters degree with a full year teaching internship; or increasingly in recent years, no classroom experience at all.

“Teaching has been a career in which the greatest challenge and most difficult responsibilities are faced by those with the least experience” (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 1998, p. 21; Huling-Austin, 1990b). “[It] is the only profession without an established apprenticeship phase” (Danielson, 1999, p. 252). Lortie (1975) found that the beginning teacher is expected to step directly into the role of professional teacher with little if any assistance and assume the same responsibilities as the veteran teacher. “The difficulty involves the complexity and fast pace of the classroom where many events occur simultaneously and require on the spot problem solving . . . teachers may be involved in as many as 1,000 to 1,500 interactions with students each day” (Santrock 2001, as cited in Podsen, 2002, p. 85).

In some cases, beginning teachers are assigned to the more challenging situations such as lower level classes, larger classes, more varied teaching assignments, classes for which they were not trained and additional extracurricular activities (Adams, 1982; Danielson, 1999; Griffin, 1985; Pataniczek & Isaacson, 1981; Reiman & Parramore, 1994). Veteran teachers often “pull rank” on beginning teachers and use their seniority to get assigned to the more advanced students, leaving the less desirable, more challenging assignments for new teachers (Huling-Austin, 1990b). Linda Darling-Hammond (1996, as cited in Danielson, 1999) refers to these practices as “professional hazing.” Even when the teaching responsibilities of beginning teachers are the same as those of experienced teachers, Johnson (2001) reminds us that the nature and needs of beginning teachers set them apart from their more experienced colleagues and they need assistance and support as they transition into teaching.

### Concerns of New Teachers

Studies that examine the concerns of beginning teachers often cite classroom management and student discipline as major concerns. Katz, Mohanty, Kurachi, & Irving (1981) conducted follow-up studies on the experiences of students from various graduate teacher education programs using questionnaires to reveal some common concerns among beginning teachers. The concerns reported included: discipline, communication skills, lesson and curricular planning, student evaluation, as well as skills they claim were never acquired or were inadequately addressed in their teacher preparation programs. Veenman (1984) analyzed eighty-three empirical studies of teachers with less than three years of experience that used the questionnaire rating scale method of study. He identified classroom discipline and motivating students to be the most frequently cited needs of beginning teachers; discipline was cited as a “concern of major proportion” (p. 49).

However, Odell (1986), who studied areas of mentoring activity, along with the amount of assistance needed in each area, in order to infer the needs of beginning teachers, found otherwise. Odell found seven categories of needed support through data that were collected from the mentor teachers’ records of the assistance they offered during the first year mentoring process. When ranked by the number of times each area was addressed, classroom management support appeared lower on the list. The findings, in order of need were: system information, resources and materials, instructional strategies, emotional support, help with classroom management and discipline, help in managing the physical environment of the classroom and the need for demonstration teaching to observe for ideas. When Odell examined the areas in which new teachers

needed the assistance of their mentors, she found that the need for instructional support in the classroom ranked higher than classroom management and discipline.

Although ranked low in the Odell study, new teachers' need for demonstration teaching has been indicated in other research findings. For example, Underhill and Brown (1988, as cited in Camp, 1988), reported the need for demonstration teaching as an important induction assistance activity. In fact, Joyce and Showers (1995, as cited in Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1998) claim that demonstration is one of four major components of teacher training that is needed if the desired results are to be achieved.

Odell attributes finding different highest level needs than previously reported in the literature to the research methods used. The questionnaire method used in past studies, such as Veenman (1984), renders a self-report that measures perception of need "after-the-fact" and Odell claims that this may yield "unreliable" data. In addition, Odell deems the questionnaire method inferior to ongoing functional analysis in that questionnaires do not track the changing needs of beginning teachers over time. Odell, Loughlin & Ferraro (1987), in a follow-up study, had eighteen mentor teachers record the questions asked by beginning teachers; their findings are in accord with their original study. They concluded that "the functionally identified need for disciplinary support never emerged as a strong one . . . [although] disciplinary support often ranks as the highest perceived need for beginning teachers when assessed through retrospective self-report" (p. 56).

In yet another follow-up study, Odell (1989) collected data through mentor administered interviews conducted at the beginning, mid-year and at the end of elementary teachers' first year of teaching. The surprising finding was that these data confirmed the reports of earlier studies, such as Veenman (1984), who found discipline to

be a major concern of beginning teachers. Odell reported, “It may be that various methods of assessing the needs of beginning teachers in an induction context tap different dimensions of teacher needs. . . . Direct observational approaches may be primarily recording the frequency of needed teacher support, while the present post hoc interview procedure may be primarily assessing the intensity of teacher concerns” (p.49). In other words, beginning teachers may not experience many discipline issues, but when they do happen, they have a great deal of impact on the beginning teacher. These variations in reported beginning teacher concerns suggest that the needs of beginning teachers are complex and studies that follow the mentoring process over time are needed to examine the relationship between the mentoring support and teacher needs.

#### Stages of Beginning Teacher Concerns and the Needed Support

A number of studies have indicated that the needs and concerns of beginning teachers change with time and different categories of needs are evident at different stages of new teacher development (Glickman, 1981; Huffman & Leak, 1986; Odell, 1986, 1989; Odell et al., 1987). Based upon a review of three hundred studies that examined the development of new teachers, Fuller and Brown (1975) identified stages of learning to teach that vary with the changing concerns of new teachers. They describe the “self” stage as that which occurs at the start of the school year. In this stage the beginning teacher is concerned with survival. With some success, the beginning teacher moves into the “task” stage where s/he begins to focus on how his/her teaching skills can be improved. Finally, as the beginning teacher becomes comfortable with survival and

teaching strategies, s/he enters the “impact” stage where s/he begins to consider the result of the teaching process on the student.

Glickman (1981) elaborated upon Fuller and Brown’s stages and identified the appropriate support needed at each stage. According to Glickman, while in the “self” stage, the beginning teacher needs direction and suggestions; in the “task” stage, collaborative assistance is most effective; at the “impact” stage, needing little help, the beginning teacher is best served by working as a co-learner with peers. Huffman & Leak (1986) argued that until beginning teachers can resolve their concerns about teaching that affect them personally (“self” stage), they are unlikely to move on to solving problems that affect their students (“impact” stage). A beginning teacher who is frustrated and confused cannot adequately address student learning.

Ligana (1970) described a “curve of disenchantment” that beginning teachers may experience. They enter teaching excited and idealistic, then, as they encounter frustration they develop negative attitudes toward students and teaching in general. With experience, they rebound to a more realistic but still relatively negative attitude. For those who stay in teaching, the result is that they tend to abandon the norms and expectations they developed during pre-service education and adapt to the norms and expectations of the local school culture (Griffin, 1985). Furthermore, Gordon (1991) purports that those who “make it through” the first three years on their own often develop a “survival mentality” that interferes with their openness to be reflective and highly skilled teachers. If new teachers are not supported and their needs are not addressed, their motivation and creativity can be stifled and this can foster negativity that interferes with high quality teaching.

### The Isolation Factor Compounds New Teacher Concerns

Physical, psychological and social isolation have long been problems for teachers in public schools (Huffman & Leak, 1986; Lortie, 1975). “Almost without exception, teachers work in settings where the actual structure of the school building precludes much interaction among adults” (Harris, 1995, p. 19). The “invisible walls” created by the “culture of teaching” encourage isolation and autonomy as opposed to collaboration within the teaching profession (Britzman, 1986). Lieberman & Miller (1984, p. 11) identify “unspoken rules” where it is acceptable for teachers to talk about a host of non-school related topics and it is acceptable to talk about or even “complain in general about school and the students [but] it is unacceptable for teachers to talk to each other about teaching and what goes on in classrooms.”

In an article describing the successful implementation of New Teacher Groups with 49 elementary teachers from five school districts in North Carolina, Rogers and Babinski (1999) reported that loneliness and lack of support further exacerbate the problems of beginning teachers. Rogers and Babinski conclude, “Given the sociocultural context of most schools, we can easily understand why beginning teachers feel isolated and are afraid to reveal uncertainties about their practice and reluctant to ask for assistance for fear of appearing inadequate” (p. 38). If mentoring is to be successful, then mentoring programs will not only need to address the physical isolation, but also the “invisible walls” that hinder discussion of what goes on in classrooms. One aim in my examination of mentors’ changing conception of mentoring over their first year in a mentoring relationship is to reveal what, if any, circumstances help to break down these walls and/or keep them in place.

## Teachers Without Teacher Training: A Growing Issue that May Further Exacerbate New

### Teacher Transition

It has been reported that the issues resulting from the assimilation into professional teaching are exacerbated when teachers are hired with no teacher education, as is common today with the shortage of certified teachers in certain disciplines. Barr (1987) referred to them as “fast-track” teachers and has serious concerns about this “stopgap” measure being used more and more to address teacher shortages. Haberman (1985) referred to the practice of untrained teachers as “common sense” pedagogy and goes on to conclude that it is, in fact, “nonsense.” He finds that the pedagogy of untrained teachers can be counter-productive to the educational system in general and damaging to the students in the classroom. Sedlak (1987) concurs and warns that this practice of “pseudo-credentialing” can be expected to result in large numbers of incompetent teachers. In addition, he reports that the promise of higher standards is being betrayed by a system that gives “warm bodies” license to teach.

Although current research conclusions provide different views of the impact of teacher training on the quality of the teacher, the fact remains that many schools still do hire uncertified teachers and then attempt to support them in the process of becoming certified. These new teachers clearly have needs that go beyond those of newly certified teachers with at least some classroom experience (See Appendix A for Studies that Investigate the Impact of Teacher Background on the Qualification of Teachers).



## The Need for Mentoring: Retention of Quality Teachers

Huling-Austin (1990b) found little reference to mentoring and few mentoring programs reported in the literature prior to 1980. After A Nation At Risk: A Response to Educational Reform (1983) and three other reports cited by Huling-Austin: the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education report, NCATE Redesign (1985), the Holmes Group report, Tomorrow's Teachers (1986), and the Carnegie Forum report, A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the literature on teacher mentoring and induction programs began to proliferate. More recently, the reported crisis level shortages of certified teachers and the high rates of beginning teachers leaving the profession have continued to prompt a focus toward mentoring and induction programs as an effort to retain quality teachers (Thompson, 2000; Whitaker, 2000; Podsen, 2002).

The National Education Association (NEA) reports that colleges graduate more than enough teachers each year to fill all teaching vacancies, but of these graduates, 30% never enter teaching; of those that do, 30% leave within the first five years; in larger cities it is as high as 50% (Huling-Austin, 1990b; "Invest in New Teachers," 2001; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Some studies report that, in the United States, 30% of teachers leave the profession in their first two years of teaching (Casey & Mitchell, 1996; Perez, Swain, & Hartsough, 1997), with as many as 10% leaving before the end of their first year (Podsen, 2002). Snyder (1998) reports that, since 1990, the number of new teachers has barely kept pace with school enrollment.

Reports of the cost for replacing a teacher vary. A study by the Texas State Board for Educator Certification (*The Cost of Teacher Turnover*, 2000) determined that the cost to taxpayers when a teacher leaves and has to be replaced is in excess of \$50,000.00 which

includes hiring, training and the learning curve of replacements. A California study estimated the average cost to be more than \$5,000.00, including administrator time (Danielson, 1999). Using a model approved by the U.S. Department of Labor, *Tapping the Potential* (n.d.) reports the cost of recruitment, hiring and training new teachers as approximately thirty percent of their salaries. Although the numbers vary, it is evident that there are both financial and human costs associated with high rates of teacher attrition and this prompts the rising focus on mentoring.

Recent efforts to retain beginning teachers has resulted in a focus on more formalized mentoring programs; however, schools that implement these programs are the exception rather than the rule (Podsen, 2002). Interest in formalized mentoring has grown in recent years because these programs are presumed to convey beneficial knowledge needed to be successful in teaching as well as offer emotional support (Thompson, 2000). One of the reported reasons that teachers leave the profession at such alarming rates is lack of mentoring support (Schlechty & Vance, 1983; Slaybaugh, Evans, & Byrd, 1995/1996). Teachers who do not participate in “programs of induction,” which includes mentoring, are reportedly twice as likely to leave than those who do participate (“Invest in New Teachers,” 2001). Thus, at least one study associates the implementation of mentoring with teacher retention; and more schools are looking to these programs in hopes of retaining quality teachers.

### Summary

When beginning teachers enter the classroom for the first time they are often unprepared for the challenges they face and find their experience to be overwhelming.

They report that their teacher training does not always prepare them for the challenges of the classroom, and for those who lack formal teacher training, their issues may be compounded. Stressed and frustrated in an environment that is often unsupportive, new teachers are leaving the teaching profession, which has led to a crisis level shortage of teachers.

Three stages of new teacher concerns have been identified and are characterized by the teacher's changing focus: 1) survival, 2) instruction and 3) student learning. Without the appropriate support, new teachers may not progress from stage to stage; they may abandon their idealistic expectations for teaching; and they may adopt the status quo norms of the school culture. The result is that they may focus their efforts on survival rather than on a quality of teaching that advances the learning of their students. In the past few decades, the well-documented need for supporting beginning teachers has led to a focus on mentoring practice in schools. At this point, however, there is little empirical evidence to support specific mentoring practices (Bennetts, 2001; Hawk, 1986-1987; Little, 1990).

## CHAPTER III

### THE CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF MENTORING: FROM TRADITIONAL TO RELATIONAL MODELS

The greatest gift the mentor offers is a new  
and whole way of seeing things . . .  
Through this gift of self as philosopher,  
the receiver, the protégé, is awakened.  
-Gehrke (1988)

#### Introduction

In this chapter I trace the development of various conceptions of the mentoring role in western societies from its origin through more recent applications in business and education settings. While traditional authoritarian mentoring models emerged in business and higher education, where the mentor passes on the knowledge and skills needed for career advancement, I will suggest that because the goals of mentoring in primary and secondary schools are different, mentoring for K-12 teachers may command a different approach. Furthermore, if the goals of mentoring are both new teacher support and also professional development for the mentor as well as the mentee, a focus on mutual inquiry and critical reflection through the development of a collegial partnership may provide a more appropriate model for successful mentoring in schools. This relational model first emerged out of the difficulties traditional mentoring presented for women in business and higher education. It has now begun to take hold in public education settings where teacher collaboration is recognized as a practice that promotes the development of professional skills.

In the final section of this chapter, I present a relational conception of mentoring that I now find most promising for meeting the needs of teacher professional development and for supporting new teachers. In putting forth a relational model of mentoring based upon an ethic of care, I present a variety of alternative features of mentoring pedagogy that one can look for in defining a non-traditional conceptualization of the mentor role.

### Origins and History of Mentoring

An examination of the literature reveals a variety of conceptions of mentoring. Historically, in western European literature, mentoring is most often traced to ancient Greek mythology as described in Homer's epic poem, *The Odyssey* (Homer, 1963). According to the myth, when Odysseus set out to fight the Trojan War, he left his infant son, Telemachus, in the charge of Mentor, his wise, elderly entrusted servant. Mentor assumed the responsibility for educating and advising Telemachus and preparing him for his destiny as both a man and a soldier. Mentor had great knowledge and experience in these matters, which gave him the power and authority to be Telemachus's guide (Clawson, 1980). As a trusted servant, Odysseus granted Mentor the authority to parent his son in his absence. However, it was actually the goddess Athene to whom Telemachus turned for help. She chose not to appear to him in her supernatural form, but rather appeared as his trusted mortal companion, Mentor. Athene gave direct practical advice and encouraged him to act upon her direction.<sup>11</sup>

If this Greek myth is the origin of the term "mentor," as is often reported, then a mentor is traditionally someone who is respected, knowledgeable *and* holds power; who

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<sup>11</sup> Lash (2000) contends that, "... like Athena, women must become 'male' in order to gain *overt* responsibility, recognition and respect" (p. 25).

is generally older, wiser, inspirational *and* usually male. “The object of the relationship is termed the mentee. The skills required [of the mentor] are akin to those employed by a counselor, the process is transformational and the mentor is chosen by the mentee. The motivation for the success of the relationship is intrinsic” (Cross, 1998, p. 224). Thus, traditionally, a mentor is someone chosen to direct the development of the mentee.

For centuries, mentoring has been the vehicle for handing down knowledge, maintaining culture, supporting talent and securing future leadership (Darwin, 2000). Historical reference has also been made to the practice of medieval guilds where a form of mentoring was the means of inducting new members to the practice of master craftsmen (Cross, 1998; Darwin, 2000). This was a hierarchical relationship where the mentee was referred to as an apprentice, pupil or protégé. The skills sought by the mentee were those of the instructor or mentor. The protégé was assigned or selected by the mentor; and there may have been some formal reward for the time and effort given to guide the skills of the protégé.

Darwin (2000) reports other historical roots of mentoring: in pre-revolutionary China, there was a process called, “passing of the thrown” from sovereign to the successor known as “Shan Jang,” or “stepping out of the way;” mentoring flourished in the English feudal system as favored pages and squires became knights; during the European Renaissance and Baroque periods, patron families supported talented artists. History demonstrates that, in general, a strong reproductive element has been attached to the concept of mentoring as societies relied on ritualized behavior to protect and maintain the status quo.

### *Traditional Conceptions of Mentoring: Western Versus Eastern Perspectives*

Over time, conceptions of mentoring have shown variation, especially in terms of the range of responsibilities of the mentor (Howey, 1988). There is some confusion and contradiction in the literature because the term, “mentor” is often used to describe roles that are quite different, “such as Mentor/Athene and Mentor the master craftsman” (Cross, 1998, p. 225). Jacobi (1991) states that although many researchers have attempted to provide concise definitions of mentoring, “a mentor definitional diversity continues to characterize the literature” (p. 506). However, there is some agreement about the range of roles that constitute traditional mentoring relationships. The mentor is seen as someone who is a “teacher,” “guide,” “sponsor,” “patron,” “counselor,” “advisor,” “expert,” “exemplar,” “role model,” and “surrogate parent” (Cross, 1998; Levinson, 1978; Lyons, Scroggins, & Rule, 1990; McIntyre & Brinton, 1998; Merriam, 1983). The mentee on the other hand, is usually described as “protégé,” “apprentice,” “learner” and “novice” (Levinson, 1978; Merriam, 1983; Stalker, 1994). There appears to be a continuity in most of the research I reviewed suggesting that the mentor-mentee relationship is a developmental process where the mentor fosters the realization of the protégé’s dream and assists the protégé in developing a new sense of self, both personally and professionally (Levinson, 1978; Daloz (1986, 1999).

Many traditional views of mentoring have in common, “notions of power, authority, experience and knowledge” – traits often associated with “. . . western patriarchal conceptions of mentoring” (Thompson, 2000, p. 23). In addition, beliefs in mind/body dualism, rooted in western culture, set the mind apart from and above the body and also often present a gendered view of knowledge acquisition “where masculinity is

constructed around the mind, while femininity is constructed around the body (Hesse-Biber 1996, as cited in McGuire and Reger 2003, p. 55). Thus, many western cultures have historically “reinforced the idea that men are ‘naturally’ equipped to be intellectuals and that feminine qualities (in men and women), such as the expression of emotion, caring for others, and attention to relationships, impede scholarly activity” (McGuire and Reger, 2003, p. 55).<sup>12</sup>

However, the traditional western view of mentoring, where the benefits of the relationship run in a single direction from mentor to protégé, is not the only conception of mentoring, as evidenced by Yamamoto (1988) who suggests a different view grounded in an eastern philosophy. According to Yamamoto, mentoring involves an experience of “transcendence” for the mentor, as she reexamines and reflects upon her being, and a “transformation” for the novice, as the mentor helps her to “see beyond” herself and her own experience in order to “become more fully human” (p. 188). Yamamoto’s conception of mentoring suggests that there are alternatives to western patriarchal structures where both the novice and the mentor may benefit from the relationship, and this is the direction I want to take.

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<sup>12</sup> The paternalistic associations with the concept of mentoring can be seen in the origins of the terms, ‘mentor’ and ‘protégé.’ The root of the word mentor is “men,” meaning to remember, think, council. The word protégé comes from the French verb “proteger” meaning to protect. Thus, traditionally, the mentoring relationship has been framed in the language of paternalism and dependency and it stems from a power dependent, hierarchical relationship aimed at reproducing and maintaining, the status quo (Darwin, 2000). Sandler (1993, as cited in Bona, Rinehart & Volbrecht, 1994) concurs with this view. She reports that traditional conceptions of mentoring are based on a hierarchy of power where a mentor, who is likely to be older, sets the mentoring agenda and initiates the mentoring process.



### Mentoring in Business Organizations: From Informal to Formalized Mentoring

In modern western institutions, mentoring has often developed from an “informal” interpersonal relationship into a systemic “formalized” program of induction and initiation into organizational structures (Thompson, 2000).<sup>13</sup> Many business organizations became interested in formalizing mentoring when the research indicated that mentoring was linked to career success (Roche, 1979), personal growth (Levinson, 1978), leadership development (Zaleznik, 1977) and increased organizational productivity (Zey, 1984).

Some business researchers have defined mentors as “individuals with advanced experience and knowledge who are committed to providing upward support and mobility to their protégé’s careers (Hunt & Michael, 1983; Kram, 1985). Kram defines two functions of mentoring: career development functions that facilitate the protégé’s advancement in the organization and psychosocial functions, which contribute to the protégé’s personal growth and professional development. Researchers have correlated having a mentor with more promotions (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Scandura, 1992), higher incomes (Chao, Waltz, & Gardner, 1997; Dreher & Ash, 1990), more mobility (Scandura, 1992) and greater career satisfaction (Fagenson-Eland, 1989). Mentoring has also been found to have a positive impact on organizational socialization (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993), job satisfaction (Koberg, Chappell, & Ringer, 1994), and reduced turnover (Viator & Scandura, 1991).

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<sup>13</sup> “Informal” mentoring refers to spontaneous mentorships that are initiated and guided by the individuals involved where “formalized” mentoring is developed through the intervention of an organization - usually in the form of voluntary assignment or matching of mentors and mentees along with some organizational requirements and/or guidelines for mentoring.

Although Chao, Walz & Gardner (1997) and Ragins (1989) both found that informal mentoring has a greater impact on the career development of the protégé than formalized mentoring, formal mentoring programs are still being implemented in business organizations and they often target women “in an attempt to help them advance in the organization and break through the glass ceiling,” into upper level management positions that are not easily accessed by women (Ragins & Cotton, 1999, p. 530). In recognizing the advantages mentoring offers, many business organizations have tried to replicate “informal mentoring relationships” by creating “formal mentoring programs” (Ragins & Cotton, 1999, p. 529)

*Perceived “Costs” of Formalized Mentoring in Business Settings: Issues for Women*

Although much of the research literature supports the use of mentoring to promote career advancement, existing theory also suggests that there are costs to being a mentor and women incur greater costs than men (Noe, 1988; Ragins, 1989). The female mentor-female protégé relationship is the most “visible” of all gender combinations and therefore entails the greatest risks, especially if the protégé fails; demands on women tend to be greater than those on men. Other costs to women, as reported in the literature, include the risk of being displaced or “backstabbed” by ambitious or disloyal protégés (Hatlin & Knolts, 1982). As a result of these findings, some researchers speculate that women might be reluctant or even unwilling to enter mentoring relationships and that this could account for the under-representation of women in many of the business mentoring studies.

To test this hypothesis, Ragins and Cotton (1999) conducted a study that found women experience more negative repercussions from entering mentoring relationships than their male counterparts, however, they expressed interest equivalent to men in participating in mentoring practices despite anticipating significantly greater risks and drawbacks. Ragins and Cotton concluded that women's persistent intention to mentor in the face of reported barriers might be the result of the importance of social relationships to them. This suggests that there is a need to examine further the experiences of females in mentoring relationships in contrast to those of males.

Ragins and Scandura (1994) designed a study to test whether women anticipate greater benefits from the mentoring relationship than men. Controlling for rank, salary, tenure, employment status, type or size of the organization, age, race and education, they found no significant differences between men and women in mentoring experience, intentions to mentor or the costs and benefits reported to be associated with mentoring relationships. Theoretical implications resulting from this study are that position rather than gender may account for the effect on the mentoring outcome and the lack of female mentors in business organizations may be the result of the relative absence of women at high ranks rather than gender differences in intentions to mentor. This same conclusion has been suggested by others (Morrison, Glinow, Nelson & Leadership, 1987; Noe, 1988). However, "the notion that mentoring is an exclusive activity undertaken predominantly by older males for younger males is no longer appropriate" (Darwin, 2000, p. 4). This is particularly important for women who aspire to high ranking management positions since studies suggest that mentoring may be a key practice for

advancing the careers of women who enter the business world (Burke & McKeen, 1990; Noe, 1988; Ragins, 1989).

#### Formalized Mentoring in Higher Education: Similar Goals and Concerns

As in business organizations, there is currently a rising popularity of mentoring in institutions of higher education. With the recent focus on quality improvement, leaders of higher education have turned to mentoring in order to empower college and university faculty, to promote their skills and knowledge and to inspire professional growth (Luna & Cullen, 1995). According to Luna and Cullen (1995), the goals are to “invigorate senior faculty,” help their junior colleagues “learn the ropes,” and “assist female and minority members in understanding the organizational culture” (p. 2). Their research found that “teaching and research improve when junior faculty are paired with mentors . . . [and] mentors themselves also feel renewed through the sharing of power and advocacy of collegiality” (Boice 1992, as cited in Luna & Cullen, 1995). Numerous mentoring studies in higher education focus particularly on the issues of career advancement of women and minorities in colleges and universities; these include graduate student and doctoral advisement/mentoring (Cain, 1994; Chandler, 1996; Cordova, 1988; Davis, 2001; Heinrich, 1991, 1995; Lash, 2000; Luna & Cullen, 1995; Matczynski & Comer, 1991; Sands, Parson, & Duane, 1991; Schramm, 2000; Stalker, 1994). It appears that higher education employs mentoring to achieve the same two categories of outcomes that Kram (1985) identified in business: (1) career advancement and (2) psychosocial development of the mentee.

The same gender issues and concerns found in the research of business organizations surface in the literature that examines mentoring in higher education. Senior level faculty tend to be white males and, as in the business domain, the mentor pool is limited and tends to present obstacles for women as well as minorities (Maczynski & Comer, 1991). In many instances, women choose male mentors/advisors due to the scarcity of appropriate female role models with power and authority in the university who can pave the way for career advancement. However, mentoring relationships require a high level of intimacy, trust and support, which may be compromised in cross-gender relationships (Maczynski & Comer, 1991). “Fearing the potential for petty jealousies, angry spouses, office gossip and perceived sexual favors, female protégés are less likely to engage in behaviors such as: after work meetings, late work hours, or dinner [meetings] than their male counterparts” (Maczynski & Comer, 1991, p. 4). Furthermore, Maczynski and Comer report that potential mentors might also be reluctant to enter into cross-gender and minority relationships.

The prospect for women to develop effective mentoring relationships may be further complicated by differential treatment received from potential male mentors. It has been reported that male faculty affirm male students more often than females, give more formal and informal encouragement to male students, treat male students as colleagues and select them over women for research assistants, give more goal directed assistance to male colleagues including leadership development and risk-taking where women colleagues receive more encouragement and support, confidence boosts and visibility facilitation (Bolton, 1980; Collins, 1983; Lyons et al., 1990; Simeone, 1987). As a result, women and others who are denied access to powerful networks in academia often

develop support groups to escape isolation (Mosser, 1987; Norell & Ingoldsby, 1991). It has been reported that women tend to seek out women mentors even though they are less powerful in the organization (Cordova, 1988; Davis, 2001).

*The Emergence of a Relational Conception of Mentoring: Inconsistent Findings*

Mentoring literature in both business and higher education focuses on male mentors, and as a result, there is little research that looks at the implications of women mentors in advisor/advisee relationships. Of the studies that do exist, the results are conflicting. Heinrich (1995) reports studies that found women rate relational dimensions of female mentoring more important than the power accessed through a male mentor. In other studies she presents, women reported dissatisfaction with female mentors in that women advisors were less likely to initiate mentoring relationships, were less directive and weighted personal concerns over professional concerns.

In contrast, Heinrich also reports studies that found no variations by gender in the behavior patterns of mentors. In her own phenomenological study of 22 women who received doctoral degrees and were mentored by women, Heinrich (1995) found “warm professional friendships” as well as instances of “silent betrayal” where mentors did not advocate for mentees and let them flounder or allowed them to be victimized by male and female colleagues. Successful mentoring relationships for women were described as “power-with” relationships where “reciprocity, empowerment and solidarity” were characteristics of the relationship and the mentor served as “initiator, guide, and ultimately colleague in the professional world” (pp. 465-466). Heinrich’s review of the research suggest that two conceptions of the role of the mentor have emerged in

organizational settings, one where the mentor's knowledge and power is foregrounded and one where partnership, mutuality and shared knowledge drive the relationship. Her own research concludes that success may be found in a balance of advocacy for and support of the mentee.

Cain (1994), in describing her experience being mentored as a graduate student, described "required dependency and gratitude" but then also described an "exchange of identity" that occurred when she came to recognize her ownership and authority over her own knowledge, an experience that doesn't often emerge from traditional mentoring (p.115). This prompted her to question the traditional mentoring model when she posed an important question, "Is it possible to re-imagine the mentor model in terms of women working together in reciprocity and trust?" (p. 117).

Gilligan (1982) theorizes about women's psychological development emphasizing the importance of "making connections." Women place a high degree of importance on communicating, understanding and caring about others, and maintaining relationships. Although a relational conception of mentoring has been suggested, mentoring relationships in higher education tend to be traditionally structured with goals similar to those found in business. These traditional models see mentors as the "experienced ideal" to be replicated in the protégé. According to Schwiebert (2000):

In a traditionally male world that is highly task-oriented, these female qualities may not be perceived as unique strengths that women bring to the workplace. Therefore, many women may actively work to deny these traits and may cultivate traits that they perceive as more desirable . . . As a result, society ultimately loses because it fails to benefit from the strengths of being both task-oriented and relational, for each contributes equally to the development of the most successful approach (p. 45).

A new conception of mentoring has begun to emerge that defines mentoring as a reciprocal learning relationship where knowledge is shared and personal and professional growth is the goal for both the mentor and mentee, but will it flourish in a society that historically values and operates with hierarchical, patriarchal structures? According to Cross (1998), economic theorists suggest that success in the twenty-first century will be attributed to “the exploration of intellectual capital” (p. 229). Modern organizations are going to need “all its people to act as mentors in different contexts and at appropriate times. . . . Creating a culture that encourages and rewards knowledge sharing, as opposed to knowledge hoarding, is the most important task facing many modern organizations. Mentoring and being mentored will have their place in realizing that culture” (p. 230). This necessitates a closer look at relational structures of mentoring.

#### Paradigm Shift: A Relational Approach

Relational mentoring foregrounds one’s natural propensity to connect with others in a caring way and sheds new light on mentoring theory and practice. In this type of mentoring relationship the mentor and mentee can question each other’s practice as well as the taken-for-granted issues that they often fail to confront; in this circumstance, both mentor and mentee may be more likely to grow professionally (Fletcher, 1998). “[Mutual confrontation requires] ‘open-mindedness,’ an ‘active desire to listen to more sides than one; to give heed to the facts from whatever source they come; to give full attention to alternative possibilities; and to recognize the possibility of error even in the beliefs that are dearest to us’ and ‘responsibility,’ or the ‘desire to synthesize diverse ideas, to make sense of nonsense, and to apply information in aspired direction’”



(Goodman, 1988, as cited in Smyth, 1992, p. 295). Clinchy (1994) refers to this relational style that considers the perspectives of others when making meaning from one's encounters as "connected knowing" and claims that it is a feminine characteristic because women tend to foreground relationship and concern for others' perspectives in their interactions. It is this relational quality that characterizes a non-traditional conception of mentoring where mentor and mentee enter into a relationship based upon mutuality and co-construction of knowledge.

*Mentoring as Relationship: Framework of an Ethic of Care*

In her book, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (1982), Carol Gilligan brings a new focus to the understanding of women's responses to moral issues and decisions. She makes a strong argument that psychological theories had consistently misinterpreted the development of women. Where men interpret moral dilemmas in terms of rights and justice through a stance of separation; women are more often preoccupied with responsibilities and relationships by means of caring and maintaining connections (Gilligan, 1982). Using interviews with women regarding their personal issues and decisions (about abortion), Gilligan reframes relational qualities that other theories interpret as weaknesses, and shows them to actually be strengths when viewed from the feminine perspective of an "ethic of care."

In 1984, Nel Noddings wrote *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, in which she builds a philosophical argument for a female ethic of caring based on receptivity, relatedness and responsiveness. According to Noddings, there are two features of a caring relationship. The first she calls "engrossment," which is the capacity of the "one-caring" to "feel with" the "cared-for" (p. 30). The second is a

“motivational shift” that occurs for the “one-caring” as s/he engages in relationship with the cared-for (p. 33). When this happens the one-caring “shares” his/her motive energy; it “flows toward” the cared-for with a central focus on serving their needs. The commitment to act in the interest of the cared-for is essential to the ethic of care and it is represented in the relationship of a mentor to his/her mentee.

Noddings discusses the realignment of educational structures, both in Caring and future publications, by applying the feminine ethic of care to the classroom teacher-student relationship (Noddings, 1984, 1992). She discusses a relational pedagogy that foregrounds the needs of the student in the instructional relationship. Furthermore, when the goals of mentoring programs focus on shared knowledge about teaching, the mentorships presumably become pedagogical relationships where the mentor-mentee relationship reflects the teacher-student relationship (Thompson, 2000). Thompson states, “Because they are collegial relationships, more egalitarian forms of pedagogy must be operationalized. In fact, many mentoring relationships exhibit characteristics and dilemmas common to feminist pedagogy” (p.7). Thus, relational mentoring that Thompson refers to as “feminist mentoring” employs a relational pedagogy that foregrounds relationship, mutuality and shared inquiry.

#### The Emergence of Relational Mentoring in Schools: Roles, Practices and Responsibilities

The literature indicates that, although traditional mentoring models exist in schools, they are being reexamined as changing values emerge through school reform

movements.<sup>14</sup> The following presentation of literature on teacher mentoring in public school settings contrasts the application of traditional and relational paradigms and suggests that relational mentoring may present some advantages in the context of schools.

### *Goals of Formalized Mentoring in Public Schools*

Research that has connected teacher quality with student achievement has prompted a focus on the retention of quality teachers and professional development that improves instructional skills (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Mentoring programs are now focusing on collaborative relationships as opposed to the one-way transfer of knowledge. The goals of mentoring focus on providing systematic and sustained assistance and support to beginning teachers by an experienced teacher for at least one year (Huling-Austin, 1990b). In a review of the literature on mentoring beginning teachers, Huling-Austin identified five major goals that stand out in most programs. These goals include 1) improving teaching practices of beginning teachers, 2) improving retention of beginning teachers, 3) promoting the personal and professional well being of new teachers, 4) satisfying mandated requirements related to induction and 5) transmitting the school culture to beginning teachers. Cole (1991) found similar goals with the addition of 1) the development of skills in self-assessment and 2) the development of habits of reflective practice.

Since beginning teachers share the same professional roles and responsibilities as their experienced mentors, it has been suggested that the relationship between them needs to

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<sup>14</sup> Wong claims that new teachers learn best in systematic induction programs complemented by mentoring to provide support and facilitate reflection (Wong, 2002b; 2004). It is the mentoring component of new teacher induction that is the focus of this

be more collegial or equal than in more traditional mentoring relationships (Howey, 1988). According to Thompson (2000), mentoring programs in schools need to encourage teachers to plan together and reflect on the resulting practice; she claims this will naturally facilitate the development of norms of collaboration and collegiality. No longer is merely the transfer of knowledge from mentor to mentee considered to be the primary objective of mentoring.

In describing their vision for mentoring in the new millennium, Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) claim that beginning teachers may have valuable information from which mentors can benefit because the teachers who are recent graduates may know more about some current instructional strategies. If the school assumes that mentors have all the answers, innovative beginning teachers might experience the mentorship as oppressive. Cochran-Smith and Paris (1995) suggest that mentors and mentees work in a climate where the common assumption is that teaching is inherently difficult, mentors don't have all the answers and everyone needs help, not just the beginner.

One of the guiding beliefs here is that when mentoring becomes a collaborative process that benefits both mentor and mentee, the mentor will facilitate "transformation" as opposed to merely "confirmation" (Butcher, 2002). This conception is aligned with the eastern philosophy of mentoring as reported in Yamamoto (2000), where the mentor experiences "transcendence" and the mentee is "transformed." Here, 'transcendence' refers to a heightened quality of pedagogy and knowledge for the mentor; and the resulting 'transformation' for the mentee entails moving from "beginner" to a knowledgeable partner and colleague.

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study and not comprehensive induction, although they often do, and should, go hand in hand (Wong, 2004).

“New Generation” Models of Mentoring: Learning-Focused Approaches that Require  
Ongoing Training and Support

Mentoring, in what is now being reported as “new generation” formalized programs, promotes mutual mentor/mentee reflective inquiry and specifically trains mentors to engage mentees in co-learning activities (Ganser, 2002a). The “new generation” approach to mentoring is evident in the emergence of distinguishing terms such as, “quality mentoring” (Danielson, 2002), “effective mentoring” (Holloway, 2001), “effective teacher mentoring,” “fully developed teacher mentoring” (Podsen, 2002), “learning-focused mentoring” (Lipton & Wellman, 2002) and “second generation mentoring programs” (Ganser, 2002a). The common focus in these “new generation” schools has become the learning of both the mentor and mentee.

Ganser and others claim that “new generation” mentoring programs are superior to the “first generation” programs that were initiated in the 1970’s and 1980’s in that current models build on the successful features that mentoring provides for new teachers and improve upon them by adding new structures that promote teacher learning. These new structures include: (a) “just in time” mentor training (training presented and/or reinforced throughout the year at the time of implementation); (b) co-mentoring or “team mentoring” (a lead mentor with several assistants who serve many teachers); (c) Electronic communication (i.e. workshops and courses) and (d) multiple year mentoring programs. It is claimed that learning-focused structures, when included in mentoring/induction programs, will produce high quality mentoring that results in professional development for both mentor and mentee.<sup>15</sup> “The old model of mentoring,

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<sup>15</sup> In addition to teacher learning, it is also being reported that learning-focused mentoring may advance student achievement (Summers, 1987 as cited in Boreen, Johnson, Niday, &

where experts who are certain about their craft can pass on its principles to eager novices, no longer applies” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000, p. 52).

#### Learning-Focused Mentoring Requirement: Appropriate Mentor Selection

The mentor traits associated with fostering learning-focused mentoring are being identified and the importance of the mentor selection process is taking its place on the list of requirements for establishing learning-focused outcomes. McPhie and Johnson, 1994 (as cited in Thompson, 2000) identified seven key attributes of good mentors. These include 1) ability to communicate professional knowledge, 2) commitment to professional development, 3) ability to work with adults, 4) willingness to volunteer time to be a mentor, 5) teaching in the same school, 6) teaching the same subjects and 7) teaching the same grades.

In recent years, the importance of understanding adult learning and the facilitation of reflection in a caring relationship have become important additions to the list.<sup>16</sup> Sweeney (2001) includes the importance of mentors’ knowledge of strategies for adult learning. Weeks (1992), in describing her experiences as a mentor teacher, noted the importance of the ability to foster a “non-judgmental relationship” and maintain a “commitment over time” (p. 304-305).

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Potts, 2000; Breaux & Wong, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Holloway, 2001; Johnson, 2001).

<sup>16</sup> The ability to challenge as well as to support beginning teachers, is an adult learning strategy that is well documented in the literature as an effective mentoring practice (Daloz, 1999; Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1998). Mentors’ roles of challenge and support will be examined in Chapter IV.

*Learning-Focused Mentoring in Contrast to Informal Support: Concerns with Traditional Buddy Support*

Not all models of mentoring found in school settings today operate under these formalized structures that promote mutual inquiry through ongoing training; those that do are the exception as opposed to the rule (National Commission on Teaching America's Future, as cited in Podsen, 2002). Some programs still operate on the traditional “transfer of knowledge” models that emerged in business and higher education organizations. An example commonly seen is the unstructured “buddy system” where a knowledgeable veteran teacher is paired with a new teacher. Buddy pairing may emerge independently or be formally structured by providing an “advisor” or “buddy” who can answer questions and provide basic technical information that beginning teachers need to “survive” their first year; there is little to no mentor training. The buddy model is designed with the assumption that experienced teachers have expert knowledge and experiences that can be accessed to support the beginning teacher.

Ballantyne and Hansford (1995) found that buddy systems, while providing support, appeared to be inadequate in many ways. In a qualitative study where buddy teachers wrote detailed written reflections regarding their beginning teacher’s concerns and professional development needs, Ballantyne and Hansford found that buddy teachers often lacked skills and knowledge about beginning teachers. Furthermore, the study indicated that buddies were often reluctant to provide the needed critical reflection and formal feedback that beginning teachers needed to develop their instructional practice.

Other studies indicate that mentoring practices often are more characteristic of “buddy support” than learning-focused “mentoring.” Andrews and Quinn (2005) gave

questionnaires to 188 new teachers in a formalized mentoring program to assess perceived mentor support. They found that the most reported support was in the areas of policies/procedures and personal/emotional support, with the least amount of support reported in the areas of instruction/curriculum and resources/supplies.

Head, Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall (1992) reported that in some circumstances buddy “mentoring” can contribute to negative outcomes for beginning teachers. They purport that “an inadequate or nominal mentoring program may actually be worse than no program at all in facilitating the professional development of beginning teachers” (p. 2).<sup>17</sup> This is important information in light of the fact that mentoring is reported as a relatively new development in schools, and school systems may not yet employ formal structures that include ongoing mentor training and support.

Buddy programs may provide a brief mentor training and/or orientation for mentors and mentees and then they generally send them on their way with no ongoing support. Most educators realize that one-shot professional development workshops are not very effective; the National Staff Development Council estimates that only 10% of what teachers learn in workshops without follow-up support is ever implemented in the classroom (Lewis, 2002). Why then, would we expect successful mentoring to result from one-shot mentor orientations or “trainings”? Galbo (1998) cites the work of Showers and Joyce indicating that, “ninety percent [of teachers] will transfer a new skill into use if theory, demonstration, practice, feedback and ongoing coaching are

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<sup>17</sup> It is my hypothesis that some schools may perceive the benefits of supporting beginning teachers, but not realize possible negative impacts of informal support by untrained or poorly trained “buddy mentors,” such as contributing to more authoritarian, more rigid, less pupil-centered beginning teachers, as reported in Head et al. (1992) and higher levels of teacher attrition and lower levels of teacher effectiveness as reported by the National Commission on Teaching America's Future, (as cited in Podsen, 2002).



provided . . .” (p. 14). The “new generation” programs that Ganser (2002a) describes recognize that mentors need training over time as well as opportunities to meet with other mentors to talk about mentoring experiences. The question remains whether or not most year-long programs with ongoing support do produce the expected results.

### Potential “Costs” for Teacher Mentors

Heller and Sindelar (1991) report possible “costs” to mentors who offer their support to novice teachers. As we saw in the literature review of mentoring in business settings, there is a perceived cost to sharing resources and exposing one’s teaching to public scrutiny; and some experienced teachers are reluctant to mentor for this reason.

Dilemmas persist, such as: who should become a mentor, how should they be selected, what training is needed, as well as how to provide support for the impact on mentor teachers’ workloads (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Huling-Austin, 1990a). The time needed to devote to a quality mentoring relationship can interfere with an already demanding workload and add additional stress. How these issues are resolved can impact the success of the mentoring program.

### Alternative Structures of Relational Mentoring Pedagogy Based Upon an Ethic of Care

I turn once again to the work of Noddings to define a caring relationship. Noddings claims that women “often define themselves as both persons and moral agents in terms of their capacity to care” (Noddings, 1984, p. 40). She states: “My very individuality is defined in a set of relations. This is my basic reality” (p. 51). She further contends, according to Diller (1996a) that while being-in-relation is natural, being in *caring*

relationships is ethically desirable. Noddings redefines ethics from a relational perspective as “meeting the other morally” (Noddings, 1984, p. 95). This is not ethics in the traditional form of justification (often masculine), but rather, ethics in terms of obligation – to do what is required to maintain and enhance caring relationships (often feminine).

The structures of a caring relationship provide the conceptual framework for me to suggest an alternative relational mentoring pedagogy that includes the following: (a) co-construction of knowledge, (b) mutuality, (c) widening the circle of support, (e) receptive caring and the centrality of listening and, (f) the centrality of critique. These components of the proposed alternative relational mentoring pedagogy are defined in the following sections of this chapter and then illustrated by presenting a co-mentoring model of relational mentoring that has been implemented in some schools.

### *Co-Construction of Knowledge*

According to Nelson (1993), when mentoring functions collaboratively, there is a possibility for mentorships to be epistemological relationships in which knowledge is co-constructed and standards of justification are shared. Nelson, states that, “interpersonal experience is necessary for individuals to have beliefs and to know” (p. 122). As one grows, one continues to learn through the many relationships one forms. Each relationship reveals different knowledge: “knowledge” of other, “knowledge” of oneself, “knowledge” of one’s experiences and “knowledge” of the world. “. . . [W]e come to know through our own direct experiences and our reflections on those experiences, but it is often in relationships that we clarify and express those understandings, and test them against the

experiences of others with whom we are in relation. In effect, we develop within these relationships, shared standards to justify our knowing” (Thompson, 2000, p 9).

Knowing and learning are communal acts (Palmer, 1987), particularly for many women who, according to Clinchy (1994), have a proclivity for “connected knowing” -- to relate to the ideas of others from the other’s point of view (p. 33). This is different from the tendency for “separate knowing” often associated with a male/masculine perspective, which stems from a stance of detachment where argument and debate is the mode of discourse (p. 36). By saying that women have a proclivity toward connected knowing, Clinchy does not mean to imply that women cannot challenge or argue a point. What she is saying is that “many women would rather think with someone than against someone” (p. 40). Thus, many women come to know through connecting with others, and this forms a basis for justification of their own knowledge. Furthermore, Palmer (1987) contends that “the way we know has powerful implications for the way we live” (p. 22). He argues that, “every epistemology becomes an ethic and every way of knowing tends to become a way of living” (p. 22). Thus, the relevance and value of relationship and connectedness to the construction of knowledge is supported in the literature.

### *Mutuality*

Noddings’s ethic of caring does not seek justification for one’s actions; it seeks one’s “completion in the other” (p. 95). Thus, a caring relationship is beneficial to both parties. Noddings uses the terms “one-caring” for the caregiver and “cared-for” for the recipient (p. 4). According to Noddings, “ the one-caring has one great aim: to preserve and

enhance caring in herself and in those with whom she comes in contact (Noddings, 1984, p. 172). The ultimate goal is the perpetuation of “natural caring,” caring that develops “spontaneously out of affection or inclination . . . and [does] not require special effort; [it] arises directly in response to the needs of the cared-for” (Noddings, 2002, p. 129). She contends that if the one-caring truly values caring, s/he would want to nurture the “ethical ideal” of caring in the cared-for. Noddings contends, however, that it is essential for both parties to contribute to the relationship if caring is to be complete. It is not a one-way commitment; the cared-for must “receive” the one-caring in order for the relationship to be a caring one. Thus, a caring relationship provides the basis for “power-with” mentoring relationships characterized by mutual collaborative inquiry.

#### *Widening the Circle of Support*

“Engrossment” in the cared-for’s reality which leads to the commitment to act in the interest of the cared-for is essential to the ethic of care, according to Noddings; but others take the view that this may represent over-commitment to the point of risking self-exploitation and resulting in self-harm (Card, 1990; Diller, 1996a; Hoagland, 1990; Houston, 1990; Koehn, 1998). However, “before we conclude that this is an overly strenuous ethic, we should remember that one thing [the one-caring] might do is find someone else to help the cared-for, or even simply direct them to the appropriate source of aid” (Diller, 1996a, p. 93). Thompson (2000) defines “widening the circle of support” as an aspect of successful “feminist mentoring” relationships (p. 266). Thus, one of the roles of a relational mentor is to facilitate the connection of the beginning teacher with others who can offer support.

### Receptive Caring and the Centrality of Listening

Thompson (2000) contends that a “feminist” practice of mentoring draws upon Noddings’ (1984) concept of “receptive” caring and Hollingsworth’s (1992) acknowledgement of the centrality of listening to suggest that the focus within the mentorship should shift to the beginning teacher. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule (1986) described this shifting focus through the metaphor of the “midwife-teacher” whose first concern is the student’s “newborn thoughts . . . it is always clear that the baby is not theirs, but the student’s” (pp. 217-218). In traditional mentorships, the beginning teacher is the listener; in a relational mentorship the focus is on the novice’s voice and the mentor becomes the listener. Hollingsworth (1992) describes her personal mentoring experience in becoming a listener in her longitudinal study that analyzed monthly collaborative conversations with three cohorts of pre-service and beginning teachers focused on learning to teach literacy:

The change was both methodological and philosophical . . . the conversational form . . . involved a shift in power, [it was] a process of working with them as a colearner and creator of evolving expertise through non-evaluative conversation. To accomplish this shift, I had to be silent and listen (p. 375).

The goal is not to be totally silent, but to “shift the balance of talk, to be still and listen before speaking and to speak with less certainty, to wonder along with the beginning teacher, to support them in making their own tacit knowledge explicit and elaborating it” (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 217). “What must be stilled here is the mentor’s ‘expert’ status and authoritative knowing” (Thompson, 2000, p. 58). These accounts of supportive mentor practice suggest that an effective mentor will foreground the mentee’s thoughts and ideas in the mentoring relationship.

### *The Centrality of Critique*

A relational mentoring practice necessitates a central focus on critique, not only of one's teaching, but also of the systems and practices of the institutions of schooling. In a relational paradigm, both mentor and mentee examine their practice and their assumptions about teaching and learning, and it is through this mutual critical inquiry that knowledge is co-constructed. In her dissertation, Thompson (2000) presents mentoring as a relationship where women teachers can question these "taken-for-granted" issues of teaching and being a teacher through what she calls "thoughtful critique" (p.276).

Hollingsworth (1992) finds that as beginning teachers explore their concerns, they initially feel prohibited from acting critically and teaching in the ways they want to teach. Over time and through "continuous cycles of critique, knowledge construction and social action" (p. 398) they find that "adopting a critical perspective about the social norms of that climate – and receiving the support to move through the emotional stress that accompanies such a perspective – is crucial to claiming their own professional voices within their schools and attaining the personal and political freedom to reconstruct classrooms that support diverse values and ways of being instead of restricting them" (p. 393). This raises the questions of how mentors allow the voices of beginning teachers to emerge, as together they examine the structures of teaching, and how mentors come to understand the importance of nurturing the beginning teacher's voice.

### Co-Mentoring: A Model of Relational Mentoring

Successful relational mentoring, where the beginning teacher and the mentor engage in caring association, is founded on a practice of shared experience that facilitates a reciprocal process of constructing and examining knowledge. Shrewsbury (1993) contends that traditional mentoring has to do with “bringing-in,” implying that it is the beginning teacher who will change to fit the new circumstances, while feminist pedagogy in mentoring aims to “bring-out,” to change the individual and to change the circumstances (pp. 12-13). Bona, Rinehart & Volbrecht (1994), reflecting on their experiences instructing in a “learning community” comprised of twenty two students taking linked courses in the English and Philosophy departments (Ethics and Fiction), contend that “learning can be transformative when teachers and students create a learning community in which intellectual, emotional and moral growth are seen as interconnected” (p. 118).

Acknowledging pedagogy based on the ethic of care and applying it in mentoring relationships means that the relationship between “teacher” and “learner” must be reconstructed to promote less hierarchical modes of learning. Bonna et al. use the term “co-mentoring” to describe the support generated by several connected individuals. Co-mentoring is defined as an intense mutual mentoring relationship that “allows for each participant to experience being the giver as well as the receiver of all types of information, feedback, support and constructive criticism” (Mosser, 1987, p. 17). Ganser (2002a) identifies co-mentoring as an essential component of high quality mentoring programs that promote teacher professional development. Co-mentoring is gaining popularity in business, higher education, medical as well as school settings (Challis,

Mathers, Howe, & Field, 1997; Jipson & Paley, 2000; Kochan & Trimble, 2000; Lick, 2000; Mullen, 2000; Norell & Ingoldsby, 1991). It is demonstrated in collaborative inquiry groups where members feel safe to open up their practice for critical feedback, such as mentoring in Critical Friends Groups (CFGs) and faculty study groups. These structures seem similar to those that Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) term “connected knowing groups” (p. 118) and Bullough and Gitlin (1991) term “educative communities” (p. 35).

“Co-mentoring is grounded in caring for each other” (Jipson & Paley, 2000); thus its theoretical structures reflect the ideals of relational mentoring models that are based upon the ethic of care. Where “feminist” relational mentoring tends to focus exclusively on mentoring women because the model is based upon feminine relational theory, co-mentoring is often applied to mentoring both men and women. It should be noted that both Noddings and Gilligan indicate that the ethic of care, though based on a female model, does not apply exclusively to women (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984).

Andreadis (1983) suggests that co-mentoring offers “friendship and support without an ideological price-tag” (p. 9), and it does not appeal exclusively to feminists. In this study I do not focus exclusively on women and I use the terms ‘relational mentoring’ and ‘learning-focused mentoring’ rather than ‘feminist mentoring.’

A common characteristic of co-mentoring models is that both mentor and beginning teacher benefit from the relationship (Kochan & Trimble, 2000). Bloom (1995), in describing the multiple roles of the mentor, states that the two can “meet as sister learners . . . In order [for this to occur] the mentor must be willing to learn, publicly, alongside the learner. She must be willing to continually explore her own . . . development; developing



the capacity to listen, question and connect; and continuously engage in the reclamation of her own intelligence” (p. 71).

The mutuality of reflective practice that is foregrounded in relational learning-focused mentoring is also reported as essential in studies of co-mentoring relationships (Bona et al., 1994; Kochan & Trimble, 2000; Mosser, 1987). After reviewing mentoring models in business settings, Mosser (1987) suggests that co-mentoring can offer successful results, but he also notes that developing co-learning relationships often presents a challenge because the environmental context or culture in which mentoring exists can have a strong influence on the likelihood that teachers will take the risks to expose their teaching practice. Research on similar co-mentoring practices in education, such as Critical Friends Groups (CFGs), Whole-Faculty Study Groups, Collaborative Analysis of Student Work (CASW) groups and Collaborative Action Research support Mosser’s claim, noting that various contextual factors can affect the levels of teacher engagement in these activities (Dunne & Honts, 1998; Langer & Colton, 2005; Murphy, 1992, 1995; Nave, 2000).

In her dissertation study, Murphy (2001) studied factors that supported as well as hindered the successful development of CFGs in a high school setting. In her findings she states, “It is clear from this study that the culture had more of an effect on the CFGs than the CFGs had on the school culture” (p. 183). The critical factors associated with success were collaborative inquiry practices among staff, shared responsibility for learning, time for collaboration within the school day, and a supportive administration.

Drawing upon site visit observation and interview data from the seventy-five members of the Coalition of Essential Schools that participated in the National School Reform

Faculty's CFG professional development program, Nave (2000) states, "When collegial work is consistent with the organization, structure and manifest goals of the school, CFGs are readily absorbed into on-going work. . . . We found, however, that, even with the strongest possible [CFG] coaches, the power of the school culture would not be overcome" (p. 7-8).<sup>18</sup> Nave, found that a school climate that is not open to collaboration could inhibit the success of highly trained teacher CFG coaches, therefore his research suggests that an examination of the contextual structures in which mentoring occurs may illuminate elements of school culture that are necessary to promote teachers' collaborative reflective inquiry practices in schools.<sup>19</sup>

### Summary

From the literature presented, one can see that there are, in fact, many diverse conceptions of mentoring, not only between types of organizations, but within organizations as well. Some models are grounded in more traditional mentor-directed designs, yet others are based on an emerging relational model characterized by lateral, reciprocal relationships of collaboration where the mentor and mentee become co-learners. This emerging relational conception of mentoring is, in part, the result of recognizing the "costs" traditional mentoring can present for women in patriarchal organizational structures; and it suggests a new paradigm for the goals and structures of

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<sup>18</sup> The Coalition of Essential Schools school reform model, as outlined in Sizer's, Horace's Compromise (1984), purports "student as learner, teacher as coach." This model is associated with the Annenberg Institute for School Reform (AISR) at Brown University. The National School Reform Faculty, a professional development program that originated at the AISR, trains teachers to become CFG coaches in their schools.

<sup>19</sup> The impact of the context of mentoring, both school culture and mentoring program structures will be explored in more depth in Chapter IV.

mentoring based upon an ethic of care. This model has taken hold in some public school settings where a goal of mentoring has become teacher learning.

As an alternative to traditional conceptions of mentoring, I presented relational structures that have been associated with learning outcomes for both mentors and mentees. The characteristics of a relational model for mentoring include:

- 1) The equalization of power structures; the mentor and mentee become co-learners
- 2) Mutual benefits; both the mentor and mentee learn and grow
- 3) Reflective practice; both the mentor and mentee reflect on their work
- 4) A reciprocal process of support and challenge; both mentor and mentee give and receive feedback
- 5) Community of support: mentor and mentee are encouraged to seek support outside of the mentoring relationship

It is the development of this relational mentoring conception based on mutuality and reciprocity in a caring relationship that I wish to examine in more depth in the context of effective teacher mentoring programs in schools. In order to do this, I have researched the mentoring practice of first year formalized mentoring programs in two New Hampshire public school districts.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONDITIONS ASSOCIATED WITH LEARNING-FOCUSED MENTORING: THE CRITICAL ROLE OF REFLECTION

“Come to the edge,” he said.  
They said, “We are afraid.”  
“Come to the edge,” he said.  
They came.  
He pushed them . . . and they flew  
- Guillaume Apollinaire  
(as cited in Collins, 1983)

#### Introduction

In this chapter I highlight the conditions associated with a relational learning-focused model of mentoring characterized by mutuality and collaborative inquiry. This involves an exploration of the nature of the mentoring relationship itself, as well as an examination of the school climate in which the mentoring relationship develops. Through a review of literature that supports the centrality of self-reflection in teacher learning, I build a case for the need for mentors to challenge their mentees’ assumptions of teaching and learning in addition to providing them with emotional and informational support. I also provide evidence to suggest that there is often a perceived paradox in conceptualizing mentoring as providing both support *and* challenge (the paradox of critical nurturance). The confusion that often results from trying to fulfill seemingly opposite roles often leads mentors to resolve the paradox by ignoring their role to challenge; when this happens teacher learning is compromised. Research literature is presented to suggest that the conditions of relational mentoring, where mentor and mentee become co-learners who practice critical inquiry, may resolve the paradox of critical nurturance and promote

teacher learning by facilitating a shift in the conceptualization of the mentor's role in which 'challenge' is understood to be a kind of 'support.' At the end of this chapter I suggest that the nature of the school culture can be a critical factor in whether or not teachers will make the conceptual shift that resolves the paradox and engage in the reflective practice, and I present literature that connects reflective inquiry with organizational effectiveness.

### The Role of Reflection in Promoting Professional Growth

Fullan (1999) claims that it is only through reflection at the personal, group and organizational levels that teachers will begin to question their practice and think differently about teaching and learning. Although there is general agreement among researchers and theorists as to the merits of reflective practice, there are a wide variety of conceptualizations and purposes highlighting various contexts and products of reflection. What follows is a brief summary of the theories of reflection that are relevant to teacher learning, along with a discussion of how the mentor's understanding and use of reflection in the mentoring process is central to achieving learning-focused mentoring.

#### *Reflection in Theory: Theoretical and Developmental Perspectives*

John Dewey is often cited as the most influential 20<sup>th</sup> century western authority on reflection in educational settings. Drawing on the works of Buddha, Plato and Lao Tzu, Dewey (1933) discussed the notion of reflection, as a way of thinking about a problematic situation that needs to be resolved. He viewed reflection as a special form of thinking and believed that we learn more from reflecting on our experiences than from the actual experiences themselves. Dewey argued that the process begins with "pre-

reflection” in which an individual becomes perplexed about a situation. This is followed by five phases to resolve the problem: 1) suggestion, 2) intellectualization, 3) hypothesis, 4) reasoning, and 5) testing (Dewey, 1933). Over the last fifty years, researchers have extended Dewey’s ideas and emphasized the value of reflection for teacher education (Brookfield, 1990; Hullfish & Smith, 1961; Laboskey, 1993; Loughran, 1995). Some researchers also include aspects of reflective inquiry that question the social and political dimensions of actions in the context of education (Elbaz, 1988; Smyth, 1992; Van Manen, 1977).

Van Manen (1977) bases his work on critical theory and proposes three levels of reflection: technical, practical and critical. These stages may be seen as a sequence of progression from basic to more complex (Yost, Sentner, & Forlenza-Bailey, 2000). Technical reflection concerns the application of skills and technical knowledge by the classroom teacher. Practical reflection involves making sense of the teaching experience by reflecting on the assumptions underlying a specific classroom practice and the consequences for learning. Critical reflection involves an understanding and questioning of the moral and ethical dimensions that may directly or indirectly influence decisions made about classroom practice. Critical reflection emphasizes the need for teachers to be aware of how they are influenced by their peers as well as by the broader social, historical, economic and political contexts (Yost et al., 2000).

Another perspective on reflective practice is put forth by Donald Schon (1983) in his book, The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action. Schon rejects any view that theory and practice should be viewed separately. He argues that teacher learning is acquired through continuous action and reflection on day-to-day problems,

which tend to be difficult to articulate and analyze. Schon endorses the practice of experts who coach novices so they can make their own sense out of how the means and methods employed connect with the desired outcomes (Ethell & McMeniman, 2000). Schon places emphasis on the search for personal meaning that leads towards professional artistry and separates novices from experts. According to Schon, prompting mentees to engage in reflection on their teaching and reflection on their assumptions about teaching and learning is essential to giving them a voice to define and express who they are as teachers.

To gain knowledge from practice, Schon proposes that practitioners need to engage in “reflection-on-action” and “reflection-in-action.” “Reflection-on-action” refers to thinking back over practice, deliberately and systematically. “Reflection-in-action,” a more important form of reflection for classroom teachers, refers to the ability of practitioners to revise their constructs of teaching and learning as they are engaged in practice, a sort of pedagogical improvisation (Ethell & McMeniman, 2000). Killion and Todnem (1991) built on Schon’s theory to include the term, “reflection-for-action,” to indicate that reflective thinking is intended to inform future actions.

David Hunt (1976), in describing his theory of teacher development, refers to a concept similar to Schon’s “reflection-in-action. Hunt uses the term, “read and flex” and purports that this ability is linked to teacher development. A teacher’s capacity to “read and flex” means that s/he has “the ability to change the learning environment in accord with pupil needs” (Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1998, p. 49). This capacity to tailor the environment to promote student learning is indicative of an enhanced level of pedagogy that is not likely to be developed in beginning teachers; and it is supported in numerous

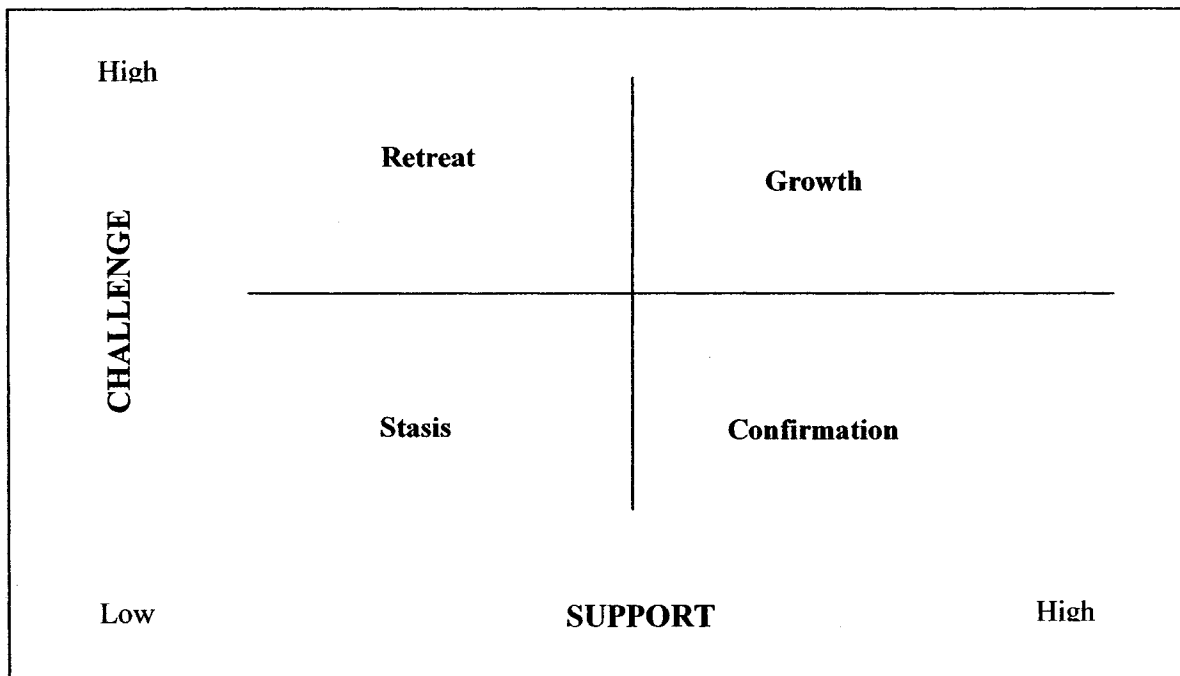
research studies (Miller, 1981). Daloz (1986) uses of the metaphor, “providing a mirror,” to describe the mentor’s role to facilitate the mentee’s reflection on his/her teaching practice. He states, “One of the more important aspects of the special mirror that mentors hold up to their students is its capacity to extend the student’s self-awareness” (p. 234). Thus, according to Daloz, a role of the mentor is to facilitate the self-reflection of the mentee and to help them to see aspects of themselves and their teaching that may not be readily obvious.

### *Reflection in Practice: Roles of Challenge and Support*

The role of an effective mentor is one that includes challenge through reflective dialogue as well as support of the beginning teacher (Daloz, 1983, 1986, 1999). Daloz (1983) defines a mentoring model that claims highly effective mentors do three distinctive things: “they support, they challenge and they provide vision” (p. 212). According to Daloz, support is defined as, “acts through which the mentor affirms the validity of the [mentee’s] present experience” (p. 212). The mentor conveys to the mentee that s/he is “understood” by “bring[ing] her boundaries into congruence with his” (p. 212). The role of challenge, on the other hand, is to “peel them apart” (p. 213). Through the introduction of challenge “[t]he mentor may assign mysterious tasks, introduce contradictory ideas, question tacit assumptions, or even risk damage to the relationship by refusing to answer questions. The function of challenge is to open a gap between student and environment, a gap that creates tension in the student, calling for closure” (p. 213). Burgess and Butcher (1999) contend that the purpose of challenge is to “prompt learning and to move the [mentee] beyond competence.”



Although support and challenge are essential functions of quality mentoring, Daloz claims that they must be addressed in the larger context, what he refers to as “vision” (p. 213). Daloz claims that a balance of mentor support and challenge are needed to promote the teacher growth that can move the mentee toward the realization of a more long-term goal, their “dream.” (see Figure 1).



*Figure 1.* Challenge vs. Support (Daloz, 1986, p. 214)

According to Daloz, when support and challenge are both low, there is little effect from mentoring; there is no real change and no growth. When support is increased, there is some growth but it emerges from inner needs of feeling confirmed; however, there is still an inferior capacity for productive engagement with the environment. On the other hand, too much challenge without appropriate support can foster insecurity,

disengagement and “retreat” that can lead to “rigid epistemology” (p. 215). When high support is balanced with challenge, growth and development can occur.

Daloz believes that good mentoring skills can be learned. He outlines several primary supportive functions of mentors, challenge tasks of mentors and ways for mentors to support the vision (pp. 215-235). Research that tests the Daloz mentoring model indicates that implementing the theory in practice can be problematic when it comes to mentors balancing support with the challenge needed for growth and development (Martin, 1996; McNally & Martin, 1998).

#### *Balancing Roles of Challenge and Support Can be Problematic*

Martin (1996) used questionnaires to examine roles considered to be important to math mentors and the extent to which the mentors felt they could carry out those roles in a student teaching program implementing the Daloz model. She found that mentors tend to see their primary role as that of supporter and not assessor. “The notion of challenge is not at the forefront of their minds . . . it can be in conflict with or incompatible with a supportive role. One is seen to be encouraging and positive in contrast to the other which is perceived to be critical and judgmental” (p. 46). The math mentors in this study generally found it difficult to reconcile both roles. Martin noted that mentors’ years of experience did not necessarily qualify them to be effective mentors and claimed that mentor training may be essential for mentors to adequately address support and challenge in their mentorships. Mentors who have opportunities to extract the philosophy and underlying beliefs upon which they operate may more readily embrace challenge in the

mentorship. “If mentors are uncertain as to their own goals of teaching then it is more difficult to engender the same in those they are supporting” (p. 53).

Furthermore, Martin (1996) found that the degree to which mentors felt comfortable with the role of facilitating reflection matched their perception of the extent to which they considered it to be an important aspect of mentoring. In this study it appeared that the mentors’ conception of their mentor role influenced the mentoring task.

In a follow-up study, McNally and Martin (1998) studied mentoring pedagogy to examine how trained mentors engaged beginning teachers in shaping their own vision of teaching. They found that beginning teachers who were confident in their role and used self-reflection on their own were more likely to be supported in this practice by their mentors; those who lacked ability and confidence had mentors who were more directive. It was reported that mentors were less proactive in initiating challenge than they would have liked to be and they found it easier to respond to initiatives taken by the beginning teacher. Although they all believed challenge to be a part of the mentor role they were not strong in facilitating it.

Even when mentors believe their role is to challenge as well as support, implementing this task can be difficult for mentors. McNally and Martin also found that the mentor’s own beliefs about mentoring had a strong influence on their mentoring practice. For example, this was reflected in the degree of intervention they believed was necessary to shape the beginning teacher’s development. Three approaches to mentoring based on mentors’ beliefs about their roles were observed in the study: (a) “Laissez-faire” mentors saw their role as primarily one of nurturing and support; (b) “collaborative mentors” combined challenge and support in ways that engaged mentees in critical reflection and

saw their role as focusing on individual needs of mentees in order to extend their understanding of teaching and learning; and (c) “imperial mentors” with strong beliefs about needing to provide intellectual challenge, provided minimal support. The findings also revealed variability in what mentors understood challenge to be and the extent to which they engaged in this practice. These findings confirmed those of Martin’s earlier study that showed mentors have difficulty balancing challenge and support in practice and that mentors’ beliefs about their roles appear to have some relation to their mentoring practice.

Other researchers have found inconsistencies in the mentor’s ability to balance roles of support and challenge (Elliott & Calderhead, 1993; Elliott 1994, as cited in Martin 1996; Kelly & James 1994, as cited in Martin, 1996; Timperley, 2001), and some have noted the absence of facilitated critical reflection by mentors. Thompson (2000) not only saw a lack of “thoughtful critique” in mentoring practice, she identified many “missed opportunities” where mentors could have pursued critical inquiry, but, chose to ignore it. Missed opportunities were also reported by Achinstein and Meyer’s (1997) work with new teachers in CFGs (this study will be examined later in this chapter).

Elliott (1994, as cited in Martin, 1996) suggests that even when mentors do see challenge as part of their role, they choose to ignore it for fear that it would jeopardize the mentor-mentee relationship. In an analysis of twenty-two audio-taped feedback interviews comparing trained and untrained mentors, Timperley (2001) found that, prior to training, mentors did not tend to mention concerns they had about their mentee’s lessons unless the mentee mentioned it first, confirming the findings of McNally and Martin (1998). Furthermore, “torn between not wanting to mention problems but

wanting [mentees] to improve their practice, the mentors frequently gave advice designed to improve practice without identifying first of all what was problematic” (p. 113).

Feiman-Nemser and Parker (1992) analyzed interview and observation data of mentors in various contexts and suggest that in some cases mentors may avoid critique because either they believe that individual style or personality is fixed and can't be changed or they may have come to equate critique with evaluation and they don't see that as part of their mentor role.<sup>20</sup> The researchers predicted that, “beginning teachers will come to value collegial exchange if they and their mentors regularly experience the power of observation and conversation as tools for improving practice” (p. 17).

### *The Paradox of Critical Nurturance*

The question raised is, “Can a mentor be caring, nurturing and supportive *and* critical at the same time?” This question has been addressed by Morgan (1996) as one of the paradoxes of the “Bearded Mother,” namely, the “Paradox of Critical Nurturance:”

We are expected to implement an ethics of care, to be available to listen, to offer counsel, and to give support and encouragement such that genuinely autonomous growth occurs . . . [but] there is a deep paradox in thinking of pedagogical nurturers criticizing, challenging, calling into question, posing contrary evidence, developing counterexamples, and detecting contradictions and other forms of inconsistency and inadequacy in the students they are nurturing. And it is even more paradoxical . . . to see this very process of criticism as the nurturing (p. 127).

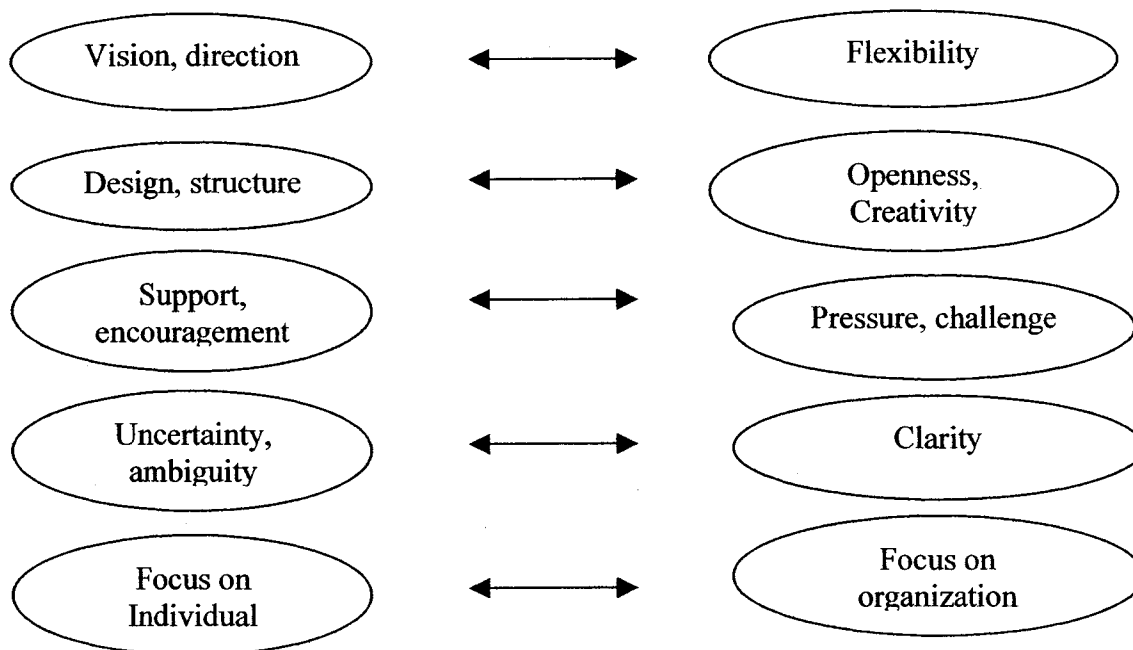
Achinstein and Meyer (1997) identified the paradox of critical nurturance in their ethnographic study of second year teachers in a Critical Friends Group (CFG). The cohort of teachers, who met as a CFG during their pre-service teaching, continued to

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<sup>20</sup> Feiman-Nemser and Parker studied mentoring in the following contexts: mentors as local guides, mentors as educational companions and mentors as agents of cultural change.

meet as they each took teaching jobs in different school districts. The researchers, who were also the CFG leaders, documented many instances of resistance and tension with regard to the critical examination of each other's teaching practice using multiple sources of data: participant observations, interviews, document reviews, audio-taped recordings and transcripts of their monthly meetings. Although there was strong emotional support within the group, teachers still resisted hearing criticism, limited themselves to giving safe feedback; and some expressed concern about the critical nature of the feedback given while others felt they were not getting the critical feedback they wanted. The researchers reported that, in many instances, problematic assumptions were left unchallenged and opportunities for critique were not taken. They claim that there are "serious dilemmas raised by the merger of critique and friendship, thus making it an 'uneasy marriage'" (p.3).

York-Barr, Sommers, Ghore and Montie (2001) claim that the current focus on reflective practice to improve schools has heightened an awareness of "paradox within reflective practice" (p. 157). They describe tensions that go beyond the paradoxical need for challenge and support in fostering learning and growth through reflection; they outline five different tensions in promoting reflective practice in schools (see Figure 2).



*Figure 2. Paradox of Reflective Practice (York-Barr et al., 2001, p. 157)*

Reflective practice should be guided by a common goal, or as Daloz states, a vision, and it helps if all participants in schools are clear about where they are headed; at the same time there needs to be enough flexibility for individuals to set personally meaningful goals. The organization needs to promote a design and structure that will facilitate change that is commensurate with its goals while still allowing for creative new ideas to emerge. There should be enough support to create a trusting environment where participants feel safe, but will also take risks to challenge the status quo. A willingness to move through the uncertainty of change is necessary to reach the clarity that can come from new learning. A focus on the dynamic connection between individual needs and the growth needs of the organization is what may lead to the continuous growth and improvement that is characteristic of learning communities.

### *Second Semester: An Opportunity for Reflection*

Although researchers indicate that beginning teachers may be ready to engage in critical reflection in first year mentorships, empirical studies of mentoring indicate that this does not often happen in practice. A number of studies report the absence of reflective critique facilitated by mentors. This raises concern because many formal mentorships do not continue beyond the first year of teaching and the opportunity to promote reflective inquiry may be lost.

Ballantyne, Hansford & Packer (1995) examined beginning teacher concerns as measured by questionnaire before, during and after the first semester. Using nonparametric measures to analyze changes over time led to their claim that there are significant changes in beginning teachers' concerns and "most of the students in this study were able to . . . focus on the needs of their students" by the beginning of the second semester. They concluded that the second semester would be an ". . . opportune time for the introduction of critical reflection and feedback on professional practice" (Ballantyne & Hansford, 1995, p. 5). Beginning teachers become more confident, relaxed in their roles and are able to relate on a more equal basis as they go through their first year (Ballantyne, Hansford, & Packer, 1995; Stanulis & Russell, 2000). Guillaume and Rudney (1993) report that, as the year ensues, mentors and mentees will continue to talk about the same things, but will talk about them in different ways, indicating that there may be some kind of shift in mentoring that needs to occur.

The studies that examine the developmental changes of the first year teacher are grounded in the work of Fuller and Brown (1975), discussed in Chapter II, who identified the stages of new teacher concerns. According to Fuller and Brown, in the second



semester, new teachers' concerns shift from those of survival to those of instruction and its impact on student learning. This suggests that, at this time, mentoring may need to shift from directive technical support to reflection on and critique of instructional practice, including the assumptions underlying the choices teachers make and how they affect student learning. Veenman (1984) found that at midyear, when survival needs of new teachers are lowest, their needs regarding curriculum and instruction become greatest. Moire (1999), describes a "reflection phase" that emerges toward the middle of the second semester where new teachers begin to review and evaluate their teaching. A corresponding change in mentoring was reported in Veenman, Denessen, Gerrits and Kenter (2001), who suggested that in the second semester the role of the mentor may gradually shift to the role of coach and they noted that the development of this mentor skill needs further attention.

### *Responses to The Paradox of Critical Nurturance*

There are a number of responses in the literature to address the paradox of critical nurturance, and Diller (1996b) critiques three of them in her essay entitled, "Is Rapprochement Possible Between Educational Criticism and Nurturance?" The "For Your Own Good" model claims that criticism is a required aspect of teaching and teachers are obligated to make "real demands" and to hold students to high standards. This is comparable to Daloz's high challenge, low support quadrant. The "Never Criticize" position advocates only for support and excludes all criticism. As Diller points out, this approach dismisses opportunities to learn and grow, which is the point of mentoring relationships. The same concerns have been associated with the Daloz high

support, low challenge quadrant. Diller identifies a third approach, “Do Both but Keep Them Separate,” that proposes we have two mentors; one to nurture and one to “push the limit.” The problem here for relational mentoring is “the perpetuation of genderized stereotypes . . . and disempowering epistemology. . . ” (p. 139). In this circumstance, the nurturing mentor embodies the values of relational mentoring which foregrounds the construction of teaching knowledge through inquiry and collaboration; the “push the limit” mentor embodies values of traditional patriarchal mentoring where the experienced mentor holds the knowledge, judges the needs of the mentee and imparts the appropriate knowledge. In the “push the limit” aspect, knowledge construction is not seen as the product of a collaborative process of mentoring; it is something that the mentor already possesses. The mentee passively receives the wisdom of the mentor, which is contrary to the philosophy of an ethic of care. Diller (1996b) notes that it is problematic to view knowledge as existing “‘out-there’ somewhere . . . rather than recognizing that knowing and the known are bound up together in an ongoing process of human inquiry done by persons like ourselves” (p. 139).

Diller’s answer, the “Do Both Together” position, supports the ideals of co-mentoring where the mentor and beginning teacher co-create knowledge out of shared experiences. The key to success, as demonstrated in the Daloz model high support, high challenge quadrant, is to find the appropriate balance between support and challenge; a task that does not necessarily come naturally to mentors.

Diller (1996b) identifies the environment for this kind of deeper learning as 1) a community of support and 2) a community of inquiry. Presumably, schools that embrace co-mentoring structures such as CFGs, collaborative action research and teacher study

groups would fall into these categories. In regard to mentoring, this implies that the “community” fostering learning needs to extend beyond the mentoring relationship itself, or even beyond the induction support program in order to encompass some significant “critical mass” within the whole school as community and even within the teaching profession as a whole. This is supported by Thompson (2000) who identified a lack of “thoughtful critique” within the teaching system she studied and, in conclusion, posed a need for beginning teachers to see models of thoughtful critique in the school community and have the opportunity to practice in the safety of the mentoring relationship.<sup>21</sup>

#### *The Need for Training to Promote Deeper Levels of Reflection*

Many researchers have found that highly experienced teachers are novices themselves at reflective practice; their attempts at reflection tend to be more descriptive than critical and it is hard for them to articulate the thoughts and decisions that underlie their own teaching (Brown & McIntyre, 1995; Carter, 1990; Martin, 1996; Hawkey, 1997; Ross, 2002). Ben-Peretz and Rumney (1991) analyzed guided practice sessions between cooperating teacher mentors and their student teachers and found that cooperating teachers tend to transmit the “wisdom of practice” and were directive rather than allowing opportunities for discovery of shared understandings. This is supported by Cochran-Smith (1991) who reported that cooperating teachers promote conventional practices as opposed to current reform practices. As a result, the student teachers are generally more passive and the mentor-mentee relationship authoritative; the flexibility to

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<sup>21</sup> As noted previously, research supports the notion that the cultural context can have an impact on the development of co-mentoring practices.

create a shared vision for mentoring isn't evident. However, studies support the claim that with training, mentors can learn to facilitate deep reflection in their mentorships and in their own practice (Everston and Smithey, 2000; McCormick, 2001; Veenman, Denessen, Gerrits and Kenter, 2001; Galvez-Martin, Bowman and Morrison (1999, as cited in Jonson, 2002; Giebelhaus and Bowman, 2002; Ross, 2002).

McCormick (2001) examined the development of reflective practice in California's Formative Assessment and Support System for Teachers (CFASST), designed to support beginning teachers. Through case study and focus group analysis she found that, although teachers initially already thought of themselves as reflective practitioners, the program improved the depth of teacher reflection. McCormick contends that the change does not come naturally; a structured facilitation is necessary. She found that in their second year, beginning teachers became more aware of complex student issues and instructional needs of students, and they also became aware of larger issues of the school, the district and the teaching profession in general. She suggested that these awarenesses were influenced by regular reflective inquiry fostered by structured facilitation. This suggests that reflection may not only fulfill the mentees' needs, it can actually prompt the shift to focus instruction on student learning.

In a controlled study of forty-two pre-service teachers, Galvez-Martin, Bowman and Morrison (1999, as cited in Jonson, 2002) found that those who received specific training in reflecting had significantly higher levels of reflective practice than those who did not. It was noted that, among those who did not receive training, there was some improvement in reflection as a result of participating in reflective exercises. It appears that having opportunities to reflect can improve the occurrence of reflective practice, but facilitated

instruction in reflection can have a significant impact on deeper levels of subsequent reflective practice.

In a study of the effects of a coaching skills training program for mentor teachers in a student teaching program, Veenman, Denessen, Gerrits and Kenter (2001) found a significant treatment effect for coaching skills that focused on the development of autonomy (empowerment), feedback and the encouragement of self-reflection. Using both quantitative and qualitative data, Everston and Smithey (2000) found that mentors trained in coaching practices had superior conferencing skills, were more aware of their mentee's need to analyze his or her own teaching before offering solutions, and they were also more likely to offer specific strategies when they made suggestions. In addition, the beginning teachers in their study who worked with trained mentors demonstrated higher-level teaching skills than those working with untrained mentors. Evertson and Smithey claim that classroom experience, caring and good intentions are not enough to ensure high quality results from mentors.

Giebelhaus and Bowman (2002), using a quasi-experimental design, studied twenty-nine student teachers, fourteen with mentor teachers trained in the Praxis III/Pathwise supervision model developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and fifteen without this training. They found that teachers assigned mentors trained in this dialogical discussion model demonstrated a significantly higher level of proficiency on a post-test as compared to a pre-test on eleven of nineteen skills in four domains. An ANCOVA on the overall results revealed a significant difference between the two groups at the .001 level in each of the skill domains indicating a benefit from training mentors.

### Mentors Need Training and Follow-up Support

Clinard and Ariav (1998), in a cross-cultural study of pre-service mentors using both qualitative and quantitative data, found that both training in cognitive coaching and on-going mentor support and dialogue were crucial to the development of mentor role-identity and sustaining mentoring. “It is simply not enough to ‘do mentoring’ . . . one needs to talk about it . . .” (p. 105). They also found that mentoring needs a long time to develop. Israeli and U.S. mentors reported that it took some time for them to develop an understanding of their roles; Israeli mentors reported that it was only in their third year that they “began to come to grips with their new role” (p. 105). This suggests that there is a need to examine the mentor’s developmental process.

The literature is consistent in reporting that, “The mere presence of a mentor is not enough; the mentor’s knowledge of how to support a new teacher and skill at providing guidance are also crucial” (Holloway, 2001, p. 85). The case for mentor training *and* support is clear. “. . . Mentors need to be mentored . . .” (Zimpher & Rieger, 1988, p. 181). Sweeney (2001) claims that if mentors do not have their own mentor to monitor the implementation of their training and to provide support, the implementation of mentoring will likely be inconsistent and the desired outcomes for student learning will be missing.

### Reflection and Organizational Reform

The benefits of fostering the practice of teacher reflective inquiry not only affect the cognitive development and pedagogical skills of the beginning teacher and the mentor, they can also lead to organizational reform and cultural changes that create learning

communities where collaborative reflective inquiry focused on continuous improvement is the standard (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; Freiberg & Others, 1996; Futrell, 1988). Furthermore, the relationship is synergistic in that mentor-mentee practices affect collaboration in the school community and school community collaboration, in turn, affects mentoring relationships (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Healey & Welchert, 1990; Lick, 2000; Mullen & Lick, 1999).

Reflective inquiry has been closely linked to organizational effectiveness. This is evident in the practices of school reform models such as the Coalition of Essential Schools where inquiry and collaboration focused on continuous improvement are integrated into school-wide co-mentoring practices such as Critical Friends Groups (Dunne, & Honts, 1998). Brookfield (1987) reports that the most innovative and productive organizations are those which encourage their members to scrutinize organizational behavior, to challenge existing practices, and to continually look for better ways of doing things. Osterman (1990) states that, “effective organizations will be those which encourage reflective practice both individually and collectively” (p.8).

According to Osterman (1990), reflective inquiry illuminates understanding and awareness of the “problems of practice” (p. 4). In education, much of the work that teachers do is not visible to others; and those aspects that are visible are limited. Often, teachers choose what it is that they want to “expose.” Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) discuss the tendency of teachers to hide the “imperfect progress of their thinking” and allow only a glimpse of the “polished products” (p. 215). If this is true of teachers in general, it may be even more true for beginning teachers who often feel inferior to their more experienced colleagues and vulnerable in opening up themselves to

reflective inquiry for fear of exposing weaknesses (Danielson, 1999; Rogers & Babinski, 1999; Wildman & Niles, 1987). This perception is evident in the quotation of a beginning teacher presented in Pearson and Honig (1992, as cited in Jonson, 2002) - "It is professional suicide to admit you need help" (p. 5).

According to Wildman and Niles, student teachers may tend to self-blame for any weaknesses uncovered in the process of reflection, especially when the locus of control is not within the individual. This lends support for the need to examine the challenges of promoting mutuality in collaborative relational mentoring relationships where both mentor and mentee share their reflections on strengths and weaknesses in their own practice.

Osterman (1990) claims that a focus on lifelong learning will stimulate a change from "hiding practice" to regular dialogue focused on practice. A school culture that supports a belief that the teacher can be a partner in generating solutions to problems tends to also accept that problems are a normal part of the reality of teaching. This way of thinking acknowledges that the source of many problems is often rooted in the system, rather than in personal inadequacies. In a reflective learning environment, problems are not seen as a sign of failure or weakness, but rather a "challenge to seek new and better ways [of doing things], and to create knowledge . . . they are opportunities for dialogue, learning and change" (p. 4). In examining a nationally representative sample of first year teachers, Weiss (1999) found that a school culture that supports collaboration and teacher participation in decision-making was most strongly related to higher morale, stronger commitment to teaching and intentions to remain in the profession.



The problem with many educational settings is that they tend to have traditional structures that support isolation, as opposed to collaboration. According to Osterman, “schools have been negligent in their efforts to nurture and support critical thinking” (p. 8). Where effective organizations have been shown to be promoters of critical reflection, schools have done just the opposite; “critical thinkers are categorized . . . as troublemakers” (p. 8). Where there has been great focus on developing the thinking skills of elementary and secondary students, ironically, “. . . the importance of critical thinking skills for teachers and school administrators has not received as much attention” (p. 8). As a result, reflective self-examination of one’s teaching practice is perceived as threatening by a large percentage of teachers.

When mentoring is structured in formalized programs with ongoing mentor training focused on promoting collaborative reflection and mentor support, mentoring has been shown to have the potential to be an effective way to promote teacher development. School leaders who understand the program needs and are able to provide the necessary resources are those who are likely to develop successful programs. Danielson (1999), Ganser (2002b) and David (2003) suggest that mentor programs include orientation and/or training for administrators so that they are knowledgeable of the program supports and leadership needed for success.

### Summary

The improvement of teaching skills can result from both developmentally appropriate challenge and support (Bloom, 1995; Daloz, 1983; Thies-Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1987; Yost, 2002), and it has been shown that this is often lacking in first year mentorships

(Dunne & Bennett, 1997; McNally & Martin, 1998; Thompson, 2000; Timperley, 2001). When mentors are effectively trained in areas such as beginning teacher needs, stages of teacher development, adult development stages, observation techniques, facilitation of reflective inquiry and cognitive coaching, the quality of mentoring can be greatly increased (Evertson & Smithey, 2000; Timperley, 2001; Ganser, 2002a). It appears that through the training offered in formalized programs, mentor teachers can gain a clear understanding of the nature of the support role, as well as their role to challenge practice. With training, mentors may come to realize the limits of support as well as understand that challenging beginning teachers' thinking to enable them to seek their own answers is part of their supportive role; thus they might come closer to resolving the paradox in critical nurturance.

## CHAPTER V

### RESEARCH METHOD

If we are to support new teachers as they learn to teach, then attention to what mentors know and how they support protégés' practice is of paramount importance.

- Everston and Smithey (2000)

#### Introduction

Chapters II through IV provide a review of the relevant literature, the context and rationale for pursuing the following research questions that are the focus for this study:

- How do teacher mentors in formalized public school mentoring programs conceptualize their roles and how do their mentoring practices change over the first year of mentoring?
- How do mentors and mentees benefit from the mentoring relationship between experienced teachers and new teachers?

In this chapter I describe the research design used to explore these questions, including the setting, participants, data collection and analysis. I also address the integrity of the data that were generated in terms of their validity, reliability and generalizability.

Using a grounded theory design, I followed seven pairs of beginning public school teachers and their mentors representing elementary, middle and high schools in two school districts located in southern New Hampshire, the Elmwood and Westville School

Districts.<sup>22</sup> The requirements for selection were as follows: 1) mentors are mentoring first year teachers 2) mentors are first time mentors in a formalized mentoring program and, 3) participants are recommended by the program facilitator as someone likely to engage in the interview process and be open to sharing his or her mentoring experiences. Six female mentors and one male mentor were selected; four mentees were female and three mentees were male. The mentor-mentee pairs consisted of the following: four female mentors with female mentees, two female mentors with male mentees and one male mentor with a male mentee.

Using transcriptions of interviews, mentoring conversations and journal responses, I used open coding to identify the concepts evident in each mentorship that were then combined to formulate themes that comprised my data categories. Strauss and Corbin's (1998) traditional grounded theory procedures were used to examine the interrelationships of set data categories (context, causal conditions, intervening conditions, strategies and consequences) to the core phenomenon. This process was initially used for analysis; however, I found the set categories did not adequately represent the process that emerged in my study.

Glaser's (1992) modification of Strauss and Corbin's original design emphasizes the importance of letting the theory emerge from the data.<sup>23</sup> In that respect, Glaser does not hold to the need for using set categories to analyze the data, rather he claims that data categories that are appropriate for representing the process should be used. In this respect modifications were made to my coding paradigm in order to represent the

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<sup>22</sup> The names of the two school districts are pseudonyms.

<sup>23</sup> Strauss and Corbin published books that modified grounded theory design in 1990 and 1998.

interrelationships of the data that emerged. This study allows not only for the exploration of mentoring compared to the literature, it also allows for the exploration of consistencies and differences across schools and across school districts in order to generate hypotheses that could be applied in other similar settings.

Using the process of “theoretical sampling,” data were collected from two additional mentors and one mentee from the Elmwood program who were also participating in a mentoring program sponsored by the New Hampshire Department of Education. The program, called Project ACROSS (Alternate Certification Routes with On-going Support), is a mentoring program for uncertified teachers who have not completed a teacher education program and therefore need to become certified through one of the alternative paths outlined by the Department of Education. The data from this theoretical sample, though considered anecdotal, are included in this dissertation in order to explicate the research findings by allowing for comparisons of program structures that suggest conditions that may lead to relational learning-focused mentoring. The methodology for collecting and analyzing Project ACROSS data are presented in a separate section at the end of this chapter.

#### Site-Selection

This study focuses on the development of the mentoring practices of first year mentors in two New Hampshire public school districts that were implementing a district-wide formal mentoring program that had been developed and made available by a local New Hampshire education association. I reviewed the results of a survey conducted by the New Hampshire Department of Education’s Mentoring Task Force in the spring of 2002 in order to identify school districts in southern New Hampshire using formalized

mentoring programs and their program contact persons. I chose this region because its proximity would ensure accessibility for regular meetings and interviews with my research participants.

Initially, a single district was identified as a research site, a district implementing a formalized program for the first time. The superintendent's office was contacted and permission was requested to recruit new mentors and their mentees for this study. Upon written consent from the Superintendent, recruitment was started through a collaborated effort with the district's Instructional Supervisor and a district Peer Coach. After a month of failed attempts to recruit any willing participants, which was precipitated by the inability to settle negotiations of the teachers' contract, another district was contacted. Permission to conduct my research in this second district was granted during the initial phone conversation with the district's Assistant Superintendent who had chaired the development of their program over the past year and who currently oversees its implementation at the district level.

When it became apparent that there would not be sufficient appropriate volunteers from this second district, I decided to include my own district as well in the study, since both districts were implementing the same program facilitated by the same program trainer. Although my district had piloted this program in the previous school year, this was the first year that a full training was provided for mentors. It was suggested by my superintendent that I contact the school board for permission to conduct research in the district's schools. A letter was written to the board outlining the purpose of the study, along with the research procedures to be used, and subsequently permission was granted to conduct the research study.

Although conducting research in familiar settings can present challenges to the validity of a study, it can also provide some benefits in that teacher relationships with the researcher are established in many cases and participants are generally open and forthcoming with sensitive information with someone who is familiar and trusted. In this particular situation, my role was that of Curriculum Director, and although I had served in a supervisory capacity for some teachers in the past, I did not currently serve in a supervisory capacity. There was only one mentor that I had supervised in the past when I assumed a different role as Assistant Principal. We had, and still have, a very positive relationship. My role during the year of on-site data gathering focused primarily on curriculum development and instructional support and I did not evaluate teachers.

### Setting

The Westville School District located in southern New Hampshire is primarily an upper-middle class community that consists of 2,500 students. The Westville school district has two elementary schools (PK- grade 1; grades 2-4), a middle school (grades 5-8) and a high school (grades 9-12). Mentors and mentees from the grade 2-4 elementary school (35 teachers), the middle school (90 teachers) and the high school (85 teachers) participated in this dissertation study.

Approximately twenty miles away is the Elmwood School District, which represents another upper-middle class community and serves the town of Elmwood and two smaller adjacent communities. The Elmwood school district has approximately 3,000 students in two elementary schools (grades 1-3; grades 4-5), a middle school (grades 6-8) and a high school (grades 9-12). Mentors and mentees from the grade 4-5 elementary school (24

teachers), middle school (80 teachers) and high school (90 teachers) participated in this dissertation study.

### Participant Selection

Once permission to conduct research was granted at the district level, the mentoring coordinators at the building levels were contacted to set up a process for identifying first year mentors and their mentees and recruiting participants for the study. In the Westville School District, the high school Technology Director is the main coordinator of the district program, although the Assistant Superintendent oversees the program. The Technology Director's role involves coordination of the high school program, where her office is located, as well as coordinating the implementation of the district-wide program sessions, which are facilitated by the local mentoring program trainer/facilitator. In the middle school and two elementary schools, the building principals and/or assistant principals coordinated mentoring for their teachers. The Technology Director spoke at the first monthly meeting to encourage volunteers to participate in this research study. Those interested were asked to contact me directly; only one high school mentor contacted me.

In an effort to gain additional participants, I was given the e-mail addresses of mentors and was able to contact them directly to recruit additional participants. I was successful in recruiting two additional mentor/mentee pairs, one at the middle school and one at the elementary level.<sup>24</sup> The plan to limit my study to the secondary level was changed due to

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<sup>24</sup> Recruitment for this study was challenging in this district because not all mentors were working with first year teachers and were therefore not selected for the study, and the high school staff was involved in their NEAS&C (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) accreditation process which required a great deal of time.



the difficulty of recruiting at that level exclusively. I believe that examining mentor development across all three levels, elementary, middle and high school levels still provides valuable information in understanding mentor role development and teacher benefits of mentoring; perhaps even more so since differences among levels may be apparent.

In the Elmwood School District, recruiting was not as challenging as in the Westville district due to the fact that my work as a Curriculum Director in the district had enabled me to build trusting relationships with faculty. I was able to recruit one high school, two middle school and one elementary school mentor/mentee pair to participate in the study, reflecting the three grade levels participating from the Westville School District. In the Elmwood district, the building level administrators oversee the mentoring coordination in their respective schools; however, the training and program meetings are district-wide and are conducted by the program trainer/facilitator (the same trainer/facilitator as in the Westville district). The Assistant Superintendent, who was new to the district, oversees the district-wide program, although she is not involved in the routine operations. The mentor program trainer/facilitator, who happens to be a recently retired teacher from this Elmwood district, assumed most of the program coordination, including some of the responsibility of recruitment in the middle school where she was a teacher.

A “purposeful” sample of seven mentor/mentee pairs was selected by the end of September; two elementary level, three middle school level and two high school level pairs represented the two districts.<sup>25</sup> All participants signed informed consent to participate in the research (see Appendix B for Informed Consent Forms).

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<sup>25</sup> The Elmwood middle school had two participating dyads; all other schools had one.

As the study progressed, I discovered that some of the teacher-mentees had one or two years of prior teaching experience, although all were in new teaching situations (See Figure 3 for Mentee-Mentor Profiles).

<b>Mentee</b>	<b>Mentor</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Current Mentee Assignment</b>	<b>Prior Mentee Experience</b>	<b>Mentee Education</b>
Nora	Candace	Westville	Classroom Teacher - (First Classroom)	District Teacher – traveling (One Year)	B.A. Education
Zach	Liz	Elmwood	Academic Classroom (First Classroom)	Non-academic – not classroom setting (One Year)	B.A. Education
Laura	Ruth	Elmwood	Elementary Classroom – First Classroom	Reading (Two Years, Small Group Setting)	M.A. Education
Chrissy	Sonya	Elmwood	Classroom Teacher	Classroom Teacher (One Year in Another State)	B.A. Education
Bill	Roseanne	Westville	Classroom Teacher (First Classroom)	Student Teaching (One Year)	M.A. Education
Harry	Kevin	Elmwood	Classroom Teacher (First Year)	Substitute Teacher – No Teacher Training	*B.S. Computer Technology
Carrie	Evelyn	Westville	Classroom Teacher/ Student Teacher (First Classroom)	Substitute Teacher/ Student	*B.A. Candidate

\*Not yet teacher certified

*Figure 3. District Mentee/Mentor Profiles*

Five of the seven mentees were managing their own classroom for the first time; three were first time teachers, two taught before but did not manage a regular academic classroom and the remaining two mentees had some classroom experience in another

school. Although they were all referred to as “new” teachers, in reality they had various levels of experience.

Although this study draws upon “feminist” relational mentoring research for its theoretical context, my literature review indicates that relational mentoring practice is not exclusive to women; therefore it is not necessary only to look at female mentoring. Neither gender nor age was a consideration in the selection of participants for this study. In fact, I considered it desirable that both male and female participants were recruited. The representation of both genders provided an opportunity to present further evidence for the claim that “feminist mentoring” is not gender specific.

In order to study the ongoing development of and influences on mentors’ conceptualization of their roles, the grounded theory design allows for the use of a flexible sample. Theoretical sampling is characteristic of grounded theory methodology and involves gathering additional data from sources that arise as relevant to the development of hypotheses as the study ensues. I used theoretical sampling to gather evidence to support the interpretation of the data as they emerged and to provide additional information to confirm or reject my analysis as it unfolded. This involved interviews with various building administrators involved in the implementation of the programs, with the program facilitator/trainer, and with other mentors in the program who were also participating in Project ACROSS, as well as with informal mentors not participating in any program.

## Data Collection

### *The Mentor/Mentee Interview Process*

One-on-one interviews were conducted with each mentor and his or her mentee three times during the 2003-2004 school year. The focus of my series of three interviews was done according to the model outlined in Seidman (1998). His three-interview model made sense in light of the objective of studying the development of the mentor role over the first year of mentoring. According to Seidman, "People's behavior becomes meaningful and understandable when placed in the context of their lives and the lives of those around them" (p. 11). A single meeting with a participant would not lend itself to understanding the behavior within the context it occurs, nor would it allow for the relationship building between researcher and participant that is needed to open channels of communication that allow for the sharing of personal information.

Seidman's three-interview model also provided a focus for understanding how mentors developed an understanding of their roles and how those roles evolved throughout the year. According to the model, the first interview focused on life history: how the mentor came to be a participant in the school's mentoring program and the understanding of mentoring that they brought to the situation. The second interview focused on the details of the experience: what happened in their mentorships, what their role was in the process and how the mentoring program and the school supported them in the process. The third interview inquired into their reflection on the experience, the meaning of being a mentor and how the experience influenced their understanding of mentoring. "Making sense or making meaning requires that the participants look at how

the factors in their lives interacted to bring them to their present situation” (Seidman, 1989, p. 12).

The first interview took place in October, the second in February/March and the third in June. A semi-structured interview protocol was prepared prior to the first interview based on the literature review of mentoring roles and practices, both traditional and relational. Subsequent interviews were developed based on a combination of information culled from the literature and analysis of the data collected up to that point through the constant comparative process. In addition to questions that were prepared prior to the interviews that probed the documented process of mentoring, qualitative questioning that employed open-ended prompts were used that allowed participants to tell their stories and to present the personal experiences that were meaningful to them (Seidman, 1998; Charmaz, 2000).

According to Charmaz (2000 p. 163), this type of in-depth qualitative interviewing is well suited to grounded theory methodology. In the directed conversation, the researcher, who has “substantial experience, often combined with considerable insight,” can draw out the participant’s subjective views and tailor questions to pursue themes that emerge during the interview (p. 163). Grounded theory relies on the co-existence of researcher control and researcher flexibility, as evident in qualitative interviewing techniques, to implement the “constant comparative” process of analysis. This ongoing analysis strategy allows the researcher to respond to the data as they emerge. My interview questions, while grounded in the research literature and in the data, were also designed to provide the opportunity for participants to elaborate on issues of importance to them and

to discuss the circumstances unique to their own experiences (see Appendix C for Mentor/Mentee Interview Protocols).

All interviews were audio-taped with the exception of one of the second and third interviews. One of the mentors was not happy with how her relationship with her mentee was going, and she also had issues with how the mentoring program was being implemented in her building. Because some of her comments were critical, she was not comfortable having me tape record our conversation. At that point she also gave me back the tape recorder I gave her to record her mentor-mentee conversations and said that the conversations were too personal to record. I proceeded with our interview and wrote down some notes as we talked. When I returned to my office I wrote more complete notes of our conversation and e-mailed them to the mentor for her review. She did not indicate that she wanted me to strike any of my written comments or alter them in any way. She was willing to share her honest feelings with me; she just did not want them on tape. After her request not to tape the second interview, I did not ask to record the third interview; she was comfortable, however, with my taking notes as we talked.

### *Open Response Journal*

In addition to the three interviews, open-ended questions for reflection were mailed between interviews in the months of September/October, November/December and April, to all of the participants in the study. The response journal consisted of one or two questions that asked the participant to reflect on what they were experiencing in their mentoring relationship at that time (see Appendix D for Journal Prompts). Questions were formulated based upon data analysis, allowing for follow-up on themes that

emerged through the interview process. Participants were asked to respond to the questions and return them via e-mail.

One participant indicated during the first interview that she did not have her e-mail set up and was uncomfortable relying on e-mail to complete that part of the study. I mailed the question to her with a self-addressed-stamped envelope so that it was easy for her to respond and return her answers to me. During the study it became apparent that many of the participants did not use their e-mail regularly. When I was informed that participants had not gotten their questions, I provided a paper copy for them to complete.

#### *Mentor-Mentee Conversation*

Each mentor and their mentee were asked to audiotape two mentoring conversations that they considered to be typical of their regular practice. Participants were given a tape recorder, tapes and addressed, stamped envelopes to return the recorded tapes. They were asked to do one in the first semester and one in the second semester, and were told that I would welcome additional recordings if they wanted to do them. Three of the seven mentoring pairs recorded a mentoring consultation in the first semester. Two others had made attempts, but were unable to complete the task. One was due to the personal nature of the discussion, the other was because the time for the discussion was always interrupted with other things that had to get done and the mentor and mentee were not able to have their planned mentoring conversation. In the second semester only one pair submitted the second tape, they also submitted a third taped conversation. The chart in Figure 4 provides a summary of the data that was collected.

School District Mentors, Mentees	Interview #1	Interview #2	Interview #3	Journal #1	Journal #2	Journal #3	Tape Semester 1	Tape Semester II
<b>Candace</b>	X	X	X	X		X	Attempt	
Nora	X	X	X		X		Attempt	
<b>Roseanne</b>	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Bill	X	X	X	X		X	X	
<b>Evelyn</b>	X	X	X	X		X	X	X +1
Carrie	X	X	X	X		X	X	X +1
<b>Ruth</b>	X	X	X		X		Attempt	
Laura	X	X	X				Attempt	
<b>Kevin</b>	X	X	X		X	X		
Harry	X							
<b>Liz</b>	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Zach	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
<b>Sonya</b>	X	X	X					
Chrissy	X	X	X	X	X	X		

\* Names in bold are mentors

Figure 4. Summary of District Mentor/Mentee Data

School/Program Administration Interviews

Each administrator that was involved in overseeing the mentoring program was interviewed using an interview protocol that was developed to ascertain the purpose and goals of the program and the manner in which the program was supported (see Appendix E for Administrator Interview Protocol). Again, all interviews were audio-taped. Building principals and/or assistant principals and curriculum coordinators were interviewed from each participating school, the district level administrators were interviewed and the trainer/facilitator of the mentoring program was also interviewed.

Document Reviews

Document reviews of mentoring program materials were examined to provide information about the structures of the various mentoring programs that were studied.



Materials used in the local mentoring program that the Elmwood and Westville School Districts used were collected and reviewed. Additional district materials used to augment each district's program were also collected, such as, district professional development guidelines for mentoring, books and mentor program toolkits.<sup>26</sup> These data were used to establish the context of mentoring. My methodology for the collection and analysis of data from other mentors who contributed to this study will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

### *The Transcription Process*

All audio-taped conversations were transcribed verbatim. During the first round of interviews I had the help of a secretary Ann, who offered to transcribe the audiotapes. Ann used a Sony Transcriber with foot pedal controls to transcribe tapes into a computer word document to produce a first draft of the transcript. I would then listen to the tape and make corrections to the draft. After correcting the first few tapes, it was apparent to me that someone who did not have a teaching background and was not present during the interviews would have difficulty understanding what was being said on the tapes. There was a lot of educational jargon and contextual referrals that would not be familiar to someone who didn't work in education. At that point I began writing out the transcripts myself and used Ann's help to type the documents from my handwritten transcriptions. This proved to be an easier, faster and more accurate process. Ann typed the transcripts

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<sup>26</sup> See Appendix F for Westville Professional Development Plan Beginning Teacher Track and Mentoring Toolkit, Appendix G for the Classroom Management Training Manual Contents and Appendix H for the Mentor Training Manual Contents.

and then e-mailed them to me. I then printed the transcripts for review and imported them into my software program, MAX QDA (Qualitative Data Analysis), when they were ready for coding.

Printed transcripts were returned to the participants for their review prior to any coding or analysis. Lincoln and Guba (1985, as cited in Maxwell, 1996) refer to this process as “member-checks” because it allows the participants to check the document for accuracy and credibility (p. 94). I asked participants to read my documentation of their interview and submit any changes and/or corrections prior to my analysis.<sup>27</sup> This was done to ensure that I had captured a valid representation of our conversations about their mentoring experiences; it was not my intention to have them review my analysis. My analysis was not submitted to the participants for feedback other than through subsequent interview questions.

### Coding and Analysis

My first step in working with the transcripts was to create an index of each transcript. The main ideas were documented, sometimes in a shortened phrase or partial sentence, and the page number was noted. A template sheet was created for this process (See Appendix I for Transcript Index Template). This allowed me to create a condensed version of the transcript (1-2 pages) and to be able to look for transcript sections easily by using the page documentation. During this process, concepts and themes became evident in and across interviews. This made the next step, the initial coding of concepts and themes, much easier.

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<sup>27</sup> No participants raised objections to the content of the transcripts. Three mentors did return the transcripts with corrections on the spelling of technical terms and on occasional typos.

To identify and document concepts, the transcriptions were formatted in a half-page column. This provided a blank half of the page to write down concepts evident in the narrative. This process was done with all of the data received by the end of the first round of data collection in November: mentor/mentee interviews, mentor/mentee open response journals and mentor/mentee audio-taped conversations.

Once the concepts were identified they were combined into themes that represented the concepts that emerged across the data. The MAX QDA software was used for the rest of the data analysis process. All transcript data were imported into the program and themes were set up for coding. The transcripts were then coded and sorted by appropriate themes.

When the coding was complete, transcript sections were printed out by themes representing data from all mentors. Matrices were then created to document the themes that emerged from the individual mentors. This allowed me to see the similarities as well as differences that occurred in each of the mentorships. What I identified as aspects of mentor role development that emerged from the data were followed up on in subsequent interviews. My analysis of the data allowed me to narrow the focus of examination in ensuing interviews and to highlight what seemed to be the developmental aspects of mentoring that began to emerge as important as well as the circumstances under which they occurred.

### *Stories of the Mentorships*

Once the second interviews were completed, transcribed and analyzed for theme development, I began to construct the individual stories of each mentorship. Using the coded data, transcripts and my own notes, I integrated the data to write the stories of each

mentorship using the words of mentors and mentees and the themes that emerged as a framework. By using their words, it allowed me to look at mentoring in a way that is not often reported in the literature. The “rich data”<sup>28</sup> of the mentoring stories revealed the mentor’s experience of mentoring over the course of the school year and it allowed me to gain insight, not only into the mentoring practices, but also into the emotions that accompany them. As I fit the pieces of their stories together, I began to understand and see more clearly what was happening in the relationships for both the mentors and the mentees.

The process of writing the stories was a part of my preliminary analysis and it informed the protocol for my third and last set of interviews, where I was able to test my understanding of each mentor’s experience. After the last interview, I completed each story. I then used these stories as my working data from which I report common themes in Chapters VI through VIII, along with a discussion of the findings.

#### Data Integrity: Reliability, Validity and Generalizability

##### Research Reliability

According to Seale (1999), reliability in qualitative research is established through the implementation of what he calls “low inference descriptors” that record data in terms that are as concrete as possible (p. 148). This study’s “concrete terms” come from verbatim accounts of mentoring experiences that were transcribed from interviews and mentor-mentee conversations as well as from journal responses written by the participants. The

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<sup>28</sup> Maxwell (1996) uses this term to refer to, “data that are detailed and complete enough that they provide a full and revealing picture of what is going on,” and it generally refers to data that constitute verbatim transcripts of interviews with participants in a research study.

stories I constructed to represent the data were written using the words of the participants to tell their experience. The extensive use of verbatim transcripts allowed the researcher's personal perspective to be bracketed, to some extent, as the stories were constructed. The result is an account of what transpired told as much as possible from the perspective of the participants.

Silverman (2001) addresses the reliability of interview protocols as a central question of reliability in qualitative research. According to Silverman, it is important that each participant understands the question in the same way so that coding is accurate across all participants. The interview protocol used in this study was piloted at the end of the previous school year with mentors and mentees who were completing their first year of mentoring. This allowed me to test for understanding of the questions I used in my study and make any necessary adjustments in wording. It also allowed me to gain insight into the experiences of the participants and provided ideas for additional questions I should add to my interview protocol as well as what I might look for in the mentorships, such as experiences with building administrator support, the mentor selection process and differences in mentor and mentee investment in the program.

The pilot data were transcribed and coded, which gave me the opportunity to review my interviewing technique as well as to practice the transcription/coding process. In transcribing my pilot study I became aware of my tendency to ask leading questions and provide a lot of information that might tend to influence participants' answers. Subsequently, I was able to improve my interviewing technique by becoming less directive, spending more time listening and being more open to what the participant needed to tell me.

### Research Validity

This study was designed to discover the conceptualization of the mentor role by examining the experiences of first year mentors. The research design took issues of validity into account in a number of ways. First, my research design allowed for data collection that was not only informed by the literature, but allowed participants to highlight the experiences that they themselves felt were important to understanding what happened in their mentorships. The grounded theory design also allowed for an ongoing development of assumptions and conclusions that were grounded in the data, and therefore reflected the reality of the mentoring experiences being studied. The interviews with the mentors and mentees were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. This allowed the participants' own words to be analyzed as opposed to researcher notes and impressions. Furthermore, the research process allowed participants to examine the transcripts and make any necessary changes prior to analysis. This strategy, known as "member checks," contributes to the validity of the study by ensuring that the researcher accurately represents the voices of the participants (Guba and Lincoln 1989, as cited in Maxwell, 1996, p. 94). According to Maxwell (1996, p. 94), "It is the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpretation of the meaning of what they say and the perspective they have on what is going on."

An important threat to the validity of this research that must be addressed here is the influence of the researcher's presence on the individuals in the study, known as "reactivity" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 91). The fact that I worked in the Westville School District six years prior to this study and that I was working in the Elmwood district at the time the research was conducted presents the possibility that my personal relationships

and familiarity with some of the participants may have interfered with the collection of accurate data.

In the Westville district only one of the mentors was a teacher I had known when I was employed there. In the Elmwood district, although I knew all but one of the mentor-mentee pairs, I never supervised any of them; and my relationships with them were consistently positive. It is my impression that knowing these teachers and having established good relationships with them actually benefited my research. For example, I found that the teachers were very willing to participate; and they trusted me enough to openly share the details of their relationships with me. Being careful to allow mentors and mentees to report what was meaningful to them and using their words to construct their stories allowed me to minimize the validity threat.

According to Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, as cited in Maxwell, 1996), “eliminating the actual influence of the researcher is impossible, and the goal in a qualitative study is not to eliminate this influence but to understand it and use it productively” (p. 91). As the data were analyzed, I was constantly looking to identify situations that may have been jeopardized by my familiarity. I found mentors, mentees and administrators to be candid about their experiences, and I do not feel that those who knew me altered their reports.<sup>29</sup> From time to time, knowing I was a school administrator, three of the mentors indicated that I should influence the future direction of the program (one of them was not from my school district).

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<sup>29</sup> Casual comments from fellow administrators made to me regarding the mentoring program or particular mentors and mentees were not incorporated into my data. The only interview data that I used came from my transcripts.

The data collected in this study came from a number of different sources: interviews, journals and audio-taped conversations and program documents. The use of multiple data sources, called “triangulation,” contributes to the validity of the study by providing more than one way to examine a situation, multiple lenses through which the mentoring experience can be viewed. Interpretations and conclusions can be validated by convergence of these different perspectives. In addition, the triangulation process allows for the recognition of inconsistencies that would require further investigation and explanation. By looking at multiple case studies and allowing for ongoing theoretical sampling, deviant cases were included and explored to provide a deeper understanding of the circumstances that affect mentoring. This led to the same hypothesis regarding the development of mentor role conception and its impact on mentoring. It also raised questions to prompt further inquiry.

#### Research Generalizability

Silverman (2001) writes about the issues of “representativeness” and generalizability in relation to qualitative research. How do we know that the findings of the case or cases studied are characteristic of other similar cases? Can we draw conclusions for a general population from qualitative research? Silverman cites Hammersley’s (1992) claim that “obtaining information about relevant aspects of the population of cases and comparing a researched case to them . . . may allow us to establish some sense of representativeness of our single case.”

According to Perakyla (1997), “The comparative approach directly tackles the question of generalizability by demonstrating the similarities and differences across a number of settings” (p. 214). While the cases studied here are bounded in their school



setting, they all shared the implementation of a common mentoring program structure across six schools in two school districts. This study allows not only for the exploration of mentoring compared to the literature, it also allows for the exploration of consistencies and differences across a few schools and across two districts. Generalizability within my research setting is what Maxwell (1992) refers to as “internal generalizability” as opposed to “external generalizability.” In qualitative research, the “descriptive, interpretive and theoretical validity of the conclusions all depend on the internal generalizability of the case as a whole” (Maxwell, 1996).

“This does not mean that qualitative studies are never generalizable (Maxwell, 1996, p. 97). Maxwell cites Judith Singer’s concept of “face generalization” which assumes that there is “no obvious reason *not* to believe that the results apply more generally (p. 96). Maxwell also points out that qualitative research is focused not just on an explicit population, but rather, on the development of theory that can be applied to other cases. In light of these perspectives, the goal of this study is to describe the common relationships between these case studies that illuminate mentor role conceptualization in first year mentorships, relate it to what is reported in the literature and then to develop hypotheses that can be used to examine other cases in similar circumstances. This is accomplished through a process of finding common themes, developing individual mentor stories, and then constructing hypotheses by relating patterns of behavior across all of my cases.

## Project ACROSS and Informal Mentors: Anecdotal Data

### Rationale for Additional Data Collection and Inclusion in this Dissertation

In the course of interviews with administrators in one of the schools in the Elmwood School District, it became apparent that there was a noticeable difference in the quality of mentoring in certain instances. With further investigation it was determined that in one instance these mentorships were comprised of mentor/mentee pairs that were also participating in the state's mentoring program, Project ACROSS, designed for new teachers who were seeking alternative routes to teacher certification.<sup>30</sup> In another instance, they were not participating in any program at all; they were informal mentors/mentees.

This prompted me to widen the scope of my data gathering to include interviews from these Project ACROSS mentors and mentees in order to answer questions that emerged in the research process:

- Why was the mentoring practice of these teachers noticed and deemed exceptional?
- How did these mentors conceptualize their roles?
- Was their practice different from what was emerging in the mentoring program of the two districts I was studying? If so, what was different about it?
- Were there any distinctive conditions that influenced the mentoring practice of Project ACROSS mentors and mentees?

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<sup>30</sup> The Project ACROSS mentors and mentees were also participating in the Elmwood School District's mentoring program.

Because these additional data were not gathered in the same systematic manner, the context of Project ACROSS training was not the same as the district training and Project ACROSS mentees did not have teacher certification, the data from these mentors are presented separately. I use them only as a basis of comparison with the data from the original research design in order to raise suggestions about what may lead to learning-focused mentoring. Figure 5 presents the Mentor/Mentee profiles of these additional participants.

<b>Mentee</b>	<b>Mentor</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Current Mentee Assignment</b>	<b>Prior Mentee Experience</b>	<b>Mentee Education</b>
Brenda	Annie	Elmwood /Project ACROSS	Classroom Teacher (First Classroom)	No Teacher Training or Experience	*B.S. Science
Jim	David	Elmwood/ Project ACROSS	Classroom Teacher (First Classroom)	No Teacher Training or Experience	*B.A. English

\*Not yet teacher certified

*Figure 5. Project ACROSS Mentor/Mentee Profiles*

*Participants and Setting*

Two Project ACROSS mentors and one of their mentees agreed to participate in this study; all three were teachers in one of the schools in the Elmwood School District.<sup>31</sup> Transcripts from one male mentor and his male mentee and another female mentor comprised data collected from Project ACROSS participants. A summary of the data collected from Project ACROSS participants is presented in Figure 6.

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<sup>31</sup> The second Project ACROSS mentee was contacted about participating, but failed to reply to my request.

<b>Project ACROSS</b>	<b>Interview #1</b>	<b>Interview #2</b>	<b>Interview #3</b>	<b>Journal #1</b>	<b>Journal #2</b>	<b>Journal #3</b>	<b>Tape Semester 1</b>	<b>Tape Semester II</b>
<b>Dave</b>		X	X			X		
<b>Jim</b>		X	X					
<b>Annie</b>		X	X			X		
<b>Brenda</b>								

\*Names in bold are mentors

*Figure 6. Summary of Project ACROSS Mentor/Mentee Data*

In addition, two informal mentors who were identified by an administrator as demonstrating effective mentoring practices without involvement in any formal programs were interviewed about their mentoring practices in a single interview that was conducted in April. No additional data were collected from these informal mentors. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed along with the interview data from Project ACROSS.

*Data Collection: Project ACROSS*

Two Project ACROSS mentors and a mentee were interviewed in March using the mid-year interview protocol generated for this study. They were also asked to complete the April response Journal prompt that was given to the other mentors and mentees participating in this study. Project ACROSS participants were then interviewed again in June using the final interview protocol used in this study. I also collected Project ACROSS training documents along with the agendas for their summer training and follow-up training that occurred during the school year.<sup>32</sup> One of the mentors also gave me the reflection journal he kept as part of his requirements for participation in Project ACROSS.

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<sup>32</sup> See Appendix J for Project Across On-going Training Agendas; see Appendix K for Project ACROSS Training Manual Contents and Summer Training Agendas.

### *Analysis for Project ACROSS Data*

My data from Project ACROSS participants were transcribed and analyzed using the same process as the original research design. All data were coded to identify concepts and themes evident in the mentoring process. The themes identified turned out to have both similarities and differences compared to the themes I generated from the original research participants. Different patterns of practices and outcomes in Project ACROSS prompted my decision to use these data for comparative purposes to suggest the mentoring structures that may have influenced these differences.

### *Data Integrity: Reliability, Validity and Generalizability of Anecdotal Data*

The anecdotal data were collected using the same interview protocols and response journal prompts as were used in the original research design, therefore the reliability of the data is consistent with the original study. In this circumstance, however, I need to note that there is less data validity due to the small samples used. Only two case studies comprised both Project ACROSS data as well as informal mentoring data. Member checks were conducted with the transcribed interviews to enhance data validity, as in the original study.

The fact that one of my dissertation committee members is one of the consultants that was hired to develop and implement the Project ACROSS program presents an additional threat to the validity of this data. In my analysis of this data I was careful to back up my findings with excerpts from the Project ACROSS mentors' and the mentee's verbatim

transcripts, as I did with all other participants. This process minimized the possibility of bias on my part as well as the part of my committee member.

### Summary

This chapter has described the grounded theory research design used to examine the mentoring practices of mentors and mentees in two New Hampshire school districts that implemented similar formal mentoring programs in the 2003-2004 school year. The chapter outlined the methodology I used for the collection and analysis of data presented in this dissertation. An explanation of the circumstances leading to my gathering of additional anecdotal data, along with a rationale for why it is included and how it will be treated in this dissertation, was also provided. The remaining chapters provide the findings and conclusions drawn from this study.

## CHAPTER VI

### FINDINGS AND COMMENTARY: STRUCTURES, DEVELOPMENT AND INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION OF MENTORING PROGRAMS IN TWO SCHOOL DISTRICTS

We used to have a buddy system, some sort of support and information on how the building was run, and that's not what we're interested in anymore. . . [We want to address] what's going on in the classroom, how's the content going . . . We're trying to take it to a different level . . . much more in depth (October Interview).

- Mentor Program Coordinator  
Westville School District

#### Introduction

The structures, development and initial implementation processes of the two participating school district's mentoring programs will be described in this chapter. I will also discuss some of the challenges that the initial implementation of formal mentoring presented in these two districts. The common goal that both school districts had was to move beyond their informal buddy to formalize a district mentoring program that would engage mentors and mentees in collaborative reflection on instruction. The intent was that formalized mentoring would provide teacher professional development for mentors and mentees, as well as support new teacher transition into the district and improve teacher retention. The districts' processes for developing a formalized mentoring program, recruiting mentors and providing the initial orientation and training for mentors and mentees are reviewed in order to highlight both the similarities and differences that

were evident in the two programs. Excerpts from the research transcripts highlight some of the difficulties that ensued as each district developed and implemented their programs. I am also interspersing some of my researcher commentary.<sup>33</sup> The overall challenges that mentoring presented are summarized at the end of the chapter.

### Developing New Programs: Moving Beyond Buddy Support to Formalized Mentoring

All mentors in this study indicated that helping a new teacher was something that they did before the name “mentoring” was attributed to it; they all had given new teacher support on an informal basis. Two of the mentors talked about having been “cooperative teachers” for novices during their student teaching semester.<sup>34</sup> In fact, Roseanne, a Westville district mentor had a student teacher during the first semester of this study in addition to being Bill’s mentor. Evelyn, another Westville mentor, was Carrie’s cooperative teacher as well as her mentor because Carrie was hired before she completed her student teaching. As the lead teacher for the humanities, mentoring new teachers in her department was part of Evelyn’s job description.

**Evelyn:** I’m the lead teacher, so technically its one of my responsibilities [to mentor new teachers]. . . . [I had one alternative certification candidate], we had to go through and just do the paperwork and so forth. All he had to do was sit in on one of my classes and then we talked about things. But as far as mentoring is concerned, I haven’t done any formal programs other than this one (Interview #1).

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<sup>33</sup> Researcher commentary is presented in italics in chapters VI-VIII in order to offer distinction from the presentation of findings.

<sup>34</sup> A “cooperative teacher” is a veteran teacher who supervises the student teaching semester of a student who intends to apply for teacher certification upon graduating from college. The student will usually begin by observing the cooperative teacher and then eventually take over the instruction of his or her classes.



Even though all mentors had various levels of experience working with new teachers, none of them had any kind of mentor training. They were attracted to their district's formal mentoring program because they said they felt a responsibility to help new teachers and this was something that they generally did. Now that the districts' new professional development plans provided the opportunity to receive professional development credit toward teacher re-certification through the mentoring process, many took advantage of the opportunity.

*A Formalized Program: Administrators Looking for Something New*

I spoke with administrators in both the Westville and Elmwood school districts about their decision to implement a formal mentoring program. Each district revised its professional development plan to include mentoring and each was moving from offering informal buddy support to the implementation of a formalized program that includes summer orientation/training and regular monthly mentoring meetings for both mentors and mentees. In each case, the planning committees viewed mentoring as a research-based way to attract and retain quality teachers and as a process that could benefit the effectiveness of the mentor's as well as the mentee's pedagogy.

**Westville District Mentoring Coordinator:** We talked about needing to put a program in place for teachers . . . for a while, so over the course of last year we did some workshop sessions . . . the district curriculum team and a facilitator we hired, on the topic of mentoring and we started to put together our own sort of toolkit. We then discovered this local mentoring program and decided that that looked like . . . um . . . a really good way to go. We supported it with our own toolkit and money was put in the budget, not as much as we wanted, but money was put in to pay a decent stipend to the person who is serving as a mentor . . . there's turn over, there's the amount of time that, as administrators, we don't have to um . . . you know, successfully get a new teacher started. Just because they've graduated from a program or they've done student teaching doesn't mean

that they're . . . you know, fully classroom ready . . . in my case, some of my teachers come from careers in business and industry, they don't even have teaching pedagogy . . . although it wasn't so much focused on career and technical teachers, it was the rest of the teachers in the district as a whole. In some cases there's going to be big shifts in terms of numbers of teachers that are retiring and need to be replaced (October Interview).

**Elmwood Mentoring Committee Administrator:** I would say that the purpose of the mentoring program, from my perspective, is to help teachers make it through their first or second year here so that we can retain them – the practical purpose is to retain the teacher. . . . We adopted a local program, but that came on second. [Mentoring] was built into the long-term process of the district professional development plan. A committee came together to build the professional master plan – and *then* a professional development committee [was formed to outline] the mentoring pieces, what do we want? So we started building it from ground zero. I think an issue was, how do we compensate mentor teachers to do this and the issue of not having the money anyway – and I think our homegrown plan never got off the chalkboard. I think that's why [the Assistant Superintendent] said "Let's do this program and get it in place." I don't think it was the preferred model, I think it was, "Oh well, we have to do *something*," job embedded professional development and collegiality is our professional development philosophy. I think that's what we *wanted* in a mentoring program – I think the one we got is sort of the opposite (February Interview).

The districts each researched what they wanted in a mentoring program with the help of a hired consultant. Although each district held similar philosophies about mentoring and incorporated the same local mentoring program into their districts' mentoring plans, their processes for developing and implementing mentoring in their districts differed in some ways.

The Westville School District. The Westville district involved all building principals along with the district curriculum committee in the design of their program, the development of their Mentoring Toolkit and the incorporation of mentoring into their professional development plan (see Appendix F for the Westville Professional Development Plan Beginning Teacher Track). In the Westville district, building

principals had input into the design and they enthusiastically supported the district's program.

**Researcher:** Were building administrators involved in designing this program?

**Westville Principal:** Oh yes – we had input. At first I was skeptical of the program because I wasn't sure. . . . We're very pleased with the program. We thought it was appropriate, well designed. – I don't have any concerns right now.

The Westville plan required building principals to meet with new teachers on a regular basis. The exact schedule of the required administrator meetings were left up to each building administrator, each conducted these meetings according to their own schedules. The meetings were a check-in to give new teachers an opportunity to raise issues or concerns and get the support of their building administration as well as a way for administrators to promote school policies. The reports of these meetings varied from building to building.

**Principal #1:** We have had huge meetings where we get them together a few times a year and check in, "How are you doing?" And I've done different things . . . like I might [meet with] them one-on-one – what's going on, what problems are they facing? This year we have not done it as we have in the past. Each year takes on its own characteristics. Some years I have alternated – sometimes we all sit down, sometimes one-on-one. Everybody does things their own way (June Interview).

**Principal #2:** District-wide, each principal met with their people once a month . . . We touched base . . . they had a chance to talk amongst themselves and they were able to bring up different aspects of what was going on. Each building has its own way of doing it. We decided that we would meet as a group – then they have a bond together (June Interview).

The Elmwood School District. A subcommittee of the district's professional development committee did the planning for mentoring in the Elmwood district. The subcommittee researched mentoring and made recommendations to the Assistant Superintendent for structuring the mentoring component of the district's professional

development plan. The Assistant Superintendent then moved forward with the decision to bring in a local mentoring program to facilitate mentoring in the district; the same program that the Westville district used. She employed this local mentoring program because she wanted to move forward with a mentoring program but had limited monetary resources and obstacles with the district's teacher contract, which did not allow for career ladders or adding teacher stipends to the pay schedule without negotiation. The Assistant Superintendent said she thought that their teachers would be supportive of this outside program and it was at least a place to start.

In the year prior to district-wide implementation of their formalized mentoring program, the Elmwood district offered participation in a pilot of the local mentoring program to any teachers who wanted to participate. After making some adjustments to the summer orientation that was provided, the Elmwood district was now moving forward with district-wide implementation of this local mentoring program for all of its new teachers.<sup>35</sup>

Unlike the Westville district, the Elmwood district had little district level coordination of the mentoring program implementation and no guidelines for building level orientation or support. The result was variation in how the program was promoted and implemented in each building. Elmwood building administrators were presented

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<sup>35</sup> In the pilot year, only a two-hour training was offered to mentors. In the first year of full district-wide implementation, a full six-hour day of mentor training was provided for mentors.

with the plan for the district's mentoring program after it was already decided upon and they were asked to implement and support it - with mixed results.<sup>36</sup>

**Elmwood School Administrator #1:** The formalized mentor program? – I don't know who the mentors are that are participating in it, I don't see what happens; I think its invisible.

**Elmwood School Administrator #2:** I think that there's organizational things that you have to think about; we have all the tools here and I think that the district would be supportive – it's just that the agenda hasn't been pushed here. I don't think [mentoring] has been a top item.

**Elmwood School Administrator #3:** Here, at our school, I think that it is really supported . . . we discussed the need; it was very evident that some of our new teachers were not well trained . . . there aren't enough mentors to go around. If you come into the district and have some years of experience and are not a brand new teacher, you are guaranteed a buddy, but not necessarily a mentor . . . There's a big time commitment for mentors and they're really not getting remunerated; they're not getting recognized.

**Elmwood School Administrator #4:** I first knew of [the mentoring program] when it had already been decided that this is the program the district is using and the Assistant Superintendent was attempting to recruit mentors. [We were not given an overview] in any depth. The faculty support (pause) - I don't think they know enough about it – we just got it this year and only had one new teacher – its not a priority for them at this point (February Interview).

Common Professional Development Goals. The two school districts had some different processes for developing and implementing mentoring in their districts, but what they shared was the adoption of a common local program and the goal to move away from buddy support and formalize mentoring in order to retain new teachers and improve instructional practice for both the mentors and mentees.

**Westville District Mentoring Coordinator:** . . . [W]e also see it as tremendous professional development for the mentors who are involved. I mean, those teachers are very good teachers; *but* then to be in the

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<sup>36</sup> When titles or names administrators are not identified, it is to maintain the confidentiality of the participants.

position where you have to help and guide someone else to be a good teacher - *shifts* who you are and what you do in your classroom - there's a different perspective there. . . . Our intent with the mentoring program is, first of all - our Teacher Improvement Professional Development System is structured around Charlotte Danielson's Frameworks for Teaching so, you know, we are looking to develop the whole person. There are the four domains and . . . absolutely we expect the mentor to help the mentee with instruction in the classroom. . . . I don't see supporting and coaching as different. . . . We're not interested in [a buddy system] anymore . . . we're trying to take it to a different level; much more in-depth than the buddy system we had (October Interview).

**Elmwood Professional Development Plan:** The Beginning teacher pathway is aimed at helping teachers to become integrated members of the school community and to advance learning in their classrooms through the enhancement of their professional performance. . . . To be successful, Induction/Peer Coach programs need to begin before school opens and must be systematic, sustained, in-depth and highly structured. . . . In order to be able to help other teachers effectively, the peer coach has to reflect on his/her own professional knowledge and instructional repertoire. It is in this reflectivity that the coaching relationship contributes to the professional development of both participants and as a result boosts the quality of the professional practice of both participants (p. 6-3, 6-4).

### Recruiting Mentors

#### Westville School District

As part of their Mentoring Toolkit, the Westville district developed a district mentor application and teachers were invited to apply to become mentors. After the applications were filled out, the building principals reviewed them and invited qualified applicants to become mentors for new teachers. According to the building principals, most of the teachers who applied became mentors; in fact, they had to do some additional recruiting because there were not enough applicants. The three mentors, who were participants in this research study from the Westville district, were all recruited by their principals; no written applications were involved.

Recruiting mentors was not always easy. In one case, a principal tried to recruit a teacher who met the district guidelines for recruitment and taught the same grade and subject as Bill, the new English teacher, but the teacher did not want to be a mentor. He was planning to retire at the end of the year and didn't want to take on a new responsibility. At this point, Roseanne was approached and asked to be Bill's mentor because there were no willing participants in Bill's subject area. Roseanne was on Bill's team and they had adjoining classrooms; according to her, she seemed to be the next logical choice. She said she had the qualities of a good mentor; she was reflective, collaborative and involved with the school initiatives. Roseanne said she was happy to help out, but she was also reluctant because she did not teach the same subject as Bill. She wasn't sure that she was going to be able to provide the content instructional support that Bill would need, but the administration told her that it was not the mentor's job to cover the curriculum, that would be done by the curriculum coordinator, so Roseanne agreed to be his mentor.

When Bill found out that the teacher across the hall was originally asked to be his mentor he stated the following:

**Bill (Roseanne's Mentee):** You know how when teachers have been here for 30-35 years and you can tell that they're just going through the motions – they don't care anymore. Somebody like that wouldn't be a good mentor. And there was one person I was told that, "you might have had this person" and I was like, O.K. But now that I *know* the person, I'm like (*whispering*) "*Oh my god! – they couldn't be a mentor!*" I don't know if it's that they didn't have enough mentors – but the right mentor [is what's important] (Interview #1).

The elementary school principal in the Westville district also needed to recruit mentors; she delegated this task to her assistant principal. Candace was contacted during the summer and asked if she would consider mentoring one of the two new teachers.

Candace did not return the call and she soon received another message, “If you don’t hear from me, I found someone else.” The assistant principal was not having any luck finding someone who would agree to mentor. Candace hesitated to call her back because she said she knew it would mean a lot of time – which she didn’t have. Candace is a teacher who has many commitments: she is the lead English Language Arts teacher for her grade level, a representative to the Parent Teacher Organization, chair of the book fairs, she has a student intern from the high school four mornings a week and she is taking two courses on reading comprehension. She eventually called her assistant principal back and said, “If you really need me, I’ll do it.”

**Candace:** After I said yes, I had to talk myself into it because I know how much a new teacher needs . . . I really didn’t choose to do this – I did it for my Assistant Principal, she said it would be “a piece of cake.” . . . Once I committed I couldn’t quit, there was no going back (Interview #1, #3).

When Westville principals needed to recruit, sometimes they went to faculty who were veteran teachers in the appropriate grade level or subject and other times they went to veteran teachers in near proximity to the new teacher. The teachers they sought out were generally already involved with a number of commitments in the school and/or district.

At the high school, Evelyn replaced the mentor who was supposed to mentor Carrie, because Carrie specifically requested Evelyn to be her mentor.

**Carrie (Evelyn’s Mentee):** Evelyn was the first person I observed and - her organizational skills, her classroom management, her momentum – all make me think that I wanted to be that kind of teacher . . . she’s friendly with her students – and she *cares* about her students. And that’s how I wanted to be, or still want to be (Interview#1).

Although the high school had enough mentor applicants, they allowed Carrie to have Evelyn as her mentor because they had already begun to develop a



trusting relationship while Carrie was doing fieldwork for one of her college courses.

*Having the opportunity to choose your mentor may be an essential factor in the success of the mentorship (Hardcastle, 1988; Galvez-Hjornevik, 1989; Klopff and Harrison, 1981; Hayes, 1998). This may be a factor in why this was reported to be one of the most mutually satisfying mentoring relationships in the study. Mentor choice by the mentee is generally a characteristic of informal mentoring, but rarely characteristic of formal mentoring programs in educational settings. School administrators generally line up the mentoring pairs before the mentees arrive and there are no opportunities for mentees to choose their mentors. This mentoring relationship was different because the participants had already established a connection and a working relationship (see footnote #33, chapter VI).*

#### The Elmwood School District

The local organization with which the district contracted had its own mentor application and process for mentor selection that involved the submission of the application followed by selection made by the building principal; this was the process the Elmwood district adopted. All building principals were asked by the Assistant Superintendent to provide mentors for each new teacher and to make the summer training/orientation available to them.

As in the Westville district, the building principal often had to recruit mentors because there were not enough mentor applicants; when this happened the written applications were not always used. While some of the mentors administrators recruited met the

program requirement of having a minimum of three years and preferably five years of teaching experience, others did not.

**Ruth:** Actually, the administrator, my principal, asked if I would do this, so that was how it started because this is really only my third year in the classroom. So I didn't, at first, feel that I was prepared to do this only because, of course, I'm still at the stage where I'm just getting myself together. It gets easier, but yet on the other hand, when I was thinking about it, I thought it might be even better because I'm closer to understanding where she's coming from (Interview #1).

Ruth was a relatively new teacher in the Elmwood School District. She wasn't sure that she was ready to be a mentor because she said she was still feeling overwhelmed by the experience of teaching.

**Ruth:** I'm still at the beginning stage where it's still overwhelming to me – keeping everything straight. . . . The first two years here I was here at 6:30 and I left at 6:30 – and I came in every weekend! This year with my [increased family responsibilities]– *I want to be home more!* So – I'm trying to do more in school – and having Laura, that's going to be the challenge – making time for her . . . as it is now, I have three planning periods and they're completely taken up by either meetings, phone calls – I'm not even getting planning time in – so it's difficult (Interview #1).

Another teacher who was also just going into her third year of teaching was approached to be a mentor. This teacher was not only relatively new to the profession, she entered teaching through an alternative certification route and did not have teacher training in college or the benefit of student teaching.

**Sonya:** Over the summer I was called by the administration office to ask me if I would consider becoming a mentor, and they had pretty much picked me out already, but they wanted to see if that would go along with what I could do for the year. I said that would be fine and that I had already met with my mentee . . . about three times. . . . (Interview #1).

The other two mentors from this district were volunteers who had applied to be mentors. Liz indicated that she felt an obligation to mentor Zach because he did not have experience teaching the subject he was assigned, so she stepped forward.

**Liz:** I was somewhat apprehensive giving him the “thumbs-up” in his hiring. I really felt that it was important to have someone with experience entering into this position (December Journal).

**Liz:** I guess I thought that it was important that somebody coming into my particular field to have guidance, have somebody there who knows their curriculum, who has been there before and taught - I taught that age group when I came here (Interview #1).

Kevin also filled out an application to mentor, but he never got called to mentor until the program facilitator contacted him after the school year had started.

**Kevin:** Last year I turned in my application to be a mentor . . . and I was told, I don’t remember, either they had enough mentors or they didn’t need any more mentors – something along those lines. I actually inquired about the mentoring program last year and I was told there were no openings. And then, at the beginning of this year I got a note from the mentoring facilitator, asking me if I would mentor Harry – he was on my team.

**Researcher:** So you missed the training piece in the summer?

**Kevin:** Exactly! Because I would have been able to do it in the summer if I had been accepted and knew I was in it last year (Interview #1).

No one I talked to was sure why Harry did not have a mentor appointed before the start of the school year; he was hired before the end of the previous school year.<sup>37</sup>

*As a result of recruiting teachers who couldn’t say “no” to their administrators, mentors found themselves stressed over finding time to meet with their mentees. This raised the questions, “What criteria were principals using in making their selections?” and “Were principals recruiting the ‘right mentors’ or merely someone with experience?” It’s often believed that anyone who is an experienced teacher will make a good mentor candidate, but being a good teacher is considered a necessary but*

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<sup>37</sup> In addition, Harry would have been eligible to participate in Project ACROSS because Harry did not have teacher certification; he was coming into teaching from a career in industry. Even though the Elmwood district was a participant in the pilot of Project ACROSS, this opportunity apparently was not offered to Harry.

*insufficient condition for being a good mentor (Fawcett, 1997; Ganser, 2002a; Wang, 2001). Mentors have to be able to connect with their mentees.*

*Current research confirms the difficulties this study found in selecting and assigning appropriate mentors. Kajs (2002) claims that the prevailing practice is for principals to select mentors “based upon teaching competency, not necessarily on mentor-teachers’ personality, management style, and mentoring approach in relation to the novice teachers’ dispositions” (p. 60). Ganser (1995) claims that the lack of sufficient veteran teachers and their doubts about their ability to mentor may play a role in hasty selections. Furthermore, Zimpher and Reiger (2001) claim that selection without consideration of process is often used because it provides expediency considering the many demands on administrators’ time. In addition, it was found that when proximity to the mentee, content expertise and time to devote to the mentoring process are not considered in selecting mentors, the outcomes can be less than successful (see footnote #33, chapter VI).*

### Mentor-Mentee Orientation and Training

#### Westville School District

The Westville School District outlined a four-day orientation/training for mentors and mentees in August, prior to the opening of school. The contracted local organization delivered their two-day mentor-mentee training that included one-day of mentor training and a joint mentor-mentee class in classroom management (See Appendix G for Classroom Management Training Manual Contents and Appendix H for Mentor Training Manual Contents). This organization also facilitated the monthly meetings throughout the school year for mentors and mentees. In addition to these training structures, the district provided mentoring resources and two days of additional district orientation for

mentors and mentees that included information on the district's professional development plan, personnel information, building orientation with building level administrators, time to set up classrooms and time for mentees to meet with their mentors.<sup>38</sup> For their participation in the program, Westville mentors were paid a stipend of \$500 (Initially they were told it would be \$1,000).

Two of the three mentors in this study attended the full summer program; the mentor who was not present for all sessions had prior commitments and attended only one mentor training day. Attendance at the monthly meeting was expected and all mentees and their mentors attended regularly.

#### Elmwood School District

Since the Elmwood district contracted with the same local organization, they provided the same two-day summer mentor-mentee training sessions, one day of mentor training and one day of mentee classroom management training for both mentors and mentees. The same program facilitator delivered the training sessions for each of the districts. The only additional components added by the Elmwood district were two optional days of summer workshops on reading and the writing process, which were being offered to all teachers in the district. However, none of the participants in this study took part in these optional workshops.

In the Elmwood district there was inconsistency in the attendance at the summer training compared to the Westville district. Out of the four mentors who were recruited

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<sup>38</sup> All mentors were provided with copies of Mentoring Matters: A Practical Guide to Learning-Focused Relationships by Laura Lipton and Bruce Wellman, and New Teacher Induction: How to Train, Support and Retain New Teachers by Annette Breaux and Harry Wong.

for this study from the Elmwood district, only one attended any of the summer training even though this district did offer \$20/hour for attending the training sessions.<sup>39</sup> The one mentor who did attend only attended the mentor-mentee day of classroom management training. At this session, mentors were asked to sit on the sidelines and observe as the mentees actively participated in the workshop discussions and activities.

**Ruth:** I think there's some confusion about the mentor training I got. The only thing I really went to was one day with [my mentee]. I was the only mentor there. So, I'm not sure it was [mentor training] because it was for the mentees. The program facilitator said I got half of the training, but still, it was geared for the mentees so – I don't think that was for us (Interview #1).

The mentor program facilitator scheduled another mentor training session for the teacher workshop day that was scheduled in November because there were many mentors, like those in this study, who did not get the training or received partial training. In the case of Kevin, it was because he wasn't selected until the start of the school year. In Sonya's case, she said that she was not encouraged to attend the training; an administrator in her building said it wasn't necessary. However, by the first interview she was reporting some challenges.

**Sonya:** My administrator said that we didn't have to attend the summer mentor training. It would have been helpful to have a feeling of what my role is in the view of the people who are putting on the program. That's just something that if you want to note for the future, that the planning for that is really important - for the mentors. . . . There are definitely some challenges that I'm facing (Interview #1).

Mentors in the Elmwood district were not paid to mentor during the school year because it was in conflict with their teachers' contract; therefore, the district did not pursue funding sources. The Assistant Superintendent said she expected that, since

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<sup>39</sup> Attendance at the two summer "training" sessions was voluntary. Those who did attend received \$120.00 per day.

mentoring was part of the district's professional development plan, teachers would participate in mentoring in order to gain professional development credit toward their recertification. The reality, however, was that attendance in the monthly program was inconsistent and it declined as the year went on.

### Summary: Initial Implementation Processes and Challenges of Mentoring in the District

#### Mentoring Programs

Both the Westville and Elmwood school districts were implementing similar mentoring programs that incorporated the same training components and utilized the same trainer. Both had the goal of developing and implementing mentoring that would lead to professional development of both mentees and mentors. Developing and beginning the implementation of formal mentoring programs provided challenges in the following areas:

- Mentor recruitment and appropriate matching of mentor/mentee pairs
- Informing all administrators about the program requirements (Elmwood)
- Consistent implementation of all program guidelines by administrators
- Promoting full mentor-mentee participation in the program
- Developing appropriate mentor-mentee training
- Providing mentor remuneration for their participation in the program
- Finding time for mentors to incorporate mentoring along with their other professional responsibilities

## CHAPTER VII

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: THE REALITIES OF MENTORING IN TWO SCHOOL DISTRICTS

I was wrestling with what is my actual role – do I have the right to say anything about this, or – it’s hard to kind of infer something without saying, “You should be doing this.” . . . I would have done whatever it took to take that mentoring course. I really would have – if they were offering it at a different time or even if I got the materials and found the time to read it on my own.

- Liz  
Mentor, Elmwood School District

#### Introduction

This chapter highlights the experiences of mentors and mentees as they went through their mentoring programs over the course of the 2003-2004 school year in order to draw conclusions about the circumstances that appeared to shape mentors’ role conceptualization and how that understanding changed as they experienced mentoring in their respective school districts. The data provide evidence to address the first research question: How do teacher mentors in formalized public school mentoring programs conceptualize their roles and how do their mentoring practices and role conceptions change over the first year of mentoring.

The patterns of mentoring practices are presented as well as the challenges that continued to emerge as mentors and mentees began the work of mentoring. Mentors’ past experiences with mentoring are examined in order to identify the conception of mentoring that mentors brought to the program. I also identify how mentors’ conceptions differed from that of district personnel and how mentors’ conceptions developed as the year unfolded. Although the two districts had varying degrees of



administrator understanding, commitment and support for their programs, as well as various levels of participant commitment, the patterns and practices of mentoring that resulted were relatively consistent between the two districts.

### Why Teachers Become Mentors

#### Past Experiences That Influenced Teachers' Desire to Mentor

After talking to the seven original mentor participants about the experiences that led them to want to become mentors for new teachers, I found that it wasn't so much their own experience of having a mentor that prompted their desire, but rather, experiencing a *lack* of mentoring that was the primary motivating factor. Five of the mentor participants in this study experienced "helping relationships" in the past that they now define as "mentoring," however; they did not think of them as mentoring relationships at the time. Only two of the five mentors reported positive mentoring experiences, but even those mentors mostly talked about the times when there was no one to help.

**Candace:** I did have a mentor – she was probably, at the time she was older than me, maybe 10 – 15 years older than me. Now she's in California - we still keep in touch. I didn't think she was at the time, but looking back on it, she was a mentor. It was – (*whispering*) like she was my mother! . . . Maybe I thought of it that way; she did kind of protect me. The same kind of social things [that I help my mentee with] – she told me what to watch out for, you know, helped me get what I needed, um, not letting anyone else know that she was helping me. . . . Maybe [my mentor had something to do with me wanting to mentor] – but I think *not* having a mentor, not knowing what to do and not having anybody to help me. I think that's what really said that, you know, mentoring's important! I've been in a couple of new schools and a couple of new grades – and there's *nobody!* – and I felt all-alone. I did it . . . because I know what its like to be out there (Interview #1).

In another instance the support person was also the supervisor and, as a new teacher, the mentor reported that she was not comfortable going to her for help. This mentor

recalled what it was like to struggle as a new teacher and reported the importance of having a peer as a mentor, someone you could trust.

**Sonya:** The reason I wanted to be a mentor was, reflecting back on my own experiences - I would have really benefited from having a teacher be my mentor. The way it was set up - was that my supervisor was my mentor, um - and that - that didn't really work out for me - and for different reasons. I would have benefited from having someone I could meet with on my level, like a peer, another teacher who I could say to, "I'm having a hard time with this," and also not feel compromised to really discuss my struggles. So basically [I wanted to mentor] because I would have appreciated the same thing, because I understand the value in it and I have some really clear ideas of what I would have needed in my first year to make it easier on myself (Interview #1).

The mentors who reported being helped by another teacher also remembered being in situations where they felt isolated, even though they had a "buddy teacher." They recalled needing to seek out their own source of help because their "buddies" were unavailable or inadequate, and sometimes new teachers turned to each other for support.

**Ruth:** I had a mentor but she, at the time was involved in something else that was taking a lot of her time in school, so - I didn't see her that much. But I did find that, when I started, there was another teacher that was new at the time and we sort of connected - because you *feel*, when you're a new teacher - you *feel* - inadequate, you know. You don't want to admit to someone that you don't know what to do here and you don't want to let on that you're not on top of things. So when you have another person you can say, "Do you remember what we're supposed to do?" (Interview #1).

**Evelyn:** No, I haven't, well actually, I shouldn't say that. The first year I taught here I had a mentor and she was a math teacher at the time. She never came to see me *once* - the whole time! And the only thing I ever asked her was, "What time could we leave?" - that was the extent of it. It was incredible, ya know what I mean, to think - and I remember that I was very friendly with the math department and [there was another teacher who] would tell me what to do (Interview #1).

The two mentors who reported having no one to help them when they were starting out were left to figure things out on their own. In one of these cases, the mentor seriously contemplated leaving mid-year because she was so overwhelmed:

**Liz:** When I first came here, I didn't have that opportunity, [to have a mentor] and I was – I was my own team. I had *nobody* to ask questions to or bounce ideas off – “Is this a program or not a program?” I really want to do *everything* that I can to provide guidance for my mentee. I just remember being fresh out of college and by Christmas I was ready – this is it – this is not for me – *I can't do this any longer!* – I wanted to quit and I just knew that I didn't want [my mentee] to feel the same way (Interview #1).

In the other case, the mentor received advice in the teachers' room:

**Kevin:** [The only mentoring I received was] when I just started out, sitting around the teachers' room with all the teachers *advising* me. So, *informal advice* is where I got my mentoring – if you call it mentoring (Interview #1).

The mentors remembered being helped by administrators, experienced teachers who were willing to offer advice or, like Ruth, from other new teachers who turned to each other when they had questions. In all of these cases, whether they had someone assigned to be a support person or not, they remembered how overwhelming it was to be a new teacher.

*I expected to hear that teachers were drawn to mentoring because someone had been a mentor to them, either formally or informally, and they were greatly impacted by the relationship, therefore they wanted to be able to offer new teachers that same experience of having someone who was there for you, no matter what. However, I found that even if they had a positive experience with a teacher who helped them out, it was the other times when they did not have a support person that influenced their desire to become a mentor. The uncomfortable experience of having questions and not having someone to go to seemed to make a lasting impression that drove veteran teachers to want to mentor a new*

*teacher. They didn't want new teachers to experience what they had: feeling "alone" and "inadequate" (see footnote #33, chapter VI).*

### *Recent Experiences That Influenced Teachers' Desire To Mentor*

Two of the mentors in this study reported that they were concerned about new teachers leaving the profession and indicated that they wanted to mentor because they were passionate about teaching and they wanted new teachers to experience the same joy in teaching. They had seen new teachers leave their schools and they felt the impact of it on a personal level. There seemed to be a sense of obligation to pave the way for new teachers.

**Sonya:** I think the way our department has been in the past is a great motivator for me. There've been a lot of changes, a lot of people leaving mid-year – before I came. The last few years have been much more stable and I would hate to see that decline again. That impacts me – it impacts the kids . . . There might be some fine-tuning – but we're all a fit, so we don't want this person to get discouraged or feel like they're alone. So it's more like the environment that's affecting me in making my decision [to help a new teacher] (Interview #1).

**Roseanne:** I love education and I want to find a way to attract and keep people. It's a very challenging profession to be in, especially now a day, but it's a very important profession for our country and for our education. I'm a firm believer in public education - I *am* a teacher – I will always be a teacher. . . . I want to do whatever I can to assist teachers and get them excited about teaching . . . because I believe teaching is a profession, its not a job, and I think being involved in the mentoring program will help take it up to that level (Interview #1, #2).

All seven mentors were teachers who seemed generally collaborative in nature and reported that they usually helped out new teachers. Whether they were assigned to help out under a "buddy system" or not, they generally looked out for them.

**Kevin:** I always help beginning teachers *anyway*. It's something I did anyway and when this program came around, I figured – it's a way to get into an actual program of doing it, not just off the cuff – and I can get professional development [credit] in the meantime – so that's basically why I got involved (Interview #1).

**Roseanne:** Last year I kind of took under my wing the new teacher on the other team . . . Because I was the experienced teacher and she was kind of new – we decided to just sort of work together and – even though I was [informally] mentoring her – I actually felt we were helping each other because she was bringing in fresh ideas and things like that . . . (Interview #1).

**Sonya:** When I found out that we hired her and that we were going to be teaching the same thing, I called her and said, “Why don't we get together?” (Interview #1).

Their dedication and altruism was corroborated by the mentees, who all described their mentors as caring individuals, dedicated to the profession and willing to go out of their way to help them.

**Carrie (Evelyn's Mentee):** I think she wants to do this – she's the kind of person who does more than most normal people do (Interview #1).

**Nora (Candace's Mentee):** You go around and look at other classrooms and there's not a lot of people here, but she's always here late. You can see that she dedicates a lot of time to what she's doing and I like that because it shows me that she cares about what she's doing, she cares about trying to help me (Interview #1).

In summary, teachers said they became mentors because they had knowledge and experience that they were willing to share, they knew from experience the difficulties new teachers faced and they felt obligated to help teachers get a good start. Each indicated that they had something to offer a new teacher and they were willing to step forward to help out. They said they were glad that a formalized program was being put into place to provide a structure for offering mentoring support and they looked forward to mentoring in the new program.

### The Beginning of the School Year: Role Conceptualization

When I first met with the mentors in this study, I asked them to describe their mentoring role and report what was happening in their mentorships. I hoped to gain insight into what they understood mentoring to be, now that they had completed the summer training and had begun their participation in the new mentoring program. I found great consistency in the responses of all mentors, regardless of the district from which they came.

Offering advice and suggestions based on the mentors' years of experience was the most consistent role description that was discussed; all seven mentors referred to this role. There were at least twenty such references in the transcripts after the first interview. Only one mentor referred to giving advice no more than once in the first interview, the others referred to it from two to five times each.

**Ruth:** Well, I think I'm a good listener and I think that I offer good advice. I think that I have good common sense and have that big picture – of what the important piece is in teaching and what the important piece is for her to be successful in this school (Interview #1).

**Candace:** You act like a parent, not that they're a child, but you should treat them like a child because *they're new* (Interview #1).

**Liz:** I guess [a mentor] . . . is a role model, as well as somebody to turn to for guidance . . . advice (Interview #1).

**Kevin:** [A mentor provides] advice from experience. Look, I've been doing this for a long time – if you do this – this is what could happen – it's up to you. It's somebody, hopefully who has experience – is going to help you through the difficult things of beginning teaching. Someone who is going to be there to listen, be there to advise, be here to share their experience – but also, not someone who is going to dictate how you're going to be a teacher (Interview #1).

**Evelyn:** I certainly don't expect anyone to copy me exactly, but if I say, "*this works*" I mean it because *I know* it works! . . . I think you need to have that kind of relationship where you can say, "That's not a good idea" (Interview #1).

The second most common initial role description was to explain the culture and climate of the school. Six out of the seven mentors reported that they knew the ins and outs of their schools, and had insights into the personalities of key individuals in their buildings. They said this was important information for mentees to know. Three mentors reported the importance of knowing how to negotiate certain personalities, of both administrators and colleagues. Four of them said that knowledge of the school culture was part of the reason why they thought they would be good mentors.

**Candace:** I've been teaching for a really long time . . . its twenty years I've been here. So, in other words, I know people, I know the background, I know the administration. You can get in a lot of trouble if you don't know the way things work . . . (Candace, Interview #2).

**Ruth:** I know a little bit about what's going on with things, but I don't know all of it. So, there are people she can go to – but I'm afraid sometimes that she's going to get too much. I'm not her keeper; she'll have to weed out what she hears. I do tell her though, I said, "you know, just be careful what you say to people. If there are things that happen that will upset you – come to me, say what you want and it will stay with me – especially your first year . . . (Interview #1).

The third most common understanding was the expectation that mentors and mentees would work together. Five out of the seven mentors made between one and three references that described mutuality as an aspect of their conceptualization of mentoring. Three mentors talked about planning lessons together and all talked about the discussion of their own classroom practices with their mentee. They talked about the expectation that their relationship would be more of a partnership because, after all, they were peers.

**Roseanne:** I think it looks like a partnership, I think. I was going to say friendship, but I think more like a partnership – very much based on

respect – and being a peer. The only advantage I have is that I have been in this building, ideally the only advantage I have is that I know the culture of this building – and that’s what I have, some experience – and he’s a first year teacher; I think that we’re partners . . . (Interview #1).

**Sonya:** Since she had [taught this course], and I had not, she was actually helping me as well, so it wasn’t just me teaching her, instructing her – it was actually very mutual that we were working together . . . (Interview #1).

There seemed to be a sense of excitement about the potential for collegiality in both mentors and mentees.<sup>40</sup>

Another conceptualization of the mentor role found in the first interview was to be supportive by listening (four mentors made one reference). When mentors talked about listening, they all indicated that they shouldn’t tell the mentee not to try ideas just because the mentor didn’t think they would work, because it might still work for the mentee. Mentors indicated that mentees needed to find their own teaching style.

**Candace:** I think a mentor should listen a lot – I don’t want to tell her that something’s not going to work – because it might work for her (Interview #1).

**Ruth:** I listened and I watched – and to me, I’m thinking, “Oh boy! I have a much better way!” But instead of saying to her, “Oh, you can’t do it that way,” I’d just say, “Whenever it stops working – or if it stops working, let me know because I have another idea for you” (Interview #1).

In the first interview some mentors also made references to their role to provide emotional support by “being there,” validating mentees’ feelings and letting them know that all new teachers go through the same struggles (4 of the 7 mentors made one or two references).

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<sup>40</sup> Although mentors and mentees seemed to expect the mentorship to be a collaborative relationship, this study found that the tendency to provide information and give advice often got in the way of collaboration and mutuality. This will be discussed further, later on in this chapter.



**Carrie (Evelyn's Mentee):** [My mentor's] approachable and nonjudgmental. The thing is, she'll give me advice; but she'll always say, "You know, this is your first year as a teacher" (Interview #1).

Offering encouragement was also found to be an initial conceptualization of the mentor's role (four mentors made one or two references). Mentors made an effort to let their mentees know that they were doing a good job. They reassured them that because they needed help did not mean that they were not doing a good job. This encouragement seemed to motivate mentees to "hang in there" in difficult times.

**Carrie (Evelyn's Mentee):** I think one of the big concerns I have is – it's a daunting task and I don't want to leave here after my first year – and not come back! And I think she keeps telling me, "You know, it's going to be okay" – and that's important. . . . She's given me confidence because she always tells me - whenever I have a meeting with her I always feel better after. She always says, "We're really glad to have you here – and that makes me feel confident (Interview #1).

**Nora (Candace's Mentee):** The first six weeks of school I was – I don't know how I got through it. . . . It was a very difficult balancing act – and she heard it all! And she kept reassuring me that everything will be fine – you're doing a good job, I only heard wonderful things. So, she made me feel that I'm not – screwing it up (Interview #1).

Mentors described the role of being a protector, someone who "saves you" and keeps the mentee from getting into difficult situations (two mentors made one reference).

Other mentor characteristics that were reported by only one mentor in the first interview included: observing other mentees' classrooms to provide feedback, setting up observations with other teachers and facilitating connections with other staff members. It's interesting to note that although instructional coaching was a stated goal at the district level, being an observer of instruction in the classroom and discussing instructional practice did not emerge in my interviews with the mentors as an explicit

focus of mentoring practice during the first few months of the school year, with the exception of the one mentor mentioned above.

### *The Mentees' Expectations for Mentoring*

Mentees told me that they were thankful for the mentor program because it meant that they were not alone, they had someone who they could trust and they could ask anything at all. They said they valued their mentors' friendship, emotional support and the information they provided about the culture of the school.

Just as the mentors put giving advice at the top of their list of responsibilities, mentees also expected that their mentor would provide advice and suggestions to help them out. They said they expected mentors to teach them the procedural things they needed to know as well as advise them on the general culture of the school.

**Carrie (Evelyn's Mentee):** As a mentee, my role is to go to my mentor for advice about school, classroom curriculum and administration concerns. My role is also to become independent and to become knowledgeable about the school and how it operates . . . another part of my role is to pay attention to these ideas and to put them in motion while I am still figuring out my own teaching style . . . (October Journal).

**Laura (Ruth's Mentee):** A mentor is someone I can go to and talk about school issues, whether it's, okay – Halloween is coming up, how exactly does it work in *this school*? Or, I really don't know so and so but she said something to me – should I take it the way I think I should take it, or is it just *that person* (Interview #1).

While mentees indicated that they wanted to collaborate with their mentors on classroom instruction, they also wanted a certain degree of independence. They wanted the freedom to chart their own course and try out their own ideas, but they also wanted the mentor to be there to catch them if they should stumble.

**Zach (Liz's Mentee):** . . . She was just willing to give me advice and things like that. She offered to come in and watch a few times – I didn't

feel that that was needed at the time. I personally prefer to go try it on my own at first (Interview #2).

**Laura (Ruth's Mentee):** . . . It's someone who checks up on me and makes sure how I'm doing as a person and as a teacher. Giving – bouncing ideas off each other. It's not necessarily someone who dictates how I am teaching and what I am teaching . . . It's just someone who guides you along and makes you feel comfortable and secure so that when you have a question . . . (Interview #1).

Mentees did say they expected that their mentors would provide some critical review of their instruction. Most talked about their student teaching experience and said that they were used to getting critical feedback and that it was helpful for improving their pedagogy. However, the mentees conveyed that they were no longer students and they expected to be treated as colleagues. While critique was welcomed, they made it clear that they didn't want it to be excessive; they wanted autonomy to review their own lessons and make their own decisions about the quality of their lessons. They wanted mentor feedback as long as mentors didn't tell them what they should do.

**Laura (Ruth's Mentee):** [When I was student teaching there were] four questions that you had to answer – what went well, what didn't, how do you know and what would you change – and that was *every* lesson! – and you had to turn those into your professor . . . That was wonderful for me because now – I just do it automatically. I think both support and the facilitation of critique are important in a mentorship. I don't mind criticism as long as I'm not being talked down to, as long as it's respectful criticism, then I'll take it because constructive comments are only going to make my teaching better. And even if I don't agree, I can say, "Well, I don't agree with this because this is how *I* feel about that." So I think that constructive criticism is important (Interview #1).

**Bill:** They should come out and make sure you're getting what you need, not just, hi, and wait for you to come and see them. They also should be willing to – um – if need be, stay out – if you don't need the help they should be willing to kind of back off and wait for you to come to them. It's like a fine line there; they should give you as much as they can, but they should stay out as much as you *need* – or *want* (Interview, #1).

All mentees in this study reported that they actually looked forward to having their mentor visit their classroom and having conversation about teaching and learning.

*Is Everyone Headed in the Same Direction?*

The mentors entering the newly formalized programs had experience being “buddies” who were there to answer questions, give advice and provide procedural information. Rarely, if ever, had being a buddy included observation of classroom practice and instructional coaching. Mentors reported that their expectations of the mentoring program were that they would continue to do the same things as before only there would be more structure and facilitation of the process and more opportunities for conversation with other mentors and mentees. This role conception was clearly different from that of the program administrators who expected that mentoring would include peer coaching on instructional practices in the classroom.

As reported in Chapter VI, from the perspectives of the two school districts that were examined, mentoring was a process that they expected would lead to the professional development of both mentor and mentee. They defined a mentor as someone who would introduce mentees to the practices and procedures of the building and district as well as someone who would provide encouragement, social support and instructional coaching. Through a collaborative process of examining their teaching practices, experienced teacher mentors were expected to help guide the development of the new teacher. However, in my examination of the process, I found that mentors and administrators had differing conceptions of what it meant to be that “guide.”

*Based on my interviews, it appears that the summer training had not established an understanding of the role of mentor that included instructional coach, someone who would facilitate the mentees' exploration and self-assessment of their instructional planning and teaching strategies. Initially, mentors were able to articulate ideals of partnership, mutually planning and investigating teaching and of not telling mentees what to do, as these things had been presented in their summer training. However, as they began to mentor, their actions remained directive and focused on providing information and advice from experience. Going into their first semester of mentoring, mentors didn't do anything different than they had in the past as a buddy teacher; administrators, on the other hand, envisioned mentors as being much more involved in a coaching relationship. These differing conceptions led to challenges in the work of mentoring as the year ensued (see footnote #33, chapter VI).*

### Mentoring Reality: Obstacles and Challenges

#### *Finding Time to Mentor: A Challenge for Mentors*

As mentors began the process of mentoring, they all found it very difficult to fit mentoring into their schedules. It was particularly difficult for Candace, who was mentoring as a favor to her administrator because there was no one willing to mentor at her grade level.

**Candace:** Well, - you really have to be available whenever that person needs [you]. I think we have to have that time – um, - at the beginning of the year. I know she needs a lot of time – and I didn't always – five hours one day, two hours another day and before we started school, half an hour here, two hours on Friday. I just felt like I didn't have enough time for her. . . . I *will* put in the time and effort into it – whenever she needs me.

If she asks me to stay, I'll stay, unless I have a meeting. If she needs anything – I go get it. See, that's the hard part for me, because – I knew that would happen – that if she needs something, I would do her business before my own – *and I have enough to do (laughing), you know?*"  
(Interview #1)

From the beginning, the needs of her mentee began to take a toll on her. At the end of October, she wrote the following in her journal:

**Candace:** I cannot always answer the questions she asks and I feel that she expects me to know. . . . This past week I saw her coming down the hall and I "beat feet" out the door. I just couldn't handle another question or complaint. Are other mentees so needy or have I created a monster (?) who feels that I am at her beck and call anytime, This is wearing on me. It's very stressful to be a mentor – a paid one. The \$ is nice, but it puts an obligation on me AND expectations that since I'm being paid I must render a service that fits the mentees schedule more than mine . . .  
(Mentor's Journal, October).

This mentor suggested that the stipend created pressure and an obligation for her to give her time. The program guidelines stated that mentors and mentees should meet regularly on a weekly basis, but this mentor was finding that her mentee needed more time and assistance than the program outlined. She also felt that, as a mentor, she was supposed to have all the answers. In November, she was still journaling about how stressful it was for her to find the time for mentoring.

**Candace:** It's stressful because of the time element. When I'm the most busy, like preparing for a field trip or report cards, etc., is the time when Nora most needs me to explain to her all about the procedures of the field trip or how to write report cards, etc. I feel like I do double duty. Just taking care of my own responsibilities stresses me out (!! no matter how many field trips I've done or report cards I have written (November Journal).

When I talked to Candace at the end of the year, she noted the stress and stated that mentoring demanded much more from her than she thought it would.

**Candace:** I think, for me, everything I had to do this year – The stress! There was just too much to do. I really didn't choose to do this – I did it

for my Assistant Principal. I never thought it would be this much time – but I couldn't quit, there was no going back. The administration part - that was hard for me and for my mentee too. She certainly wanted to be told what to cover in the curriculum. They weren't specific in what they wanted to be done, (*pause*) it wasn't a mentorship like the book. The administration, what they gave us; I didn't always follow that (Interview #3).

All mentors had difficulty finding the time to meet with their mentees and all but one continued regular meetings throughout the year. They fit mentoring into their busy routines wherever they could find some time.

**Bill (Roseanne's Mentee):** Sometimes I'll have an issue – and we don't always have a formal sit-down meeting like we should. We've only had three or four sit-down meetings the whole year. Most of our meetings I walk in there and sit on the desk across from her - and I like chat for five seconds, ten seconds – whatever time we have between classes (Interview#2).

Two of the mentors were not in near proximity to their mentees so they didn't normally run into each other; even those who did often see each other did not keep a regular meeting schedule for mentoring, except for Evelyn, who was also Carrie's cooperating teacher. She was the only mentor, out of the seven, who made meeting a priority and had regular mentoring meetings throughout the year. Making arrangements for regular meetings was difficult because there were so many demands on teachers' time and unexpected things would often come up. Two mentor/mentee pairs scheduled their meetings in the morning before school started because it was the only time they could get together. One of them, Laura, told me it was a challenge for her to get to school by six thirty in the morning to have a conference with her mentor.

Attending the monthly mentoring meetings also presented a challenge because they were scheduled after school and the schools in the district ended at different times. The Westville district released elementary teachers early so that they could get to their

meeting location on time; but this created problems for the teachers who had to leave their classes. Although administrators were willing to provide coverage, it was difficult for teachers to make arrangements to be out of the classroom and finding the coverage wasn't always easy. Sometimes there was no one to cover and mentors and mentees missed the beginning of the meetings. In addition, the mentors and mentees had to leave specific instructional plans when a classroom aid came in to cover and this was not always convenient; it was one more thing they had to prepare.

*The Challenge of Time to Mentor: Mentees Feel Like They're Burdens on Their Mentors*

As the year went on, there were instances where mentees encountered difficulties in their teaching; some encountered major difficulties. Mentees who constantly struggled often relied heavily on their mentors. In these cases there were indications that mentees sensed their mentors were stressed by the time taken up by the mentoring relationship. The mentees reported that they were beginning to feel like they were burdens on their mentors. They conveyed concerns that they were monopolizing their mentors' time and two of the mentees reported being hesitant to continue to go to their mentors for support with their problems; they looked for help elsewhere. Bill even said that he thought the mentor was not receiving enough compensation for the job that she was expected to do.

**Bill (Roseanne's Mentee):** Technically, it's her job to do this – even though they don't pay her much and she's not getting anything out of this. I mean it's a waste of her time! . . . The thing I like about the mentoring program is having a person there, a friend you can go talk to. The thing I don't like is that there are times that – she really doesn't want to do it, which I understand and I don't go to her unless I have a question that I *have* to go to her with. Because I don't want – I mean she's not getting paid a lot! . . . It's a lot to ask of somebody who's already doing a lot of stuff – volunteer workshops and committees. Sometimes I try to find someone else to talk to if it's something that someone else can do because



I don't want to keep going to her with every little thing. Instead of bugging her and taking away her time, if I can go somewhere else, I go there.

**Researcher:** It's a huge commitment.

**Bill (Roseanne's Mentee):** It is. You can make it easy if you give somebody that time – that would be the best thing. You're asking somebody to do something, you're not paying for it, you're taking away their free time to do it – so what's the benefit here? (Interview #2).

### *Insufficient Mentor Training and Follow-up Support: Mentor Stress and Role Confusion*

Not only did mentors realize that mentoring was a lot of work and it took a great deal of time, they found that their training didn't prepare them for some of the issues that arose. All but one mentor reported instances where they thought intervention was needed, but they were reluctant to intervene. Mentors were concerned with maintaining a trusting relationship and they feared that raising concerns would jeopardize it.

**Roseanne:** Ah, I haven't, I haven't, there's a couple of things I want to talk to him about that I haven't gotten around to yet, and I really feel I need to. And I think I'm waiting because I'm feeling a little uncomfortable. Because they're not – I don't want it to be an insult or that I'm being negative (Interview #1).

**Ruth:** She needs to know that there's someone here for her so she doesn't feel afraid to say things – and if I'm critiquing her, she's not going to want to share, "Oh I had this lesson and *it bombed!*" . . . I actually think the mentor is much more for support – they're going to be critiqued by the principal . . . I'm the kind of person who always seems to think positive – so – it's somewhat uncomfortable to make suggestions (Interview #1).

Eventually mentors began to have questions about what to do but there was no structure in place to address *their* own needs as mentors. Six of the seven mentors expressed frustration about the lack of support - for them. The result was that mentoring became stressful.

**Candace:** I don't think I was really well prepared to be a mentor. It was the first year and we were kind of finding our way. A lot of people complained about those monthly meetings . . . it would have been nicer to

have more direction. . . . I think you need more training for mentors – clearer criteria for what they expect from us – I think. I don't know how anybody else did. From what I heard from the high school teachers, they were really stressed! My mentee is a really good teacher – but what if? What if she wasn't a good teacher? I thank my lucky stars! (Interview #3)

There were monthly mentoring meetings, often referred to as “trainings” by district administration, but the agendas were focused on information that mentees needed such as parent conferences, progress reports and district professional development plan requirements - not mentor needs. Mentors reported that they had nowhere to go for help with their own concerns as mentors.

**Roseanne:** I . . . I wish that it could be more of the formal [training], but I know its the first year, so I'm grateful for that because we're all kind of finding our way . . . (Interview #1).

**Roseanne:** I think the meetings were a waste of time, to be honest with you. You set aside 45 minutes and you get over there and – we're talking about conferences, so get with your person and talk about conferences. I was hoping for a little more direction, a little bit more – how can I deal with what I'm faced with? They have a planned agenda - and that was good at the beginning. I appreciate that there was an agenda, but I would like more - we were left to our own – a lot! The training at the beginning was overwhelming – what a day! The second day we just sat there and watched the mentees – why am I here? It was a waste of time. I really felt that I didn't get any training as a mentor other than that first day. And I really felt – I didn't want to take the time in a meeting to say, “Well, I have this issue” – because there are people who might say, “Well, I don't have this issue.” . . . There's never really time to say, “Well, I'm having this concern” (Interview #2).

The fact that there were mentors in the Elmwood district who did not receive the summer mentor training further exacerbated the problem. Three of the four mentors in this study from the Elmwood district did not attend the summer training, and the one who did, only attended one of the two sessions. These mentors reported feeling that they were disadvantaged by not having the training because they found themselves faced with situations they weren't sure how to handle.

Liz reported being confused about the boundaries of her role as a mentor; she thought that she must have missed some crucial information about mentoring strategy and was now unprepared compared to others. She knew from the monthly meetings that she was not supposed to “tell” her mentee what to do but she didn’t know how to help him without “telling” him. When the make-up training was scheduled in November, she was not able to get the make up training because her principal wanted her to participate in the building activity on the professional development day. She discussed this in both the second and third interviews because she continued to struggle with this throughout the year.

**Liz:** . . . I guess I feel like I don’t really know what my role is anymore – had I had that training, I would have more direction. At this point, I go to the monthly meetings, help when things come up but – it’s just that he is a very . . . *closed* and *guarded*, or he really has everything under control – and I really think it’s the latter. I think by now I’d hear if he was falling apart – and that’s not happening (Interview #2).

**Liz:** I was wrestling with what is my actual role – do I have the right to say anything about this, or – it’s hard to kind of infer something without saying, “You should be doing this.” . . . I would have done whatever it took to take that mentoring course. I really would have – if they were offering it at a different time or even if I got the materials and found the time to read it on my own.” (Interview #3).

Kevin also reported in his first interview that he wished he had the summer training. He was also having difficulty balancing giving advice and not telling his mentee what to do. He wasn’t sure how to back off and still provide help.

**Kevin:** The greatest challenge is knowing where to back off and not come on too strong saying, This is, I know this is the way it ought to be done . . . I find myself starting to tell him. . . . The biggest roadblock for me is to fight the urge to go and tell the mentee how to do it; to temper advice without coming across saying, “This is the way you’ve got to do it.” . . . That’s one of the biggest things that I think the training, if anything I can think of, that’s the thing I would like to hear about more than anything

else. It's – uncertainty, you know. Should I step in? – and when do I back off? (Interview #1).

In one instance, Kevin did not confront his mentee when the mentee suggested something that could be dangerous for his students' – because in training they said, "Don't tell them not to try something," so he just listened and said, "I wouldn't do it, but do what you want," instead of raising the concern and helping his mentee to examine some of the possible negative results.

Even mentors who had the training struggled with not telling their mentees what to do. When their mentees had issues they either listened or they gave advice; the training did indicate that listening was an important mentor role. Candace would just "listen" when she was faced with the issues and concerns of her overwhelmed mentee; there was no attempt to use questioning techniques to help her mentee sort out her ideas or consider other perspectives.

**Candace:** I think that a mentor should listen a lot – I don't want to tell her that something's not going to work – because it might work for her. The first couple of days of school she had a lot going and I wanted to say, "You don't need a lot because you're not going to get through it!" So that's what she thought she needed and if I said, "Don't worry, you're not going to get through all that," it would be like I was brushing her off. So I said, 'Oh, that's a good idea, I never thought of - Sometimes when I have meetings with her I never say anything – and she's just Blaah! She just throws everything out and sometimes she's spinning, you know what I mean? - Just thoughts that she - I never really need to answer her, so sometimes I'm like a mother [I tell her what she should do], sometimes I'm not – I need to listen all the time to her (Interview #1).

On the other hand, Evelyn did very little listening, but she gave a lot of advice.

She felt strongly that this was how to help her mentee.

**Evelyn:** At the first mentor meeting we were told to *never* say, "don't try such and such" – and I have a problem with that because if you *know* something isn't going to work, ya know what I mean, then why would you let someone go through that. When I had a student teacher that was the

problem I had with him. I would say to him, “don’t do this because if you do” – he’d do it anyway and it would always backfire, ya know what I mean?”

**Researcher:** “How do you deal with that?”

**Evelyn:** Um – I do it anyway – because I think it’s more important – to help her in that regard and I *tell* her all the time – its just from experience and I *know* what’s going to work and what’s going to backfire as well, but generally speaking – just little things that – classroom management type things . . . ” (Interview #2).

When I listened to the tapes of her mentoring conversations there was very little said by her mentee other than, “Yes” and “uh-huh.” Evelyn’s mentoring was very directive and knowledge flowed from the mentor to the mentee.

Although Evelyn’s mentee welcomed her advice and tried to put it into action, when other mentors gave advice it was not always taken. As noted earlier, mentees said they didn’t want to be told what to do. They wanted to try out their own ideas and make their own assessments about what works in their classrooms. Mentors, however, seemed to have an expectation that mentees should take their advice and at least try their suggestions; they seemed frustrated when mentees didn’t listen.

**Roseanne:** I think that we’re partners but [although he has a Master’s degree] I have the experience and the wisdom to offer. And I have to *c-o-a-c-h* him into seeing that my suggestions – he should at least give my suggestions a try – and not say, “nah, that’s not gonna work for me” (Interview #1).

**Roseanne:** It’s really hard to push someone to try something - that *you know works!* He’s resistant, not confident – whatever the reason. He views a lot of what I say as criticism and even if I said it’s not and things are fine – I can *hear* that they’re not. I try to offer a few suggestions and – well, “They’ll work for *you*” – and he’ll shoot them down – or maybe he’ll try it for a couple of days (Interview #2).

**Kevin:** I mean when you give people advice, you also have to make sure they listen. You don’t have to do it my way – I’ve been teaching for twenty-five years – this is my experience – you can either buy this or (laughing) – you don’t have to. And in a lot of cases its helpful and in a

lot of cases they decide to fly on their own and all of a sudden they come back and say, “you were right!” (Interview #1)

**Candace:** She’s not such a good listener (long pause) – I guess that – something that disturbs me is that I’ve given her more suggestions (pause) – she doesn’t really listen to suggestions – or talk about them – or give me feedback on them. She just continues on with what she has to say and – or a reason why she can’t use mine – suggestions. So be it - I’m not upset over that. That’s another quality [of a good mentor] – you can’t take it personally” (Interview #1).

Candace said you can’t take it personally, yet it did seem to bother her.

### Negotiating Boundaries Within the Circle of Support: More Mentor Role Confusion

Mentees also received assistance from others such as their teaching teams, other teachers in the school, building administrators and district personnel. The involvement of others seemed to lead to further confusion for mentors regarding the boundaries of their mentor role. Five mentors showed evidence of having a hard time negotiating their role within the “circle of support.”

### Assistance from the Team and/or Others

Three of the mentors from this study were on four-person teaching teams. Teams were used to “taking care of their own,” and in this situation, the mentor was not the only source of information. The district also had two curriculum coordinators that offered instructional support to teachers as well as a certification administrator who oversaw teachers’ professional plans for certification. While the mentees generally benefited from having many resources, it created a problem when mentors were unsure of the information that was being offered by others. Mentors questioned what mentee needs

were already being addressed elsewhere and they were left wondering what their mentees needed from them.

**Kevin:** The other thing about this is – the piece of the puzzle that I do not know is like – I know he has met with the high school curriculum coordinator. I know he has met with the Assistant Principal or the Principal. I know he’s met with people from the white building (Central Office) – I think that’s his Alternative IV mentor, but then I’m – there’s pieces . . .

**Researcher:** So you don’t have the whole picture?

**Kevin:** Well, I’m not sure what he’s doing with the curriculum coordinator and I don’t pry, you know, if he wants to talk about it, he can talk about it – but the pieces of the picture that – I’m not sure, in terms of curriculum. Like if he’s working with Ellen and she’s helping and the eighth grade teacher is helping him with curriculum – I don’t know where all those pieces fit (Interview #2).

In the case of Ruth and Laura, they were both in a teacher training group facilitated by a consultant who offered on-site coaching. Because the coach facilitated the teachers’ critical reflection on instructional practice, Ruth questioned her role in addressing her mentee’s classroom practice.

**Ruth:** My mentee participates in our training group so she’s going to be critiqued by the coach. I am more for her support (Interview #1).

#### *Assistance with Curriculum and Instruction: Mentor-Administrator and Mentor-Mentee*

##### *Conflicts*

In general there was confusion about whose role it was to address instructional issues in the mentee’s classroom. Even mentors who received the mentor training questioned the boundaries of “support” when issues of instruction and curriculum arose. Mentors said they did not feel comfortable addressing curriculum issues and they were operating under the assumption that this was *not* part of the mentor role. The message that both

mentors and mentees said was delivered during the mentor training was mentors were to deal with “general issues of teaching” and the administrators would address curriculum.

**Nora (Candace’s Mentee):** I think the first meeting that was just mentees we were told what the mentor’s role was. It wasn’t to teach us how to teach because we had that in our student teaching. It was to be our biggest cheerleader, to be supportive, to listen, give advice (Interview #2).

When there were problems that needed to be addressed dealing with curriculum or classroom instruction, mentors said that it was up to the administrator to step in; furthermore, they didn’t feel comfortable addressing these issues.

**Ruth:** It’s awkward to talk about curriculum in the mentorship. You had asked what is a mentor – I think it’s listening and being non-judgmental – I feel that curriculum issues are not my role. . . (Interview #1).

**Sonya:** It’s because she’s a first year teacher that these things are happening, um – those types of things are very difficult for me. I wouldn’t really get involved if this happened with another teacher. . . . I get confused about, should I influence her now in any way?

**Researcher:** Would that be uncomfortable for you to address those issues?

**Sonya:** Yes, it would. It’s not – I don’t think it’s my role – it’s her supervisor’s role to observe and say, ‘here’s what my concerns are that I see.’ I don’t see that as my role here . . . (Interview #2).

Candace and her mentee had ongoing issues with her mentee’s need for curriculum support. Candace wasn’t comfortable going over the curriculum requirements with her mentee and when this information wasn’t forthcoming from the curriculum coordinator, Candace’s mentee became anxious and she put pressure on Candace to help her out with curriculum issues. Candace reported that the administration was not following through with their end of the bargain and she said that her mentee should advocate for herself and go to the curriculum coordinator. She even went to the curriculum coordinator to let her know that Nora needed help. To her surprise, the curriculum coordinator thought the mentors were taking care of providing curriculum direction.



**Candace:** I would love to help more with the curriculum, but I really feel that's the curriculum coordinator's job, um – when it comes to that, I don't want to be *the boss* – the authority – because I'm not – I'm not . . . I even pulled it out (the mentor program toolkit) and showed it to her – the curriculum coordinator – and she thought *we* were doing that! She has so many things to do and that was just one more – she has a million things! I think the administration could have taken a better role in this . . . and I feel badly for Nora, but if Nora needs that, Nora needs to ask the curriculum coordinator. So, whatever she needs – I don't want to give it to her – because it's not my job – not to tell her what to teach (Interview #1).

**Candace:** I don't want to screw her up. They haven't given her the full spectrum – and I don't understand it - and she still hasn't gotten a handwriting binder from the curriculum coordinator yet. They should tell her what she's supposed to do! (Interview #2).

As Candace's mentee became more frustrated, Candace gave in and helped her with the curriculum:

**Nora (Candace's Mentee):** The most frustrating part for me, I'll say to Candy, "Candy, I don't know the curriculum, what am I supposed to be teaching?" and she is not comfortable telling me what I should be teaching; that should come from the curriculum coordinator – and with the new math program this year, she's just been overwhelmed! So, I feel as though, "*When is somebody going to tell me what I'm supposed to be teaching!* . . . For instance, we have a writing program – which I don't even have a copy of in my room. Someone asked about my writing prompt scores – I said "What! What are you talking about?" I had *no* idea . . . I'm supposed to have already done one in September? - now I'm behind . . . I feel like I'm just floating in the wind . . . Candy finally said, "I'm going to show it to you – here it is." - and so she showed it to me. I'm still not sure how far I'm supposed to go with the kids – I don't know, so that's frustrating for me to hear at the grade level meeting . . . that the other new teacher who's been teaching for eight years said that she feels alone – I look at her and say, "*really?* – how do you think I feel? . . . It's frustrating – I don't know who's dropping the ball and I don't want to be caught on the other end of it and have them say, "Well you should have known. So how am I supposed to have known if nobody told me?" (Interview #1).

Candace made it clear that taking on the responsibility for a first year teacher's instruction was something that she didn't want and it's not what she expected mentoring to be. She expected more involvement from the administration in the area of

instructional supervision and her frustration escalated to anger when the responsibility of helping to explain the required curriculum fell on her.

**Candace:** Um – I didn't know there was so much involved – and I didn't really want to be that responsible for somebody else's first year of teaching. You mentioned about the curriculum – I never would want that responsibility – I never would accept that because – what if she was depending on me for that – and I didn't tell her – and they decided that she should go – then it's my fault. It's my own personality – I don't like to make mistakes – especially making a mistake where it pertains to her. Having to face the fact that I don't do what everybody else does – she needs to know that there's better things than just what I do – and I don't want that to be known! I don't want to be criticized! . . . I'm happy to have them come in and watch me – but I always thought that they never got enough from the college – that's a big thing.

**Researcher:** It's a big responsibility.

**Candace:** Yes, and *I don't want it!* (Interview #2).

Mentors were clearly confused about the boundaries of their roles when it came to addressing classroom instruction and curriculum implementation. The confusion went unaddressed because there were no opportunities during the monthly mentoring meetings to discuss mentor concerns that came up in their mentoring relationship. As a result, the issue was never resolved; it continued throughout the school year.

#### *Mentor Observations Confused With Administrator Evaluation*

Reluctance to address curriculum and instruction seemed to lead to reluctance to do classroom observations. All seven mentors eventually talked about the fact that they were supposed to observe their mentees, but no one ever did it. Although mentors understood from the training that peer observation was a part of mentoring, they often talked about it as only a one-way opportunity for the mentees to do the observing in order to get ideas from their mentors or other experienced teachers. In fact, four mentors did make arrangements for their mentees to observe other teachers who were willing to have

them in their classrooms. According to the program facilitator, mentors, particularly those in the Westville district, were very uncomfortable with the idea of being observed.

**Facilitator:** They are very nervous about it – they’re very nervous about it. They told me, “Oh! I hate being observed – I hate being observed and how much time it takes and how it distracts them from what they’re doing – and they’re nervous about it, they’re nervous! . . . I suggested to people that if you’re uncomfortable with it, why don’t you both go and observe another teacher – someone who’s willing to let you in . . . It would be nice if people would look at it as a tool for reflection as opposed to – its just not natural for them yet. It would be nice if it became a natural part of it.

It’s possible that because mentors did not seem comfortable with the role of being the observer, they focused on their mentees being the “observers.” Mentors said that they were reluctant to provide critical feedback to their mentees and they seemed to question their role in supporting classroom instruction, they said this was the administrator’s role.

In the case of Sonya and Chrissy, there were opportunities for Sonya to be in her mentee’s classroom while she was teaching, but using that opportunity to observe her teach and have a follow-up conversation to reflect on her instruction never happened. In this case, Sonya was uncomfortable raising concerns and said she did not think it was her role as a mentor.

**Sonya:** I don’t think it’s my role – it’s her supervisor’s role to observe and say, “Here’s what my concerns are that I see.” I don’t see that as my role here . . . (Interview #1)

**Chrissy (Sonya’s Mentee):** she’s observed me but it wasn’t really an observation. She comes in my [last class] a lot – It’s a place to work for her – She hears things, sees things – I’ll ask her questions. We team taught – we switched classes for a little bit . . . and we talked about what each other was doing; but we never observed each other. If one of us was in the classroom, we were there to visit (Interview #3).

In the case of Candace and Nora, Nora wanted to get into her mentor’s class to observe how she ran a reading group, but there were obstacles arranging coverage for her

class. In addition, Candace was reluctant to share too much with her mentee about what she does in her classroom. She told me that she didn't discuss what she does in class with her mentee. She didn't want to expose her to the difficulties she had covering the curriculum or the fact that there were some things that she didn't agree with and just didn't do.

**Candace:** . . . [M]y philosophy is to say nothing. There are things that I'm not doing . . . so I don't want to tell her she should do those things if I'm not doing them. . . . I really don't want to change the way I teach. I really don't want her to know I'm not doing those things that the other teachers are doing – I try to do – I do the best that I can. . . . It's not as fun to teach anymore, it's not that enjoyable – if I have to think of everything I'm supposed to be doing. I'm sure my children get as good an education as anybody else – but there are just a couple of things I cannot do

**Researcher:** Do you ever get into any of those philosophical questions with your mentee?

**Candace:** . . . She's just trying to tread water - I don't want to screw her up (Interview #2).

When Candace reflected back on the year of mentoring, Candace reported that she thought she should have done more to help her mentee with instruction, including conducting classroom observation, but it was not stressed as a priority and the program did not support the process – so she didn't do it.

**Candace:** Well, I think I should have been more, like, when you have a student teacher. Like I should have looked at lesson plans more – made her come in and watch me.

**Researcher:** Did the training you received say that you needed to do these things – were these the expectations?

**Candace:** It was in the [training] – but they didn't enforce it. Only the administrators went in and I know there was a time when she wanted to come in and see a reading group – and that was really my fault – it seemed like every time she wanted to come in, a sub couldn't come to cover her class . . . I really should have gone in and observed my mentee – but that's something I just didn't do (Interview #3).

Sometimes the difficulty was the lack of time to integrate meetings and observation into the school day and sometimes it seemed also that mentors and mentees did not make

this a priority in their mentoring practice because they were uncomfortable with it. This was an obstacle that was difficult to overcome. Administrative assistance for arranging class coverage to do observations was promised, but in reality there was no follow-through.

**Roseanne:** It's hard to be a motivator when you can't get in there and see it - I could have said, "Remember when you did this - if I had the same situation, here's what I would have done." Otherwise it's just he said, she said in conversation and if I'm in the room or even if it's just a video tape - we can watch it together. . . . [We teach at the same time so] it's difficult. That was never available to us. They said that it would be but the support [for coverage] got pulled away as well [when my mentee was told he would not be renewed] (Interview #3).

**Bill (Roseanne's Mentee):** I would say, a lot of what I didn't get much of was the opportunity to observe other classrooms; to go out to the other classrooms and observe and discuss - we didn't get any opportunity to do that this year. Technically, [my mentor] was supposed to come in here and see me - it never happened. The administration never gave us the time to do that; they haven't provided the subs. They didn't encourage that in a way like, "have you done that yet? Well, let's get you a sub." We would have had to get it together ourselves if we wanted to do it - and we had enough on our plates (Interview #3).

In the case of Ruth and Laura, proximity seemed to be an obstacle, but it also seemed that Ruth was waiting for her mentee to ask for her to come in.

**Ruth:** Laura being on the other side of the building creates a bit of a problem. Our relationship might be different if she were closer. I've not seen her teach - I would like to. I've brought it up, but we haven't done it yet. We can get a sub to observe each other - she hasn't taken me up on it yet (October Journal, Interview #2 Notes)

**Laura (Ruth's Mentee):** We've not done a classroom observation. I don't necessarily know why, I don't think it was getting my class covered but - it's very hard, our days are so structured and there's a lot of things the kids have to do. . . . Again, it was more important for me to be in here. I never went to see her teach, but we did talk about our teaching when we were together (Interview #3).

Since the school district did not support and promote observation with training and practice, there was not an explicit expectation that classroom observation would

definitely be done, and this even created some confusion about whether or not it should be done.

**Liz:** – and I don't really know what I *should* know, you know, if I'm supposed to be looking at a rank book or am I supposed to be sitting in on a class – an obstacle is – what are *my* boundaries? what are *my* guidelines? – where do I stop being a mentor? - I'm *not* his advisor (Interview #2).

*Mentors were generally uncomfortable being critical in any way; they saw observation of instruction as the job of the building administrators. The training failed to establish an understanding of observation as a form of peer coaching to be distinguished from observation as evaluation. For example, Showers (1985) summarized one way of distinguishing the role of coach from the role of evaluator: "The evaluation of teachers typically implies judgment about the adequacy of the person, whereas coaching implies assistance in the learning process . . . the norms of coaching and evaluation practice are antithetical and should be separated in our thinking as well as our practice" (p. 46). For the mentors in my study, this distinction was not made (see footnote #33, chapter VI).*

#### *Mentor-Mentee Confidentiality: Issues with Administrator Respect For Boundaries*

When administrative intervention occurred, it exacerbated mentor-administrator boundary issues if administrators looked to the mentor for information about their mentees. Although administrators were told that they should respect mentor-mentee confidentiality, there were times when they crossed that line. Two mentors in the Elmwood district became very upset by their administrator's questioning. When there was a problem with the new teachers and it was time to make contract renewal decisions, two Elmwood administrators tried to assess the situation by involving the mentor. One

administrator addressed his perspective on the issue of mentor-mentee confidentiality with me:

**Elmwood Administrator:** Good question - and it's come up and I've had the conversation with individuals about it and it's a conversation I've been having all the time with [members of the teachers' union] - "We're on the same team." This line up of administrator, teacher - and you can't cross that boundary. I think we're trying to support, nurture and help people become great teachers - some people need more help than others . . . and then someone's choosing a) not to listen, not to take advice, not to take suggestions. I think the mentor teacher has as much culpability, responsibility as the administration. So maybe that's naïve or too philosophical, but I think we're much closer and I don't see great need where you have to keep confidential because it will be used against them or they'll be non-renewed. Anyone we hire, we desperately want to see them be successful.

**Researcher:** So are you saying that you think you and the mentors can collaborate?

**Elmwood Administrator:** I think it should be part of a wraparound to do everything you possibly can do. You use the professional judgment of the mentor that some things will be better left unsaid and if someone is stumbling or trips or having trouble they don't need to share it all . . . But when issues arise to the level of concerns, with a mentor I think we're all on the same team. We want to flood them with the support that we could give them and see if they're going to listen and be open - I might be sharing my ignorance.

*There's no doubt that the administrator's intentions were good; he wanted to help the mentees and he thought that the mentors should become his allies. He wanted to work together to solve new teacher issues and he knew mentors had knowledge of what happened in their classrooms; it seemed logical to come together to help the mentees. He thought that the administration and the teachers in his building had become closer in the past few years and he felt that there was enough trust that had been built for them to collaborate. He did not believe that sharing information could jeopardize the mentorship; after-all, his school was focusing on building a culture of collaboration. The result was*

*that one of his mentors was put in an uncomfortable position; feeling pressured by her administrator to betray mentor-mentee confidentiality (see footnote #33, chapter VI).*

**Sonya:** [My principal] called me in and said, “I want to talk to you about [your mentee].” And when I say, “well, it’s very difficult for me because I’m her mentor.” He said, “Well, I really think, I talked to the Professional Development Rep. – and that’s a thing of the past, you know, this whole not talking about what the mentor-mentee relationship is about – that’s a thing of the past.” And, “that may be your opinion – but as far as I’m concerned – my role is clear, you know, and I’m here to support my mentee.” And I know he wants – it’s been a very difficult fit – which I agree, but I just don’t like the way we are doing business. In our department, it’s constantly a problem – basically I told him – “yes 50% may be her – but 50% we have to own” – like, not me, but the administration. You *have* to look at what’s going on *every* year. The same thing happens, we get people in here . . . and this is the first year the real mentorship stuff is going on – it’s critical, they’re part of it, the support from the administration. So, I mean I really learned that – watching this – I was not enough for her. She needed more direct supervision than what she was getting – *and* when there are problems – all the more reason to go in there – what’s really going on – let me see for myself, let me not just hear it from parents who are calling. Is their role unclear? – Because my role is – I observe her – but it’s only for *her*, I’m not reporting back to them – and they can’t ask me. If they want to know about her, they have to go there on their own. To me, it seems fair to me, why doesn’t it seem fair to them? (Interview #3).

Ruth’s principal also brought her in for questioning when there were concerns about how well her mentee was doing.

**Ruth:** They called me in to ask how she was doing. I went to bat for her. I told them that she was not getting the support she needed from them . . . it did not seem right for this to come up at the end of the year [without any intervention earlier in the year]. As a mentor I did not feel comfortable being called in by the administration. I tried to make a case for her. She is a good teacher (Interview #3 Notes).

**Laura (Ruth’s Mentee):** It was not Ruth’s job to do the supervision – and she told them that because there were times that they would ask her questions and she was like – “That’s not my job, that’s your job and I’m not here to spy on her. I don’t report back to you about things that are



going on and if you have a problem, then you need to go and figure it out” (Interview #3).

In these cases, the mentors commented that administrators should know the boundaries of their roles and be made aware of their limits by those responsible for implementing the mentoring program. The violation of these boundaries seemed to create bad feelings between mentors, mentees and administrators.

Summary: Challenges to Mentoring in the District Mentoring Programs and Implications for Mentor Role Conceptualization

Following the mentors and mentees throughout the year illuminated some major challenges to the implementation of mentoring in the district programs. These included: inchoate vision and goals for mentoring between district level administrators, building administrators and mentors/mentees; lack of time to mentor; and insufficient funds for teacher remuneration. The following is a summary of the common patterns and practices of mentoring that resulted as mentoring continued throughout the year and my observations as to how they appeared to impact mentors’ role conceptualization in this study:<sup>41</sup>

- **Mostly directive “advice giving” and answering questions without the facilitation of mentees’ reflection on possibilities.**

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<sup>41</sup> Common patterns and practices of mentoring are bolded followed by how they impacted mentor role conceptualization.

Mentors and mentees came to mentoring with the conceptualization of mentor as buddy; the program failed to promote a re-conceptualization of mentor as peer coach.

- **A focus on social/emotional and procedural support without addressing curriculum and instructional issues.**

Mentors did not believe it was their role to offer curriculum and instructional assistance; furthermore, they did not appear to be comfortable in taking on this role.

- **There were no classroom observations reported by mentors.**

Mentors appeared to understand instructional support as “evaluation” and something to be done by administrators, not teachers.

- **There was less and less mentor-mentee contact as the school year went on.**

Mentors took on the role of answering mentees’ questions and giving advice.

When mentees no longer came to them with questions, the mentoring essentially stopped.

- **Mentors were not given ongoing assistance as they learned to be mentors.**

This appeared to be associated with role confusion that led to stress, anger, reluctance and/or inability to address mentees’ needs, and conflicts in relationships between mentors-administrators and mentors-mentees.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE END OF THE YEAR: BENEFITS, DRAWBACKS AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

I think, for me, everything I had to do this year – The stress! There was just too much to do. I really didn't choose to do this – I did it for my Assistant Principal. I never thought it would be this much time – but I couldn't quit, there was no going back . . . They weren't specific in what they wanted to be done, (*pause*) it wasn't a mentorship like the book.

- Candace  
Westville School District Mentor

#### Introduction

In this chapter, I present the data that address my second research question: How do mentors and mentees benefit from the mentoring relationship between experienced teachers and new teachers. I begin this chapter with a presentation of the data that indicate where the mentoring relationships ended up at the end of the school year and I assess the perceived benefits of mentoring as well as drawbacks to mentoring that were discovered. The data indicate that although there were perceived benefits to mentoring, the mentoring relationships stayed within the parameters of traditional practices. The development of collaborative partnerships focused on critical inquiry into instructional practices did not occur as part of the mentoring activities in either of the district programs that were examined. In addition to perceived benefits of the program, there were also a surprising number of drawbacks to mentoring that were evident in this study.

In the last section of this chapter, I examine how the two districts evaluated their programs and how their findings affected their plans for programmatic changes. What they learned and what they failed to learn from their evaluation data provide useful information

that allow me to suggest some guidelines for effective program evaluation strategies designed to identify program strengths and weaknesses and to provide direction for effective program changes.

### Second Semester: Where Did They End Up?

When I interviewed the participants at mid-year and then for the last time before they left for the summer, I asked them to reflect on what transpired in their relationships in the second semester and how they understood mentoring now as opposed to the beginning of the relationship. What I consistently found was that, with one exception, mentors and mentees reported becoming frustrated and disappointed as the year ensued because the mentorship did not turn out to be what they had expected. Mentors said they thought the formal mentoring program would support them in the mentoring process and make mentoring easier than it was when they were “buddies.” They also thought that they would learn about mentoring and that the program would provide them with the time that mentoring needed. One mentor/mentee pair did report being satisfied with the program, but even this pair reported dissatisfaction with the program meetings; and the mentee said she wished that she and her mentor had been closer and had developed more of a friendship.

All but one of the mentors reported that addressing classroom instruction and teaching issues was a problem in the mentorship. They said it was “supervision” and “evaluation” and they felt it was the job of the administration and not the mentor. Although mentors were presented with a training manual, had two days of summer training workshops (only one of which actually focused on mentors), and Westville mentors were also given two books on mentoring, none of them learned the skills to facilitate reflection on practice to the level of

being able to practice it in their mentorships. As a result, after the technical information was passed on, the procedural tasks were learned and their mentees had no more basic questions, the mentoring changed in the second half of the year.

**Bill (Roseanne's Mentee):** Yes, it's changed a lot. At the beginning of the year [our meetings were a] weekly occurrence; as the year has gone on it's died. We don't have weekly conferences like we used to – there's not as many questions that I have to ask her. I'd say eighty to ninety percent of it, the day-to-day questions; I don't have to ask her. I know what to do now and if I need something I know who to go see. So those kinds of questions are out of the way (Interview #3).

In the second semester, the mentor-mentee meetings became less formal and less frequent or stopped all together. Candace reported that she wasn't needed as much and she was just letting her mentee "fly on her own" and just come to her if she had any questions.

**Candace:** I don't know if my mentee knows everything now and feels comfortable or we have just been too busy to meet . . . I feel less stressed with fewer meetings and Nora's fewer concerns. I'm letting her "fly on her own." She'll let me know if she needs something, until then . . . (Mentor's Journal, January).

When I interviewed Candace's mentee about the second semester, she reported that she was pretty much on her own; Candace rarely met with her anymore. She said she got by on her own and only went to her mentor if she found herself getting into trouble or if she had a problem that she couldn't solve on her own.

**Nora (Candace's Mentee):** I haven't really seen that much of her in the last couple of months. It's more as needed. I've had a few questions about the end of the year. I didn't have any materials for the last couple of weeks – The curriculum is kind of winding down and I'm not sure what I should be doing. . . . I did not see a lot of Candy the last couple of months – I didn't need to either. I would have gone in to see her – I would have said, "I really need to see you for just a few minutes."

**Researcher:** Has the nature of your mentoring relationship changed as you went through the year?

**Nora (Candace's Mentee):** She's always there if I need her, but I don't seek her out as much.

**Researcher:** So you raise the issues when you have questions?

**Nora (Candace's Mentee):** Yes. I had questions about – the behavior in my classroom and I would go to her and say, “This child is doing this – do you have any ideas? I’ve tried this, this and that, and it’s not working.” So she would tell me things that have worked for her in the past. – Sometimes I feel like I’m winging it myself, and if I feel like I’m sinking, I go to her (Interview #3).

*Mentees Non-Renewed: Who's Responsible?*

Mentors' expectation was that administrators would help with the instructional issues that mentees continued to have into the second semester; however, in reality mentors were left on their own to handle any and all issues that arose with their mentees, and often they felt unprepared to deal with these problems. Mentors struggled with mentees who needed more guidance than they could give, especially since they were not going into the classroom to observe. Mentors reported that classroom observation was not their role. As mentors, they reported that they were supposed to be supportive and give advice; any kind of critique or intervention was to come from their supervisor. When the administrators did eventually get involved, it was toward the end of the school year, when decisions were being made about contract renewal.

**Sonya:** Her supervisor did an observation with her only the last week of school while she's playing jeopardy – Now it shows her *nothing* – she got observed maybe one other time – which is *another* problem, she needs to be observed several times . . . (Interview #3).

**Ruth:** [The principal and assistant principal] did not give her the supervision she needed. They never went into her classroom except for her formal observations – twice (Interview #3)

**Laura (Ruth's Mentee):** I got the support I needed from Ruth, absolutely! – definitely from Ruth – I wouldn't say there was a lot of administrative support – like I never saw the administration in here. I had two classroom observations and that's the only time they came in here (Interview #3).

Mentors indicated that their mentees needed administrator support *before* the problems escalated. In these cases the problems began to emerge by November/December and they

were referred to in the second round of interviews, but by then mentors were struggling unsuccessfully to help their mentees. As the semester went on, they backed away.

Out of the seven mentees who participated in this study from two school district mentoring programs, three were non-renewed, and one came very close to being non-renewed. When mentees were not successful, mentors' responses were complex; on one level they blamed administrators but on a deeper level they blamed themselves. In all four of these cases, there were reports concerning the level of support and intervention of the building administration. In each case, mentors perceived that their administrators did not do their part in supervising the mentee. In the end, when the mentees were not offered a contract, mentors blamed administrators, but also reported feeling like *they* had failed their mentees, as in the case of Kevin:

**Kevin:** The administration did not give him much support – when they did enter the picture, it was too late . . . I feel bad that he's not coming back – because I was his mentor and I couldn't help him (Interview #3).

When I talked to Roseanne at the end of the school year, while she initially stated that she knew she couldn't blame herself and that she did everything that she could to help her mentee, she also said she felt somewhat responsible, because she was there to help him succeed – and he didn't; he was not given a contract for the next year. As we continued to talk about her feelings, she revealed that she was hurt by comments her principal made to her; he led her to believe that she was to blame.

**Roseanne:** In fact right after [he was non-renewed] the principal didn't have much to do with me for a while. One of the comments made a couple of weeks ago, that I thought was directed at me, he said things like, "More could have been done."

**Researcher:** "You took that personally?"

**Roseanne:** I took it personally, – I did. But I know in the long run, I can't blame myself. I did the best that I could – I feel like I was asked to be a mentor because I have a lot to offer and I'm enthusiastic about what I do and –

I'm disappointed that I couldn't help this teacher see – or help him find whether or not he is a teacher. . . . So that's what I want to make sure that this story says – being a mentor – is – a very difficult thing (*pause*) – and it can be a disappointing thing. . . . I think a mentor needs to get involved in a year in the life of their mentee and – I don't know if I did a good enough job helping to break down those walls – because my mentee isn't coming back. . . . but his cup was full and I couldn't give him anymore. So after a while I just stopped. . . . I say to this day, that I think I have something to do with his failure – that I could have done more (Interview #3).

*When I left this interview, I thought to myself, “Does anyone realize how this mentor feels about what happened in this mentoring relationship? Who is there to debrief these kinds of experiences with the mentors? It was these feelings of responsibility for their mentees failure that weighed heavily on mentors and contributed to the stressful year and the ultimate decision that they would not take on another mentee in the next year (see footnote #33, chapter VI).*

*End Result: I'm Not Really a “Mentor”*

I followed these mentorships to the end of the year and found that all but one of the mentors indicated that, as mentors, they were not totally successful. They said that they provided the support and security that comes with developing a friendship, but not much more.

**Liz:** Basically, you know, when I think of mentor – mentee, I don't think of our relationship in that way. I just feel like I'm here to help as I would if it was anybody else (Interview #2).

**Ruth:** My mentee taught before, she doesn't ask for help. I'm not comfortable as her “mentor.” I don't feel I'm needed . . . It's more like friends talking over coffee (Interview #2).

**Chrissy (Sonya's Mentee):** I think there wasn't a Mentoring – because we became friends. It was not like – here's my Mentor – It was like here's



Sonya. . . . I think it's all just about friendship – Neither one of us were pushing each other or anything like that (Interview #3).

There was an expectation that this would be different than being a buddy, but it wasn't. In fact, being in this program seems to have created more sources of frustration for mentors who got into situations they didn't know how to handle. When I asked if they would continue to mentor, five of the seven said that they might in the future, but not for a while because they either did not want to have another experience like this one, or they just needed a break. Mentors and mentees were supportive of the need for a mentoring program, but said that the district needed to work on improving the program before they would consider doing it again.

### Perceived Benefits of Mentoring

All mentors and mentees who participated in this study reported benefits from being in the mentoring program. Even those who encountered difficulties in their relationships and reported that the program did not support their needs still said they benefited from the mentorship, but not to the extent that the literature claims is possible.<sup>42</sup> In the process of helping mentees, mentors said that they learned about themselves because they had to reflect on why what they did worked in order to explain it to their mentees. They also reported getting new ideas from their mentees and feeling good about the realization of all that they

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<sup>42</sup> The following literature reports benefits of mentoring for mentors and mentees: Anderson, Boles, Abascal, Barand, Bourne, Brown & Cassidy 1995; Breaux and Wong, 2003; Brennan, Thames & Roberts, 1999; Carter, 1986; Danielson, 1999; Cole, 1991; Fullan & Hargreaves, 2000; Ganser, 2002a; Huling-Austin, 1990b; Huling & Resta, 2001; Thompson, 2000; Villani, 2002; Yost, 2002; Zuckerman, 2001. The benefits for mentees that have been reported in the literature include: improved pedagogy; improved retention rates; enhanced social and emotional well being; improved self-assessment skills and the development of habits of reflective practice. Reports of mentor benefits also include enhanced norms of collaboration; exposure to new instructional practices, improved student achievement, professional revitalization and enhanced teacher efficacy.

leaned over the years; mentoring validated all they had accomplished. The benefits mentors did report are reflected in a number of the transcripts.

**Roseanne:** I've learned a lot this year, it's made me stop and think about why I do what I do. I haven't thought about why my classroom discipline works – so – until he asked – it just has . . . (Interview #2).

Mentoring provided the opportunity for self-reflection and teachers who served as mentors found this to be valuable.<sup>43</sup>

Mentors also reported that they got new ideas from their mentees and they acquired new teaching activities from working with them.

**Candace:** I've learned a lot of things from just watching. I haven't been in to watch her teach, but I've seen her with her kids in the hallways and I've been in her classroom many, many times. I've seen all her books and ideas – I've learned from her. I guess the relationship can't be that *she's* the child all the time (Interview #1).

**Sonya:** It's been helpful and she's been able to – teach *me* things – which I told her was great. She has a lot of good activities . . . Just sharing ideas with her has helped me and hearing about what she's doing in her class helps me – you know, I could do that too; you share ideas (Interview #2).

When I asked mentors to reflect on how they benefited from being mentors, some reported a realization of how much they'd learned over the years. Being mentors made them realize all that they knew when they compared themselves to their mentees and it made them realize how much a new teacher has to learn.

**Candace:** I really enjoyed this program as a teacher, it reminded me of all kinds of things that I'd forgotten that I could do. The mentoring books were good resources for me. In those books were great ways to discipline kids. I

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<sup>43</sup> In the last interview, Roseanne said she thought that promoting reflection should have been “a part of the mentor training” so that it could have been used more consistently. Although the clinical observation process was an element of the training, the model was only presented; there was no time to internalize the skills. Roseanne said that they “didn't really know what they were supposed to be talking about” (Interview #3).

looked at the seating arrangements, how to deal with difficult parents. I guess I just relearned how hard it is to be a teacher – that’s really it! (Interview #3).

**Evelyn:** I think you learn what its like to be a first year teacher and all those concerns that you have. I also look back and think and say, “God, I’m glad I’m not there.” (*laughing*) You know it’s funny because when you care about – the problems are about the same in every single classroom. It’s nice to be able to say, “I know how to fix that” – because that’s what it’s all about. – Knowing how to fix that. – You have to fix it. So that’s been beneficial (Evelyn, Interview #3).

The mentees generally reported satisfaction with the mentoring relationship when asked about the benefits of participating in the program. Evelyn’s mentee reported that being mentored was beneficial for her because it gave her the information she needed about the school and the resources she needed to get started. She said this provided security because she did not have to face her first year on her own, her mentor was always there to tell her what she needed to know. This seemed to give her the confidence to think that she could be successful as a teacher.

**Carrie (Evelyn’s Mentee):** As far as the mentor part, I can’t imagine not having it. . . . I’ve learned about working for the school – from an inside view. I’ve learned I’m not alone here, my mentor’s here if I need her. I’ve also learned that I could do it on my own. I’m *slowly* learning that I can find my own voice – I’ve done a lot of borrowing of materials this year because I don’t have my own repertoire yet. That I think I can make a difference in the lives of students – not all, and they’re not all going to like me, I’ve learned that (Interview #3).

In general, all mentees reported the same feelings: they benefited by getting social/emotional support and classroom resources from their mentors, even the four who also reported frustration when curriculum support was not forthcoming and consistent. This was evident in the case of Nora, who reported frustration because she was not getting information on the curriculum she was supposed to present at her grade level and because she was unable

to get into her mentor's classroom to watch her teach.<sup>44</sup> When she was asked how she felt about the mentor program, she said she was thankful to have had a mentor with whom she could share her experiences.

**Nora (Candice's Mentee):** I still feel overwhelmed, but I can't imagine what it would have been like if I couldn't talk to anybody about it . . . there certainly are things that I would just say to my mentor and she has told me that – “you can tell me anything – it won't leave my lips”– and that's comforting (Interview #1).

Mentees may not have gotten all that they needed, but the fact that there was someone there for them to help with school procedures and school culture as well as to provide resources and ideas was reassuring.

#### Discussion: Drawbacks of Mentoring

Although there is extensive research that reports benefits for mentors and mentees who participate in structured mentoring programs, there is very little reported about the possible negative consequences of mentoring. Drawbacks reported in the research include:

- working with a “buddy” can promote negative attitudes and limited perspectives (Ballantyne & Hansford, 1995; Head, Reiman & Sprinthall, 1992)
- teachers who put their work up for public scrutiny risk attracting negative as well as positive attention; because of this some teachers are reluctant to mentor (Heller & Sindelar, 1991)
- Mentors have difficulty finding the time to mentor and it interferes with other responsibilities (Ganser 1996; Huling-Austin, 1990a)

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<sup>44</sup> The conversation representing Nora's frustration with not being informed about her curriculum requirements was reported in Chapter VII.

The findings of my study that are presented below confirmed two of the three drawbacks to mentoring that the literature reports:

- “Buddies” lack the skill needed to facilitate mentees’ critical reflection on their teaching, thus the development of new instructional approaches may be limited
- Mentors have difficulty finding time to meet with mentees

I also found patterns of experiences in my research data that reflected these additional drawbacks of mentoring:<sup>45</sup>

- Added stress for mentor and mentee over the lack of time for mentoring
- Frustration for mentors over their inability to help mentees with their issues
- Frustration for mentees when they are not given curriculum and instructional support
- Feelings of abandonment when there was no source of support for mentors
- Role confusion for mentors when mentor and administrator expectations were not well-defined
- Disappointment and guilt for mentors when mentees were non-renewed
- Anger when administrators compromised mentor’s limits of confidentiality

In six of the seven cases, mentors in my study left the program at the end of the year saying they would not be returning next year. Mentors reported that they did not want to face another year like the one they just had. It had been a very stressful year for them for a number of reasons; including the fact that three mentors had mentees that were not offered a contract for the following year and one came close to not getting a contract. In all of these

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<sup>45</sup> The drawbacks to mentoring found in my research that are summarized here are described and supported with transcript data in Chapter VI with the exception of mentor guilt over mentee non-renewal, which is discussed earlier in this chapter.

cases involving non-renewal there was anger and/or frustration toward the administrators who were assigned to supervise the mentees; mentors claimed that administrators did not do enough. Mentors' issues with administrators included a lack of provision of curriculum information, a lack of classroom supervision and conflict over the perceived limits of mentor-mentee confidentiality, all of which added additional stress to their school year. In another case, the mentor did not feel that she had the appropriate skills to mentor because she was not able to access the training. She reported confusion about the boundaries of her mentor role as she tried to be a mentor. In all of these cases, the reports of an overwhelming, stressful year precipitated mentors' decisions not to continue in the program.

The findings of my study suggest that the initial implementation of a mentoring program can result in both perceived benefits as well as many drawbacks. An understanding of the antecedents of both benefits and drawbacks will help to identify the structures for the successful implementation of learning-focused mentoring.<sup>46</sup>

### Program Evaluation

At the end of the year, each district underwent a process of evaluation of their mentoring program. The local program that was implemented by both districts had a survey component that was administered by the program facilitator in January and then again in May (see Appendix L for Mentor/Mentee Surveys). The same survey was used both times and each district's administration received a copy of the survey results.

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<sup>46</sup> Chapter X will elaborate on the benefits and drawbacks summarized here and discuss my hypotheses for what led to these outcomes. Chapter X will also provide some suggestions for developing mentoring structures that may be needed to produce learning-focused outcomes.

In the Westville district, the local program's survey was the primary tool for evaluation. The mentor survey had seven questions that were rated with a likert scale but was primarily structured in an open ended way so that mentors decided what they wanted to say – there was little structure to ensure that all aspects of the program were evaluated. Mentors listed their own expectations for mentoring then rated the degree to which they thought they were met. Mentees rated their level of expectation on a list of mentor roles and also listed the degree to which they thought their expectations were met. The surveys were satisfaction based and did not evaluate the level of effectiveness of program objectives with any evidence-based outcomes.

What was interesting was that “observed and critiqued my classroom practice” was on the survey list of expectations and at the end of the year, five of the ten mentees answered “completely agreed” with this expectation and nine of the ten “completely agreed” that their expectation was met even though in practice no mentor in this study observed their mentee. In addition, only four of ten mentees reported that they completely agreed with the expectation for “curriculum and materials selection” and eight of them completely agreed that their personal expectations were met. The mentees' low expectations for and high confirmation of expectations for mentors to help with curriculum indicates that the district expectation for mentors to address curriculum issues was not consistently conveyed to mentors and mentees. It also reflects the inconsistent understandings around mentors' and administrators' roles in providing curriculum and instructional support that were reported in my interviews. Mentors, mentees and administrators all had different understandings of the mentor's role in providing curriculum and instructional support and this often led to conflict.

When the survey results were compiled, it was done in a way that obliterated any statistical analysis of the outcomes. For example, the mentor responses were compiled verbatim and if one comment reiterated what another said, it was not included again on the list of responses. In reviewing this list of mentors' expectations for mentoring and the degree to which they thought their expectations were met, I noted mostly positive and some negative feedback. There was general support for what the program was accomplishing; the negative responses indicated a desire for a more building-based focus to the program.

There were major stressful issues that surfaced in this dissertation research that were not reflected in the survey results, such as lack of administrator support for mentees, mentors not doing classroom observations, a lack of training to deal with the problems that arose and infrequent mentor/mentee meetings. The absence of these concerns in mentors' survey responses raises the question, "When mentors and mentees self report, do they adequately address both the negatives and the positives? Without the examination of evidence to back up these survey claims, we cannot know if the self-reports actually reflect what did or did not happen in the program."<sup>47</sup>

In addition, all the Westville administrators got together at the end of they year to have a discussion on how they thought the program ran and what they thought should be done differently in the future. Based on the feedback they gathered, the Westville district decided to continue with the implementation of the local program in the next school year and also try to build in some building-based components. In contrast to my research findings, there was no discussion of any need to make changes in the mentor training or provide follow-up

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<sup>47</sup> The lack of reliability of self-reporting was raised in the Odelle (1986) study that was presented in Chapter II.



mentor training throughout the school year. There also was no discussion of administrators' roles in facilitating the mentoring process in their respective buildings.

The Elmwood district also received the local program survey results but they did not rely on the results because only four mentors attended the meeting in January when the survey was completed and there was also low attendance in May; the results were not considered to be a valid representation of the participants. Therefore, the district Professional Development Committee added an evaluation rubric published in the state of New Hampshire's *Induction With Mentoring Toolkit*<sup>48</sup> (see Appendix M for *Induction with Mentoring Toolkit* Evaluation Rubric) to assess their program. This evaluation rubric was designed to assess the degree to which the essential components of a high quality learning-focused mentoring program were present; and it focused on the professional development of both the mentor and mentee. A committee, comprised of teachers and administrators in the district who were familiar with the district's program, conducted the rubric assessment. The rubric, which was research-based and outlined essential components of a beginning, developing and established program, allowed them to assess program strengths and weaknesses as well as what needed to be done to take the program up to a higher level of effectiveness (see Appendix N for Elmwood Rubric Evaluation Forms and Results).

Thus, the Elmwood program was evaluated on evidence for each of the following: degree of being a systemic program; relationship to teacher supervision, evaluation and professional development; program evaluation; program support; administrator support; mentor support;

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<sup>48</sup> The *Induction with Mentoring Toolkit* was developed as a result of the 2002 NH Mentoring Task Force's inquiry into the benefits of mentoring. The toolkit was developed by a subcommittee of the task force to provide school district administrators with the tools and resources to implement high quality mentoring that will result in teacher retention, improved pedagogy, and improved student learning. At the time of this study, the Toolkit was in the initial stages of circulation.

and beginning teacher support. The committee not only evaluated their program on each of these components, they developed an action plan to improve each of the components. The evaluation report was passed on to the Assistant Superintendent who worked with the professional development committee to implement components of the suggested action plan.

The end result was that the Elmwood district decided *not* to use the local program again. They began to plan a “homegrown” program by putting together the induction workshops that mentees needed, providing for ongoing mentor training and support, and involving the building level administration in the process of creating support for mentoring in their buildings. Furthermore, the Elmwood district was developing a plan for building the mentor training goals into their mentors’ professional development goals and also building instructional goals into the professional plans of their mentees. With specific goals tied to teachers’ professional growth plans, they proposed that both mentors and mentees would work with their supervising administrator to develop a plan and assess their progress. These collaborative goals would bring together the administrative support for mentor development as well as for mentee classroom instruction.

By using the Mentoring with Induction Toolkit rubric to evaluate their program in relation to its objectives and to make program revisions, the Elmwood district was able to come up with the first steps of a plan aimed at bringing their mentoring program in line with the essential components of what is reported in the literature as “new generation” and learning-focused mentoring (Ganser, 2002a; Lipton & Wellman, 2002).

## Summary

Although all mentors and mentees reported benefits to participating in mentoring, these were often reported to me in conjunction with negative experiences. For mentors, the benefits were minimal and generally consisted of getting new ideas from their mentee and realizing how much knowledge they had gained over the years. In some instances mentors said it made them think about why what they did worked, but apparently this was not discussed with mentees, nor did seem to prompt further collaborative reflection.<sup>49</sup>

What was most surprising were the number of drawbacks of mentoring for the mentors, who became stressed, frustrated and angered in the face of conflicted understandings of their role expectations. This was further exacerbated when there was no forthcoming support for the mentors themselves, who had difficulty providing the support their mentees needed; this was particularly evident in the mentees' need for curriculum and instructional support. A review of my data indicate that building level support was inconsistent; and, in some cases, those supporting the program did not understand and/or respect guidelines, such as mentor-mentee confidentiality and mentor selection criteria. Inconsistent support of the process led to conflicts that inhibited mentors' ability to be successful in their roles and it affected their satisfaction with the program.

An examination of the evaluation processes used in the two school districts presents evidence for the need to use standards-based evaluations, not merely satisfaction-based surveys. When satisfaction-based inquiry is the sole method of program evaluation, issues and concerns can be overlooked, as was seen in the Westville district. When a standards-

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<sup>49</sup> Reflection on practice seems to have been limited to classroom management techniques.

based rubric was used in addition to individual surveys, the Elmwood district was better able to identify the problems inherent in their program structures and thus propose solutions.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE VISION FOR MENTORING: POSSIBILITIES

I think because a lot of [our conversations] were reflective – not only did I feel that I had to trust my mentee; she had to feel that she could trust me. So you end up developing a deeper relationship because you have this feeling of trust.

- Annie  
Elmwood Project ACROSS Mentor

#### Introduction: Project ACROSS and Informal Mentors

The state of New Hampshire piloted a mentoring program in the 2003-2004 school year called Project ACROSS (Alternative Certification Routes with On-going Support Systems) for new teachers entering the teaching profession without teacher training. The Elmwood School District was one of the New Hampshire school districts that sent mentors and mentees to participate in the first year of the two-year pilot program. In the process of interviewing one high school administrator about the district's mentoring program, a comment was made that one particular mentor was doing an outstanding job and he seemed to have taken mentoring to a "higher level" than other mentors in the school. Then, another administrator commented that a different mentor was doing an outstanding job. Initially, these mentors were not a part of this dissertation study; however, when it became apparent that their mentoring was noticeably different, I decided to widen my circle of participants, using the process of theoretical sampling, in order to investigate what might account for the difference. I eventually learned that these two mentors added to the study were also participating in the Project ACROSS mentoring program as well as in the district's mentoring program.

The data reported here are separated from the findings on those who participated in the original design of this study because participation in Project ACROSS provided mentors with a different context for conceptualizing mentoring and they did not participate in my research study to the same extent as the seven original mentors.

In order to further illuminate findings concerning the role of classroom observation, I have also included data from a single interview with an informal mentor, who did not participate in any formal mentoring program. In this chapter I lay out the findings from these two additional inquiries and compare them to the findings from mentors and mentees in my original study. These data are included in this dissertation because a comparison of the mentoring outcomes provide a basis for explicating the findings of this study by providing insight into what may be needed to move mentoring beyond buddy support; these conclusions will be discussed in Chapter X.

### Orientation and Training in Project ACROSS

Project ACROSS consisted of an administrator seminar in the spring of 2003, a week of summer training for mentors and their mentees, as well as five follow-up days of training throughout the 2003-2004 school year, with one additional day to follow in the 2004-2005 school year.<sup>50</sup> When I talked with the Project ACROSS mentors, they described training that not only introduced mentoring skills, but also taught the skills (See Appendix J for Project ACROSS On-going Training Agendas). The five-day summer training included a focus on building mentor-mentee relationships as well as general knowledge that all teachers should know. The scope of Project ACROSS and the specific

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<sup>50</sup> This was more comprehensive than the single session of mentor training that the district program offered.

skill training that was provided was evident in my conversation with David, who was one of the Project ACROSS mentors in the Elmwood School District:

**David:** . . . the summer [Project ACROSS training] was five days – three sessions a day with two open slots where you had some free time – so that makes thirteen sessions. And some of the sessions were for mentors and mentees and some were separate. *Very intense* and *specific*, and *some* of them were general education, especially special education responsibilities. There was a session on legal obligations – those were some of the mutual ones, I think. So, they were trying to head off some very specific places where ignorance could be dangerous . . . part of it was *clearly* about relationship building. So you were doing things together, making presentations to the groups . . . in the things where they took us apart, often it was coaching training and strategies for being a coach and again, an ethical piece there, as well. That is a *lot* of what the summer was about. (March Interview).

Project ACROSS training seemed to have made mentors think about how they relate to their mentees. David talked about the importance of not telling teachers what they should do and how the Project ACROSS training had mentors examine their communication style.

**David:** . . . I clearly remember what I did in Project ACROSS – I have it all written down. Project ACROSS addressed very specific skills – especially in looking at yourself – how you are communicating, trying to use different strategies to try to make sure that your method of communicating is appropriate for your mentee – as opposed to your norm. And we were looking at the advantages of looking at different questioning techniques, for example. They didn't want experienced, senior teachers *telling* new teachers *how* to do it. I know what they were *concerned* about and I see a lot of the mentors in Project ACROSS are kind of bossy people, in a way. And I can see how they could be overpowering and with the best intentions, alienate their mentees (March Interview).

The Project ACROSS mentors talked about the advantage of the follow-up training sessions they had during the school year that reinforced what they had learned in the summer sessions as well as introduced new mentoring skills. These meetings provided opportunities for mentors to raise questions, practice skills and talk with other mentors

about their mentoring experiences. Annie, the other Project ACROSS mentor in the Elmwood district, described the program's approach:

**Annie:** Project ACROSS is *very* proactive . . . Project ACROSS seems to be, "Alright, you've got a job teaching and we're *assuming* that you're a reasonably intelligent person and you'll know to *ask* somebody if you need help; lets go one step further, and give you *other* strategies: how do you deal with teaching the curriculum, how do you deal with special education laws, how do you deal with difficult parents – so it's *more* of, and you may not have those experiences the first year – but at least you've had some experience *practicing*. Project ACROSS does a lot of practicing at those sessions. You meet with the candidate and you do pre-conference practice and then a post conference practice, or you'll do an observation, a classroom observation . . . (March Interview).

The mentors in Project ACROSS reported that the materials they were given were tools that were used through out the training process. Project ACROSS provided a large binder of information and materials that were used in the training sessions and for homework activities (See Appendix K for Project ACROSS Training Manual Contents and Summer Training Agendas).<sup>51</sup> David noted that the materials in the Project ACROSS binder were used in their meetings as a "text book" and a "workbook."

**David:** Project ACROSS – it was a textbook almost. It was a notebook, but the thing had nine or eleven sessions – sections of the book were particularly for the session you were attending . . . the book was actually a workbook . . . (June Interview).

David also mentioned that the quality of the presentations and activities were "more professional" in the Project ACROSS program than in the district program.

**David:** We had hours and hours and hours; there were three, three-hour sessions a day. Project ACROSS was much more professionally presented. The speakers were, there was always a good sound system;

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<sup>51</sup> The district program also provided a binder, but it was less comprehensive and only referred to in the one-day training – and then it was just a resource that mentors could turn to if they so desired. It was interesting that, although one mentor said the information in the district program was more accessible because it was not as big a binder, he did not know where it was and he never used it.



always overheads and a lot of things going on at the same time and it had that real professional kind of feeling to it, and therefore, you valued it more . . . (March Interview).

The mentors reported that Project ACROSS training not only told them what should happen in the mentoring relationship, it told them *how* to make it happen.

**David:** In Project ACROSS they were talking a lot about *how* to be a mentor without being offensive, *how* to tell people what they need to do, what to do in different situations without – *how* to motivate people (March Interview).

David told me how important he thought being led through the mentoring skills was, especially for veteran teachers. He recognized that it was not easy for many teachers to be reflective and make nonjudgmental comments in order to allow the mentee to explore their own ideas.

**David:** I think there were some mentors for whom that might have been a weakness – they have a lot of confidence and they're very bossy *but*, and the Project ACROSS people would say that everybody teaches differently and a lot of being a good teacher is learning how to take advantage of your interests and unique abilities and therefore be interested in what you can be and able to convey that to the students. So you can't just tell somebody – you can tell somebody how to do a duty, but you can't necessarily tell them how to teach (March Interview).

### Mentoring Structures in Project ACROSS

As Project ACROSS mentors talked about their training structures, it was clear that Project ACROSS mentor training was comprehensive and provided both theory and practice. Furthermore, my findings indicate that the mentoring practices of Project ACROSS mentors, as well as their outcomes, were closely aligned with those of relational learning-focused mentoring. This was evident in certain structures such as peer coaching, a focus on curriculum and instruction, and in the ways mentors and mentees

working as partners in caring relationships built on mutual trust. The evidence of these structures is discussed in the following sections.

### Peer Coaching and Co-Learning

Evidence of peer coaching activities that seemed to result in co-learning for mentors and mentees was found in the conversations about the peer observations that were conducted in Project ACROSS. Furthermore, a focus on instructional best practices and the implementation of curriculum that were a part of the Project ACROSS training gave mentors and mentees a focus for their discussions about what happened in their classrooms.

1) Clinical Classroom Observations. Project ACROSS mentors practiced clinical classroom observation techniques that included a pre-conference to discuss the focus of the observation and a post conference to provide feedback

**David:** Project ACROSS had training in this observation cycle . . . we spent time practicing; asking non-directive, open-ended questions. It wouldn't have been my most debilitating weakness as a mentor but, but that training was useful (June Interview).

**Annie:** We practiced several observation techniques. Maybe a first year teacher is having trouble with this group of kids in the corner who never seem to be paying attention and I could just go in and observe that group of kids for time on-task. I don't have to *worry* about anything else. I don't have to look at anything else. I only have to look at that particular group of kids – or maybe they're concerned that they're not asking the right kinds of questions. With Project ACROSS the mentors and mentees had . . . follow-up sessions through out the year to reinforce and practice [observation] techniques (March Interview)

When Project ACROSS mentors engaged in mentoring they had the mentoring skills to provide constructive feedback in their mentoring relationships. A Project ACROSS

mentor talked about a number of classroom observations she did with her mentee and how helpful she found these to be for her mentee and for herself, as well.

**Annie:** My mentee did ask for me to come in and observe and just watch which kids were asking questions – was she concentrating on a certain part of the room – it was a concern that she had because she felt that she was really concentrating on a certain part of the room that had the rowdy kids – so, was she giving the kids who were not rowdy equal time and attention?  
**Researcher:** So, she directed what information she wanted – and you had a reflection conference afterward?

**Annie:** Yes

**Researcher:** And was that helpful for her?

**Annie:** It was! It was interesting for me too because one would think in a classroom if you have a particular group of rowdy kids, you're going to spend time dealing with that behavior of those kids and keeping them on task. So it's logical that you would – and *how much* more time – what percentage of your time is taken up by these kid? Is it a huge percentage of time – do you need to take *drastic* action? - because they're taking ninety percent of the time. Or is [it] something that you can just kind of – maintain status quo? (June interview).

David also reported benefits of conducting classroom observations, but in his case setting up the observations presented a challenge.<sup>52</sup> There was an acknowledgement that some kind of process needed to be provided by the administration, but there had been no follow through in David's district on the solution that was generated. It was March and mentors still had not been able to get in mentees' classrooms to observe their teaching.

**David:** Actually, in the first quarter my mentee was having a problem in study – so I went in and worked with him in study hall – actually, I've not been in his classroom; I should have by now. I should have now probably several times.

**Researcher:** Has the district provided opportunities for coverage so you could do that?

**David:** I would say, I have to say yes, that I know that I could request coverage and it could be arranged. Actually, in one of the district meetings, one of the suggestions that came up, and I thought it was brilliant, but it wasn't followed up on, was that the district mandate a day and provide a substitute and say this substitute is going to [cover for

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<sup>52</sup> As we saw in Chapter VIII, organizing coverage to do observations was an issue in the Elmwood district.

someone] each period. I thought that would have been good because it's awful easy to just coast along with a sense that everything's fine – and not be too - concerned (March Interview).

Even though David had not yet been able to schedule an observation of his mentee's classroom, his mentee had gotten in to observe his class.

**David:** Oddly, my mentee has been in *my* classroom. That was interesting. We pretty much went through the process; we talked ahead of time, then he came to the classroom and observed, then we talked about it afterward. Well, we were talking about transitions and pacing and some classroom management skills – this was after I talked to him about his study, after observing his study hall. He was having a management kind of problem . . . one of his lunch duties was to watch the back door – and it lined up with the second half of my lunch – So we met at least once a week and it was actually pretty informal.

**Researcher:** So you met while he was on door duty?

**David:** Exactly – and no one goes out the back door so it was perfect. And we talked, and we talked about his classes and his concerns and his curriculum – what he's teaching, how he's trying to teach. And we talked about transition in the classroom and pacing and that short pieces with pace changes are better in the long blocks – and he came in and watched one class and I made a point of demonstrating that in that class. And that was actually a pretty model mentoring experience all the way around. I would say – that was pretty good (March Interview).

David's mentee reported that he found the observation process to be helpful in developing his classroom skills. Seeing his mentor in action allowed him to observe a different approach to a situation and think about ways he could integrate these techniques into his own style.

**Jim (David's Mentee):** Because you can say, hey I've got kids that act this way – he deals with the situation – which is usually nine times out of ten different from the way I would deal with it. I tend to be much more sarcastic and – (laughing) get down to their level. He's much more philosophical the way he treats kids – it's kind of neat to maybe intertwine our two styles, and he can help me with that. So yes, it's definitely good to get into his class . . . and debrief what happened (June Interview).

By the time I talked to David again in June, he had been in his mentee's classroom to conduct clinical observations; he said it was an expectation of Project ACROSS and he seemed determined to pursue opportunities.

Project ACROSS mentors were not only conducting the classroom peer observations with pre and post conferences; they were also reporting great benefits for themselves as well as for their mentees.

**Annie:** *It's huge!* I think it's *huge!* And we were pretty lucky that my planning period, my mentee had a class and her planning period, I had a class - And the same with our shared duties - we didn't need to get someone in to cover (June Interview).

**David:** And we did do observations. Project ACROSS was very, very insistent on this observation – you've got to get into the classroom, you've got to go see your mentee – you have to talk to them before and talk to them afterwards – and we didn't really demand that in our district program – it wasn't a priority – and it *is* difficult to do in this school . . . it's a lot of work to get out of the classroom for a half an hour.

**Researcher:** How valuable is it? How valuable was it to get into the classroom?

**David:** I actually do believe that it's very important. I agree with the Project ACROSS philosophy, that observation by peers is very important. . . . I think the whole peer observation piece is very important and I *bet* that it would be even more important in a marginal situation [where the mentee was struggling].

Through the process of trying to provide answers to the mentees' questions, Project ACROSS mentors had to answer those questions for themselves; they had to reflect on their own practice. Through the mutual sharing of practices and ideas, both mentors and mentees were able to respond to the insights of a collaborative peer and to benefit from another's perspective. They reported that this led to new ideas, new approaches to learning and fresh perspectives on teaching the curriculum.

2) Curriculum and Instruction. During their training sessions, the Project ACROSS mentors and mentees were taught how to analyze lessons, and then they were led through

activities that allowed them to analyze their own lessons and apply new strategies. There was a focus on evaluating what constitutes a good lesson and examining how to present the curriculum in a way that challenges all students.

**Annie:** What's really been good is that Project ACROSS uses a – they showed us how to use those forms for a Standards Based Lesson. I've *never* even seen this form before in my life. We had to pick an activity that we did and fill out this form. We met with other Mentors to kind of have a pre-conference to practice and then my mentee and I did several of those together – and it's been *really good* because it makes you figure out the “why” – figure out all the little details. For example, I have some kids who are not English speakers and I have to be really aware of that when I'm planning things and try to - figure out cultural things - because kids just know information because it's cultural – and [foreign] kids don't. So I never would have thought of that if it wasn't for that Standards Based Lesson Form, because one of the things you have to do is, “what obstacles or special needs do you have.” So it kind of threw that to the forefront . . . (March Interview).

This mentor had the opportunity to learn ways to analyze a lesson, then the opportunity to practice with other mentors and finally, an opportunity to use this technique with her mentee as she discussed her lessons. Project ACROSS developed an understanding of quality classroom instruction that provided a foundation for mentor-mentee conversations about teaching and learning.

What was interesting to me was that critical inquiry and reflection on instruction was also seen in one of the informal mentoring situations that one of the Elmwood administrators reported to me. Joan and Kate were experienced teachers who shared a room as a home base. Kate was new to the school and she did not have her own classroom, she was given a desk in the back of Joan's room. Kate was a veteran teacher; therefore she was not assigned a mentor. Joan and Kate each had a preparation period when the other was teaching, so they had the opportunity to see the other teach the course that they each taught.

**Joan:** I get to see what's going on in her class, different ways of teaching. I get ideas from her and I get to see a different perspective . . . Occasionally we have conversations . . . our dialogues are often about what we're doing and why we're doing it that way. We planned a mid-term together . . . [I questioned some of the things she was doing] and this led to a joint inquiry of why we were putting things on the test. The result was a common assessment – it was a good test!

What happened was that Joan and Kate mentored each other and they each benefited from the experience and insight of the other. Although they did not receive training, it appeared that the opportunity to see each other teach and having time for discussion, along with the development of a trusting relationship created the circumstances that fostered what I would describe as an effective learning-focused mentoring relationship where both teachers were willing to take the risk to expose their teaching for critical feedback.

#### *Development of a Trusting Relationship*

With the development of a higher level of trust in their relationships compared to district mentors and mentees, Project ACROSS mentors and mentees were able to question their mentees' practice without jeopardizing the relationship. I specifically raised the issue of challenging the mentee's practice with Annie, a Project ACROSS mentor who was describing an instance when she questioned her mentee's instruction:

**Researcher:** How does [your mentee] respond to [the question you raised] – is it threatening at all?

**Annie:** No, because I try not to ask it in a threatening way. She'll do something that I'll shake my head and say – what the heck was she thinking – sometimes I'll just say it to her that way. (*laughing*) "What the heck were you thinking?" – You know, kind of laughing, and she'll laugh and say, "Obviously I wasn't thinking." Or sometimes she'll say, "Well, there's this connection here – the kids were really having a hard time understanding something and they did this other little activity or thing I did in class – it kind of made them see that connection better" and I'm

like, “you know, you’re right!” So there are some things she has done or developed that I’ve copied from her – why reinvent the wheel? (March Interview).

Annie questioned her mentee but was open and accepting of her mentee’s explanation, in fact, she agreed with her. It appears that when a mentor conveys that he or she is open to accepting the mentee’s ideas, it may create an atmosphere of trust where mentees feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas. In this case, the trust was mutual. Annie reported that the development of trust was crucial to having the type of mentorship that they had.

**Annie:** I think because a lot of [our conversations] were reflective – not only did I feel that I had to trust my mentee; she had to feel that she could trust me. So you end up developing a deeper relationship because you have this feeling of [mutual] trust (June Interview).

The “deeper level of trust” was also evident in the example of the informal mentorship that I presented. What started out as what Joan reported as, “an invasion of her space,” ended up being at a collaborative friendship where each felt comfortable challenging their own and each other’s assumptions about teaching and learning. It gave Joan a new perspective on her instruction after many years of teaching.

**Joan:** It was risky for me at first – I like to work in isolation and I’m not used to having someone in my space – but it worked out. We developed a connection; a friendship, that’s why it worked so well. That’s why we were able to have those kinds of discussions. There was mutual respect of where we were each coming from. The experience has been good for me, it’s changed my perspective . . . We wouldn’t have achieved what we have without caring about curriculum, caring about the other person . . . If you think you have all the answers, it won’t work, it has to be nurturing, there has to be a relationship, a friendship. It’s not just give - its give, give – take, take. We have developed a real friendship.



## Project ACROSS Compared with the District Program: Perspectives of Project ACROSS

### Mentors

When I asked Project ACROSS mentors to talk about each program in which they were taking part, they had a number of positive things to say about Project ACROSS and very few to say about the district program. It appeared that while they were quite satisfied with what they were getting from their Project ACROSS experience, they did not appear to be getting the same level of training in the district program; the district program was more limited.

**David:** If we were doing coaching training in the [district's] mentor training – it didn't make anywhere as much of an impression . . . The district program was much more focused on the culture of our school – how do you do this in our school – when can you throw a kid out of your classroom, work sessions on doing grades; the assumption in the district program was that you knew how to teach, you know, and that you're probably an experienced teacher, but new to the district (March Interview).

**Annie:** . . . There's a *huge* difference in the way the programs are implemented; except at the beginning, the classroom management training [in the district program] was really good . . . The district program seems to be giving the mentee, the first year teacher, [practical] survival skills – on how to get through the first year – which is very important, because the first year teaching, the first three years really, are probably the *worst*. The first year, in particular, just giving them survival strategies, things they can do and contacts that they can go to if they need to put out a fire – it's a reactive thing . . . The [district program] is very different it's more of a buddy system, understanding district policy and doing progress reports and report cards; the focus is procedural stuff. In terms of teaching quality – it's missing from our district program (March Interview).

These mentors identified programmatic differences between the two mentoring programs.

The district program was focused on procedural tasks the beginning teacher needs to know; Project ACROSS went beyond procedural tasks to also focus on developing the skills needed for effective teaching and mentoring.

While both Project ACROSS mentors that I interviewed were doing classroom observations by the end of the school year, this was not the case with any of the other mentors who were only in the district programs. When I asked David if the district program promoted classroom observation as a mentoring strategy, he indicated that it was not promoted.

**Researcher:** Was that a part of the district program to do observations?

**David:** I want to say, almost not at all (June Interview).

At the end of the school year, when program evaluations were being done and changes were being proposed for next year, I asked Project ACROSS mentors what they thought would make the district program better. The mentors agreed that classroom observations needs to be a part of the program and that the district needs to find a way to ensure this happens.

**Researcher:** They are making some changes for next year. From your experiences, what do you think is essential to being able to have a good mentoring relationship?

**David:** Right at the beginning I would make the assumption and make it inevitable that the observations will occur. In the case of alternative certification candidates, I'd have some focus on classroom management.

**Researcher:** Do you think mentors need a strong training piece or do you think teachers can generally do observations and be effective on their own?

**David:** I would say there are some teachers who would not be very effective in the observation cycle because they would not be open – it would be too directive - because they have strong personalities and a lot of confidence they're sure that their way will work. They might know it's not the only way but they're very assertive. I think a lot of successful teachers are – not necessarily the very best [mentors], but a lot of successful teachers are kind of dominant personalities (June Interview).

This mentor indicated that observation was important and that training would be needed because many veteran teachers are confident in their methods and might have a tendency to impose their views - because it works for them. Research studies indicate

that although veteran teachers may not have the skills to facilitate reflection, they can learn with training. The Project ACROSS training focused specifically on how to be non-judgmental and how to use peer coaching techniques to support the mentee's exploration of their own methods.<sup>53</sup>

The elements of mutuality and partnership in Project ACROSS mentorships, where both parties took risks in exposing their questions for mutual examination, seemed to render a deeper relationship than what was being reported in the district programs. Annie referred to this as a "different level of trust" compared to what she saw in the district program. District mentors and mentees did not get into each other's classrooms and therefore they only talked about classroom instruction on a superficial level; they only had to expose what they were comfortable exposing and their conversations were focused more on answering questions and giving advice. In this situation, the same level of trust did not develop. Watching each other teach seemed to allow for deeper reflective conversation about teaching and learning, which resulted in deeper mentor-mentee relationships.

#### Mentoring as Partnership: A Different Conceptualization

It seemed that the overarching theme of mentor support was understood differently in the district programs than it was in Project ACROSS. District mentors seemed to understand their role as "leading the journey" then stepping back to let mentees "fly on

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<sup>53</sup> David also raised the issue that mentor selection can be important; not all veteran teachers would necessarily be good mentors, they have to be open to looking what they do and willing to learn the skills.

their own,” where Project ACROSS and the informal mentor stepped to the side to continue the journey together as partners.

### *Coming Together as Partners vs. Stepping Back*

What stood out in Project ACROSS and informal mentors was the way they provided instructional support. The discussions about teaching were two-way conversations; mentors and mentees examined each other’s instruction by raising questions about their teaching and observing each other in their classrooms. Annie, a Project ACROSS mentor, and her mentee examined instructional decisions that each of them made as they taught their lessons, they were working together as partners. The mentor put her instructional decisions up for their mutual examination; it was not just an examination of the mentee’s teaching. Project ACROSS was not only training mentors and mentees “how” to teach and mentor; they were also facilitating a process of mutual reflection where mentor and mentee would share the thinking that underlies their instructional decisions, the “whys” of teaching.

**Annie:** A lot of the questions she’s asked me – her favorite question is, “Why?” “Why *do* you have to do that?” So, it’s made me really think, “Why do you do that?” You know, and sometimes I don’t have an answer. “So, we do that because we’ve always done it that way?” That’s not really a good answer.

**Researcher:** Do you ask her, “why?” about her lessons?

**Annie:** Yes, “Why are you doing this, what’s the reasoning, what are you thinking here?” (March Interview).

Reflective inquiry into the assumptions underlying instructional decisions was also evident in the conversations of the other Project ACROSS mentor and mentee who had conversations that were focused on examining the mentee’s classroom instruction and the decisions on what materials to use in class.

**David:** . . . We talk about how he's teaching the plays that he's teaching – how he's handling a book or how he's introducing something. We also discuss the material he's chosen for his class to read and the challenges it presents for instruction (June Interview).

As we can see from what these mentors report, the Project ACROSS training gave them strategies that they could use to analyze instruction and they were able to bring these skills to their mentoring practice. Because they were led through analysis activities together in their training sessions, they did not appear to perceive the examination of teaching practice as threatening; the training seemed to intentionally focus on developing a trusting partnership. The participants reported that they trusted each other and were comfortable with each other, which appeared to make it easy for them to open up their practice to examination.

I made the following comments in one of my analytic memos upon reflecting on my conversations with David and his mentee:

**Analytic Memo/June:** One of the things that set David and Jim's relationship apart from most of the mentorships is the level of collaboration. Not only do they observe each other's classes, they debrief the lessons and talk philosophically about the nature of adolescents and how to reach them. Because of the level of interaction, it is as if, together, they are going through the experiences of teaching and problem solving; they are a team. David, being a fairly new teacher himself, opens himself up to learn and grow from the experience. It's an expectation that he said he brings to the mentoring relationship. As a result, they relate as peers and each of them contributes . . . to possible solutions. Each of them takes what works best for their own style, from the ideas they generate together. Through their collaboration there is co-construction of knowledge and understanding and the solution to problems is often a mixture of what they both bring to the table. The interaction between them has become so natural that when I asked Jim to describe David's style of mentoring he said, "It's hard to do, because it's just like having a conversation with him, it's a two-way interaction" (April Interview).

It appeared as if they were mentoring each other. In our last interview Jim said, "Now it's more along the lines of talking about things as colleagues instead of me asking

questions. We're teaching each other things and we learn from each other" (June Interview). This statement is evidence of a shift in the relationship from providing information to mutual inquiry into teaching and learning and the reports of their mentoring activities support this observation.

Where the mentors who were only in the district mentoring programs began to step back from their mentees because they had already answered most of the mentees' procedural questions, the Project ACROSS mentors were able to shift their attention to instructional techniques and best practices for teaching the curriculum. Where the mentors in the district program saw their mentoring role as being there to answer questions, give advice, and to listen; the Project ACROSS mentors saw their mentoring role differently as their mentee's needs changed in the second semester. They conceptualized support in the second semester as stepping to the side in order to form a partnership and engage in mutually reflective conversations about teaching and learning in both of their classrooms, question instructional practices, and come up with answers together.

**Annie:** It's changed. The first half of the year was a lot of logistical stuff. How do you plan field trips, how do you keep a grade book – that kind of stuff. Now it's – her questions are more like, "You know I developed a test rather than using one that's already been developed. Can you look at it and tell me if you think it's too hard, has it covered the right material?" It's more *supportive* – she doesn't seem to need a lot of assistance anymore and a lot of guidance anymore – which is really good. So it *has* changed (June Interview).

Project ACROSS mentors continued to provide support and guidance, although the nature of being supportive had changed. They had become the kind of partners that the other mentors in this study said they hoped to develop but never did. Because of the ongoing training and practice provided by the Project ACROSS trainers, the mentors

developed peer-coaching skills and were able to put them into practice when their mentees were ready to focus on the impact of their instruction on their students' learning.<sup>54</sup>

### Summary

The data presented here outlines the comprehensive structures of Project ACROSS that included a weeklong training in the summer followed up with ongoing training through out the year that facilitated the development of mentoring skills. In addition to presenting mentoring theory, the program included opportunities to practice mentoring strategies as well as opportunities for mentors and mentees to examine instructional best practices and reflect on applications to their own teaching.

It's clear from the data presented here that the mentoring practices that resulted in Project ACROSS include elements that represent what the literature calls learning-focused relational mentoring. While district mentors disengaged from their mentees in the second semester because they no longer had questions, Project ACROSS mentors went on to observe each other's classrooms and engaged in deeper inquiry into instruction that impacts student learning. This led to the development of a partnership characterized by trust, mutuality and peer coaching that led to co-learning. The same characteristics were evident in the report from my example of the informal mentor who regularly observed her mentee (and her mentee observed her), which leads to my conclusion that the observation and discussion of what happens in the classroom may be

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<sup>54</sup> As reported in Chapter II, it is in the second semester that beginning teachers begin to shift their attention from "survival" to the effects of their instruction on student learning (Fuller & Brown, 1975; Veenman, 1984).

essential for moving beyond buddy support to learning-focused mentoring where both participants benefit. This will be discussed in Chapter X.



## CHAPTER X

### LESSONS LEARNED

When teachers and administrators recognize the school-wide benefits of nurturing critical reflection skills, mentoring practices will be encompassed in various programs of collaborative professional development where all teachers and administrators take on the roles of mentor and mentee in order to grow professionally through self-discovery. When this happens, the learning community as well as the mentor will support new teacher development.

- Pamela Miller (2006)  
Dissertation Conclusion

#### Introduction

In this final chapter I apply a “coding paradigm” to my research findings in order to explore the interrelationships of the core phenomenon, mentors’ role conceptualization, with contextual factors, mentoring practices and mentoring outcomes. This allows me to illustrate my qualitative hypothesis that mentors’ conceptualization of their mentoring role is a crucial factor that impacts their mentoring practice. As I apply the model to my findings from both the original study and Project ACROSS, we can see that the mentoring structures of each program appear to affect the core phenomenon differently. As I compare the two models, key structures related to the apparent shift in mentor role conceptualization that was associated with learning-focused outcomes in Project ACROSS emerge. Furthermore, I suggest that the absence of these structures in the district programs may be why mentoring in those programs did not move beyond buddy support.

Based on my interpretation of the models, I make some recommendations for administering learning-focused mentoring programs and I also suggest further research

that may help foster a deeper understanding of the conditions associated with learning-focused mentoring. Synthesizing the implications of the findings, this chapter concludes with my vision for re-conceptualizing mentoring as a systematic approach to teacher learning that encompasses the induction of new teachers.

#### The Coding Paradigms for Two New Hampshire School Districts and Project ACROSS

When the mentoring data from this study and from Project ACROSS are examined in relation to the core phenomenon of mentors' conceptualization of what they believe to be appropriate mentoring tasks and activities, one can see that mentoring strategies and outcomes are a result of the interaction between the mentors' role conception and the three contexts within which mentoring occurs: 1) the history that mentors bring to mentoring; 2) the school culture; plus 3) the structures of the mentoring program (see Figure 7 and Figure 8, pp. 205-206). Because the mentors from both Project ACROSS and the two district programs had similar contextual influences with respect to the contexts of 1) history and 2) school culture, one can begin to see how the context of 3) the mentoring program structures, which were considerably different, may account for the difference in the mentoring strategies and outcomes observed. These patterns are reflected in the two models I present here in Figures 7 and 8.

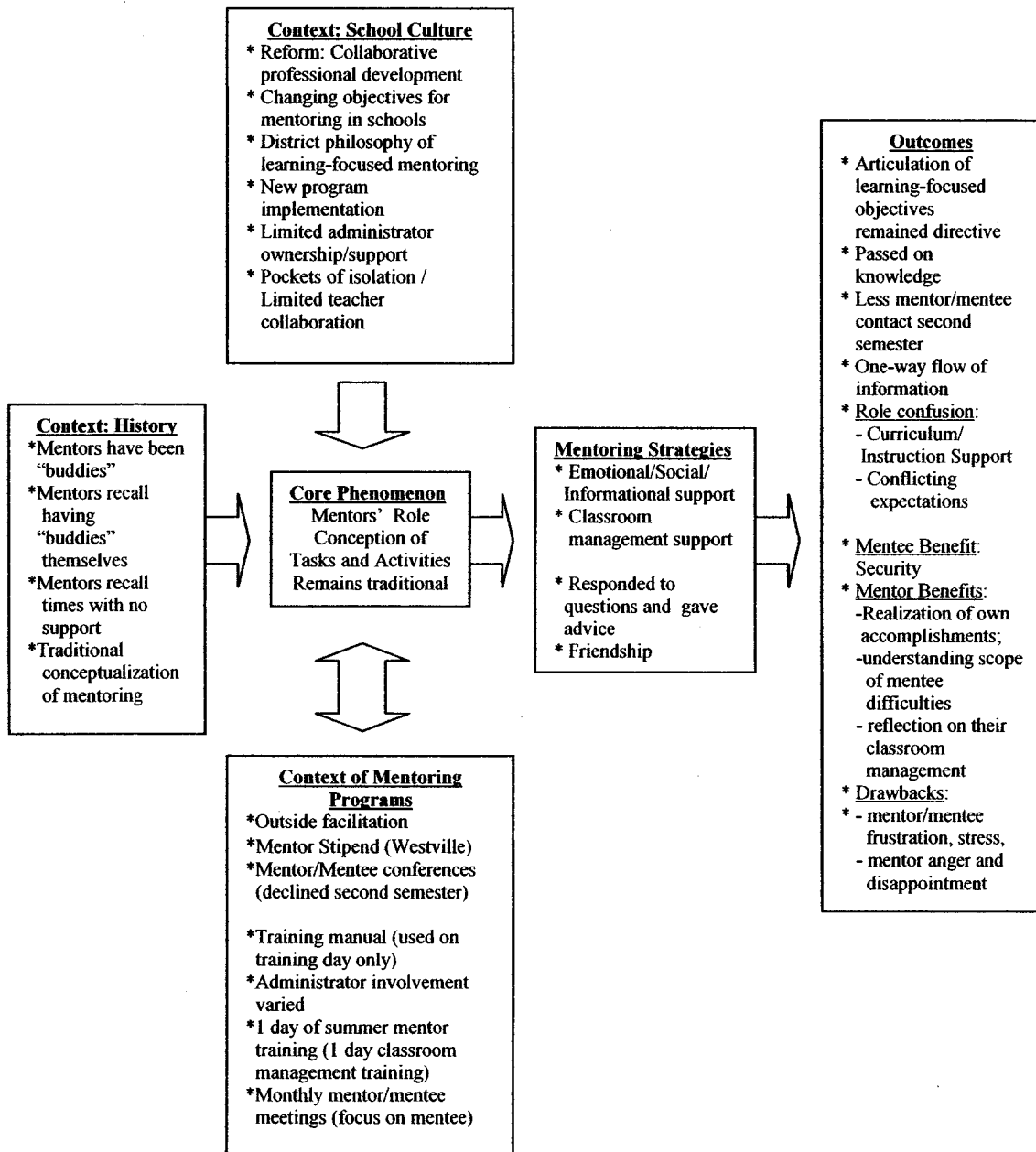


Figure 7. Mentoring in the Elmwood and Westville School District Mentoring Programs

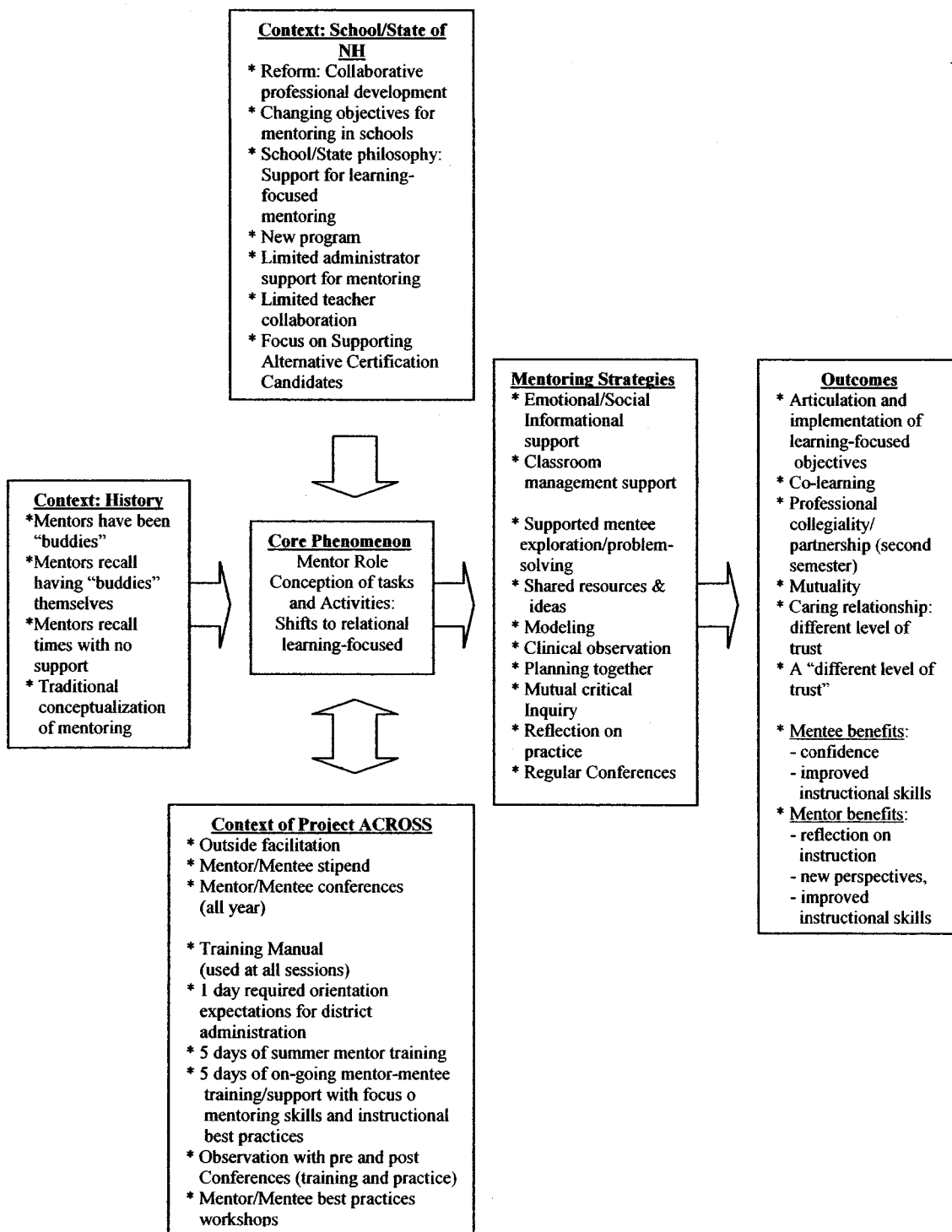


Figure 8. Mentoring in the New Hampshire Project ACROSS Mentoring Program

*Coding Paradigms: Contextual Influences on Mentor Role Conception in the District Programs Compared with Project ACROSS*

We can see from Figure 7 that the “core phenomenon,” mentors’ conceptualization of mentoring tasks and activities, remained traditional in the district programs, whereas Figure 8 shows that in Project ACROSS mentors’ role conceptualization shifted from a traditional conceptualization to a relational learning-focused one. My understanding of how the three categories of contextual influences affected mentors’ role conception is described in the following sections.

History. As seen in Figures 7 and 8, the past experiences of mentors are outlined under the contextual influence of History. Mentors in Project ACROSS and in the district programs had been informal “buddies” for new teachers in the past. They also recalled being helped by buddy teachers themselves, as well as remembering times when they had no help at all as they began their own careers. From their past experiences, all mentors brought a traditional conceptualization of mentoring to the new formalized mentoring programs. This meant that they understood mentoring as offering information, ideas and advice based upon their own experiences, as well as providing moral support and being available to answer new teachers’ questions. The traditional focus of the mentoring relationship had been on helping the new teacher transition into their new job.

School Culture. The context of the school culture in which mentoring occurred is another contextual influence on the core phenomenon of mentor role conception. As Figure 7 indicates, the Westville and Elmwood districts had reformed their professional development plans to include opportunities for collaborative professional development that included formalized mentoring. Each district had a buddy system of mentoring in

the past and they were now formalizing mentoring in order to implement a learning-focused approach that would lead to the professional development of both the mentor and mentee. Although there were various levels of administrator involvement in the program development processes in the two districts, in practice there was limited administrator ownership and support for mentoring in each district. My data indicate that administrators did not always have a clear understanding of their role in the implementation of mentoring in their buildings. At least one administrator in the Elmwood district told mentors that they did not have to attend the district meetings. In addition there were issues with appropriate mentor selection and limits of confidentiality. Furthermore, the school culture in each district still had pockets of teacher isolation where collaboration was limited and acceptance of mentoring was sporadic.

As seen in Figure 8, the context of school culture was the same for Project ACROSS mentors, as these mentors were teachers in the Elmwood district. In addition, Project ACROSS was a state directed program developed in response to a New Hampshire goal to establish learning-focused mentoring for uncertified teachers who were seeking alternative paths to teacher certification. The state of NH had been exploring ways to promote learning-focused mentoring in schools. In addition to the development of Project ACROSS the state had engaged a Mentoring Task Force that made recommendations for the implementation of high quality mentoring programs in New Hampshire schools. Those involved in teacher credentialing and teacher professional

development at the state level were beginning to develop and pilot programs that promote teacher development through mentoring.<sup>55</sup>

Mentoring Program. The contextual structure that appeared to be a key influence on the core phenomenon of mentors' role conception is the context of the mentoring program. In examining Figures 7 and 8, we can see that the double-sided arrow between the core phenomenon and the context of the mentoring program indicates that not only do mentors' experiences in the mentoring program influence the development of the mentor role conception as mentoring ensues, but the role conceptualization mentors bring to mentoring (the result of history and school culture) affects mentors' experience in the mentoring program. The impact of the mentoring program structures on the core phenomenon is therefore the result of the interaction of all contextual influences.

An examination of the mentoring program structures in the district programs (Figure 7) and in Project ACROSS (Figure 8) indicate that there were few similarities and some key differences in the training/orientation of mentors and mentees, as well as in the implementation of the training structures. The similarities were only found in the general program structure, both were formalized programs with outside facilitation, had summer orientation/training, regular meetings during the year and required regular mentor/mentee conferences. However, the details of these structures and the way they were implemented were found to be quite different.

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<sup>55</sup> The state of New Hampshire was also developing a mentoring program for beginning teachers that was being made available to school districts through a Teacher Quality Enhancement grant. The program was piloted in the 2004-2005 school year.

In Figure 8 we can see that Project ACROSS began with a required administrator orientation. This meeting clarified the objectives of the program and the expectations for administrative support that included required release time for mentors and mentees to attend all of the training sessions as well as release time to facilitate mentoring activities, such as regular mentor-mentee conferences and peer observations. In Figure 7 we see that in the district programs, administrative involvement with and knowledge of the district's formal mentoring program varied, some only received a brief overview of the mentoring program.

The time devoted to mentor/mentee training and orientation is another obvious difference between the two programs. In Figure 7 we can see that the district programs consisted of one day of mentor training and one day of classroom management training, while Figure 8 shows that Project ACROSS mentors and mentees had five days of summer training with ongoing training and reinforcement of mentoring skills through out the school year. Project ACROSS also trained mentors and mentees how to conduct clinical classroom observations with pre and post conferences and they devoted time for mentors and mentees to practice these skills. In addition, Project ACROSS provided training on instructional best practices, which provided mentors and mentees with a common knowledge and understanding of quality instruction as well as provided a basis for feedback and discussion on observed lessons.

In the district programs, as illustrated in Figure 7, the monthly mentor/mentee meetings were focused on procedural tasks that mentees needed to know, like the process for doing report cards and guidelines for conducting parent conferences or developing teacher professional development plans. The focus of these meetings was not mentor



training or opportunities to address mentor issues and concerns; the meetings focused on the needs of the mentee.

In Figures 7 and 8 we can see that mentors in the Westville district and mentors and mentees in Project ACROSS were each given a stipend for their participation in the program. In each of these cases, participation in the summer orientation/training and attendance at the regular meetings was strong and consistent throughout the year. However, in the Elmwood district the teachers' contract would not allow for stipends, therefore participation had to be voluntary.<sup>56</sup> The Elmwood mentors were paid for the summer training, if they attended, but not for the responsibilities they had during the school year. Where attendance was high in Project ACROSS and the Westville programs, few attended training in the Elmwood district. Attendance at Elmwood monthly meetings was inconsistent and it declined as the year went on.<sup>57</sup>

#### *Coding Paradigms: Mentoring Strategies and Outcomes in the District Programs*

##### *Compared with Project ACROSS*

Comparing the contexts of the district programs in Figure 7 with those of Project ACROSS in Figure 8, I am suggesting that the differences in the Project ACROSS program structures may account for the shift in mentor role conception that led to the learning-focused practices and outcomes we see in Figure 8. In the district programs,

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<sup>56</sup> Project ACROSS mentors, who came from the Elmwood district, also participated in the district's mentoring program on a voluntary basis.

<sup>57</sup> Not receiving a stipend may be one reason for the low attendance at the Elmwood monthly mentoring meetings; inconsistent promotion of the program by administrators may be another.

mentors' role conception remained traditional whereas in Project ACROSS it shifted from traditional to a learning-focused conceptualization.

Mentoring Strategies. We can see in Figure 7 that the mentoring strategies that were found in the district programs consisted of answering questions, and giving advice, as well as providing resources and information. In addition mentors formed friendships with their mentees and helped them to understand and navigate the culture of the school; they provided social and emotional support. Mentors also reported that they helped their mentees with classroom management issues but they did not get involved with their mentees' classroom instruction techniques.

When it came to providing assistance for the implementation of curriculum and the instructional practices in the classroom, mentors provided resources and ideas but they were reluctant to do much more. Providing instructional support in the classroom was perceived to be the role of an administrator, either curriculum coordinator or principal, not the mentor. Some mentors said they were not comfortable telling their mentees what to teach or how to teach.

Figure 8 shows a different set of mentoring practices that represent the mentoring activities found in Project ACROSS mentorships. In addition to providing social/emotional support, this program was focused on collaborative planning and shared problem solving. Knowledge, resources and ideas flowed in two directions, from mentor to mentee *and* from mentee to mentor. Although Project ACROSS mentors and mentees had less of a peer relationship than the district mentors/mentees when they began the school year (Project ACROSS mentees were not certified teachers), they demonstrated closer peer relationships by the end of the school year. A key strategy used by Project

ACROSS mentors and mentees was that of clinical classroom observation. Mentors and mentees learned the skills to conduct reflective conversations and use peer-coaching strategies to raise questions about classroom instruction. They then mutually explored alternative instructional approaches that could advance the learning for all students in their classrooms. One mentor reported using his mentee's observation of his classroom as an opportunity to model an instructional approach that they had previously discussed. Being in the classroom provided the opportunity to address what actually happened in the classroom, not merely what mentors and mentees recollected or were willing to share.

Classroom observation is absent in Figure 7 as it did not occur with any of the district participants, although it was introduced as a mentoring strategy in their one day mentor training and there was an outline of the process in their training manual. Perhaps classroom observation did not occur in their mentoring practice because mentors still saw observation as an administrator's role. Furthermore, the mentors appeared reluctant to implement a strategy with which they had no experience; there were no opportunities to practice this skill in their training.

Mentoring Outcomes. In Figure 7 we can see that, although district mentors articulated learning-focused objectives for mentoring such as working as partners and not telling mentees what they should do, their actions remained directive; and mentoring did not facilitate the mentees' reflection on instructional practice. Furthermore, district mentors developed role confusion because they received inconsistent messages about whose role it was to address curriculum and instruction. In some cases, mentors were told that administrators would address curriculum issues while the administrators thought mentors were addressing these issues. In addition, the mentor training outlined a process

for conducting clinical classroom observations but the implementation was not encouraged or supported with the resources needed for it to happen.

In my interviews there were a number of instances where mentors said that it was up to the administrators to raise concerns and address instructional issues; this was not something that teachers did and mentors said they did not want this responsibility. Mentors equated classroom observation with evaluation, and not peer coaching. They did not develop a conceptualization of peer review as a learning strategy. Furthermore, mentors did not learn peer-coaching strategies, even though they were introduced to the concepts. Overall, the message mentors got was that doing observations was not an important part of mentoring.

Problems arose when the mentees' curriculum needs were not being met. Figure 7 indicates that there were a number of drawbacks to mentoring observed in the district programs that included mentor frustration, stress and anger associated with the mentoring process and disappointment when their mentees were not successful. Some even reported that they didn't feel that they had a "mentoring" relationship with their mentees.

The mentoring outcomes outlined in Figure 8, representing Project ACROSS, are different from those found in the district programs. Project ACROSS mentors not only articulated learning-focused mentoring objectives, they were able to implement them in their practice. Through the process of mutual inquiry, Project ACROSS participants developed "a different level of trust" which seemed to allow them to come together as partners and explore answers to questions that they each raised about their teaching methods. Ongoing training and practice of mentoring skills, coupled with the development of a trusting relationship, enabled these mentors and mentees to conduct

classroom observations, raise questions about teaching and learning and problem solve alternative ways to deliver instruction that could impact learning in their classrooms.

As the year ensued, mentees no longer needed basic information about school/district processes and procedures. At this point the mentoring practices of Project ACROSS mentors shifted to focus on instruction in the classroom. This was different from what I observed in the district programs; when these mentees no longer had questions and the procedural information was passed on, mentoring decreased and even stopped in some cases.

The benefits reported by mentors in the district programs are outlined in Figure 7. District mentors reported validation of their own knowledge, gaining some new resources and developing a better understanding of their own classroom management strategies. The benefit reported by district mentees was having the security of the relationship. Although the mentees reported that their first year was overwhelming, they didn't feel alone. There was no indication that their level of instruction was advanced by the mentoring relationship.

We can see in Figure 8 that both mentors and the mentee in Project ACROSS said that they were better teachers from the experience; mentoring appeared to be effective professional development for each of them. The two mentors reported that mentoring impacted their teaching skills; it gave them new perspectives and new ways to approach instruction to benefit all of their students. The Project ACROSS mentee reported more confidence in the classroom and the development of his personal teaching style. Where the Project ACROSS mentors reported being re-energized and motivated by the

mentoring relationship, district mentors reported being stressed and burned out to the point of being reluctant to enter into another mentoring relationship.

### Core Phenomenon: Mentors' Role Conceptualization

The core phenomenon, mentors' conceptualization of their mentoring role, was a traditional one in each of the cases I examined as the year began. Mentors understood their role to be essentially that of a "buddy" who was appointed to help a new teacher transition into the district, only now mentors were going to get professional development credit towards their re-certification and the district was going to direct the process and provide resources such as training, monthly meetings and written materials to help with the process.

As the year went on, the core phenomenon appeared to be greatly influenced by the context of the mentoring programs. While the core phenomenon remained traditional in district programs, the role conceptualization of Project ACROSS mentors appeared to shift from a traditional to a relational learning-focused conceptualization as the year evolved.

### *Circumstances of Attaining the Conceptual Shift*

The training content, depth of training and expectations for the implementation of the mentoring program structures in Project ACROSS (Figure 8) appeared to lead these mentors to shift their conceptualization of mentoring responsibilities and activities. For example, mentor training in classroom observation appeared to be a key program

structure that impacted the shift in mentors' role conceptualization, along with ongoing training and instruction in mentoring skills and practices.

Training Content and Depth. The Project ACROSS mentors received training in cognitive coaching and clinical classroom observation techniques that included opportunities for mentors to practice implementing the process. They understood mentoring activities to include questioning classroom practice and mutually engaging in reflection with their mentees on what they observed in each other's classroom. These mentors and mentees collaboratively engaged in inquiry into teaching and learning.

Expectation to Conduct Observations. Not only did Project ACROSS train mentors and mentees in the observation process, they clearly expected that mentors and mentees would conduct clinical observations. Classroom observation was addressed in the summer training and it was followed up on in subsequent training sessions. In addition, the administrator orientation addressed the need for administrators to support the process by ensuring that there was release time for mentors and mentees to get into each other's classes. It is my belief that the extensive training and follow-up support mentors received in Project ACROSS, along with the clear expectation for conducting clinical classroom observations, was key to facilitating the conceptual shift from "buddy" to "mentor."

#### *Circumstances of Maintaining a Traditional Conceptualization*

While Project ACROSS mentors seemed to shift their conceptualization of mentoring as they participated in the mentoring program, the district mentors maintained their traditional conception. A lack of essential structures and unclear expectations in the

Elmwood and Westville programs seemed to interfere with the ability of mentors to change their conceptualization of mentoring.

Insufficient Mentor Training. While the district programs outlined a process for conducting observations, there were no opportunities provided for mentors to learn the required skills. As a result, the district mentors never went into classrooms to observe their mentees teach. Without being in the classroom, the district mentors and mentees discussed only what they were willing to bring up in conversation and those conversations focused on answering questions as opposed to analyzing instruction. As Figure 7 indicates, district mentors maintained a traditional conceptualization of mentoring responsibilities and activities and their mentoring strategies and outcomes also remained traditional; they did not move beyond providing buddy support.

Mentor Role Confusion. In fact, some district mentors stated that observation was something that administrators did as part of the teacher evaluation process and these mentors questioned classroom observation as a mentor's role. These mentors expected that the supervising administrator would conduct classroom observations and give the mentee feedback on the quality of their instruction, including areas that need attention. District mentors said that they were not comfortable being the one to point out their mentee's weaknesses and furthermore, they thought that any critique might jeopardize the relationship and interfere with mentoring. The role of facilitating critical inquiry did not fit their conceptualization of mentoring activity and they were confused when there were indications that they were supposed to observe their mentees teach.

Inchoate Expectations. It was clear that district mentors did not develop the skills in their mentoring programs to enable them to engage in learning-focused mentoring,



although their training articulated learning-focused objectives for mentoring. In some instances mentor role confusion was exacerbated when district mentors received mixed messages in their training about addressing curriculum. Some mentors waited for administrators to provide help in this area, and when it didn't happen, they became frustrated and angry because their mentees were asking for help and the mentors did not feel comfortable providing assistance in this area. In addition there were conflicting expectations for mentoring objectives between mentees, who expected mentors to help with curriculum and instruction and their mentors who did not think that this was their role. In the end, mentors felt inadequate at mentoring and they endured a great deal of stress because they did not feel that they were able to meet their mentees' needs.

*Conclusion: Programs Need to Facilitate the Conceptual Shift*

Through my analysis of the data obtained in this study, I conclude that simply implementing a formalized program that includes mentor training will not necessarily lead to learning-focused mentoring practices and outcomes – even if these are the stated objectives of the program. For this reason, I contend that mentoring structures need to be examined in relation to how they affect mentors' role conception of responsibilities and appropriate tasks and activities for mentors to do for and with their mentees. We also need to understand how a conception of learning-focused mentoring can be facilitated.

When mentors bring a traditional role conception to mentoring, i.e. “mentor as expert,” the program strategies need to facilitate a shift to “mentor as co-learner” in order for mentoring to produce learning-focused outcomes. My analysis of the differences in the program structures of Project ACROSS compared to the district programs lead to my

suggestion that mentor training needs to specifically address and facilitate this conceptual shift. In the following section I offer some insights and suggestions as to the mentoring program structures needed for this to occur.

### My Suggestions for Developing Learning-Focused Mentoring

With knowledge of the research on mentoring, schools, such as those that participated in this study, add mentoring programs to their teacher professional development plans because it is suggested that mentoring promotes the professional growth of both mentor and mentee. The expectation is that by supporting mentoring, districts will provide for the professional development of all teachers who participate in the program as well as support new teacher transition. What building administrator wouldn't think this is a good idea? However, as this study suggests, the structures of the mentoring programs and how they affect mentors' conceptualization of supporting new teachers are crucial to actually producing the desired result, there are formalized programs that do not realize this goal. The following are my recommendations for the successful implementation of learning-focused mentoring based upon the findings of this study and upon the anecdotal data that I included in the findings. The first five recommendations are based on my findings from the district programs while recommendations six through ten are based on my findings from Project ACROSS and informal mentors.

#### Recommendations Based Upon the Elmwood and Westville District Findings:

1. School Culture. When teachers see raising questions about their teaching as threatening, one cannot expect mentors and mentees to take these risks in their

mentorships. As seen in this study, some teachers were sensitive about exposing what they do in their classrooms and there were pockets of mistrust and isolation in the teaching communities; and while the teachers recognized it, it was not necessarily acknowledged by the administration. Even when districts do, in theory, support the structures of a collaborative learning community and attempt to move in this direction, in practice the behaviors and attitudes of staff change slowly. In order to create an environment that is conducive to relational mentoring, it is important that a climate is fostered where individuals do not fear the repercussions of exposing weaknesses, but rather see this as an opportunity to learn. This can be accomplished by promoting collaborative teacher groups that focus on sharing instructional practices with the purpose of receiving critical feedback in order to improve instruction. When groups that employ protocols to critique teacher work are used, such as Critical Friends Groups and Collaborative Assessment of Student Work, the risks of exposing practice can be minimized. Furthermore, administrator support for this process helps to build a school culture focused on continuous improvement where questioning the status quo becomes the norm.

2. Support for Mentors. Mentors need to be supported in their roles, not only by being given training in appropriate mentoring skills, but also by being provided opportunities for mentors to address the stress and frustration that can result from mentoring. Mentors can easily become overwhelmed by having to balance commitments and responsibilities, make time to conduct classroom observations and deal with new teachers' personal and professional issues. There can be emotional "costs" of being a mentor as well as great sacrifices of time and energy. New

teachers and new mentors face many challenges that can be overwhelming, especially when the mentor is not sufficiently trained, provided with resources needed to mentor nor given emotional support. Providing opportunities for mentors to meet with other mentors throughout the year to share their experiences, raise questions, problem-solve their issues and concerns, as well as gain moral support are necessary program components to support learning-focused mentoring.

3. Support from Administrators. Mentors need support and they need appropriate resources in order to be effective. This study supports the claim that administrative support is crucial for successful mentor program implementation, but to what extent do administrators need to be involved and how do administrators become engaged? It is suggested here that those responsible for the implementation of mentoring need to be “trained” in order to understand the components of learning-focused mentoring and be able to ensure that the appropriate resources and structures are in place. For instance, administrators need to provide the time for mentors and mentees to meet. To do this mentors and mentees could be released from performing teacher duties such as lunchroom coverage or bus duty. In addition, administrators will need to understand why conducting classroom observations are an essential part of the mentoring process and they will need to find ways to provide the classroom coverage to ensure that this happens. Administrators, and the staff as a whole, will need to be exposed to the philosophy of learning-focused support for new teaches in order to understand what makes “mentoring” different from “buddy support” and to come together to support the process.

4. Program Evaluation. If mentoring programs are not well monitored and evaluated, poor outcomes can easily go unnoticed and administrators may assume that they are obtaining benefits that are not there. Program evaluation needs to be an integral part of the mentoring program and it needs to include evidence about whether or not the program is achieving its goals. While satisfaction-based surveys can provide useful information on how mentors/mentees experience mentoring, they also need to be complemented by evidence-based program assessment. Data that measure program outcomes are needed in order to ensure that mentoring practice is impacting the mentoring goals that are aligned with improving teacher quality and student learning. When this happens program improvements that align with the targeted outcomes can be made.<sup>58</sup> When mentoring programs are established, the task of program evaluation should also be put into place. This responsibility can be assigned to an existing group, such as a Professional Development Committee, or a steering committee can be established to monitor progress and outcomes.
5. Funding. In order to establish learning-focused mentoring, avenues of funding should be explored. While individual school districts need to be able to determine the structures for new teacher support that will be effective in their schools, there should be established sources of funding available so that districts can create and sustain quality programs. Limited funding can put restrictions on program structures, such as voluntary participation as opposed to stipend supported teacher involvement, limited training and follow-up support and limited or lack of release time for observations.

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<sup>58</sup> The findings here are consistent with the Odell studies presented in Chapter II indicating that after-the-fact questionnaires may not reveal valid representations of the mentoring reality. This is an area that warrants further study.

Without adequate sources of funding, school districts may expect more than they can adequately provide.<sup>59</sup>

*Recommendations Based Upon Project ACROSS and Informal Mentor Findings*

6. A Caring Relationship. When mentors/mentees develop a caring relationship it provides for a “different level of trust.” This allows mentor and mentee to be comfortable enough to take the risks needed to expose their practice for critical feedback and it allows for joint inquiry and reflection on instruction without raising anxiety. Components of effective mentoring programs will include relationship-building activities that give mentor and mentee opportunities to learn about one another on a personal level as well as activities that enable them to collaborate on a professional level, such as planning lessons and developing curriculum.
7. Learning-Focused Mentor Training. Comprehensive training with practice and follow-up activities, such as ongoing training and mentor support groups, may be more likely to result in learning-focused mentoring where mentors and mentees challenge classroom practices and contemplate solutions. Being a “mentor” is different than being a “buddy;” we’re no longer just asking teachers to simply “be there” and pass on the wisdom of their experience, we are asking them to partner with new teachers to improve instructional practices. Mentor training needs to facilitate this conceptual shift. We can no longer assume that experienced teachers can do this on their own by relying on the wisdom of their experience; when this is

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<sup>59</sup> In the 2003-2004 school year, 15 states required and funded mentoring-based induction programs (*Tapping the Potential*, n.d.).

their only resource we set them up for failure. Relational approaches to mentoring are not likely to be internalized without training in cognitive coaching skills along with practice and ongoing support of the process.

8. Instruction in and Examination of Instructional Best Practices. In addition to developing coaching skills, mentoring programs need to teach instructional best practices; and mentors and mentees need to review and discuss the application of instructional best practices in their classrooms. For example, mentors and mentees might study various questioning techniques that can be used in the classroom or ways to address different student learning styles. Engaging in mutual exploration of these teaching strategies provides a common focus for mutually examining instruction and learning through observation in each other's classroom.
9. An Expectation for Peer-Observation/Coaching. Mentoring needs to include opportunities for mentors and mentees to see each other teach followed by opportunities to debrief the observation. My examination of Project ACROSS and informal mentoring suggests that deep reflection and critical inquiry of instructional practice is more likely to occur when the mentor and mentee talk about what they observe in each other's classrooms. Without observations, conversation about classroom practice remains superficial and contains only a single perception. Having the opportunity to watch another person teach provides the opportunity to raise questions that the teacher may not have considered on his or her own. This expectation needs to be communicated to those in the program as well as those who provide the resources and support for the program.

10. Self-Reflection and Mutuality: Conditions for Mentor Selection. Effective mentors are cultivated through a process of their own self-reflection and inquiry into their teaching practices. Effective mentors need to be willing to share their successes and failures as well as be open to supporting the ideas of others. It is important that the qualities of effective mentors are understood and considered in making mentor selections. Although training can promote critical reflection skills, mentors need to be open to examining their practice and facilitating this process in their mentees. When the school climate promotes collaborative inquiry as opposed to working in isolation, teachers will become more comfortable examining and sharing their classroom practices and they will be more effective as mentors. Administrators can begin by modeling collaborative inquiry themselves by establishing data teams, advisory councils and creating ways to assess school initiatives. In addition, promoting collaboration among teachers will help to establish a norm of self-reflection.

*The Need for Further Investigation of Project ACROSS and Other Formalized Programs*

It would be useful to conduct systematic research on Project ACROSS, as well as other formalized mentoring programs, in order to identify essential training structures associated with learning-focused mentoring and to see how the mentoring impacts classroom instruction and student learning. It would be helpful to continue to examine mentor development by examining the relationship between mentoring program structures, mentor role conceptualization and mentoring outcomes. Although this study of Project ACROSS was only an initial one that consisted of data from two mentors and



one mentee, the comparison of Project ACROSS data with the original study appears to support literature that suggests comprehensive ongoing mentor training along with opportunities to practice instructional coaching skills are critical to the facilitation of reflective inquiry in mentoring practice. A more systematic study with a representative sample is needed to provide validity to these findings and to further examine how program structures affect mentors' conceptualization of mentoring.

### Final Words

In the end, what should one bring away from this study? While this research helped to clarify issues raised in recent studies and confirm earlier findings, such as the need for mentor training and ongoing support, my study also illuminated possible drawbacks to mentoring. In addition, it brought to our attention the structures of relational mentoring that need to be attended to if one is to achieve learning-focused results in schools, such as: mutuality, co-construction of knowledge, and the centrality of self-reflection and critique in a caring relationship. Schools districts will merely continue to formalize buddy systems unless we can promote the knowledge and implementation of essential mentoring structures that produce learning-focused outcomes, including mentor training that actively facilitates a relational conception of mentoring. Only then will mentoring support teacher development as well as new teacher transition.

In order for more schools to provide effective mentoring, mentoring needs to become a priority. This will only happen when mentoring is seen as an essential component of school reform efforts that promote quality teaching and student learning. In this last section I propose a re-conceptualization of mentoring that complements the findings of my study.

*Paradigm Shift: A Learning Community of “Mentors”*

I suggest that school districts need a new design that re-conceptualizes mentoring as a systematic approach to collaborative professional development within a learning community environment. In this new design, mentoring would move from the sidelines into the forefront of teacher engagements and no longer be seen as an add-on program merely for new teacher transition. Mentoring would not only be for the exclusive benefit of new teachers; it would be a collaborative partnership where mentor and mentee would reflect on instruction and question instructional strategies for their mutual benefit. In the process, the new teacher would be supported. To do this I would also pay attention to the structures of relational mentoring based upon an ethic of caring. In this light, I believe that “widening the circle of support” could encompass the whole school community, including teachers and administrators, and not put the sole responsibility on individual mentors. This would require a deliberate focus on teacher co-mentoring at a school-wide level, which means redefining the school culture.

If mentoring is not re-conceptualized as a way to meet the professional needs of all teachers and transform schools into learning communities, schools will continue to design mentoring programs that focus only on the survival needs of the mentee and that burn out mentors who take on the burden of sole support for new teachers.<sup>60</sup> In other words, schools will continue to develop mentoring programs that are seen as solutions to problems rather than an integral part of systematic teacher professional development.

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<sup>60</sup> This proposed systematic view of mentoring is a conceptualization that is already beginning to emerge in the literature in papers such as Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000 and Wong, 2004.

The process of becoming an effective mentor is complex; it takes caring, hard work and it takes time. The particular environment in which the program is implemented as well as the structures of the program itself are important factors in the program's success. Not all homegrown mentoring programs are effective, even when they include elements of an established program. This dissertation study suggests that mentors need to re-conceptualize support as a balance between leading the way and stepping to the side so that the new teacher's individuality can emerge in his or her teaching. The hardest work will be stepping to the side to offer support through partnership, as this is a new way of conceptualizing support.

In my vision of effective "mentoring," all teachers become "mentors," if not for new teachers, then for each other. Mentoring would be conceptualized as a career-long practice that is the basis of teacher professional development. Collaborative critical inquiry would be understood as its essential component. When this happens, we will find that "mentoring" is "the way we do business" in our schools - teachers and administrators working in collaborative partnerships where critical nurturance is the norm and professional development is the goal; it is not merely a practice of new teacher induction. Mentoring and co-mentoring will take place through critical friends groups, whole faculty study groups, lesson study and data teams, to name a few. When teachers and administrators recognize the school-wide benefits of nurturing critical reflection skills, mentoring practices will be encompassed in various programs of collaborative professional development where all teachers and administrators take on the roles of mentor and mentee in order to grow professionally through self-discovery. When this

happens, the learning community as well as the mentor will support new teacher development.

## EPILOGUE

*The littlest cricket in Swampswallow Pond laments over his perception that he is the ugliest creature that ever lived. He seeks out support from the other inhabitants of the pond's edge, a glowworm, a ladybug and a dragonfly who all give him advice. They all tell him that, although he may not be beautiful, he certainly is not the ugliest creature and that he should be satisfied with whom he is. But the cricket does not believe them. "Why can't I be a butterfly?" he wished, for he thought that butterflies were the most beautiful creatures in Swampswallow Pond and maybe the most beautiful in the world!*

*The cricket jumped onto a lily pad and drifted across the pond. There he would find the Old One; surely she would help him. There, in the middle of her web on the other side of the pond, the Old One was waiting. "I am good at waiting," she once told the cricket. The spider was his trusted friend and he hoped that she would understand. "I am the ugliest thing that ever lived. Oh how I wish I were a butterfly," he told her. The Old One said, "Butterflies are pretty enough to look at, but they are no more special than you." The cricket thought she didn't understand, how could she not see that he was ugly and how could she think that he was as special as a magnificent butterfly?*

*The Old One saw that the cricket could not understand himself to be anything but ugly and she knew she had to help him to find the beauty that was inside of him. She continued to listen to him, but she said nothing. She asked him to follow her to the water's edge. "Look," she said, "What do you see?" "A beautiful you and an ugly me." Replied the cricket. She continued to ask him questions. She asked him to look deeper into the reflection, "What do you see?" The cricket gazed at himself for a long time, finally he asked, "Am I really beautiful?" To his surprise, his ugliness began to fade away. The Old One helped him to find the beauty that was inside of him. No matter how many others had told him of his beauty, he could not believe it until he saw it for himself.*

*The Old One asked her friend for his help as she continued the work of spinning her web. "It would make the time pass more quickly if I had some music to work to," she told him. And as she began to spin, the littlest cricket began to fiddle. Just then, a butterfly flew overhead and hearing the beautiful sound she said, "What beautiful music that creature makes. I wish I were a cricket."*

### *I Wish I Were a Butterfly*

*By, James Howe (1987)*

Like the "Old One," effective mentors need to be able to help novices discover who they are and let their voices emerge in the mentorship. This involves being able to find the balance between providing information and advice, and stepping aside to allow

the mentee's thoughts to emerge. A relational "learning-focused" mentor will facilitate this process by encouraging her mentee's self-reflection by working side-by side in partnership. As the cricket had something to offer the "Old One," mentees also bring new ideas and new perspectives that can benefit their mentors. The mentor's role is to lead her mentee to the water's edge and help the mentee to look deep, beyond the surface reflection to discover the teacher that he or she is. The mentee will become that teacher through the journey of self-discovery where the mentor is the traveling companion who lights the way.

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## **APPENDIX A**

**Studies that Investigate the Impact of Teacher**

**Background on the Qualification of Teachers**

### Research on The Impact of Content Area and Teacher Education on Teacher Quality

Concerns of teacher qualification were investigated by Guyton & Farokhi (1987), who found no relationship between overall college grade point average or discipline subject, grade point average and teaching performance. The only significant relationship was found between grades in teacher education programs and teaching performance, indicating that the education of students may be jeopardized by having “uncertified” teachers in the classroom. This study and other similar studies are reported in Darling-Hammond (2000), who used data compiled from a fifty state survey of policies, state case study analyses, the 1993-1994 Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS) and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), to examine the ways teacher qualifications relate to student achievement across states.

Ferguson and Womack (1987, as cited in Darling-Hammond, 2000) examined the influence of education and subject matter coursework on thirteen dimensions of teaching performance measured by subject matter test scores and grade point average in the student’s major. They found that the amount of education coursework explained more than four times the variance in teacher performance (16.5%) than did measures of content knowledge (less than 4%). A program-based study by Denton and Lacina (1984, as cited in Darling-Hammond, 2000) found a positive correlation between the extent of teachers’ education coursework and their teaching performance, including their students’ achievement. Research clearly shows the importance of teacher training in developing competent classroom teachers that impact student learning.

Subject matter knowledge is another variable that has been investigated to examine its influence on teaching effectiveness. “While there is some support for this assumption,

the findings are not as strong and consistent as one might suppose . . . Most studies show small, statistically insignificant relationships, both positive and negative” (Darling-Hammond, 2000, p. 3). Darling-Hammond’s interpretation of the data, that the benefits of subject matter knowledge “would grow smaller beyond some minimal essential level which exceeds the demands of the curriculum being taught” (p. 4), is supported by Monk (1994, as cited in Darling-Hammond, 2000). Monk reported that, “teachers’ content preparation, as measured by coursework in the subject field, is positively related to student achievement in mathematics and science but the relationship is curvilinear, with diminishing returns to student achievement of teachers’ subject courses above a threshold level (e.g., five courses in mathematics)” (p. 4). Darling-Hammond (2000) concludes, “It may be that the positive effects of subject matter knowledge are augmented or offset by knowledge of how to teach the subject to various kinds of students. That is, the degree of pedagogical skill may interact with subject matter knowledge to bolster or reduce teacher performance” (p. 4). This research has serious implications for the needs of those classroom teachers entering the profession through alternative routes of certification without coursework in teaching theory and pedagogy. It appears that they may have needs above and beyond the beginning teacher with teacher training.

**APPENDIX B**  
**Informed Consent Forms**

## RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

### Dissertation Research on Teacher Mentors' Conceptualization of Roles and Practice in First Year Mentoring Relationships

Pamela A. Miller

University of New Hampshire

**THE RESEARCH PROJECT:** This dissertation research project will examine how mentor teachers conceptualize their mentoring roles and practice and how those conceptualizations develop and change during the first year of mentoring. It will also examine benefits for both mentors and mentees. For many years, the literature has reported the difficulties faced by beginning teachers and the need for effective support systems. Current research reports that 30% - 50% of new teachers leave the profession in the first three to five years and their reason for leaving is often reported to be lack of support. The escalating teacher shortage and the growing number of uncertified teachers in the classroom has brought a great deal of focus on mentoring as a way to attract and retain high quality teachers in our schools.

The 2002 New Hampshire Task Force on Mentoring surveyed NH school districts and found, as reported in the literature, that mentoring programs and practice vary widely from district to district and school to school. The purpose of this study is to examine the experience of first time mentors in order to understand how mentors develop an understanding of their role, what contributes to their understanding of high quality mentoring skills as well as what contributes to the successful implementation of these skills. The findings hope to identify the circumstances and conditions that are essential for successful mentoring and promote more consistent development of highly effective mentoring programs. Research shows that mentoring has the capacity to function as high quality professional development that improves the instructional pedagogy of both the mentor and the mentee and result in improved student learning; however, not all mentoring programs achieve these results. Additional research is needed to identify the structures and conditions that lead to the high quality mentoring that improve teaching and impacts student learning.

**RESEARCH PROCEDURES:** As a participant in this study, both mentors and their mentees will be asked to comply with the following procedures from September 2002 through May 2003:

- **Three interviews,** 30-60 minute interviews will be conducted with mentors and mentees in separate interviews over the course of the school year. Interviews may be in person or via the telephone and questions will be given to participants prior to the interview.
- **Open Response Questions** – Two or three questions for reflection will be e-mailed to mentors and mentees approximately each month in a single questionnaire. Participants will complete responses electronically and e-mail them back within one to two weeks of receiving the questions.
- **Two Taped Mentor/Mentee Conferences** – Participants will be asked to submit one audio taped conference each semester. Participants may choose a classroom observation conference, a lesson-planning session or any other circumstance that reflects the mentoring relationship. Tapes and a tape recorder will be provided as well as paid postage envelopes to send them to the researcher.

**DURATION OF THE PROJECT:** September 2003 – May 2004

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** Participation in this study will remain confidential. Participant names, school and school district names will be changed in any publication or discussion of the study. However, the dissertation advisor and transcription secretary may know real names and places. Information obtained in this study will not be shared or discussed with school or district administration. Upon completion of the dissertation, all tapes will be erased and any information that could identify participants will be removed from transcripts and all other data sources.

**RISKS AND BENEFITS:** No major risks or discomforts are anticipated by participating in this research study. Participants will review transcribed data before analysis to ensure accuracy; statements will be stricken upon participant request. Taking part in this study will give participants the opportunity to share positive experiences of mentoring as well as frustrations that may be encountered. By offering to engage in candid dialogue about mentoring, participants will help others to better understand the complexities of the mentoring relationship and how quality mentoring emerges. Potentially, this information will inform the development of successful, high quality mentoring programs that result in improved teaching skills that impact student learning.

**DECISION TO PARTICIPATE AND RIGHT TO QUIT AT ANY TIME:** Participation is voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at any time. There are no negative consequences should anyone decide not to complete the process.

**RESEARCH CONTACTS:** Questions about this research study can be directed to me, Pamela Miller (487-3403) or to my dissertation advisor, Barbara Houston (862-2378) at the University of New Hampshire. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Julie Simpson in the UNH Office of Sponsored Research at 603-862-2003 or [juliesimpson@unh.edu](mailto:juliesimpson@unh.edu) to discuss them.

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE: I HAVE READ THE CONSENT FORM AND FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT I AM BEING ASKED TO DO. ALL MY QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS SYUDY AND I WILL RECEIVE A COPY OF THIS SIGNED CONSENT FORM BEFORE I BEGIN.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of participant Mentor/date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of participant Mentee/date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of researcher/date



**RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM  
(Administrator)**

**Dissertation Research on Teacher Mentors' Conceptualization of Roles and Practice  
in First Year Mentoring Relationships**

Pamela A. Miller  
University of New Hampshire

**THE RESEARCH PROJECT:** This dissertation research project will examine how mentor teachers conceptualize their mentoring roles and practice and how those conceptualizations develop and change during the first year of mentoring. It will also examine benefits for both mentors and mentees. For many years, the literature has reported the difficulties faced by beginning teachers and the need for effective support systems. Current research reports that 30% - 50% of new teachers leave the profession in the first three to five years and their reason for leaving is often reported to be lack of support. The escalating teacher shortage and the growing number of uncertified teachers in the classroom has brought a great deal of focus on mentoring as a way to attract and retain high quality teachers in our schools.

The 2002 New Hampshire Task Force on Mentoring surveyed NH school districts and found, as reported in the literature, that mentoring programs and practice vary widely from district to district and school to school. The purpose of this study is to examine the experience of first time mentors in order to understand how mentors develop an understanding of their role, what contributes to their understanding of high quality mentoring skills as well as what contributes to the successful implementation of these skills. The findings hope to identify the circumstances and conditions that are essential for successful mentoring and promote more consistent development of highly effective mentoring programs. Research shows that mentoring has the capacity to function as high quality professional development that improves the instructional pedagogy of both the mentor and the mentee and result in improved student learning; however, not all mentoring programs achieve these results. Additional research is needed to identify the structures and conditions that lead to the high quality mentoring that improve teaching and impacts student learning.

**RESEARCH PROCEDURES:** As a building administrator, mentoring program coordinator or mentor trainer, you will be asked to participate in an interview to obtain information about the mentoring program in your school. One interview is anticipated, however, if questions arise during the study, your input may be requested. Interviews will be done at your convenience, in person or by phone, and the researcher will request that the conversation be audio taped for transcription.

**DURATION OF THE PROJECT:** September 2003 – May 2004

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** Participation in this study will remain confidential. Participant names, school and school district names will be changed in any publication or discussion of the study. However, the dissertation advisor and transcription secretary may know real names and places. Upon completion of the dissertation, all tapes will be erased and any

information that could identify participants will be removed from transcripts and all other data sources.

**RISKS AND BENEFITS:** No major risks or discomforts are anticipated by participating in this research study. Participants will review transcribed data before analysis to ensure accuracy; statements will be stricken upon participant request. Taking part in this study will give participants the opportunity to share positive experiences of mentoring as well as frustrations that may be encountered. By offering to engage in candid dialogue about mentoring, participants will help others to better understand the complexities of the mentoring relationship and how quality mentoring emerges. Potentially, this information will inform the development of successful, high quality mentoring programs that result in improved teaching skills that impact student learning.

**DECISION TO PARTICIPATE AND RIGHT TO QUIT AT ANY TIME:** Participation is voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at any time. There are no negative consequences should anyone decide not to complete the process.

**RESEARCH CONTACTS:** Questions about this research study can be directed to me, Pamela Miller (487-3403) or to my dissertation advisor, Barbara Houston (862-2378) at the University of New Hampshire. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Julie Simpson in the UNH Office of Sponsored Research at 603-862-2003 or [juliesimpson@unh.edu](mailto:juliesimpson@unh.edu) to discuss them.

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE: I HAVE READ THE CONSENT FORM AND FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT I AM BEING ASKED TO DO. ALL MY QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS SYUDY AND I WILL RECEIVE A COPY OF THIS SIGNED CONSENT FORM BEFORE I BEGIN.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of program/building administrator/date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of researcher/date

## APPENDIX C

### Mentor/Mentee Interview Protocols

## Interview Protocol - September

### [Original] Research Questions:

- How do mentors and mentees in formalized mentoring programs conceptualize their roles and how does their practice develop during the first year of mentoring.
- How do mentors and mentees benefit from the mentoring relationship?

### Topical Questions/Interview Questions

#### Background

- Can mentoring skills be learned or are they the result of an intuitive approach to relating to others?

##### Mentor:

1. Why did you decide to become a mentor?
  2. Are there any particular qualities you have that you think will help you in mentoring?
  3. What experiences have you had that lead you to believe that you would be a good mentor?
  4. Have you ever been mentored? What was that experience like? How did that experience influence you personally and professionally?
- How does past experience with reflective practice impact mentoring?

##### Mentor:

1. How often do you critically reflect on your own practice? Describe how you do this.
2. Do you collaborate with co-workers? How often? Describe what that looks like.
3. Do you seek feedback from peers on your teaching practice? Describe how you do this.

##### Mentee:

1. In your student teaching, were you asked to critically reflect on your teaching practice? Is this something you did on a regular basis? How was this done?
2. Can you describe what critical reflection looks like from your experience? Is this a practice you now normally do on your own? Describe how you do this.

#### Conceptualization of Mentoring

- What do mentors and mentees perceive as essential to good mentoring when they first enter a program and how does this conception of the mentoring role change as they experience the process?

##### Mentor:

1. What is a mentor?
2. What makes someone a good mentor?
3. What characteristics are most important?
4. What happens in a good mentoring relationship? How is this evident in your relationship?

Mentee:

1. What is a mentor?
2. What makes someone a good mentor?
3. What characteristics are important?
4. What happens in a good mentoring relationship? How is this evident in your relationship?
5. What is the role of the mentee in creating a good mentoring relationship?

**Program Influence**

- How does the structure and components of the mentoring program effect the mentor/mentee's conception of their role and how does it affect their practice of mentoring? How do mentors perceive the mentoring program as having an impact on their practice?

Mentor:

1. What have you learned from the mentor training? What do you hope to learn?
2. Is it what you expected? Has any part of what you've learned surprised you?
3. How do you anticipate using what you've learned? Describe what it might look like.

Mentee:

1. What have you learned about mentoring from your experience in the program?
2. Is it what you expected? Has there been anything presented about mentoring that has surprised you?

**Challenges to Mentoring**

- How do mentors experience the paradox of taking on a supportive/nurturing role and being one who challenges the mentee's teaching practice and promotes mentees to look at themselves critically?

Mentor:

1. What do you think is or will be your greatest challenge as a mentor?
2. How important are the roles of support and critique of practice to you as a mentor?
3. Have you experienced these roles in your experience thus far? Can you provide some examples of what transpired and how you felt it worked out?

Mentee:

1. What do you expect from your mentor with regard to providing support and facilitating critique of your teaching practice?
2. What have your experiences been thus far with regard to these mentoring roles? Can you provide some examples?

**Contextual/Cultural Influences**

- How does the cultural environment affect mentoring practice?

Mentor:

1. In general, how would you describe the culture of the school? – with respect to teacher collaboration?

### January Interview Questions for Mentors

1. Has being a part of the mentoring program been what you've expected – why or why not?
2. What has influenced **how** you mentor?
3. Support can take many forms – what does support look like in your mentoring relationship? Can you provide an example of an instance when your support made a difference?
4. How has the program supported the development of your mentor skills?
5. What parts of your role are still confusing or unclear?
6. How has participation in the program impacted you as a teacher?
7. I ask again, now that you've experienced mentoring – What is a Mentor?
8. How is your understanding of mentoring different than it was in September?
9. What do you believe happens in a good mentoring relationship – How is this evident in your relationship?
10. What is a “caring” relationship?
11. What are some examples that categorize your relationship as “caring” or “not caring”?
12. Do you think it's important for you, as a mentor, to nurture a caring relationship? If yes, why do you think it's important? How do you do this?
13. Describe a “typical” meeting with your mentee - what happens, what things do you do together?
14. How do you and your mentee solve problems and make decisions? Can you give any examples?

15. What issues in education and teaching have you discussed?
16. Do you consider yourself to be a reflective practitioner? How is this evident?
17. What role has reflection played in your mentoring ?
18. How has your mentee's needs changed and what are your mentees needs right now?
19. How do you, as a mentor, facilitate the growth of your mentee?
20. What obstacles to effective mentoring have you experienced?
21. If you could change one thing – what would it be?
22. What's been the best part of being a mentor?
23. How would you finish this sentence: Mentoring someone is like  
\_\_\_\_\_
24. Is there anything that I didn't ask that you think I should know about your mentoring experience?

### January Interview Questions for Mentees

1. Has being a part of the mentoring program been what you've expected – why or why not?
2. How has being a part of the program meeting helped you?
3. Support can take many forms – what does support look like in your mentoring relationship? Can you provide an example of an instance when your support made a difference?
4. Can you give an example of something you are doing differently as a result of Your participation in the program and/or working with a mentor?
5. I ask again, now that you've experienced mentoring – What is a Mentor?
6. What do you believe happens in a good mentoring relationship – How is this evident in your relationship? What is the role of the mentee?
7. What are your mentors strengths as a mentor? Weaknesses?
8. What is a “caring” relationship?
9. What are some examples that categorize your relationship as “caring” or “not caring”?
10. How are you impacted by being in a “caring relationship”?
11. Would you consider being a mentor someday?
12. Describe a typical meeting with your mentor – what happens, what things do you do together?
13. How do you and your mentor solve problems and make decisions? Can you give any examples?



14. Does your mentor bring issues from their own classroom to be explored or discussed by the two of you?
15. What educational and instructional issues have you discussed with your mentor?
16. Do you consider yourself to be a reflective teacher? How is this evident?
17. What role has reflection played in your mentoring relationship?
18. How have you experienced support in your mentorship?
19. How has your mentor helped you to grow as a teacher?
20. What has been difficult for you in your mentorship? Can you describe any situations that have been uncomfortable?
21. What have been obstacles you have to deal with as you develop your mentorship?
22. If you could change one thing, what would it be?
23. How would you finish this sentence: Being mentored by someone is like \_\_\_\_\_.
24. Is there anything that I didn't ask that you think I should know about your mentoring experience?

### May Interview Protocol – Mentors

1. What is the role of a mentor?
2. How has your understanding and conceptualization of mentoring changed as you went through the year?
3. What mentoring strategies are important for moving your mentee beyond competence, from novice teacher toward an autonomous master teacher? (Is this your role? – if not, whose is it?)
4. Tell me about your classroom observation experiences.
5. There is often some uneasiness in balancing the roles of support and challenge (questioning, exploring alternatives, facilitating change). Are both roles appropriate for mentors and how have you dealt with this issue?
6. Why is challenge or critical advice difficult for mentors?
7. How have you challenged your mentee's professional thinking and classroom practice?
8. Knowing when to "tell" them what to do and when to step back and let them learn from experience has been a dilemma for many mentors. How have you dealt with this over the year?
9. How has this relationship been successful? How has it failed?
10. What does the mentee need to bring to the relationship for it to be successful? What has your mentee done to contribute to the successes and/or failures of your relationship?
11. What other factors have contributed to its success and/or failure?
12. What's important in telling your story? What's significant? What happened here?
13. What's a good title for your story?
14. What have you learned? How did you learn it?
15. How have you benefited?
16. What makes someone a good mentor?
17. What would you change? Why?
18. What else is important for me to know?

### **May Interview Protocol – Mentees**

1. What has happened in your relationship since the last time we talked?
2. What is the role of a mentor?
3. How has your mentoring changed as you went through the year?
4. What mentoring strategies are important for moving you beyond competence, from novice teacher toward an autonomous master teacher? (Is this your mentor's role? – if not, whose is it?)
5. Tell me about your classroom observation experiences with your mentor.
6. How has your mentor challenged your professional thinking and classroom practice?
7. Have there been instances when your mentor has stepped back and allowed you to “fly on your own”? Was this a good experience for you?
8. How do you define “support” as in the kind of support you get from your mentor?
9. How has this relationship been successful? How has it failed?
10. What do you need to bring to the relationship for it to be successful? How has this been evident in your relationship?
11. What other factors have contributed to its success and/or failure?
12. What's important in telling your story? What's significant? What happened here?
13. What's a good title for your story?
14. What have you learned? How did you learn it?
15. How have you benefited from having a mentor?
16. What makes someone a good mentor?
17. What would you change? Why?
18. What else is important for me to know?

## APPENDIX D

### Journal Prompts

## SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER QUESTIONS

Please type your response to the following questions in the space below each question (the space will expand to accommodate your response). Please add as much detail as you care to share and provide specific examples whenever possible. When complete, save this document to a file then attach it to an e-mail back to me (you can “reply” to my e-mail, but you must attach the completed document from a saved file). I appreciate your time and effort in being a part of my study. Thank you!

Best regards,  
Pam

1. Please describe what has been happening in your mentoring relationship to date
  - a. How has mentor training influenced your relationship?
  - b. What about mentoring meets your expectations, what falls short?
  - c. What issues/problems/concerns have you addressed with your mentee?  
How have you dealt with these issues?
  
2. What has been challenging for you, as a mentor? Please include:
  - a. Sources of frustration
  - a. Have you encountered any uncomfortable situations? Please describe.
  - b. What obstacles have you encountered in development of a mentoring relationship or implementation of mentoring practice?

Questions for Mentor Project: Oct. 2003

Please complete below then **save** what you wrote. Close the document then use **Forward** (not reply) to send this e-mail back to me at [pmiller@k12.nh.us](mailto:pmiller@k12.nh.us) (If you use reply, the attached document will not be sent). Thank You!!

In reflecting on your role as a mentee thus far, what stands out for you as major happenings, events and/or understandings? (This is whatever you feel is important in documenting your experience – both positive and/or negative. Please feel free to use specific examples or “tell a story” about what has been going on for you).

Please start your response after each question – the space will expand to accommodate your answer.

When you finish SAVE your work, then close the document and FORWARD the document back to me at [pmiller@doe.k12.nh.us](mailto:pmiller@doe.k12.nh.us) If you do not save, a blank document will be sent back.

**Do not use REPLY – the attachment with your answers will not be sent back.**

---

1. What has changed or evolved as you've developed your mentoring relationship? (has anything gotten better or worse; easier or harder; has the relationship or the mentoring changed in any way?)
  
2. What types of issues have you discussed in your mentoring relationship? How has it been helpful?

**Mentoring Project – April Question for Mentors**

**What does your mentee need from you at this point in the year? How does your supportive role look different now from how it looked at the start of the year?**

**Mentoring Project – April Question for Mentees**

**What are your needs at this point in the year? How does the support you get from your mentor look different now from how it looked at the start of the year?**



APPENDIX E

Administrator Interview Protocol

**Program Evaluation: Interview Mentoring Coordinator / Review Program Documents and Program Evaluation Documents**

- What program components or processes are more likely to result in an openness toward and comfort with critical reflection?
  1. What is the purpose of the mentoring program?
  2. How did you go about developing a mentor program? What resources were reviewed or used?
  3. How does the mentoring program reflect the school's philosophy?
  4. How supportive is the faculty of the mentoring program? How is this evident?
  5. What outcomes do you expect? What are the indicators of success, how are they measured?
  6. Describe a successful mentoring relationship. Describe the qualities of a good mentor. How do you ensure that good mentors are recruited?
  7. What kind of training and support is provided to mentors?
  8. How are mentors supported?
  9. What other supports are provided for new teachers? Is there an induction program? If so, what are the components?
  10. Do all new teachers have a mentor?
  11. Is attendance in the program mandatory? For mentors? Mentees?
  12. What obstacles have you encountered so far? How have you or will you address these?

(Trainer/Facilitator only)

13. What are the components of the program?
  14. What resources are provided to mentors and mentees?
  15. What is the focus of the training sessions? (can you provide agendas and schedules?)
  16. How is attendance of mentors and mentees? Is it mandatory?
  17. What obstacles have you encountered, so far?
- Have you heard any real success stories? Have there been any disaster stories?

**APPENDIX F**

**Westville Professional Development Plan Beginning**

**Teacher Track**

# **Beginning Teacher Track**

## **Purpose of the Beginning Teacher Track**

- To ensure that the Frameworks for Teaching are understood, accepted and demonstrated
- To provide support for teachers new to the district
- To provide guidelines for decisions regarding employment

## **Who is included in this track?**

The beginning teacher track is for all teachers who have not previously taught in the School District. This includes teachers who are new to the profession and those who have teaching experience but who are new to the district.

## **How long does a teacher remain in this track?**

The building principal determines when a teacher is ready to move from the Beginning Teacher Track to the Experienced Teacher Track, following a conversation between the principal and the new teacher.

Teachers who are new to the profession remain in the Beginning Teacher Track for 3-5 years. Experienced teachers (those with 3 years of teaching experience or more) who are new to the district remain in the Beginning Teacher Track for 2-3 years as indicated by their tenure status. No teacher will move to the Experienced Teacher track without current NH certification.

## **What are the components of the Beginning Teacher Track?**

- A teacher induction process
- A mentoring process
- Guidelines for regular supervision and feedback
- Annual summative assessment
- Self-assessment, goal setting and professional development

## **Guidelines for Regular Supervision and Feedback**

An evaluation meeting is scheduled at a mutually convenient time between the administrator and the teacher. At this meeting, the following items are reviewed and discussed:

- Current years' progress on goals using all data collected.
- Teacher summary of self-assessment / summative evaluation.
- Administrator summary of the teacher evaluation.
- Review and goal setting for the next 3-year cycle.

### **Informal Observations**

Beginning teachers will be informally observed at least three times a year during the first year of employment and at least two times a year in subsequent years in the Beginning Teacher Track. These informal observations may be followed up with a brief meeting at the request of either the teacher or the observer. A copy of the informal observation form will be kept in the teacher's district personnel file.

### **Clinical Observations**

Each year a teacher in the Beginning Teacher Track will be formally observed using the Clinical Observation Cycle presented in the Teacher Improvement Process. This cycle includes a pre-observation conference, a formal observation and a post observation conference. A formal summary of this observation will be kept in the teacher's district personnel file.

### **Annual Summative Evaluation**

Beginning teachers will be formally evaluated using the rubrics and frameworks for teaching each year they are in this track. A copy of the annual summative evaluation will be kept in the teacher's district personnel file.

### **Goal Setting and Professional Development**

All teachers are required to develop goals and participate in professional development activities as designed in the Professional Development Master Plan.

## Beginning Teacher Yearly Tracking Sheet – Year One

**Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Administrator:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**School Year:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Mentor:** \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher self-assessment completed. Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Goals established with Administrator. All forms filed. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal's Orientation Meetings:** (indicate year below)

First meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Second meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Third meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fourth meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Quarterly Informal Observations:**

First Observation Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Second Observation Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Third Observation Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Additional Observation(s) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Clinical Observation:**

Pre-Observation Conference Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Observation Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Post-Observation Conference Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Year-End Activities:**

All appropriate evaluation documentation completed and reviewed. Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Goal review/adaptation meeting conducted. Sheets filed. Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Administrator summative report completed. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Administrator's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Beginning Teacher Yearly Tracking Sheet – Year Two

**Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Administrator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School Year:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mentor (if applicable):** \_\_\_\_\_

### Informal Observations:

First Observation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Second Observation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Observation(s) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Clinical Observation:

Pre-Observation Conference Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Observation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Post-Observation Conference Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Year-End Activities:

All appropriate evaluation documentation completed and reviewed. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal review/adaptation meeting conducted. Sheets filed. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Administrator summative report completed. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Administrator's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Beginning Teacher Yearly Tracking Sheet – Year Three

**Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Administrator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School Year:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mentor (if applicable):** \_\_\_\_\_

### Informal Observations:

First Observation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Second Observation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Observation(s) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Clinical Observation:

Pre-Observation Conference Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Observation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Post-Observation Conference Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Year-End Activities:

All appropriate evaluation documentation completed and reviewed. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal review/adaptation meeting conducted. Sheets filed. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Administrator summative report completed. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Administrator's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



## **Teacher Induction Process (effective August 2003)**

### **Beginning Teacher Orientation**

In the first year of employment as a teacher in the \_\_\_\_\_ School District, new teachers are required to attend the new teacher orientation during the week prior to the start of school. This is a condition of employment in the district and will be compensated as per the contract (Article 4, Section E).

#### **District Orientation**

This day will be the responsibility of the SAU staff. Teachers will learn about benefits and district paperwork. They will also learn about the \_\_\_\_\_ School District Professional Development Master Plan and the \_\_\_\_\_ School District Teacher Improvement Plan.

#### **Meeting Mentors and Classroom Set-Up**

This day is dedicated to the planning and set up of the classroom. At some point during the day, new teachers will be introduced to their mentor who will answer any questions and help them to get settled.

#### **Building Orientation**

This day will be the responsibility of the building principals. Teachers will be introduced to building procedures, resources and facilities for both regular education and special education students.

#### **"I Can Do It"**

This day will be the responsibility of the \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher's Association. Teachers will participate in a workshop for beginning teachers about effective strategies for classroom management and procedures. This day is optional for teachers who are new to the district but who have three to five years of teaching experience elsewhere. This day is not required for teachers who have more than five years of teaching experience or are non-classroom teachers.

### **Principal Orientation Meetings**

Beginning teachers are required to attend Beginning Teacher Orientation Meetings with their building principals. These meetings will be held during the first semester at a regularly scheduled time. These meetings may continue throughout the entire first school year if the building principal deems necessary. The purpose of these meetings is to address beginning teacher concerns and questions and to clarify information about building and district policies and procedures.

## **Mentoring Process (effective August 2003)**

### **Importance of a Mentorship Program**

College preparation programs for new teachers provide background information and experiences, but cannot provide the ongoing support that new teachers need to be successful with their first teaching assignment. Even new teachers who are well prepared need help to deal with the challenges of the first years of teaching. Without this support, they may lose confidence, experience stress and anxiety or question their own competence. The attrition rate for new teachers is high (up to 30%) in the first three to five years. Mentor teacher programs have been successful in lowering this attrition rate.

The profile of a new teacher has changed in recent years. New teachers are not only those who have just finished college but may be adults who have made a career choice to leave the business world for the classroom or who are returning to the workforce after raising families. The needs of beginning teachers are varied and changing.

Mentoring acknowledges the wisdom and leadership of experienced teachers and challenges them to contribute to the success of their profession. Mentorship programs provide ongoing support without being tied to teacher evaluation processes. The role of the mentor is to coach, guide, encourage and advise. The collaboration and collegiality promoted in the mentor-mentored relationship help to establish the basis for the professional conversation and professional relationships important for the success of schools and their students.

### **Who receives a mentor?**

Teachers who are new to the profession (less than 3 years of experience) and other teachers new to the District will be provided a mentor for at least the first year of employment in the District.

### **Who are mentors?**

Mentors are teachers with preferably five years of experience in the District. Mentors are selected by the building administrative team from a pool of applicants. Mentors commit to the process for up to three years and receive an annual stipend for their mentoring work. Whenever possible, potential mentors are involved in the hiring process for beginning teachers.

### **What are the criteria for selection of mentors?**

- Subject area and/or grade level experience
- Five or more years of teaching experience in the district
- Knowledge of school's policies, procedures, routines, curriculum, and courses of study
- Respect of and for colleagues
- Dedication to the profession
- Ability to work in a collaborative manner
- Interpersonal skills (trustworthy, confidentiality...)
- Commitment to the mentoring process
- Advocate for beginning teacher
- Professional competence

### **How are mentors paired?**

Mentors are paired with consideration for:

- Content area
- Grade level
- Building
- Philosophy about teaching and learning
- Personality
- Proximity

### **Responsibilities of the Mentor:**

- To provide information, expertise and ongoing support
- To meet regularly with the beginning teacher
- To model and discuss effective teaching strategies including behavior management techniques and time management skills
- To attend ongoing training and meetings as necessary
- To assist mentorees with specific questions, problems and concerns
- To encourage visitations and ensuing conversations
- To help the new teacher deal with the practical aspects of being a teacher
- To be accessible, trustworthy and understanding
- To provide honest feedback, encouragement and positive reinforcement as appropriate
- To respect the confidentiality of the mentor/beginning teacher relationship

*School District*  
**Mentor Application**

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Building: \_\_\_\_\_ Years of Experience in the District: \_\_\_\_\_

Area(s) of Certification: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to make a 3-year commitment to the mentoring program? \_\_\_\_\_

Given the responsibilities and description of a mentor provided in the \_\_\_\_\_ School District Teacher Improvement Plan, what qualities do you feel make you a good candidate for a mentorship position? Please respond in the space below.

**APPENDIX G**

**Classroom Management Training Manual Contents**

## CONTENTS

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Training Goals and Objectives	<b>1</b>
Getting to Know Your Students	<b>2</b>
Rules and Routines	<b>3</b>
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**APPENDIX H**

**Mentor Training Manual Contents**

## Table of Contents

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<b>3</b>	Research on Mentors
<b>4</b>	Guidelines and Responsibilities
<b>5</b>	Performance Terms/ Learning Styles
<b>6</b>	New Teacher Needs
<b>7</b>	Question and Conference Information
<b>8</b>	Individual Staff Development and District Five-Year Plan
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<b>12</b>	Articles and Resources



APPENDIX I  
Transcript Index Template



**APPENDIX J**

**Project Across On-going Training Agendas**

*A Framework for Teaching: Focusing Your Work in Project ACROSS.*  
December 2, 2003

Purposes:

- Celebrate the personal power you bring to this work;
- Learn about a Framework for Teaching and implications for working with new teachers;
- Examine images of the Framework for Teaching in action; and
- Identify ways to use the Framework in a content-based approach.

- 9:00 Overview and Check-In; Purposes and Agenda  
Celebrating the Highlights  
Write it on a "balloon"; share it, and tape to a Highlight Wall?
- 9:15 The Wisdom of Practice: Examining Effective Teaching (individual brainstorming about what you would see or hear as evidence of effective teaching)
- 9:40 A Framework for Teaching: Introduction to and Working With the Domains of Teaching
- Origins of Framework
  - Domains, components, and elements
  - Features of the framework
  - Common themes
  - To use the two pager to identify which domains the statements are examples of (work in pairs and then quick whole group debrief)
- 10:15 Break
- 10:15 A Memorable Learning Experience in School  
*Pair and Share*
- Chart in the Domains
  - Examine the data and implications
- 10:35 Domain 2: Classroom Environment  
*Sister Act*  
*Create a rubric with different components in Domain 2*  
*Museum Tour of Rubrics*
- 11:45 Lunch
- 12:30 Zoom video
- 12:32 Pair/Share: How does this relate to your participation in Project ACROSS?
- 12:35 Write golden nugget/post-it/on balloon
- 12:40 Domain 3: Instruction  
*Mathematics Lesson Video*  
*What questions would you pose to promote his reflection?*
- 1:30 The Framework for Teaching in Action
- Self-reflection
- 1:40 Share most proud of (20)
- 2:00 Share want to work on (20)
- 2:20 Plan ways to support each other? (10)
- 2:30 Whole group debrief (15)

*Kathy Dunne and Susan Villani*  
*Learning Innovations at WestEd*  
*91 Montvale Ave., Stoneham, MA 02180*

*kdunne@wested.or*

*svillani@wested.or*  
*Tel: 781-481-1110*  
*Fax: 781-481-1120*

Handout:

When you look across these domains, which element(s) are you most proud of? What is your evidence?

When you think about these domains, which element(s) would you really like to learn more about and enhance your skill(s)? What causes you to say that? In what ways would you like to grow? How could you be helpful to each other?

2:45 Wrap up and Feedback

Parker Palmer: *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*

Typed in envelopes: With mentor pair, how does this relate to how we care about our work?

"Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves. The message used by these weavers varies widely: lectures, Socratic dialogues, laboratory experiments, collaborative problem solving, creative chaos. The connections made by good teachers are held not in their message but in their hearts- meaning *heart* in its ancient sense, as the place where intellect and emotion and spirit and will converge in the human self."

Parker J. Palmer, p.11 *Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*.  
1998 San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Evaluation

*Kathy Dunne and Susan Villani*  
*Learning Innovations at WestEd*  
*91 Montvale Ave., Stoneham, MA 02180*

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Fax: 781-481-1120

## Project ACROSS

January 29, 2004

Session 2

### You will have opportunities to:

- Deepen your understanding of *A Framework Teaching*
- Apply *A Framework for Teaching* to your role as mentors
- Examine the impact of classroom environment and instruction on learning
- Learning about and apply a developmental approach to mentoring and coaching
- To learn from and network with other colleagues

### Agenda:

8:30-9:00	Morning refreshments
9:00	Welcome and overview of this session and the next two
9:15	A Memorable Moment
9:45	Card Sort
10:30	
10:45	Break
11:00	Reflecting on Your Teaching: The Framework in Action With their partners <i>Use Richard's and Linda's standards based lesson form to jot down their lesson</i> <i>Talk with a partner about how the Framework applies to their planning and preparation</i> <i>Look at how they would assess themselves in this way- Anything else to focus on or think about?</i>
12:00	Lunch <i>Taping of group presentation</i> <i>Get the volunteer for the next session</i>
12:45	Sharing with role-alike and grade levels/subject conversations
1:30	Stretch and stand with partners- What did you learn from those conversations
1:45	A Developmental Approach to Mentoring: Matching Need for Structure and Style <i>Recall the summer- we're coming back to the instructional leadership</i>
2:45	Wrap-up Evaluation Zoom

**Project A.C.R.O.S.S.  
Alternative Certification Candidate and Mentor Training**

***Reflecting on Teaching: Choices, Challenges and Classroom Practices***  
March 18, 2004

**AGENDA**

**You will have opportunities to:**

- Learn from and network with other colleagues
- Examine the coaching cycle through video-tape images of two ACROSS colleagues
- Establish Project ACROSS study group as a structure for our work on April 14th and May 27<sup>th</sup>

**Agenda:**

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 8:30  | Refreshments   |
| 9:00  | Welcome and Overview   |
| 9:15  | Topical discussions about "front burner" challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Finding time</li><li>➤ Working with para-professionals</li><li>➤ Classroom management</li><li>➤ Effective ways to deal with resistance</li></ul> |
| 10:15 | Break -- <i>Now that you mention it...</i>   |
| 10:30 | The Coaching Cycle: Video-tape images of two ACROSS colleagues   |
| 12:00 | Lunch  |
| 12:45 | Partner conversations --<br><i>Options:</i><br><i>Conversation by you own design</i><br>Assessing Your Dimensions of Success -- Process, Task and Relationship   |
| 1:45  | Set up study groups by discipline and/or grade level   |
| 2:30  | Post Assessment<br>Wrap up   |
| 3:00  | Adjourn  |

Project ACROSS  
April 14, 2004

**Participants will have opportunities to:**

- Share their experiences with the coaching cycle
- View and discuss each other's planning and reflecting conferences
- Build a culture of support through on-going ACROSS study groups

8:30	Refreshments
9:00	Welcome, Overview, Now That You Mention It
9:15	Planning Conversation and Debrief, and Lesson
10:30	Break
10:45	Reflecting Conference and Debrief
11:30	Study Groups Report
12:00	Lunch
12:45	Walk and Talk
1:15	Round Table Talks
2:30	Preparing conversation for May
2:45	Evaluation and Wrap-Up



Project A.C.R.O.S.S.  
Candidate and Mentor Professional Development Session  
May 27, 2004

**NOTE: Please bring the following items with you to this session:**

- ✓ Your copy of *The Framework for Teaching*
- ✓ Candidates -- a lesson you have taught and examples of student work created as a result of that lesson
- ✓ Mentors -- any materials/resources you have used and/or developed to support your candidate during this past year

**Our purposes are to provide:**

- Mentors with opportunities to assess and reflect on their mentoring skills;
- Candidates with opportunities to analyze and assess their lesson design and implementation;
- Participants with an opportunities to work in pairs and/or with other mentors and candidates to reflect on their teaching practice;
- Participants with opportunities to identify ways to address current challenges; and
- Celebrate the successes of the past year's work.

**AGENDA**

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| 8:30 - 9:00 a.m.   | Morning refreshments   |
| 9:00 - 9:15        | Welcome and overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Goals and agenda</li><li>▪ Engaging with colleagues</li></ul>   |
| 9:15 - 10:15       | Analyzing your work <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Reflection on coaching rubric (<i>mentors</i>)</li><li>▪ Reflection on student work (<i>candidates</i>)</li><li>▪ Candidate pair conversations</li></ul> |
| 10:15 - 10:30      | BREAK  |
| 10:30 - 11:15      | Role alike group sharing   |
| 11:15 - 11:45      | Museum tour – <i>Celebrating student work and learning</i>   |
| 11:45 - 12:30 p.m. | LUNCH  |
| 12:30 - 1:00       | Walk and talk – mentor and candidate pairs   |
| 1:00 - 2:30        | Topical sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Myers-Briggs Type Indicator</li><li>▪ Cognitive Apprenticeship</li></ul>   |
| 2:30 - 3:00        | Wrap up and assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Assessment</li><li>▪ Celebration and Closure</li></ul>  |

Project A.C.R.O.S.S.  
Mentor and Teacher Candidate Session  
**CONSIDERING PERSPECTIVE -- A RETROSPECTIVE:**  
*November 30, 2004*

*Our purposes are to provide you with opportunities to:*

- Examine perspective as a key concept in effective mentoring and coaching;
- Learn about and begin to apply *"The Four Agreements"* as a tool to enhance effective communication;
- Explore a research-based perspective of teaching and learning;
- Engage in a self-assessment of your mentoring program using the New Hampshire Induction-with-Mentoring Toolkit;
- Expand your knowledge about teacher leadership, strategies for inclusion of special needs students, or how to evaluate your mentor program using a collaborative evaluation tool; and
- Celebrate connections with and among colleagues.

**AGENDA**

- 8:30 - 9:00 a.m. Morning refreshments
- 9:00 - 9:45 Welcome and overview
- Purposes and agenda
  - Assessing personal learning goals -- *pre-assessment*
  - *"Today will be successful if"...*
  - 
  - Zoom....
- 9:45 - 10:45 The Four Agreements -- *A Perspective on How we Communicate with Ourselves and Others*
- Don't make assumptions
  - Be impeccable with your word
  - Don't take it personally
  - Always do your best
- 10:45 - 11:00 BREAK
- 11:00 - 11:45 Looking at Learning: A Conversation with Eleanor Duckworth -- *A Perspective on Teaching and Learning*
- 11:45 - 12:30 p.m. Lunch

- 12:30 - 1:15      **New Hampshire Induction-with-Mentoring Toolkit:  
Examining Your Program -- *A Perspective on How Your  
Mentor Program is Working***
- 1:15 - 2:45      **Concurrent sessions -- *Perspectives on Key Issues Around  
Mentoring and Coaching New Teachers***
- Concurrent session 1:      Teacher Leadership**
- Concurrent session 2:      Strategies for Working with  
Students with Special Needs**
- Concurrent session 3:      Assessing the Impact of Your  
Mentor Program: *A  
Collaborative Evaluation  
Approach***
- 2:45 - 3:30      **Wrap-up and evaluation -- *A Closing Perspective***
- **Assessing personal learning goals -- *Post-  
assessment***
  - **Evaluation of today's session**
  - **Closing reflection and celebration**

**APPENDIX K**

**Project ACROSS Training Manual Contents and  
Summer Training Agendas**

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**Coaching Skills to Promote Reflection**

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**Mentor Qualities and Responsibilities**

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**Handouts**

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**Domain 1: Planning**

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**Domain 3: Instruction**

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**Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities**

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**Reflections**

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**PROJECT ACROSS**  
**Schedule for Mentors**  
**August 18 - 22, 2003**

**Friday, August 22**

8:00 to 8:45 ALL	<b>Morning Meeting</b>	Room: <b>Grand Summit Ballroom</b>
8:45 to 10:00 ALL	<b>Structured Work Time</b>	Room: <b>Grand Summit Ballroom</b>
*8:45 to 10:00 SPECIAL ED	<b>Special Education for Special Educators</b> <i>Georgia Kerns &amp; Vicki Hornus</i>	Room: <b>Cougar</b>
10:00 to 10:15	<b>BREAK</b>	
10:15 to 12:00 ALL	<b>Continue Structured Work Time</b>	Room: <b>Grand Summit Ballroom</b>
*10:15 to 12:00 SPECIAL ED	<b>Continue Special Education</b> <i>Georgia Kerns &amp; Vicki Hornus</i>	Room: <b>Cougar</b>
12:00 to 1:00	<b>LUNCH</b>	
1:00 to 1:30 ALL	<b>Review Alternative 4 &amp; 5 Plans</b>	Room: <b>Grand Summit Ballroom</b>
1:30 to 2:30 ALL	<b>Share "Learning Environments"</b>	Room: <b>Grand Summit Ballroom</b>
2:30 to 3:00 ALL	<b>Evaluation and Closing</b>	Room: <b>Grand Summit Ballroom</b>
3:00	<b>Adjourn Project Across Summer Institute 2003</b>	

**\*All Special Education Teacher Candidates and Mentors**

**PROJECT ACROSS  
Schedule for Mentors  
August 18 - 22, 2003**

**Thursday, August 21**

8:00 to 8:45 ALL	<b>Morning Meeting</b>	Room: Grand Summit Ballroom
8:45 to 10:15 MENTORS	<b>Instructional Leadership</b> <i>Susan Villani &amp; Kathy Dunne</i>	Room: Bull Moose Room
10:15 to 10:30	BREAK	
10:30 to 12:15 *ALL - Group 1	<b>Legal and Ethical Issues</b> <i>Marianne True</i>	Room: Summit Ballroom
10:30 to 12:15 ALL - Group 2	<b>Structured Work Time</b>	Rooms: Bull Moose Room Black Bear, White Deer
12:15 to 1:15	LUNCH	Rooms: Outside tables or White Tail Deer
1:15 to 3:00 ALL - Group 1	<b>Structured Work Time</b>	Rooms: Bull Moose Room
1:15 to 3:00 All - Group 2	<b>Legal and Ethical Issues</b> <i>Marianne True</i>	Room: Summit Ballroom
*1:15 to 3:00	<b>Special Education for Special Educators</b> <i>Georgia Kerns &amp; Vicki Hornus</i>	Room: Cougar
3:00 to 3:15	BREAK	
3:15 to 4:15	<b>Complete "Building a Learning Environment"</b>	Room: Grand Summit Ballroom
4:15 to 6:00	FREE TIME/HOMEWORK TIME	
6:00 to 7:00	<b>DINNER -- Mentor and Candidate Pairs</b>	Rooms: Black Bear and White Tail Deer
7:00 to 8:00	<i>Project ACROSS Staff Available</i>	Room: Bull Moose Room

**\*All Special Education Teacher Candidates and Mentors**

**PROJECT ACROSS  
Schedule for Mentors  
August 18 - 22, 2003**

**Wednesday, August 20**

8:00 to 8:45 ALL	Morning Meeting	Room: Grand Summit Ballroom
8:45 to 10:30 MENTORS	Coaching for Intentionality Balancing Advocacy and Inquiry Framing and Posing Questions What Makes a Good Question? <i>Kathy Dunne &amp; Susan Villani</i>	Room: Bull Moose Room
10:30 to 10:45	BREAK	
10:45 to 12:00 MENTORS	Continue Coaching and Questioning <i>Kathy Dunne &amp; Susan Villani</i>	Room: Bull Moose Room
12:00 to 1:00	LUNCH	Rooms: Outside tables or White Tail Deer
1:00 to 3:00 MENTORS	Introducing and Practicing Data Collection Strategies: Verbal Flow, Selective Verbatim, Classroom Traffic <i>Susan Villani &amp; Kathy Dunne</i>	Room: Bull Moose Room
3:00 TO 3:30 ALL	<i>Guided Walk and Talk</i>	
3:30 to 6:00	FREE TIME/HOMEWORK TIME	
5:00 to 6:00	<i>Project ACROSS Staff Available for Individual Conference</i>	Room: Bull Moose Room
6:00 to 7:00	DINNER	Rooms: Black Bear and White Tail Deer
7:00 to 8:30 ALL	Mentors and New Teacher Candidates go to the Movies - Viewing and Discussion of F.A.T. City <i>Staff</i>	Rooms: Peregrine Falcon Bald Eagle Cougar Canadian Lynx



**PROJECT ACROSS**  
**Schedule for Mentors**  
**August 18 - 22, 2003**

**Tuesday, August 19**

8:00 to 8:40 ALL	<b>Morning Meeting</b>	Room: Grand Summit Ballroom
8:40 to 10:00 ALL	<b>Developing Literacy Across the Curriculum</b> <i>Marilyn Richardson</i>	Room: Grand Summit Ballroom
10:00 to 10:15	<b>BREAK</b>	
10:15 to 12:00 ALL	<b>Continue Developing Literacy</b> <i>Marilyn Richardson</i>	Room: Grand Summit Ballroom
12:00 to 1:00	<b>LUNCH</b> Mentor and Candidate Pairs	Rooms: Outside tables or White Tail Deer
1:00 to 2:00 ALL	<b>How Children Learn Through Multiple Intelligences</b> <i>Staff</i>	Room: Grand Summit Ballroom
2:00 to 2:15	<b>BREAK</b>	
2:15 to 4:45 MENTORS	<b>Coaching and Conferencing</b> <i>Susan Villani &amp; Kathy Dunne</i>	Room: Bull Moose Room
4:45 to 6:00	<b>FREE TIME/HOMEWORK TIME</b>	
6:00 to 7:00	<b>DINNER</b>	Rooms: Black Bear and White Tail Deer
7:00 to 8:00	<i>Project ACROSS Staff Available for Individual Conference</i>	Room: Bull Moose Room

**PROJECT ACROSS  
Schedule for Mentors  
August 18 - 22, 2003**

**Monday, August 18**

8:00 to 10:00 ALL	<b>Overview of Project Across</b> Introductions and Expectations for the week Alternative 4 & 5 requirements <i>Staff</i>	Room: Grand Summit Ballroom
10:00 to 10:15	<b>BREAK</b>	
10:15 to 12:15 ALL	<b>Norms of Collaboration</b> Advocacy and Inquiry <i>Kathy Dunne &amp; Susan Villani</i>	Room: Grand Summit Ballroom
12:15 to 1:15	<b>LUNCH</b>	Rooms: Outside tables or White Tail Deer
1:15 to 3:00 MENTORS	<b>Setting the Context</b> Effective Teaching and Linking to Research <i>Kathy Dunne &amp; Susan Villani</i>	Room: Bull Moose Room
3:00 to 3:15 ALL INTERESTED	<b>Overview of Graduate Credit Requirements</b> <i>Marianne True</i>	Room: Cougar
3:15 to 4:00 ALL	<b>Guided Walk and Talk</b>	
4:00 to 6:00	<b>FREE TIME</b>	
5:00 to 6:00 ALL	<b>Project ACROSS Staff Available for Individual Conference</b>	Room: Bull Moose Room
6:00 to 7:00	<b>DINNER</b>	Rooms: Black Bear and White Tail Deer
7:00 to 8:30 MENTORS.	<b>Where Do You Stand?</b> <i>Susan Villani &amp; Kathy Dunne</i>	Room: Bull Moose Room

## APPENDIX L

### Mentor/Mentee Surveys

# Mentor Teacher Survey



**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Training** \_\_\_\_\_

**School District** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Information:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Mentor Teacher Survey

Individuals who have served as mentors to protégés in the past year should complete this survey.

**Directions:** Rate specific aspects of the program on a scale of 1 to 5.

- 1 = completely agree
- 2 = partially agree
- 3 = no opinion/not applicable
- 4 = partially disagree
- 5 = completely disagree

- \_\_\_\_\_ Mentor training was sufficient (covered all aspects of mentoring).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mentor training was of high quality.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Matching of mentor and protégé teacher was based on grade level or subject area.
- \_\_\_\_\_ There was sufficient time made available to observe the protégé.
- \_\_\_\_\_ There was sufficient time made available for the protégé to observe me and/or other veteran teachers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ There was sufficient time to meet with the protégé.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mentor/protégé interactions were substantive and of high quality

Please list three expectations you had of the mentoring experience /program and then rate each to the degree your expectation was met. *One (1) indicates fully met and five (5) indicates completely unmet*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Expectation 1 –
- \_\_\_\_\_ Expectation 2 –
- \_\_\_\_\_ Expectation 3 –

Which component of the program was the most beneficial to you?

Is any important component missing?

Are you willing to mentor again? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

Comments?

# Mentee Teacher Survey



**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Training** \_\_\_\_\_

**School District** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Information:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Mentee Teacher Survey

Individuals who were mentored by a veteran teacher in the past school year should complete this survey.

**Directions:** Rate specific aspects of the program on a scale of 1 to 5.

- 1 = completely agree
- 2 = partially agree
- 3 = no opinion/not applicable
- 4 = partially disagree
- 5 = completely disagree

**I expected my mentor to:**

- Be a supportive friend and listener
- Be a helpful colleague when I sought advice or help
- Assist with my orientation to the school (supplies, schedules, etc.)
- Assist with my orientation to the district (policies such as discipline, attendance)
- Observe and critique my classroom practice and instruction
- Help with classroom management
- Help with curriculum and materials decisions
- Help with student assessment
- Help in becoming part of the school family
- Help in getting along with colleagues and parents
- Help in managing my workload and professional responsibilities

*One (1) indicates expectations were completely met and five (5) indicates not at all.*

- 1 = completely met
- 2 = met most of the time
- 3 = met about half of the time
- 4 = met less than half of the time
- 5 = not met at all

**To what degree were your expectations met?**

- Be a supportive friend and listener
- Be a helpful colleague when I sought advice or help
- Assist with my orientation to the school (supplies, schedules, etc.)
- Assist with my orientation to the district (policies such as discipline, attendance)

*[Complete Next Page]*

## Mentee Teacher Survey

- \_\_\_\_\_ Observe and critique my classroom practice and instruction
- \_\_\_\_\_ Help with classroom management
- \_\_\_\_\_ Help with curriculum and materials decisions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Help with student assessment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Help in becoming part of the school family
- \_\_\_\_\_ Help in getting along with colleagues and parents
- \_\_\_\_\_ Help in managing my workload and professional responsibilities

Did you have additional expectations of your mentor or the mentor program? What were they? Were they met?

What part of the being mentored was **most Helpful**?

What part of the being mentored was **least helpful**?

Was there anything important missing from the program?

What additional measures could the district take to encourage you to continue teaching here?

**Please share any recommendations or comments** that you have regarding the program and your mentoring experience.



APPENDIX M

*Induction-with-Mentoring Toolkit* Evaluation Rubric

[http://www.nheon.org/prof\\_dev/mentoring/index.php](http://www.nheon.org/prof_dev/mentoring/index.php)

DRAFT  
Jan 5, 2004

v. 12/29/03

## A. CHART OF PROGRAM COMPONENTS

### Beginning Educator Induction-With-Mentoring Program

This document represents the efforts of the Mentoring Task Force\* and Mentoring Best Schools Team\* to identify and describe the stages of development in a beginning educator induction-with-mentoring program that intends to improve student achievement by:

- Providing beginning educators with the support needed to effectively transition into the profession;
- Fostering professional growth overtime for all beginning educators; and
- Attracting and retaining high quality teachers.

Induction-with-mentoring programs are contributors to improved student achievement when the components described here are an integral part the school culture and organization. We base this work on the research that cites teacher quality as the key ingredient to improved student achievement. Induction-with-mentoring programs are intended to support beginning educators to reach a higher level of skill and expertise faster and more efficiently than if they start their careers with no such supports. Successful teachers are satisfied teachers and, therefore, ones who wish to stay in the profession and in school districts that support teachers with strong learning communities.

In this document, the components needed for an effective induction-with-mentoring program are presented in chart form. The components are useful as a self-assessment tool to assist in determining the current level of implementation. They may also be used as a tool to initiate a program, making certain that essential functions are in place from the start.

The levels of implementation described in this document are cumulative and map the growth of a program over time.

- **Beginning** - The *Beginning Level* describes a program in its initial years. The *Beginning Level* represents a program foundation.
- **Developing** - The *Developing Level* describes a program that is taking root, with evidence and documentation. The program should reflect changes made as a result of learnings from the *Beginning Level*
- **Established** - The *Established Level* represents a formalized induction-with-mentoring program that is integral to the culture of the school district..

\* See page X for a brief history of these teams and a list of the team members.

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### Essential Components and Elements of an Induction-with-mentoring Program

<p>1. <b>SYSTEMIC PROGRAM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Research Base</li><li>b. Alignment to District Philosophy and Beliefs</li><li>c. District-Wide Coordination</li><li>d. Relationship to Student Performance</li><li>e. Relationship to Life-Long Professional Growth</li><li>f. Data Collection for Strategic Decision-Making</li><li>g. Commitment of All Stakeholders</li><li>h. Integrated Support System</li></ul> <p>2. <b>RELATIONSHIP TO TEACHER SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Nonjudgmental Confidentiality</li><li>b. Relationship to Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Defined</li><li>c. Relationship to Professional Development</li></ul> <p>3. <b>PROGRAM EVALUATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Program Evaluation See also Section II of this Toolkit</li></ul> <p>4. <b>PROGRAM SUPPORT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Documentation: District Policies and Procedures Manual and Induction-with-Mentoring Program Handbook</li><li>b. Criteria and Process for Selecting Mentors</li><li>c. Criteria and Process for Matching Mentor;and Mentee</li><li>d. Time for Mentor/Mentee to meet</li><li>e. Supportive Atmosphere</li><li>f. Contact Lists and Community Resources</li></ul>	<p>4. <b>PROGRAM SUPPORT (Con't)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>g.. Stress and Wellness Issues</li><li>h.. Grievance Process</li></ul> <p>5. <b>ROLE AND SUPPORTS FOR ADMINISTRATORS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Program Monitoring</li><li>b. Administrator Training</li><li>c. Collaboration Around Administering the Program</li></ul> <p>6. <b>SUPPORT FOR MENTORS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Orientation for Mentors</li><li>b. Regularly Scheduled Mentor Support Meetings</li><li>c. Training topics for Mentors</li><li>d. Compensation for Mentoring</li><li>e. Scheduling Supports to Perform Mentoring Responsibilities</li><li>f. Recognition and Celebration</li></ul> <p>7. <b>SUPPORT FOR THE BEGINNING EDUCATOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. <i>Organizational Supports for Beginning Teachers</i></li><li>b. <i>Orientation for Beginning Educators</i></li><li>c. Ongoing Induction for Beginning Educators</li><li>d. Mentor/Mentee Focus</li><li>e. Mentor/Mentee Strategies<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. On-going observation and Modeling</li><li>ii. Reflection and Metacognition</li><li>iii. Mentor Use of Resources for the Benefit of the Mentee</li></ul></li><li>f. Developing Goals and Professional Portfolios</li><li>g. Specialized Training for Alternative IV and V Certification Candidates and/or Highly Qualified Teacher Candidates</li></ul>
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SYSTEMIC PROGRAM	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	ESTABLISHED
1.a. Research Base	Some components of the induction-with-mentoring program are designed according to proven, research-based learning theory and instructional practice.	All components of the induction-with-mentoring program are designed according to proven, research-based learning theory and instructional practice.	Implementation of all components of the induction-with-mentoring program reflects proven, research-based learning theory and instructional practice.
1.b. Alignment to District Philosophy and Beliefs	There is little consideration of aligning induction-with-mentoring services to the philosophical thinking and plans of the district.	There is <i>some alignment</i> of induction-with-mentoring services to the philosophical thinking and plans of the district	There is <i>alignment</i> between the induction-with-mentoring services and the philosophical thinking of the district. <i>District philosophies and beliefs are operational in the program.</i>
1.c. District-wide Coordination	Induction-with-mentoring services are offered by the district and by schools although district-wide coordination may not be fully established. Services might not be in all buildings or for all educators (teachers, administrators, specialists, paraprofessionals).	Induction-with-mentoring services are offered by the district and by schools <i>with some district-wide coordination. The program exists in all buildings</i> but might not be for all educators (teachers, administrators, specialists, paraprofessionals).	Induction-with-mentoring services are <i>district-wide with coordination and oversight from the central office. The program exists for all educators (teachers, administrators, specialists, paraprofessionals).</i>

SYSTEMIC PROGRAM	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	ESTABLISHED
1.d. Relationship to Student Performance	Induction-with-mentoring is seen as an important but not necessarily fundamental strategy to build capacity of educators to meet the needs of students.	Induction-with-mentoring is seen <i>and understood as a fundamental strategy to build capacity of educators to meet the needs of students, but the connection to improving student performance is not clearly articulated or documented.</i>	Induction-with-mentoring is seen and understood as a fundamental strategy to build the capacity of educators <i>to meet the needs of students and ensure long-term impact on student performance.</i>
1.e. Relationship to Life-Long Professional Growth	Induction-with-mentoring is seen as a best practice support strategy for beginning educators.	Induction-with-mentoring is seen as a best practice support strategy for beginning educators <i>that will result in enhanced self-efficacy and improved educator quality.</i>	Induction-with-mentoring is seen as <i>a critical step in the long-term professional development sequence for beginning educators, resulting in enhanced self-efficacy, improved educator quality, and student performance.</i>
1.f. Data Collection for Strategic Decision-Making	The design, development, and improvement of the induction-with-mentoring program are based on a limited number and/or variety of data inputs.	The design, development, and improvement of the induction-with-mentoring program are based on a <i>variety of data inputs that inform strategic decision-making for the benefit of the district.</i>	The design, development, and improvement of the induction-with-mentoring program are based on a variety of data inputs, <i>systematically and regularly gathered, that inform strategic decision-making for the benefit of all stakeholders.</i>

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SYSTEMIC PROGRAM	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	ESTABLISHED
1.g. Commitment of All Stakeholders	School boards, administrators, and school community are made aware of the program and support its implementation.	School boards, administrators, and school community are <i>knowledgeable</i> about the program, its implementation, and the supports needed for its success. <i>All parties support continuation and seek establishment through budget, policies, and procedures.</i>	School boards, administration, and school community are <i>committed</i> to the program and its implementation. Continuation is supported through budget, policies, and procedures at a level needed for ongoing success.
1.h. Integrated Support System	Some supports are built into budgets, schedules, job descriptions, and expectations. Funding can come from district budget, grant money, contract agreements, etc.	<i>All supports are clearly articulated and built into budgets, schedules, job descriptions, and expectations. These supports include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>time to meet</i></li> <li>• <i>incentives</i></li> <li>• <i>consideration of caseload</i></li> <li>• <i>compensation.</i></li> </ul> <i>Funding may come from a variety of sources and is moving toward long term, planned commitment.</i>	<i>Full, long-term commitment has been made to program support, including :</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>time to meet</i></li> <li>• <i>incentives</i></li> <li>• <i>consideration of caseload,</i></li> <li>• <i>compensation.</i></li> </ul> <i>All supports are built into budgets, schedules, job descriptions, and expectations.</i>

**APPENDIX N**

**Elmwood Rubric Evaluation Forms and Results**

Last Updated:  
Jan 26, 2004

**District Assessment Tool for the Essential Components and Elements of an  
Induction-with-Mentoring Program**

<b>7. SUPPORT FOR THE BEGINNING EDUCATOR</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
a. Organizational supports for Beginning Teachers			
b. Orientation for Beginning Educators			
c. Ongoing Induction for Beginning Educators			
d. Mentor/Mentee Focus			
e. Mentor/Mentee Strategies			
i. On-going observation and Modeling			
ii. Reflection and Metacognition			
iii. Mentor Use of Recourses for the Benefit of the Mentee			
f. Developing Goals and Professional Portfolios			
g. Specialized Training for Alternative IV and V and/or Highly Qualified Teacher Candidates			
<b>Evidence of Support for the Beginning Educator Assessment:</b>			
<b>Action for Support for the Beginning Educator Improvement:</b>			

**General comments:**

**Signatures of Review Committee:**

<i>Signature</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Date</i>



Last Updated:  
Jan 26, 2004

**District Assessment Tool for the Essential Components and Elements of an  
Induction-with-Mentoring Program**

<b>5. ROLE AND SUPPORTS FOR ADMINISTRATORS</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
a. Program Monitoring			
b. Administrator Training			
c. Collaboration Around Administering the Program			
<b>Evidence of Role and Supports for Administrators Assessment:</b>			
<b>Action for Role and Supports for Administrators Improvement:</b>			

<b>6. SUPPORT FOR MENTORS</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
a. Orientation for Mentors			
b. Regularly Scheduled Mentor Support Meetings			
c. Training topics for Mentors			
d. Compensation for Mentoring			
e. Scheduling Supports to Perform Mentoring			
f. Recognition and Celebration			
<b>Evidence of Support for Mentors Assessment:</b>			
<b>Action for Support for Mentors Improvement:</b>			

Last Updated:  
Jan 26, 2004

**District Assessment Tool for the Essential Components and Elements of an  
Induction-with-Mentoring Program**

<b>3. PROGRAM EVALUATION</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
a. Program Evaluation (also see Section II of this Toolkit)			
<i>Evidence of Program Evaluation Assessment:</i>			
<i>Action for Program Evaluation Improvement:</i>			

<b>4. PROGRAM SUPPORT</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
a. Policies and Procedures Reference Manual			
b. Criteria and Process for Selecting Mentors			
c. Criteria and Process for Matching Mentor and Mentee			
d. Time for Mentor/Mentee to meet			
e. Supportive Atmosphere			
f. Contact Lists and Community Recourses			
g. Stress and Wellness Issues			
h. Grievance Process			
<i>Evidence of Program Support Assessment:</i>			
<i>Action for Program Support Improvement:</i>			

Last Updated:  
Jan 26, 2004

**District Assessment Tool for the Essential Components and Elements of an  
Induction-with-Mentoring Program**

Code:      B = Beginning                  D = Developing                  E = Established

<b>1. SYSTEMIC PROGRAM</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
a. Research Base			
b. Alignment to District Philosophy and Beliefs			
c. District-Wide-Coordination			
d. Relationship to Student Performance			
e. Relationship to Life-Long Professional Growth			
f. Data Collection for Strategic Decision Making			
g. Commitment of All Stakeholders			
h. Integrated Support System			
<b>Evidence of Systemic Program Assessment:</b>			
<b>Action for Systemic Program Improvement:</b>			

<b>2. RELATIONSHIP TO TEACHER SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
a. Nonjudgmental Confidentiality			
b. Relationship to Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Defined			
c. Relationship to Professional Development			
<b>Evidence of Relationship to Supervision/Evaluation/PD Assessment:</b>			
<b>Action for Relationship to Supervision/Evaluation/PD Improvement:</b>			

Last Updated:  
Jan 26, 2004

## **A. Using the Component Chart for Program Assessment Purposes**

### **District Assessment Tool for the Essential Components and Elements of an Induction-with-Mentoring Program**

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

The following tool is a form of self-assessment for your district's Induction-with-Mentoring Program.

With an interested group of administrators and teachers, review each component and element of the chart. Discuss the evidence you can identify for activities and outcomes in your school or district related to each component on the chart. Decide which description best matches your situation. After finding the best description based on the Program Component Chart, check that rating on the District Assessment Tool: B = *Beginning*, D = *Developing*, and E = *Established*.

Summarize the evidence you have discussed that relates to the component in general.

Discuss plans for initiating action or improving the program in each component area. In the area designated, list what actions the district may take in order to enhance the effectiveness of the program.

It is recommended that this assessment of program components happen once a year, at least for the first five years of the program.

Once areas for improvement have been determined, an implementation plan and strategy for assessing the degree to which the plan has been implemented can be developed.

**School District Mentoring Program Evaluation**  
**Professional Development Committee Report**  
**March 25, 2004**

**1. Systemic Program – Overall rating = Beginning Level**

**Evidence of Systemic Program Assessment**

- Not all components are research-based
- Program does not exist in all buildings
- Too many inconsistencies to determine if there is enhanced self-efficacy and improved educator/student quality
- Nothing provided in the budget for incentives
- Not all parties are committed to fully supporting the induction/mentoring program

**Action Steps for Systemic Program Improvement**

- **Build consistent implementation for all teachers**
- **Create a balance of school and district level meetings**
- **Build administrator support of the program**

**2. Relationship to teacher Supervision and Evaluation and Professional Development – Overall rating = Beginning Level**

**Evidence of Relationship to Supervision/Evaluation/PD Assessment**

- No collaboration between administrators, supervisors, mentors and mentees about what information can and should be shared.
- Not all parties agree with or understand the value of the program
- Some tasks and ownership of responsibilities are not defined and therefore left undone.
- No clear definition of the relationship between the mentoring program and the teacher supervision and evaluation process.

**Action Steps for Relationship to Supervision/Evaluation/PD Improvement**

- **Define the relationship between mentor, supervisor, and mentee; establish what should be shared, what are the boundaries and develop guidelines.**

### **3. Program Evaluation – Overall rating = Beginning Level**

#### **Evidence of Program Evaluation Assessment**

- The NEA survey and district survey is satisfaction based. No data is collected and analyzed to indicate retention improvement or professional development of mentor/mentee, or improvement of student learning.

#### **Action Steps for Program Evaluation Improvement**

- **Mentee – need data for assessing teacher improvement as a result of mentoring/induction. There should be some indication of goal attainment. Goals should be set for more than one year. Goals should be linked to the beginning teacher’s professional development plan.**
- **Mentor – Need data for assessing mentor professional development as a result of mentoring. Mentoring goals should be part of the mentor’s professional plan and evidence of goal attainment should be reviewed and discussed with the supervisor.**
- **Student – Qualitative and Quantitative data need to be collected to show student growth as a result of mentoring with induction.**
- **District – District data on teacher retention and exit interviews should document reasons why teachers leave the district, as well as reasons why teachers stay in the district.**

### **4. Program Support – Overall Rating = Beginning Level**

#### **Evidence of Program Support Assessment**

- No written district/building handbook. There is a section in the Handbook about Peer coaching for new teachers but it does not reflect what we do.
- Selection of mentors is inconsistent and not generally in accordance with our program guidelines
- There are no team decisions on matching teachers – random matching exists. The best matches are not always made.
- Mentors and mentees are expected to meet weekly but this is very inconsistent. Release time is not provided or rarely provided

- A district philosophy of collaboration exists but is missing the support and challenge component in mentoring – we are more support focused, no direction on how to challenge.
- Resources are inconsistent
- A stress and wellness component is missing
- Request process to change mentor/mentee is informal; there is no defined process.

### **Action Steps for Program Support Improvement**

- **Update the PD handbook. Create building-level handbooks to reflect the building process and support.**
- **Create a consistent process with administrator input. It may look different at each building. Standards need to be determined.**
- **Need ongoing mentor training and opportunities for mentors to discuss issues of mentoring.**
- **Need to create an induction curriculum or induction standards that all new teachers will use as a guideline for developing their professional plans.**

## **5. Role and Support for Administrators – Overall Rating = Beginning Level**

### **Evidence of Role and Supports for Administrators Assessment**

- Program monitoring occurs in some schools but not all.
- Administration believes in the benefits of a well-run, effective mentoring program
- There is support for the mentoring program
- New teacher needs and their professional development needs are discussed at the building level by the administrative team.

### **Action Steps for Role and Supports for Administrators Improvement**

- **Need to designate a building person to take responsibility for mentoring process in each school**
- **Scheduled meetings need to be called to share progress and tweak the program as needed**

- **Need administrator training – it is assumed that administrators know the philosophy etc. They need to understand their role in supporting the program.**

## **6. Support for Mentors – Overall Assessment = Beginning Level**

### **Evidence of Support for Mentors Assessment**

- Using the “right” topics in meetings
- Combined meetings for mentors and mentees are scheduled, but no one goes. Many do not find that the discussions meet their needs (topic and/or grade level). Some report the time and place makes attending difficult.
- One day summer training for mentors
- We use the Mentoring Program and Program. Some also attend Project ACROSS offered by the NHDOE.

### **Action Steps for Support for Mentors Improvement**

- **Define needs well before program implementation. The program needs coordination.**
- **Participation tied to benefits (stipend, PPP Goals with Admin. Support, time to observe, reflect and develop mentee and mentor skills.**
- **Time for mentors to discuss progress and improvement; it is provided but there is no follow-through (not felt that its important, no perceived benefit).**
- **No recognition – school or district-wide. Need to provide this at district and building level. Administrators need to attend.**

## **7. Support for the Beginning Educator – Overall Assessment = Beginning Level**



### Evidence of Support for the Beginning Educator

- Beginning teachers often do not have their own classrooms; they may float within 2-3 rooms.
- Teacher preparations are considered for all
- Not all beginning teachers participate in the program
- No support material
- No systematic manner

### Action Steps for the Beginning Educator Assessment

- **Teachers should be bringing materials**
- **There could be expectations of what individuals (mentor/mentee) do**
- **Create a formal document, training for mentors**
- **Need to recognize differences between Alt. IV and Alt. V**

**APPENDIX O**

**I.R.B. Approval Letter**

# UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Office of Sponsored Research  
Service Building  
51 College Road  
Durham, New Hampshire 03824-3585  
(603) 862-3564 FAX

LAST NAME	Miller	FIRST NAME	Pamela
DEPT	Education, Morrill Hall	APP'L DATE	6/11/2003
OFF-CAMPUS ADDRESS (if applicable)	66 Weare Road New Boston, NH 03070	IRB #	2974
		REVIEW LEVEL	EXE
		DATE OF NOTICE	6/13/2003

PROJECT TITLE      *Critical Nurturance: Conceptualizing Mentor Roles and Practice in First Year Teacher-Mentor Relationships*

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research has reviewed and approved the protocol for your study as Exempt as described in Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46, Subsection 101 (b), category 2 with the following contingencies. **Once you have responded to the stated contingencies to the IRB's satisfaction, you may begin involving human subjects in your study.**

- In both consent forms, the investigator needs to add the following statement, "If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Julie Simpson in the UNH Office of Sponsored Research at 603-862-2003 or [julie.simpson@unh.edu](mailto:julie.simpson@unh.edu) to discuss them."

- Rather than destroying data at the end of the study, the investigator should consider erasing tapes and removing from transcriptions and other data sources information that would identify individuals. If the investigator decides to change what she is going to do with the data at the end of the study, she needs to make sure that the consent forms reflect her decision.


Please forward to the IRB copies of the revised consent forms for the file prior to subject recruitment.

Approval is granted to conduct the study as described in your protocol once you have fulfilled the contingencies. **Prior to implementing any changes in your protocol, you must submit them to the IRB for review, and receive written, unconditional approval. If you experience any unusual or unanticipated results with regard to the participation of human subjects, report such events to this office within one working day of occurrence.** Upon completion of your study, please complete the enclosed pink Exempt Study Final Report form and return it to this office, along with a report of your findings.

The protection of human subjects in your study is an ongoing process for which you hold primary responsibility. In receiving IRB approval for your protocol, you agree to conduct the study in accordance with the ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects in research, as described in the following three reports: Belmont Report; Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46; and UNH's Federalwide Assurance of Protection of Human Subjects. The full text of these documents is available on the Office of Sponsored Research (OSR) website at [http://www.unh.edu/osr/compliance/Regulatory\\_Compliance.html](http://www.unh.edu/osr/compliance/Regulatory_Compliance.html) and by request from OSR.

If you have questions or concerns about your study or this approval, please feel free to contact me at 862-2003. Please refer to the IRB # above in all correspondence related to this study. The IRB wishes you success with your research.

For the IRB,

  
Julie F. Simpson  
Regulatory Compliance Manager

cc: File  
Barbara Houston, Education