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## **Mentoring the New Teacher**

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Mentoring the New Teacher

A Project Report

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Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for Degree of

Masters in Education

by

Lynda Jeanne Huson and Neil Thomas Zobel

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ABSTRACT

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The effectiveness of the Teacher Assistance Program was evaluated from the perspective of the first year teacher in the Wenatchee School District, the Cashmere School District and the Cascade School District. New teachers were given a questionnaire, interviewed by the researchers, and asked to complete a survey describing the impact that the mentoring experience had on acclimating them into their profession. Recommendations for improving the continued efficacy of the program include careful selection of the mentor, early matching of the mentees to their mentor, and specific responsibilities clearly outlined for all persons involved.

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## CHAPTER I

### NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

The North Central Educational Service District (NCESD) in conjunction with the Washington State Board of Education (WSBE) provide direction, finances, and accountability structures for first year teacher's adaptation to their career. Surveys have been useful in gathering responses from previous years of Teacher Assistance Program (TAP) participants. The NCESD has provided seminar settings whereby TAP participants can receive supplemental information and support. Feedback has been garnered from participants in NCESD sessions, and questionnaires from WSBE were used to gather information from TAP people at the conclusion of their induction year of teaching.

The 1997-98 school year was different. WSBE did not send out its questionnaires, and NCESD was looking for an avenue by which it could gather other supplemental information to evaluate the effectiveness of TAP. To partially fulfill the need for continued assessment of TAP, the researchers took on a self-directed approach to appraise TAP in a specific area. The study examined the first year teacher's reflective thought about their immersion into the teaching profession as it directly related to their involvement in TAP. To accomplish this goal the researchers conducted personal interviews, submitting two questionnaires, and in some cases held post evaluation conversations with beginning teachers in the Wenatchee School District, the Cashmere School District, and the Cascade School District. The researchers were interested in evaluating peer relationships, classroom atmosphere, classroom management, and career achievement.

### Definition of Terms

1. Beginning Teacher: A teacher in his or her first year of full-time teaching experience.
2. Cascade School District: Cascade is a non-participating school district within the geographical boundaries of NCESD.
3. Cashmere School District: Cashmere is considered a non-participating school district within the geographical boundaries of NCESD.
4. Mentor Teacher: A teacher with a minimum of three years of successful teaching experience.
5. NCESD: This is the acronym for The North Central Educational Service District 171, which has working contracts with sixteen individual school districts in North-Central Washington.
6. Non-participating School District: This is any school district that is directly responsible for the application of TAP without the assistance of the NCESD.
7. OSPI: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction for Washington State.
8. Participating School District: A school district in North-Central Washington which chooses to participate in the NCESD's application of TAP is considered a participating school district.
9. TAP: These are the initials for the Washington State Board of Education Teacher Assistance Program.
10. Wenatchee School District: This district participates in the NCESD's application of TAP.

### Research Question

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Teacher Assistance Program of Washington State in assisting new teachers to be acclimated to their career environment. The evaluation was applied to those new teachers in the Wenatchee, Cashmere, and Cascade School Districts. Researchers were interested in evaluating peer relationships, classroom atmosphere, classroom management, and career achievement.

### Limitations of This Study

Subject Characteristics: All first year teachers in the Wenatchee, Cashmere, and Cascade School Districts were invited to participate in this study.

Loss of Subjects: There was some non-compliance by a few teachers from the Wenatchee School District.

Location: Personal interviews were conducted in the Wenatchee, Cashmere, and Cascade School Districts.

Questionnaire: There was no pre-test given to the subjects. Two questionnaires were supplied to all first year teachers in the three districts. The initial questionnaire, developed by the researchers, was intended to garner opinions about personal growth experiences without the bias of pre-test anticipatory hopes. Results from this survey depended on the responses of first year teachers. The second questionnaire submitted to the subjects was from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

As the need for change becomes more apparent, universities and school districts can no longer continue to blame one another for gaps beginning teachers often carry with them into their first job. There has been continued realization of the need to share the responsibility of ongoing training since 1990. According to Bernhardt and Shulman in order to prepare teachers effectively, continuous and relevant instruction starting with the undergraduate programs and extending into the developmental years are needed (1990). The ability of teachers to develop their professional skills without transitional training involves random encounters with colleagues. These encounters are generally unplanned and lack specific overall goals. Whereas planned mentoring gives new teachers opportunities to acquire necessary skills.

Although essential for laying a foundation of facts about education, university classroom instruction is, for all intent and purposes, not relevant in preparing teachers to teach. Rarely do college courses or student teaching experiences prepare a beginning teacher for the first day, week, or month of school. Murphy, Merseeth, and Morey found formalized university course-work was ranked last by beginning teachers for assisting them in their first year (1990). The critical link for teacher success lies in the programs that connect theory and application during the beginning teacher's first year of teaching after completing university training.

All university course-work is filtered through a lens made up of a future teacher's personal convictions and ideals. Universities and school districts are striving to improve teacher preparedness, yet not all skills can be taught in university courses. Self-image and sense of professional presence in the classroom play a gigantic role in the teacher's professional career assimilation, but not touched upon in



college. Being a teacher is a job that strongly involves the teacher as a person. The personal knowledge, opinions and values of the individual are, in fact, the essence of the teacher.

The way a teacher views himself or herself will oftentimes explain a teacher's professional behavior. Henry found that teachers with a high sense of self efficacy attributed student success to factors within the classroom; while those with little sense of efficacy tended to attribute lack of student growth to factors outside their control such as a student's family situation, few academic elements in the student's environment, or school administration demands (1997).

As compared to other professionals, teachers have a more challenging time separating themselves from their occupation. Self-image is more important to them as practitioners than other professionals due to an inability to pull their image away from their career. Careful and purposeful mentoring can guide or improve the new teacher's self-image. Zey helped to define this complex concept when a mentor is a person who oversees and guides the career and professional development of a novice professional, usually a junior, through teaching, counseling, providing psychological support, protecting, and at times promoting or sponsoring (1984).

In a recent survey both mentors and protégées believed that induction of new teachers would ultimately and positively affect the quality of education. Enthusiasm for mentoring has been observed in the State of Missouri, which required all beginning teachers to have a mentor during the first year of teaching. First year teachers were also required to create a professional development plan according to Renegar (1992). Renegar also stated benefits would be received by both the mentor and mentee since a veteran teacher could view teaching through the eyes of a beginner while readying the less experienced professional for the first year.

Novice teachers have specific needs that aren't always met even if a program is in place. Programs designed for assimilating the new teacher may lack enough direction for guidance to occur. Often help is limited to a narrow range of classroom survival skills without identifying the unique needs of novice teachers. Mentors who were untrained in the needs of beginning teachers frequently supported novice teachers only on request, resulting in too little direction and support. The areas of mentoring assistance found to be most valued by new teachers were help in meeting school procedures, handling discipline, and dealing with fellow employees.

Direct assistance that is immediate and that is provided on the school site is preferred over workshops or conferences according to Murphy, Merseth, and Morey (1990). Mentors who were on-site and available to immediately respond to teacher concerns or needs were the key to helping neophytes survive their first year. The most successful mentors are matched with mentees with similar grade level or content area assignments, have compatible ideas about teaching and children, and are accessible to one another in both time and location. Without this access, continuous and immediate support will diminish.

Beginning teachers also look for a colleague, coach, friend, and sounding board in their mentor. Mentors are seen as guides who can be trusted because they have been there before and share ultimate goals. Shulman and Bernhardt (1990) feel that there is probably no more important predictor of program success than the perceived quality of the teachers selected as advisors. They embody hopes, warn of impending dangers, and point out delights on the path. Unconditional support should be emphasized. In a study by Darling-Hammond beginning teachers who viewed their mentors as affirming felt nurtured through feedback and suggestions. While others that thought of their mentor's job as surveillance felt isolated and anxious (1996). Gold stated that, "one of the most important functions of a mentor is to help

the beginning teacher identify the strengths they do have and develop necessary coping skills so he or she can be self-reliant" (1992, p.27).

Mentors often work under conditions that place limits on their effectiveness. The lack of opportunities to observe and discuss teaching skills, the continued idea of a teacher's privacy, and trying to treat all teachers as equals limit the role of a mentor. Mentors are often given no choice in selecting with whom they will work. Reluctance on the part of the experienced teachers to help their colleagues oftentimes was related to their opinion that beginning teachers ought to be able to cope on their own. Even when novices came to them for help they were wary of pushing their opinions too strongly. Frequently, mentor teachers have little experience with the core activities of mentoring-observing and discussing teaching with colleagues. A further limit to effective mentoring is the fact that experienced teachers may not practice the newer techniques promoted in colleges such as having a learning-centered classroom or grading using the multiple intelligence's.

Despite the idea that most teachers work alone, mentors need to take up their instructor role more explicitly for ultimate benefits for a new teacher. Guidelines given by Clement to mentors (formally assigned or not) include the following: make resources available, share ideas for working with parents and classroom management, give ideas for working with diverse students, let them know it is all right to ask questions, model coping skills, and listen and accept (1995). Implementing a mentor program should include careful consideration of mentor/mentee selection and matching. Specific training of everyone involved should include expectations for each half. Mentees who entered into relationships with mentors knowing what to expect of them felt much more comfortable asking questions and receiving guidance.

During training prior to the beginning of school, Dallas, North Carolina, mentors and mentees are given lunch money to get to know one another outside the

classroom. Wong believes that the goal is to help build moral support for new teachers during both problems and successes (1996). Psychological support for beginning teachers can treat the stress and even possible burnout of new teachers.

Goals of all mentoring programs should be to support new teachers, end classroom isolation, and improve the quality of teaching everywhere. To meet these goals one-on-one mentoring and monthly workshops on professional development topics were set up in one school. Another district had the principals create teaching teams with varying amounts of experience on each two-person team. By the close of the school year mentoring should mark a shift of dependence on the mentor to dependence on newly formed peer networks or other connections according to Hennessy (1997). Bey stated that the Commission on the Role and Preparation of Mentor Teachers adopted these principles of mentoring: It involves support, assistance, and guidance; it requires time and communication; it should facilitate self-reliance in protégées; and the program should be evaluated (1990).

The impetus for implementing such programs should flow from the desire to train competent, mature, and reproducing teachers. Yet, the teaching profession is losing teachers at an alarming rate. A variety of studies have shown that up to fifty percent of all new teachers do not remain in the profession for more than five to seven years. When eighty percent of all teachers are out of the school after ten years, as statistics reveal, the need for quality mentoring programs increases dramatically.

Reality says that children born to teachers affect these statistics. Teachers who become vested in a retirement program may account for another part of these numbers. And then there are those teachers who move into school administration positions. All of these examples are a part of the statistics. Yet, research indicates that lack of job satisfaction accounts for the majority of those teachers who leave the educational system.

What are the factors that have led to teachers leaving the profession? It would be difficult to list all of the factors, but the following items have been identified as significant reasons why teachers leave at such an alarming rate. The new teacher is pressured by large class size, diversity of needs and learning abilities of students, failure to master subject content material, an inability to assimilate into the school culture, feelings of isolation, lack of professionalism and collegiality among colleagues, and the absence of administrative support. On a more individual level, teachers who do not have a strong self-concept about themselves as a person, or a strong internal resilience for those times when their teaching skills are questioned quickly move toward disillusionment and burnout.

To address the problem of teacher turnover formal programs for mentoring new teachers were enacted by sixty percent of states in 1992. These mentoring programs were instituted to augment the great need to retain teachers. Although the intent looked good on paper and sounded good to the ear, the down side was that many of those state mandated programs were not implemented.

On the first day of school the beginning teacher assumes all of the duties of a veteran teacher. The same tasks and responsibilities are laid on every teacher's shoulder regardless of their experience in teaching. The reality of being the teacher in the classroom from being a student in college cannot be avoided. No amount of undergraduate or graduate instruction can make up for the teacher's inert sense of presence for that make or break day. These then are the reasons why a mentoring program must be in place for that initial teaching experience.

Of course, some aspects of teaching can only be experienced as new teachers take their place alone in the classroom. How much more confident will those new teachers be when they have someone who is involved with them as a mentor to guide them through multilingual populations, the inclusion of students with disabilities, and

large class size. Today's educators are required to create classrooms where the vast majority of their students will be enabled to master the content area of the curriculum. New teachers are bolstered in their ability to accomplish that task by having a mentor who has walked that path before.

One aspect of teaching that sets new teachers on edge is finding out that their assigned students are often the most difficult to teach. A non-productive scenario occurs when other teachers dump students with discipline or learning problems into the new teacher's classroom. This situation, which is not unheard of, may create an environment in which the first year teacher does not want to return the following year. Having mentors in place within the school system will hopefully dispel this unfortunate practice.

Training new teachers to become good teachers is the object of a vital mentoring program. To accomplish this, schools and school districts must allow mentors and mentees the opportunity to spend time together. On a general basis most U.S. teachers have only three to five hours for planning each week. L. Darling, in an article for Phi Delta Kappan, has pointed out that mentor relationships in many European and Asian countries who spend between 15 and 20 hours per week working jointly on refining lessons and learning about new methods (1996).

One final set of problems that any mentoring program will face, let alone the individual teacher, are the conflicts that are inherent in education. Stratification of administrators and community groups complicate the demands that are placed on teachers as a whole, and over programs like mentoring. Individual teachers have their own professional goals that they want to reach. School administrators and senior staff have agendas that they can impose upon the time and classroom demands of the teacher. Local school districts set priorities for teachers that must be given prominence in their schedules. State departments of education develop their own

resources, and implement national priorities for the development of teachers. School Boards and parent groups also have a voice in the teacher's vocational development. All of these influences shape the framework within which choices about personal professional development and the application of mentoring principles must work.

With the dropout and burnout rate at extreme levels, serious attention must be given to the personal and professional needs of the beginning teacher. One of the most beneficial means to accomplish that need is the adoption and implementation of a vital and continuing mentoring program. Mentoring new teachers will help to ensure that a continued legacy of providing competent teachers, way beyond the beginning of the twentieth century, will happen. Teachers who have been mentored with success will in turn become mentors of mentors.

Beginning teachers need to have colleagues with whom they can share ideas, make plans, and attempt to solve problems. An effective mentoring program will allow new teachers to gain experience, knowledge, feel less isolated, and develop a greater sense of self-esteem and competence. When mentoring does not occur talented people move from education to other vocations. When we effectively mentor new teachers they are more likely to be retained in the profession because they have been nurtured.

Beginning teachers enter their first assignment with the rudimentary tools they need to teach. An effective mentoring program will enhance these initial skills with the following benefits:

- supplies a support program which allows teachers to grow into their profession.
- provide a relationship that allows them to experiment, evaluate, and reflect upon their teaching experiences.
- improve teaching performance

- help link new teacher to collegial support groups made up of peer teachers and administrators.
- provide new teachers with assistance in handling tasks that are new to them.
- assist teachers to assimilate into the culture of the school.
- assist teachers to understand the demands of the school district.
- promote high teaching standards and professionalism.
- increase retention of promising beginning teachers.
- promote the personal and professional well being of the beginning teacher.
- enhance the ability of the teacher to handle the stress of their first year of teaching.
- provide the beginning teacher with a sense of empowerment through a positive support system.
- give permission for new teachers to ask for help without being upbraided.
- improve productivity.
- strengthen the educational culture.

The professional educational system cannot afford to ignore the innumerable benefits that a mentoring program provides to the development and retention of first year teachers. Another grand benefit that results is that mentor teachers become better teachers themselves due to the exciting relationship that they are involved in with their first year colleague. The mentor/mentee partnership will accomplish what every parent and school district desires: the development of great teachers who teach with competence the students placed within their care.

Although most school districts and universities agree on the importance of providing continued training and mentoring for beginning teachers, the question of costs frighten away the educational community from actual implementation. For a



number of years business and industry has used mentoring to attract, retain, and promote junior employees. Luna found mentoring improved performance and effectiveness for both the individual and the corporation (1995).

Estimates of expenditures needed to add mentors and improve teacher quality can be as high as \$750 million. Yet this amount is only 1% of what is spent annually to bail out the federal savings-and-loan. Darling-Hammond believes this is not too much to bail out our schools and to secure our future (1996). States are calling local school districts to spend more education dollars on classroom teaching rather than administrative or non-teaching positions by the year 2006. Currently, half of the education dollars in the United States are spent on personnel and activities outside the classroom.

Local administrators of mentoring programs realize the need for funding to be continued in order to provide these programs. "I want to make the Teacher Assistance Program better, but there's no funding. So, I'm not sure how to accomplish this," voiced Judy McCutchen from the North Central Washington Educational Service District at the spring TAP conference in February of 1998. Budget cutbacks experienced in many districts in the 1990's may lead to elimination of mentoring programs before the benefits of mentoring can be seen. As the research continues to be gathered concerning the positive long-term affects of mentoring, perhaps some districts will not discard mentoring as an unneeded program. Examples from the business community abound with positive comments regarding mentoring. The National Center for Educational Information reported that beginning teachers leave their profession twice as often as other more experienced professionals (Looney, 1997). Schools cannot afford to keep losing teachers without making great attempts to save them.

As studies of mentoring are published, the goals of mentoring and mentoring programs are forming. Successful mentoring is a complex, intricate mix of responsibility and friendship. The sooner this fact is realized, according to Huling-Austin, the sooner greater degrees of meaningful mentoring will take place (1990).

To be valuable Odell says, "it follows that the evaluation of the mentoring programs will have to move beyond a singular reliance of the follow-up study as characterized by one-shot mailed surveys and incorporate a variety of assessment strategies and contexts in order to obtain an optimal evaluation process" (1990, p.100). The study presented on the following pages hopes to arouse interest in a closer and more evaluative look at mentoring.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURES

In this chapter the researchers will define the steps they followed to develop the project. The first step was to identify the subjects to study and gather an appropriate materials base. The study also researched current information about the topic of mentoring in education. The study then proceeded to contact school superintendents to gain permission to contact teachers within their districts. Surveys were sent to identified first year teachers, and results were tabulated.

#### Subjects and Materials

The idea to evaluate and suggest improvements in the Teacher Assistance Program (TAP) was suggested by Judy McCutchen of the North Central Educational Service District. Areas of educational interest and concern were brought up by her to determine a suitable area of study. The parameters for evaluation of the Teacher Assistance Program were discussed. Initial resources were provided by Mrs. McCutchen that included both materials and Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) personnel to contact.

The researchers met with Judy McCutchen at a subsequent time to further clarify the study and parameters that would be used. Three school districts were chosen as a sampling of all TAP participants. One investigator chose to examine the Wenatchee School District which utilizes the North Central Educational Service District (NCESD) curriculum for participating school districts within their area of responsibility. There were sixteen first year teachers in the Wenatchee School District.

The other researcher selected the Cashmere and Cascade School Districts. These school districts did apply TAP individually and did not participate with the NCESD. These two school districts had twelve first year teachers.

An additional meeting was held with Judy McCutchen to further clarify the study and to obtain some additional research she had available. She also provided a list of first year teachers in the Wenatchee School District. The Cashmere and Cascade School Districts provided the names of first year teachers from within their districts. It was understood that the sampling subjects do not represent a true random sampling. Nonetheless the subjects were to be considered as representative of all first year teachers within the state. The researchers feel the sample was not biased and that similar responses would have been obtained from additional school districts.

#### Procedural Details

The researchers sought approval from each of the District Superintendents (Appendix A). All three Superintendents approved of the research plan.

In March a letter of introduction, including the first questionnaire (Appendix B), was sent to all first year teachers within the area of study. They were informed of our desire to have them participate with us in the study. Information that they provided would be used as a foundation to understand what works well in TAP, as well as what areas of concern should be reevaluated and improved upon.

After questionnaires were returned a time was scheduled to have a follow-up interview with each teacher. This portion of the study was completed in April. Interviews were conducted through personal contact. Verbatim responses were tabulated (Appendix C). There was some difficulty encountered with a few teachers who did not return their survey. It was discovered that some teachers did not have an individual office, a few were teaching in more than one building, or were unresponsive to contacts.

In May the Beginning/Experienced Teacher Survey provided by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) was sent out to each teacher (Appendix D). Although this form had been used in previous years, OSPI was not going to

utilize it this year. Researchers obtained permission from Joanne Sorensen, Washington State Board of Education, to use this survey for our study. Surveys were completed and returned before the end of the school year in June. See Appendix E for tabulated responses to this questionnaire.

Relevant materials relating to mentoring teachers were researched. A significant amount of material focused on mentoring as a continuing educational experience for all teachers. Some of this material was applicable to the study. Researchers also discovered a growing volume of literature that relates specifically to the first year teacher's need to be mentored. This later material identifies areas of interest to the first year teacher as well as identifying qualities of good mentors.

The last step of the project involved the analysis of surveys with reference to current data available. The researchers divided information from three school districts: the Wenatchee School District for one, Cashmere and Cascade School Districts for the other. Finally, these results were combined to form conclusions and recommendations about the validity of mentoring first year teachers.

CHAPTER IV  
PROJECT ANALYSIS OF THE WENATCHEE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Neil Zobel

The decision to study first year teachers in the Wenatchee School District was made because of the location of the district to the researchers. Proximity of the Cashmere and Cascade School Districts was a determining factor for including them in the study. Another factor was the ability to compare sixteen teachers in the Wenatchee School District to twelve teachers in the combined Cashmere and Cascade School Districts. A third factor was Wenatchee's association with North Central Educational Service District which administered TAP for that District, to Cashmere and Cascade School District's independent application of TAP.

The researchers were grateful for the use of the "Beginning Teacher Survey" from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for Washington State (Appendix C). By examining that questionnaire the researchers were able to identify five areas of need that the survey did not address. Those five areas of need were formulated by the researchers into the first questionnaire that was sent out to the subject teachers (Appendix B).

Mentoring new teachers into their profession is a relatively new development. Only since the 1980's have school districts tried to help acclimate first year teachers into their new career with formal mentoring programs. Assessment of the Teacher Assistance Program in Washington State had been a yearly occurrence. The researchers took advantage of the state's non use of their own survey to provide a limited application of it within the environs of North Central Washington. With the addition of their own questionnaire the researchers have been able to study TAP from another vantage point.

Analysis of the First Survey: Neil Zobel

Question #1: Did your initial match with a mentor/teacher provide you with a positive foundation for your first year of teaching? Please explain.

Responses were overwhelming positive for this question. Mentees were very pleased with the mentor matches they received. The qualities that shined with the greatest brilliance were: an open conversationalist; someone who is patient, motivated, supportive; someone who gives good advice; and one who can maintain emotional equilibrium amidst the melee of activity each school day.

Specific areas that mentees identified as areas where they needed help and got it were: lesson planning and preparation; an ability to clearly explain the curriculum, how to establish student groupings, how to determine how much time students require to learn a concept; experience that can help answer questions about failing students, or how to motivate students who are not turning in assignments; how to work with the computer grading system; and lastly, someone who can explain the culture of the school with a special emphasis on how professional relationships work within the building. This was a big item!

There were a number of concerns that were expressed as well. Mentees desired that the mentor should be a full time teacher who was working in their building. Mentors who had student teachers did not have adequate time to help the mentee. Mentors should identify themselves to their mentee at least one week prior to the beginning of the school year, and be willing to meet at least once per week for a minimum of one hour with their mentee. And, it seemed to some that quality mentors are also called upon to function in a variety of other tasks which extremely limited the amount of time that could be given to the mentoring relationship.

Question #2: If you are presently with a second mentor/teacher explain the reason for the transition.

There were two teachers whose mentor situation changed during the year. For one first year teacher the mentor resigned from teaching in March due to health reasons, and a replacement mentor was not assigned. By that time of the school year other relationships had been forged.

The second situation involved a mentor that did not have the same content area as the mentee. Although the relationship was good, there was little help with the curriculum. In the second month of school a second mentor was assigned who knew the mentee's area of teaching "like the back of her hand." This second relationship proved very beneficial.

Question #3: Describe some of your initial experiences (beneficial or frustrating) during your first months of teaching.

Teacher experiences in gaining their education degree did not prepare them adequately for the amount of work that was required, or the breadth of information that they were challenged to respond to. As one teacher said, "Everything I did took longer than I thought."

Environments varied from having everything written out, including the outlines, to no objectives or outcomes written out, but known and understood by experienced teachers.

On the job learning demanded a lot of time and energy. Some were overwhelmed by the curriculum choices that were available. Others found materials that had been dumped in the room by the previous teachers. One teacher admitted, "I had not been taught how to draw from a variety of materials to form a single lesson." And another teacher said it took a couple of months to figure out the "system" of



EALRS and curriculum. This last item was a curious item since Essential Academic Learning Requirements are one of the current educational hot buttons.

Classroom management and discipline issues were mentioned with a sense of personal vulnerability. One teacher admitted that their personality style needed to be adjusted in order to bring order to his classroom. Another response contrasted their student teaching experience with twenty-eight students to their class load of up to thirty-four students which added a whole new dimension to the concept of classroom management.

One teacher was extremely shocked by the low academic levels (2-3 levels below grade level) of the students. This factor made a difference in how she managed the curriculum to match the students abilities.

A third area which teachers identified was the importance of having a supportive team available to help make efficient use of their time. A school counselor found support from other counselors in the school district. One teacher seemed to be delighted when the department staff got together for lunch or dinner and talked about how they were doing as a team of educators. One individual admitted a piece of reality that should be extremely rare: "I have had to find out stuff on my own."

Student and parent relationships were also highlighted. There was the normal, "Let's check out the new teacher," syndrome, which had a healthy resolution after the first Parent-Teacher Conference as the parents affirmed that the teacher's expectations for the class were high. And there was a reality check for the teacher who was extremely frustrated by the lack of parental output when it came to helping their child study at home.

Question #4: To what degree did your TAP connection alleviate your frustration level and/or affirm your immersion into the teaching profession?

The North Central Educational Service District provides two kinds of help to the mentors and mentees of several School Districts in the area. They are a weekend retreat and several after school mini-seminars. The Wenatchee School District encourages its TAP participants to take full advantage of these offerings.

A vital part of NCESD is responsibility for providing a weekend get together at a resort on the shores of Lake Chelan. The Chelan experience received a large quantity of feedback. Responses are divided into two categories: positive feedback, and redirection comments.

Participants at this weekend get-a-way were largely pleased with the setting, content, and environment of the seminar. The setting was very relaxing and proved to be a helpful medium for instruction.

For teachers who were beginning to figure things out the seminar cleared up a number of questions about discipline and management of time. The sense of being “swamped” or “whacked out” was a feeling that many shared, and in the sharing there was relief in knowing that the situations that were being faced were not unique to any one teacher.

One teacher had the beneficial experience of being able to confide in an empathetic experienced teacher. This encounter enabled the first year teacher to put things in perspective.

Beside the positive comments that have been highlighted, there were a number of redirection comments that were expressed for the ESD to consider to make future weekend seminars even more beneficial.

First year teachers thought a simplest change was to schedule the event for October or no later than early November. The NCESD event took place in December.

Education is beginning to see more mid-life transition people coming into the teaching profession. Those who were into this category appreciated the content of the seminar, but felt that it did not give them credit for their maturity and life experiences that had enabled them to quickly adjust to the classroom setting. For these individuals and one self-disciplined first year teacher the concept of “The Wall,” a frustration and/or stress level barrier, did not apply.

One individual stressed the need for more pertinent content. The request was that “TAP should have more information on contracts, credits, and clock hours with new teachers. That which was presented was very fast and short, and lacked time for questions.” An explanation of what ESD classes were should be made with greater detail.

After school mini-seminars are the second offering that NCESD makes available to School Districts. Wenatchee participants in these events did not write down any positive responses. That doesn't mean there were none. It simply means that none stood out in the participant's mind as being especially meaningful.

There were several comments for redirection that participants noted. Chief among the responses was the thought that the after school events were either repetitive or non-applicable. Mentors were covering the material that the ESD was presenting in their one-on-one relationship with their mentees.

This is an area that the ESD will have to revisit. These short-burst learning events are qualitatively different, and more limited, than the weekend seminar. Serious content items, containing full definitions and opportunities for discussion, seem to be valued by the Wenatchee TAP participants.

Question #5: Briefly describe how teachers or administrators, other than your mentor/teacher, have assisted you.

The advice and assessment observations provided by principals and assistant principals to first year teachers was appreciated. Teaching concepts or tools that were talked about were put immediately into practice.

A first year school counselor observed that a number of teachers in the building held her at arms length through the first few months of school. "How long are you going to stay?" was an unspoken question in their minds. Fortunately, after a few months the teachers accepted her as a part of the whole staff.

A number of mentees mentioned that everyone in their school was helpful with supplies or directions. Friendliness seemed to be a constant factor among staff toward first year teachers.

#### Analysis of the Second Survey

##### "Beginning Teacher Survey" - Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

A second survey was sent to all of the first year teachers in the Wenatchee School District in the month of May (Appendix D). This survey had its origin from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). In previous years the OSPI sent this survey to all first year teachers in the state, but this year the survey was not being sent out. The return rate for this survey was less than the first survey.

Responses to questions #1-7 were not within the scope of this research project, and they are not included in this analysis.

Questions #8 & 9. Approximately how often do you meet with your mentor, and how adequate is this number for your success?

Six of the nine teachers, or two thirds of the teachers, met one to three times a week with their mentor. Two met twice a month. One individual met less than monthly with his/her mentor.

Seven of the nine respondents said that they met with their mentor the correct number of times per month. None mentioned that there were too many meetings with their mentor.

The impact of this interaction time is seen from Question #13, where contact times are viewed as being extremely important.

Question #10-12. On how many occasions did your mentor formally observe you teaching a lesson? On how many occasions did you formally observe other teachers teach a lesson? How valuable has it been to have your mentor observe you teach a lesson?

The research data suggests that observation times between the two teachers is one of the most valuable factors in teacher development. The data received in these three questions is therefore very important. What we discover is that although observations are valued, there is not much of it going on.

Only one teacher responded that the mentor observed her/him more than five times during the year. Six were observed only once or twice during the year. And two teachers recorded that they were never observed by their mentor teacher.

The other angle of observation was just as interesting. Five teachers did not observe their mentor during the year, and three indicated observing their mentor one time to four times. There was one teacher who observed their mentor seven or more times during the course of the school year.

Although seven of the nine teachers believed that having their mentor observe them was valuable, there wasn't much observation going on. Two teachers admitted that their mentor never observed them.

Question #13. How valuable has it been to have your mentor assist you in planning and reflecting on teaching?

Again, this is an identifiable indicator of success for the first year teacher. It was valued by eight of the nine teachers in this survey. Five agreed with the "extremely valuable" option, which was admirable. Three agreed that this collaboration time was "somewhat valuable," and one expressed that there was no opportunity for interaction with the mentor. Information and support is available for both teachers during these opportunities for collaboration. When the time for planning and reflection are not taken either teacher may be hurting, or both are extremely independent.

Questions #14-18. How helpful has your mentor been in each of the following: Instructional strategies, Classroom management, Building/district policies and procedures, Morale and personal support, and Curriculum materials/resources?

The responses were somewhat spread in the areas of instructional strategies and classroom management with a balance between "somewhat" and "quite" helpful. When we look at building and district policies as well as curriculum needs there is more expressed value for help given to the teacher by the mentor. The area of morale and personal support finds the greatest amount of appreciation for valuable aids given to the mentee with eight of nine recording "quite helpful" or "extremely helpful" responses.

Becoming a good teacher requires skills plus a solid self confidence that comes from helpful interactions with other teachers. The mentor teacher provides a distinct catalyst to this kind of professional growth.

We will revisit these topic areas later in the survey. They are the core questions for this questionnaire. Professional development can be assessed by tracking the responses to these questions.

Question #19-20. How likely is it that you will remain in the teaching profession? Has having a mentor influenced your decision in the previous question regarding remaining in the teaching profession?

Eight of nine teachers are convinced that they will remain in the teaching profession. This commitment seems to stem from inward assessment rather than mentor involvement. Five teachers indicated that their mentor experience carried no influence in their desire, with only one person saying that their mentor provided a great deal in their decision to remain in education.

Question #21. To what extent do you think this year's overall experience was positively affected by having a mentor?

It is heartening to have eight of the teachers affirm that the mentoring experience was a positive aid in their first year's adjustment to teaching. This demonstrates the advantage of a mentoring program for first year teachers. It also speaks to the quality of mentors that were available to the program.

Question #22. How much assistance did your building principal provide you and your mentor?

Five individuals said "some" to "none." Four people said their principal provided them with "a good deal" of assistance. This positive response was probably related to the instructional guidance the principal gave following observations of the teacher in the classroom.

Questions #23-24. At the start of this year to what extent did you feel you needed a mentor? Now, to what extent do you feel you needed a mentor?

At the start of the year two teachers responded, "somewhat," while four said, "quite a bit" to needing a mentor. Three were adamant when they indicated that they "absolutely needed" a mentor.

At the end of the year six teachers responded, "somewhat," while one said, "quite a bit" to needing a mentor. Two were adamant when they indicated that they "absolutely needed" a mentor.

Most of the movement in this question went from the "quite a bit needed" to the "somewhat needed." If the mentoring relationship had been minimal, then first year teachers may have discovered that they could, and did, do the job whether or not they had a mentor.

There were two who remained adamant that they "absolutely needed" a mentor. For these two, they may have simply had great relationship with their mentor that gained them a very good friend, or they may have been of the opinion that they could not have envisioned their first year without the added benefit of a mentor.

Questions #25-28. At the start of this school year how competent did you feel about each of the following: Instructional strategies, Classroom management, Building/district policies and procedures, and Curriculum materials/resources?

This is the second time we visit these questions. In this section we deal with assessment about teacher's sense of competency. The following section reviews assessment of the same areas at the end of the year. A distinct change does take place.

The topics of instructional strategies, building and district policies, and curriculum were all weighted around "somewhat" competent. Teachers indicated a greater degree of competency regarding classroom management even though their responses were spread across the continuum.



Questions #29-32: Now, how competent do you feel about each of the following: Instructional strategies, Classroom management, Building/district policies and procedures, and Curriculum materials/resources?

We visit these topics for the final time, and we discover a definite improvement over the course of the year. "Quite competent" receives the largest amount of responses for each category. This is definitely better than "somewhat competent."

The question that can be considered is this, "How much did mentoring play in this improvement?" or, "Did this improvement occur as a natural process of maturation rather than intervention from a mentor?"

The answer to these questions may be qualified from previous questions like the one which spoke to limited observation experiences. Another qualifier may be indicated by the final two questions in the survey which follow.

Question #33. Which one of the following activities did you find most helpful: Demonstration teaching, Observing other teachers, Observation dialogue/debriefing, Workshops/classes, Goal setting/problem solving sessions, or other?

Observations, workshops, and goal setting/problem solving all received positive responses. The largest response area was on "observation with dialogue/debriefing." These interaction times provided the first year teacher with short burst learning experiences that could be immediately turned to the teacher's advantage. The mentoring concept of providing observation opportunities accompanied with debriefing conversations is an extremely valuable tool in the teacher's induction year.

Question #34. What is your perception of the overall value of your district's mentoring program?

Although two teachers did not respond to this question, seven were of the opinion that the mentoring experience was valuable. Overall the program has a number of sterling qualities. Indispensable tools are provided to assist the first year teacher to survive their first year with success and confidence. Good old "on the job training" will always be with us, but it is qualitatively and quantitatively improved with a mentor guide leading the way for the first year teacher.

CHAPTER IV  
PROJECT ANALYSIS OF THE CASCADE AND CASHMERE  
SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Lynda Huson

The concept of having a mentor help individuals adjust to and learn new jobs is not new to the American economy. Business communities have been using this concept for many decades. However, mentoring new teachers into their profession is a relatively new development. Only since the 1980's have school districts tried to help acclimate first year teachers into their new career with formal mentoring programs.

Several choices have emerged to accomplish the task of assimilation. One such means is through the organized Educational Service Districts (ESDs) of the area that oversee the assigning of the mentor, planning training, following up on paperwork requirements, and evaluating and assessing value to participants. Another option for local school districts is to organize and run their own mentoring programs and keep the state allotted funds within the district. The district is charged with all the duties of assigning, helping, and documenting the mentorship of the newly hired teacher. The Cashmere School District of Cashmere and the Cascade School District of Leavenworth chose the option of keeping the money within their districts and running the program themselves.

Organization of the mentoring program within the two school districts is slightly different. Cashmere School District let each individual school administration assign and oversee the mentor tasks. Cascade School district assigned an individual to organize and run the operation. This person will be attempting to obtain his Principal Certificate and organized the mentor induction in partial fulfillment of his college requirements. He created a program that matched the mentors with beginning

teachers and scheduled monthly meetings to discuss various topics including keeping computer grade books, obtaining supplies, goal setting, and end of the year procedures. He admitted starting the program after school had begun and hopes to initialize the matching much earlier in the coming years. Beginning teachers did not mention any of his after school programs or involvement in the surveys although they were not directly asked for this information.

An initial questionnaire included five short answer questions (Appendix B) and was mailed to all new teachers in both the Cashmere and Cascade School Districts as identified by the Superintendent's office or by the individual in charge of mentoring. Upon return of the survey an appointment was scheduled with each of the participating teachers for a personal interview to clarify statements. Through the initial questionnaire and follow-up interview, beginning teachers told how the mentor program either acclimated or failed to help them adjust to their new profession (Appendix C).

#### Analysis of the First Survey: Lynda Huson

Question #1: Did your initial match with a mentor/teacher provide you with a positive foundation for your first year of teaching? Please explain.

There was a wide variance in responses to the question asking neophyte teachers about their match with their mentor. Responses included such statements as, "we meet every Tuesday," and "the planning I've done with my mentor has been invaluable," to "I have not been assigned a mentor teacher and have not heard of this program." If a mentor was assigned, most reported the initial match of the teachers provided very valuable help. Responses included, "extremely helpful", "helped with everything including scheduling and planning", and "she's an excellent resource."

Teachers who reported the most benefits were matched with a mentor that taught the same subject(s) and were working in the same building. Being available

and having similar philosophies were rated by most mentees as extremely valuable in determining the overall success of the program. Mentors who were in a different building from the beginning teacher, did not teach the same subject, or did not directly teach children were not rated as valuable and had fewer contacts that were each less meaningful. Teaching in the same subject area as their mentor played a major role in the success of the mentor contact especially to specialized teachers such as special education and preschool educators. These ideas are supported in research by Marlow (1997), "beginning teachers need to have colleagues with whom they can share ideas, make plans, and attempt problems. When beginning teachers are mentored in this way, they gain knowledge, feel less isolated, and develop a greater sense of self-esteem and efficiency."

Some obstacles these teachers faced included teaching at two different schools in the same day, getting hired late in the school year, and leaving the teaching position for maternity leave. Most stated the obstacles were much easier to overcome with the help of a mentor to guide them through the additional challenges in their initial year.

A common thread in all the contacts was the need to have time available together. Mentors who openly gave of their time and who were accessible at a moment's notice were rated as a more valuable resource. Teachers who had mentors that were not readily available often sought out other teachers in close proximity to answer questions or obtain ideas from. Mentors assigned prior to the start of the school year were rated as more helpful by beginning teachers than those who were established part way through the year. Again, time seemed more of the issue than the actual month of the year of the assignment. Once school was underway the lack of quality time to meet together challenged the immediate and long-term value of the mentor as a role model to follow. Gannser (1995) identified three key principles that

contribute to the success of matching mentors and beginning teachers: 1. Have similar, though not necessarily identical, teaching assignments, 2. Have compatible ideas about teaching and children, and 3. Be accessible in time and location.

Question #2: If you are presently with a second mentor/teacher explain the reason for the transition.

Transitioning from their initial mentor occurred for two of the twelve beginning teachers in the Cashmere and Cascade School Districts. One teacher seemed to have a relatively easy transition between the two mentors. The initial match was replaced since the mentor herself was only in her second year of teaching. The original pair had met prior to school starting and, according to the new teacher, was organizing a system to assist the beginning teacher.

The other transition was needed because the teacher moved districts at the end of the school year. Since she had not been hired in the previous district for a full year, she was eligible for .6 of the mentoring program this year. Unfortunately, no match-up had occurred to continue building upon her mentoring experiences. This teacher did not realize she was eligible for the Teacher Assistance Program at this school since no one had contacted her. This may have been an oversight since she did have experience the previous year, but she was eligible to some additional paid mentoring help this year.

Question #3: Describe some of your initial experiences (beneficial or frustrating) during your first months of teaching.

First year teachers listed positive and negative experiences during their initial year in their profession. A benefit often listed was the ability to work with others who were friendly and helpful. Coworkers, team members, and administrators played an important role in the positive experiences of first year teachers. Other benefits included having summer help with the room set up, having principal expectations

explained to them in advance, and having kind and understanding students during this tumultuous year.

Lack of time, getting hired late in the summer or early into the school-year, and overwhelmed by the amount of subject material knowledge required for the position were the most frequent complaints of new teachers. Two of these three complaints were helped with mentor involvement and advice. A mentor with a listening ear helped alleviate new teachers feelings of being overwhelmed by job requirements. Several new teachers stated that just knowing they weren't the only ones to have ever had these feelings was comforting. Mentors were empathetic to their frustrations and seemingly staggering workloads. One neophyte teacher had this to say about her mentor, "she relieved my anxiety, gave me answers, and made me lots of extra copies." More about mentor help with time constraints and lesson plans will follow. Other positive experiences included support from other teachers, administrators, and other beginning teachers, especially new employees in their building.

Those without mentors did not have the same positive experiences. One special education teacher who did not receive a mentor until January stated, "it was frustrating trying to meet state and federal regulations at the beginning of the year without a mentor." She had made attempts to contact other school sources, including the school psychologist and the special education director, looking for help with questions. She did not experience much success in making connections with them. Another teacher who had no mentor stated, "I had lots of freedom but not enough guidance." Overall, the tasks of teachers interviewed appeared to be somewhat less overwhelming if a mentor was available for guidance and support.

Question #4: To what degree did your TAP connection alleviate your frustration level and/or affirm your immersion into the teaching profession?

The Teacher Assistance Program connection seemed to positively affect how beginning teachers judged their first year experiences. A common statement mentioned was that the mentor was someone to lean on in challenging times.

They felt encouraged that things would get better, that they were not alone in feeling overwhelmed, and that they had someone to go to who would be sympathetic to their cause even if it involved only listening to negative experiences. The idea that they were both in this together encouraged and affirmed new teachers trying to adjust to demands of teaching. "It's OK not to know everything," was one mentors encouragement to a mentee. Another stated her mentor gave her, "strength and hope."

A prevalent statement was the willingness of their mentor to share curriculum materials with them. The lack of time for daily preparation was overwhelming for first year teachers. The ability to glean well thought out lessons from others gave them confidence in delivering instruction. Gathering ideas from an experienced person reduced the planning involved, yet the students still could obtain the information. The value of this kind of transaction was enhanced when the mentor was at the same grade level or close to the same level since they shared the same curriculum requirements. Long-term future planning with another coworker was listed as an invaluable resource for new teachers. This reason may be why the first-year teachers with same-grade mentors rated their mentors as more helpful since they could share lesson information and have empathy for the beginner's frustrations.

Having a mentor that was assigned was a relief to some teachers. They reported feeling better contacting another with questions or problems knowing the mentor was expecting them to ask. Bey found, "when a specific teacher is assigned to



be the mentor, the beginning teacher feels he/she has permission to ask for help from this person and the mentor feels that his/her assistance is sanctioned rather than likely to be viewed as interference" (1990). Having these expectations listed in advance gave the first year teacher explicit 'permission' to ask for help. Teachers who were assigned a mentor but could find little value in the Teacher Assistance Program most often complained of a lack of quality time to meet together to do any sharing.

The accessibility of a mentor often determined the amount of perceived benefits gained. Ryan believes in "reality shock" which is experienced during a first year teacher's induction period. He states, "because 'reality shock' is so context- and person-specific, a mentoring approach for supporting beginning teachers is a very effective approach" (as cited in Montgomery, 1988).

Those teachers who had no knowledge of a mentor or who were assigned one late in the year stated that they had sought out an unofficial resource person to get help with policy questions or socially appropriate expectations within their buildings. They reported mixed results without having a mentor officially assigned. One teacher sought the help of the special education director who also was in his initial year of teaching. Another had the school's librarian approach her to say she would answer any questions for the first year teacher after she had unknowingly offended another coworker. Odell stated that, "new teachers should have ready physical access to their mentors. If the mentor appears too infrequently in the classroom of the new teacher, or the new teacher must traverse the school grounds in order to be supported by the mentor, the likelihood is diminished that immediate and continuous support over time will occur" (1990). Mentoring appears to be happening whether it is assigned or not, but the degree of aid that is given is increased if the assignment is explicitly stated.

Question #5: Briefly describe how teachers or administrators, other than your mentor/teacher, have assisted you.

According to first year teachers, three groups of people interacted within the school setting to aid their induction. The principal helped teachers with feedback on formal and informal observations, praised and supported them for what they were doing, and assisted them in handling severe discipline situations. New teachers rated fellow teachers who were not specifically assigned as a mentor as being very contributive. They helped by providing curriculum and worksheets, designing labs, giving discipline support, and even planning, especially for the long-term goals. In one case, fellow teachers were extremely willing to help, yet did not know the technical information the first year special education teacher needed. Other new teachers who were in the same building were also listed as being helpful to each other. They could lean on one another for moral support, empathy, ideas, and even guidance. The daily interactions with the principal, coworkers, and other new teachers often aided them in ways that a mentor could not. But this did not replace the reliance they had on their mentor for ongoing assistance and support.

#### Analysis of the Second Survey

##### “Beginning Teacher Survey” – Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

Upon completion of the interviews, a second survey was mailed to all first year teachers asking them to complete several multiple-choice questions (Appendix D). During the interview the teachers were made aware of the fact that a second survey would be coming in May. One hundred percent participation was not achieved on return of this survey. Responses to the initial questions #1-7 did not effect our results and are not included in the following pages. See Appendix E for numerical tabulation of results from this survey. Additional information from this survey included the following responses from their candid replies.

Questions #8 & 9: Approximately how often do you meet with your mentor, and how adequate is this number for your success?

Only one half of the respondents stated they met with their mentor two times a month or more. The other half met once a month or less. Yet 80% said that this was the correct number for them. No one listed the contacts as too many, and two out of ten stated they had too few contacts with their mentor. Some mentors were listed as being more helpful than others were. Possibly the less helpful mentors were not coming as often and this was seen as a positive rather than negative fact.

Questions #10-12: On how many occasions did your mentor formally observe you teaching a lesson? On how many occasions did you formally observe other teachers teach a lesson? How valuable has it been to have your mentor observe you teach a lesson?

Available time set aside for mentors and mentees to observe one another rarely happened. Eight out of ten first year teachers reported not ever being observed by their mentor, observing their mentor teach a lesson, or observe another teacher teach more than one to two times.

The remaining two new teachers who were observed reported their feedback from these two exercises as extremely valuable or somewhat valuable. The actual observation of teaching methods seems to be lacking in the training/mentoring of new teachers, despite the seemingly positive gains from this kind of exercise. Using substitutes gives them both time to observe and evaluate teaching situations just as it is specifically laid out in WAC 392-196-077 regarding the Teacher Assistance Program-Provision for Mentor Teachers. Yet the lack of time without a class waiting to be taught seems to hold back teachers from observing one another.

Question #13: How valuable has it been to have your mentor assist you in planning and reflecting on teaching?

Since most first year teachers were not observed, reflecting on their teaching is not something their mentors could help them accomplish. The wide majority who responded positively to this question were possibly responding only to the first half of the question regarding having a mentor that assisted them with planning. This assistance was widely praised in the first survey, the personal interviews, and again in this survey.

Questions #14-18: How helpful has your mentor been in each of the following: Instructional strategies, Classroom management, Building/district policies and procedures, Morale and personal support, and Curriculum materials/resources?

The majority of first year teachers listed their mentor's help with instructional strategies, classroom management, and policies and procedures as "somewhat or quite helpful." But their rating in the areas of moral and personal support, and curriculum materials/resources was significantly higher. Seven out of ten respondents stated their mentor was "extremely helpful" with moral and personal support, with two additional answers in the "quite helpful" category. For acclimation in the area of curriculum materials and resources seventy percent answered "quite helpful" or "extremely helpful." Mentors did appear to make a significant difference in subjects that can't be directly taught at a university level such as moral, personal support, curriculum materials, and resources.

Questions #19-20: How likely is it that you will remain in the teaching profession? Has having a mentor influenced your decision in the previous question regarding remaining in the teaching profession?

One hundred percent of the respondents replied they were "very likely" or "extremely likely" to stay in the teaching profession. Of these, half reported that

having a mentor did not influence their decision. Mentoring appeared to be a nice addition to their training and could at times reduce their feelings of being overwhelmed, but did not appear to greatly influence the decision to remain or leave the teaching field. Possibly the first year was too early to tell if or how much an influence a mentor had been on the teacher in deciding future career plans.

Question #21: To what extent do you think this year's overall experience was positively affected by having a mentor?

Almost all of the respondents who were assigned a mentor answered that the year's positive experiences were attributed to having a mentor assist them. One beginning teacher was not assigned a mentor this school year. Another was assigned a consulting teacher as a mentor. She rarely visited and had no direct experience with the subjects taught by the beginning teacher. The third teacher to not respond overwhelmingly positive was not assigned a mentor until January and had struggled with several issues prior to receiving the match. There appeared to be a significant number of teachers who were positively affected by their mentor teachers during the 1997-1998 school year.

Question #22: How much assistance did your building principal provide you and your mentor?

Most reported building principals were a "good deal" to a "great deal" of help to the mentor pair although this was not a unanimous decision. A direct influence from the principal occurred in the Cashmere School District where he or she facilitates the day off provided by the district to give mentors and mentees time to plan together. Also, most also rated the principal as helpful in giving positive advice during evaluations. Two of the teachers reported the building principal was no help to them.

Question #23-24: At the start of this year to what extent did you feel you needed a mentor? Now, to what extent do you feel you needed a mentor?

At the beginning of the year eighty percent of the teachers felt they needed a mentor “quite a bit” or “absolutely.” In looking back in May most respondents felt they had only “somewhat” needed a mentor. One teacher answered she did not feel she needed a mentor at all. Answers could have possibly been higher had the mentor been more involved in observation and feedback than they seemed to find time to do. Overall, teachers seem to adjust to the challenges of teaching with differing degrees of help from their mentor.

Questions #25-28: At the start of this school year how competent did you feel about each of the following: Instructional strategies, Classroom management, Building/district policies and procedures, and Curriculum materials/resources?

Competence in the area of instructional strategies was not an issue for most the respondents, although confidence rose slightly in this area by the close of the school year. Classroom management appears to have been a concern for several participants in September when only thirty percent answered they felt at least “quite confident.” By May ninety percent answered “quite competent” to “extremely competent.”

The two areas of most concern for beginning teachers in the fall appeared to be building/district policies and curriculum materials and resources. No respondent answered above “somewhat competent” in the area of policies and procedures. This would follow research by Design, Bernhardt and Shulman that says, “increasingly, universities and school districts are recognizing that in order to prepare teachers effectively, there is a need for continuous and relevant instruction starting with the undergraduate program and extending into the professional development years” (1990). These building policies can not be taught in college or found in a textbook.

These areas can only be taught on the job or in a crash course just prior to the start of school.

Questions #29-32: Now, how competent do you feel about each of the following: Instructional strategies, Classroom management, Building/district policies and procedures, and Curriculum materials/resources?

By May teachers were more confident, but only one answered “extremely confident” concerning building or district policies. Curriculum materials or resources had most teachers somewhat competent or below when school started. Again, by the end of the year their confidence rose but still only one stated he or she was extremely confident in this area. Possibly districts would be wise to continue a mentoring program beyond the initial year to continue building up confidence in these areas.

Question #33: Which one of the following activities did you find most helpful: Demonstration teaching, observing other teachers, Observation dialogue/debriefing, Workshops/classes, Goal setting/problem solving sessions, or other?

The answers to this question varied tremendously. The wide range of grade levels and variance in teaching subjects, from special education preschool to electives at the high school, made the importance of the activities different for each teacher. There appeared to be no common thread or one activity that superseded the other in value to the first year teacher.

Question #34: What is your perception of the overall value of your district’s mentoring program?

Seventy percent listed the Teacher Assistance Program as “quite valuable” to “extremely valuable.” One chose N/A since she has not been assigned a mentor this school year although she was potentially eligible to .8 of a mentor. Another chose only “somewhat valuable” since she rarely saw her mentor and the mentor had no

experience working the same job of the beginning teacher. Overall, those teachers who have been assigned a successful mentor match rated the program as successful.

Daloz found that, “mentors are guides. They lead us along the journey of our lives. We trust them because they have been there before. They embody our hopes, cast light on the way ahead, interpret arcane signs, warn us of lurking dangers, and point out unexpected delights along the way”(1986).



## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The overall effectiveness of the Teacher Assistance Program of Washington State was evaluated for acclimating first year teachers into their new profession.

Research was sought to verify the study of the mentoring program. Documentation was gathered from several sources that verified the needs of new teachers, mentor programs, and state assistance in program guidance.

Original surveys and letters of request were mailed to all first year teachers in the Wenatchee, Cashmere, and Cascade School Districts asking for their voluntary participation in our study of the effectiveness of their mentoring experiences in TAP. Upon completion and return of these questionnaires a personal interview was scheduled with each beginning teacher to clarify and expound upon their initial responses. Judy McCutchen of the North Central Educational Service District provided responses she had gathered from opinion surveys completed following various trainings for beginning teachers. These trainings were only available to first year teachers whose districts participated in the ESD TAP.

A second survey was subsequently mailed to participants. This survey was made available to the researchers through Washington State's OSPI. The survey was intended to gather additional information pertaining to teacher's end of the year perceptions of the program. Information gleaned from the literature, initial questionnaires, interviews, ESD opinion surveys, and returned OSPI surveys was combined to formulate conclusions and the following recommendations.

### Conclusions of the Mentor / Mentee Program

Public schools in the next century will face a volume of new challenges. All teachers will be asked to expand their critical thinking skills. They will also be required to provide for student knowledge expansion in a variety of learning environments. First year teachers, facing these demands, need the support, advice, and feedback from more experienced teachers. Idealistically, mentoring should occur regardless of any prescribed legislation. Yet it has not occurred in any consistent, organized, or valuable manner unless some authority has mandated it.

Given the constraints of the current TAP most teachers found their mentor experience to be affirming. Several individuals stated that lesson planning and preparation, time management skills, and curriculum expectations were easier to understand with the help of a conscientious mentor. Experienced teachers who outlined their principal's expectations prior to school starting provided an easier acclimation into the social structure of the building for their mentee. Observation by the mentor, accompanied with the follow up debriefing, when it occurred, was highly rated as "valuable" by mentee. Classroom management, despite its ongoing challenges, was easier to articulate if a mentor was involved in a first year teacher's training. Another positive mentee feedback was the assistance they received in how to use the technology of their building.

Above all the skills an experienced teacher could pass on to a new teacher one of the most recognized benefits was the empathy and moral support offered by a person who had been in their position. Repeatedly, mentees listed their mentor as someone they could go to when they felt overwhelmed, confused, or frustrated. Another coworker could replace this ongoing support but rarely did this occur. Mentors who could be depended upon for moral support were a valuable asset to the mentee's adjustment to their first year in teaching.

Overall mentees had a strong opinion that their mentor should be an experienced teacher who could accurately define state and federal regulations for education. They said that it was very frustrating to meet those regulations without the help of a qualified and mature mentor walking alongside of them.

It was noted that mentors should be assigned as soon as possible before the school year began. In circumstances where first year teachers are hired a day or two before the school year began, or during the first weeks of school due to a change in student enrollment, identified mentors should make contact with the mentee at the earliest possible date. The best match of mentor/mentee is accomplished when the mentor's teaching assignment is in the same content area, and the mentor is a full time teacher on the same site as the mentee.

The management of time is a major concern for all teachers. Mentees valued the time that their mentor gave to them, and they felt that mentors should be strongly committed to meeting with them at least once a week for an unencumbered hour. This high priority is compromised when the mentor is involved with too much other work outside of the classroom. Sports, school and district committees, and personal agendas detract from the ideals of TAP.

A final area of concern regards the necessity of classroom observation opportunities. It was noted that mentees valued the observations and debriefings given them by their mentor. In contrast to this highly valued experience was the reality that there were very few observations given during the year. Also, mentees should be given the opportunity to observe their mentor and other teachers during the year to assist them in their professional growth.

A variety of obstacles added to the difficulty of teachers ability to survive their first-year/mentoring experience. Written objectives, outcomes, or goals of the program were not stressed to new teachers, if they were provided at all. Several

obstacles appeared in the paths of the mentor/new teacher relationship including: mentors who taught at more than one building and were unavailable as a reference for the first year teacher for half of the day; mentors who had little or no experience in the area being taught by the new teacher; more than one first year teacher lost a mentor during the school year due to illness; and one mentor was replaced because she/he was not teaching within the same content area, therefore a replacement mentor had to be assigned after a few months had passed by. When first year teachers were hired after the school year started it was difficult to assign a qualified mentor; and one mentor's baby came unexpectedly early and she had to leave her classroom for maternity leave.

Another obstacle related to school personnel charged with administering the Teacher Assistance Program was that it added a responsibility to their already overloaded schedule. Although they had good intentions to oversee TAP, it may or may not have fit into already busy days. On occasion first year teachers did not get assigned to a mentor due to oversight or lack of communication between the personnel office and the individual charged with the assigning of mentors.

In spite of all of the obstacles listed above there was one resounding fact that could overcome them all. Every challenge was much easier to face and triumph over when a mentor was available to guide the neophyte teacher along their way. This conclusion gave testimony to the validity of professional educational mentoring programs.

### Recommendations

Careful selection of mentors can only strengthen any mentoring program. Mentors need to be experienced, mature, and qualified to be able to guide a new teacher through the trials of the first nine months of teaching. Preference should be given to mentors who are in the same building as a new teacher for the full day. Accessibility is extremely important. A secondary qualification should be teaching the same subject(s) or similar subject(s) as the beginner teacher. This will enable the mentor to be of greater assistance to the mentor in the areas of overall planning, explanation of curriculum requirements, and being available to lend moral support when it is required. A mentor should have time available to meet with, observe, and give feedback to their mentee. A mentor should have a limited number of extra duties assigned to them in order to facilitate their involvement in the mentees transition year. When mentors are assigned a student teacher and given, or allowed, extra curricular activities it has the real potential of dismantling the value of the mentoring relationship.

Mentees also have a great responsibility in the success of the partnership. They need to make time available to be observed, and they need to be willing to follow suggestions given to them by their mentor. They should have opportunities to observe their mentor or other teachers. When after school training is provided for the first year teacher she/he must prioritize the need to be at these meetings for their own advantage. The responsibility of meeting weekly with their mentor for a minimum of one hour is a mutual one, but it rests with the mentee to ask for these conferences when the mentor doesn't take the lead. Above all they must participate wholeheartedly in building the relationship with the experienced teacher.

In this research the oversight of the TAP was given to either the ESD, the school district as a whole, or an individual person who managed it for the school

district. Those who mandate the schedule of the program must look at the improvement of the program as an ongoing challenge. The researchers feel that having mentors who are assigned prior to the school year and given two days to be with their beginning teacher to plan and organize is extremely valuable to starting a mentoring program on a positive path. A list of prospective mentors should be identified prior to realizing the need to have a mentor. This list should be updated periodically so it would be available at a moment's notice. While fulfilling a mentoring role, an experienced teacher's additional responsibilities should be limited to keep him or her available to help the mentee. Specified time should be available to allow for reciprocal observation, reflection, and feedback between the pair. This allotment of time may be difficult especially in the elementary schools where mutual planning times rarely occur. Three possible suggestions are given by the researchers to meet this need: pay for a substitute, or have the school counselor and/or the school administrator available to fill in occasionally to accomplish this requirement.

A teacher hired after school has started faces additional challenges. School administrations should realize these extra burdens will surface occasionally. A special effort to assign a mentor to the first year teacher will ease their total acclimation to the school. Money and time constraints often limit what can be done to improve programs. Yet, this program has long term benefits that deserve to be looked at when budgeting those two items. A well trained, qualified teacher who succeeds in their first year of teaching has the potential of improving their school immensely.

## CHAPTER VI

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

John Gordon, Superintendent  
Wenatchee School District  
P.O. Box 1767  
Wenatchee, WA 98807

February 6, 1998

Dear Mr. Gordon:

We are Central Washington University students currently seeking our Master's degree in Education at the Wenatchee Satellite Campus. The Master's program is under the guidance of Dr. Steve Schmitz. Presently, we are researching information for our Master's project and are requesting your district's assistance in obtaining some of the required data. Our proposal reads as follows:

1. Purpose of this study.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Teacher Assistance Program in assisting new teachers in becoming acclimated to their career environment.

2. Justification for the study.

North Central Education Service District and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction want more personal feedback on the program. We are going to do a post evaluation on the beginning teacher's mentoring experience.

3. Research Question.

Evaluation of new teacher's induction into their educational career as evidenced by Washington State's Teacher Assistance Program. This evaluation will be applied to those new teachers in Wenatchee, Cashmere, and Cascade School Districts. We are interested in evaluating peer relationships, classroom atmosphere, classroom management, and career achievement.

We would like your permission to ask each first year teacher to send us a copy of the state survey they fill out and return to Olympia as part of their participation in the State's program. We also would like to interview, either by phone or in person, those same teachers in your district.

We are only interested in the beginning teacher's response to the program. We are not in any way evaluating the mentors or materials they have been provided as part of the program.

Thank you for your time. One of us will be contacting you by phone next week to answer any questions you may have, and to seek your approval.

Sincerely,

Lynda Huson and Neil Zobel

Dr. Joe Crowder, Superintendent  
Cashmere School District  
210 S. Division  
Cashmere, WA 98815-1133

February 10, 1998

Dear Dr. Crowder:

We are Central Washington University students currently seeking our Master's degree in Education at the Wenatchee Satellite Campus. The Master's program is under the guidance of Dr. Steve Schmitz. Presently, we are researching information for our Master's project and are requesting your district's assistance in obtaining some of the required data. Our proposal reads as follows:

1. Purpose of this study.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Teacher Assistance Program in assisting new teachers in becoming acclimated to their career environment.

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North Central Education Service District and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction want more personal feedback on the program. We are going to do a post evaluation on the beginning teacher's mentoring experience.

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We are only interested in the beginning teacher's response to the program. We are not in any way evaluating the mentors or materials they have been provided as part of the program.

Thank you for your time. One of us will be contacting you by phone next week to answer any questions you may have, and to seek your approval.

Sincerely,

Lynda Huson and Neil Zobel



Mr. Bill Keim, Superintendent  
Cascade School District  
330 Evans  
Leavenworth, WA 98826

February 10, 1998

Dear Mr. Keim:

We are Central Washington University students currently seeking our Master's degree in Education at the Wenatchee Satellite Campus. The Master's program is under the guidance of Dr. Steve Schmitz. Presently, we are researching information for our Master's project and are requesting your district's assistance in obtaining some of the required data. Our proposal reads as follows:

1. Purpose of this study.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Teacher Assistance Program in assisting new teachers in becoming acclimated to their career environment.

2. Justification for the study.

North Central Education Service District and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction want more personal feedback on the program. We are going to do a post evaluation on the beginning teacher's mentoring experience.

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Evaluation of new teacher's induction into their educational career as evidenced by Washington State's Teacher Assistance Program. This evaluation will be applied to those new teachers in Wenatchee, Cashmere, and Cascade School Districts. We are interested in evaluating peer relationships, classroom atmosphere, classroom management, and career achievement.

We would like your permission to ask each first year teacher to send us a copy of the state survey they fill out and return to Olympia as part of their participation in the State's program. We also would like to interview, either by phone or in person, those same teachers in your district.

We are only interested in the beginning teacher's response to the program. We are not in any way evaluating the mentors or materials they have been provided as part of the program.

Thank you for your time. One of us will be contacting you by phone next week to answer any questions you may have, and to seek your approval.

Sincerely,

Lynda Huson and Neil Zobel

APPENDIX B

*Neil Zobel & Lynda Huson*  
Central Washington University

March, 1998

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Lynda and I are graduate students from Central Washington University. Our joint Master's project focuses on a particular aspect of the Teacher Assistance Program that you are participating in as a beginning teacher. Specifically, we are evaluating the process by which new teachers are inducted into their educational careers via the Teacher Assistance Program.

We are asking you to voluntarily participate in our study. There are three relatively simple aspects to the study: (1) Fill out the form that accompanies this letter and return it in the self-addressed stamped envelope before March 20th. (2) After we receive your reply either Lynda or I will be contacting you in person, or by telephone, for a brief 15 minute follow up interview at your convenience. (3) Before the school year is out a second questionnaire, provided to us by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, will be sent to you to fill out and return to us. It is a multiple-choice document that should be relatively quick to complete.

We have already received permission from each of your Superintendents to conduct our study in your District. For those participating through the North Central Educational Service District's application of TAP, Judy McCutcheon has also given us permission to work with her office.

For your information, Lynda will be communicating with beginning teachers in the Cascade and Cashmere School Districts. I will be contacting beginning teachers in the Wenatchee School District.

We realize how precious your time is to you, especially in your first year teaching. Your candid involvement in our study will give important insights into TAP's value for beginning teachers. All of our data will be sent to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and to Judy McCutcheon. Our hope is that your observations will ensure continued funding of the Teacher Assistance Program, as well as improving it.

Thank you in advance for your help with our study.

Sincerely,

Neil Zobel & Lynda Huson

# *Teacher Assistance Program Questionnaire*

for  
Neil Zobel & Lynda Huson  
Central Washington University, Master's Certification Program

- Did your initial match with a mentor/teacher provide you with a positive foundation for your first year of teaching? Please explain.
- If you are presently with a second mentor/teacher, explain the reason for the transition.
- Describe some of your initial experiences (beneficial or frustrating) during your first months of teaching.
- To what degree did your TAP connection alleviate your frustration level and/or affirm your immersion into the teaching profession?
- Briefly describe how teachers or administrators, other than your mentor/teacher, have assisted you.

APPENDIX C

# **Teacher Assistance Program Questionnaire**

for  
Neil Zobel  
Central Washington University, Master's Certification in Education

**1. Did your initial match with a mentor/teacher provide you with a positive foundation for your first year of teaching? Please explain.**

- A. There was no set-aside time.  
We had open discussions and casual conversations on units and school procedures.
- B. I was matched with someone I had worked with before in my previous professional arena.  
My mentor built the programs I manage now.
- C. Yes. I was very fortunate to have been matched up with a patient, motivated and experienced mentor. She is easy to talk to, and she is always willing to share teaching ideas.
- D. Yes. He was extremely helpful in many ways: classroom materials, willingness to share extra curriculum, FFA activities. He was always there to help and support with teaching and leadership ideas.
- E. Yes. My mentor has been a great help with concerns in planning, discipline, time savers, etc.  
Planning: explained memosa math curriculum, abstract exploration vs. addition/subtraction.  
Helped plan in practice time. I had the lowest reading group: mentor helped give initial direction and understanding of students.  
Discipline: answered my questions; gave pointers on how to work the system format.  
Time Savers: How to plan so that I did not spend hours after school, or over planning; How to pre-judge how much time students require to learn a concept; Correlation of theme materials for "wing" units; finding materials for the theme.
- F. Yes, I've received lots of good advice and help: parent phone calls; school culture (operations and staff); ideas on unit lesson plans; administrative ideas (not necessarily classroom management).
- G. I believe my mentor has assisted me in lessons, but because she is only ½ time, if I had a question about management or policies of the school, I had to ask someone else or figure it out on my own.  
I think that mentor teachers should be full time. I think the support from the whole department provided me with a good foundation.  
Management: shared room. Large # of students. No room to move students to a free area. Did student teaching in Middle school = different atmosphere.  
Policies: questions about failing students. Where to get testing scores on a student from previous years. What to do about student not turning in assignments, etc.
- H. Yes. I had the opportunity to walk with an experienced teacher. Peggy gave me helpful ideas and always had the time to listen to my questions. I was fortunate to have a mentor like Peggy. We spent many hours after school talking about lessons and students. Talked with and not rushed, took time to explain.  
Our personalities clicked.

- I. Mainly for my sanity - there was someone to talk to, to help with situational questions (not planning), professional relationships at school and staff frustrations.  
Careful consideration in choosing mentor! Mentors should not have student teachers.
- J. Somewhat. My position is new, so there is no one who has actually done "my job" before (ESL Teacher). My mentor has a strong ESL background as well as primary experience, so that is helpful.  
I didn't even know I had a mentor the first month of school. It was all kind of a blur!  
I spent the first two weeks in her classroom. Knew someone I could go to ask for help.  
Enrollment dropped and job description changed in the second week.
- K. I believe mentors should be chosen who would be willing to make the commitment to meet at least once per week for a minimum of one hours with their "mentee."  
I loved my mentor, but unfortunately, she was usually far too busy to meet with me to answer questions or observe me to help with ideas, constructive criticism, etc.
- L. My match was with a German teacher at first. A month into my first year, I was matched better with an ESL teacher (Latinos).  
From there on out it was very beneficial.
- M. Yes, she was very helpful with the culture of the school: who interacts with whom. She filled in history, "last year," "two years ago," etc. She helped with tips about student problems/concerns/difficulties. She helped me to understand school policy, progress reports, homework sheets, how to pick "Top Cats," and other unique aspects of this school.  
She was also helpful with Grade Machine set up.  
She had ideas to teach the content area: topics and lesson ideas/creative work.

**2. If you are presently with a second mentor/teacher explain the reason for the transition.**

- H. Peggy retired in March due to her health and I no longer have a mentor.
- L. My first mentor was a German teacher. Content area was the reason for matching a new mentor. I was better matched with an ESL teacher who knows Spanish like the back of her hand.

**3. Describe some of your initial experiences (beneficial or frustrating) during your first months of teaching.**

- A. Freshman curriculum was written out, including nice outlines to follow.  
There were no written objectives/outcomes. Although these were known and understood by the experienced teachers.  
The department is efficient in the use of its time.
- B. My first language experience was a mixture of Spanish and Arabic.  
In the first month I was presented with a confidential issue that related to staff, students, and parents. It was a tough situation, plus the fact that I was the new school counselor. Therefore I did not have any trust background built with the staff.  
My supportive team through the year has been other elementary school counselors. Our weekly meetings have proven very helpful.  
I have received helpful observations from my principal. I have also had to find out stuff on my own, too.
- C. I wasn't used to the curriculum. I had to spend most of my evenings familiarizing myself with

the curriculum. I was fortunate that before I came into teaching I had a career (nurse) that required me to be organized and disciplined. In addition, I have great kids.

- D. I still haven't "hit that wall" that they said I would. ESD's definition of "The Wall" was a feeling of "frustration" and having an "emotional overload."  
My experiences were positive which I believe help set my state of mind for the rest of the year. My personal philosophy of life helped me to avoid "The Wall." My philosophy is "Life is 10% of what happens to you and 90% of how you deal with it."
- E. My biggest frustration was the lack of parental input when it came to helping students at home.
- F. They have all been beneficial: Parents checked teacher out at the beginning of the year regarding student grades; After parent-teacher conferences the parents accepted me, they knew me and my expectations in the classroom.
- G. I had some classes that had 34 students in them in the first semester. During my student teaching my largest class was 28, this added a whole new dimension in terms of classroom management. I was also not prepared for the apathy some students had about school work. The support from other English teachers was great. We got together for dinner or lunch and talked about how we were doing!
- H. I only had three days to organize my room and materials because of my Summer classes. At that time I felt overwhelmed. Having a mentor helped in organizing for the first week. But then my mentor was always there to check up on me, give me valuable suggestions and good advice. Weekly planning sessions.
- I. Wanted to get to know people. Higher priority on process/procedure. They socialize. Love everyone here.
- J. Overwhelmed by curriculum choices - all of which I was familiar with. Materials. Dumped by teachers of previous years, para pro positions, learn as you go.  
Not taught how to draw from variety of materials, and form single lessons. On the job experience.  
Took couple of months to figure out the "system" of EALRS and curriculum.  
Extremely shocked by the low academic levels (2-3 levels below grade level) of my students.  
Learning where around 100 students were at, in the English language.
- K. Overwhelming problems with management of the students during class time. I let students get away with too much.  
I made a drastic change in the seating chart.  
I was "Mr. Nice Guy." Mentor and student teaching I was told, "You're too nice." Mild. You need to say (to students), "You're being disrespectful to me as your teacher. Let's get control of ..."  
So many things to keep track of.
- M. Everything I did took longer than I thought.

**4. To what degree did your TAP connection alleviate your frustration level and/or affirm your immersion into the teaching profession?**

- A. Nice to know the program is there.



Have not attended any of the ESD meetings.  
Officially I was assigned a support person.  
Let me know other teachers who would be available for expertise sharing.

- B. My relationship with my mentor has been positive.  
I felt different because I am older than many of the other participants, and I have had a previous career. Therefore, I had some different needs. If I was younger and less experienced it would have meant more, possibly.
- C. It was nice to know that other teachers had similar problems: discipline, managing time, organization.  
I participated in Middle School, TAP, and ESD events.
- D. I feel they helped in some ways, but in others they were hurting. For example, "The Wall" made me feel like I wasn't normal since I wasn't hitting it. (See 3.D. above).
- E. I liked the teacher training we did at Lake Chelan. It opened my eyes to the fact that I wasn't the only one with my head just above the water.
- F. Someone to always check with / get advice from.  
Personally, the Chelan experience was not useful, although it gave some emotional support.
- G. The second day seminar helped because I realized I wasn't the only stressed out, wacked out, 1<sup>st</sup> year teacher. The meetings didn't seem to help that we had in our ESD though.  
ESD: two meetings after school. Felt like time could have been better spent somewhere else.  
Repetitive or non-applicable information.  
Chelan experience was Okay.
- H. To a moderate level.  
The meetings have been Okay, but the new teacher retreat in Chelan was great. It had a lot of good information and was very relaxing.  
TAP should have more information on contacts, credits, and clock hours with new teachers. TAP did have this information at the new teacher retreat, but it was very fast and short. For example, how many clock hours equals one credit? When to take professional development classes or which ones are recommended.  
Lacked time for questions.  
ESD classes, get information, expect more on clarification on contracts, explaining credit hours.
- I. First year retreat enjoyed. No other ESD connection.
- J. The conference was great, although it would have been nicer to go in October, or November.
- L. I was able to confide in an experienced teacher. She was someone who could empathize with my first year experience. She gave me feedback. She said, "Don't take things too personally." I was encouraged by her words of experience.
- M. The conference in Chelan was excellent. I realized there were many other new teachers in the same situation: swamped. Teachers figuring out what to get done and how to get it done in a limited amount of time.  
Balance in school: Some papers give simple check marks not grades. Balance at home: e.g.: Tuesday is overworked so our family will eat out or order in to alleviate home stress. Mow the grass once a week no matter how long it gets.  
ESD two meetings: first have more information like mentor did. Second was not immediately

applicable. The conference in Chelan was great and the timing was Okay. Feet were wet, struggling, beginning to figure things out and then conference cleared up some questions.

**5. Briefly describe how teachers or administrators, other than your mentor/teacher, have assisted you.**

- A. The Assistant Principal is very friendly.
- B. Teachers had been through several counselors (3 yrs., 1 yr., 1yr.). At first the attitude was "How long are you going to stay?" They were friendly, but reserved. Elementary counselors provided my most supportive community. My principal/mentor was helpful and supportive. I felt comfortable calling the person having oversight of all counselors for guidance and direction.
- C. Everyone has been extremely helpful with supplies and thematic supplements, including the principal and administrative personnel. Colleges have said, "You can copy that."
- D. They have answered my questions, directed me in the right way, always there to help and most of all, they are very supportive.
- E. My principal has been a great help with assisting me in ways to probe my class for what knowledge they already have, and how to assess what I've taught. The principal assessment observations provided me with hands-on assessment vs paper work.
- F. The V.P. is extremely supportive with observations, questions, affirmation, and ideas.
- G. The English Department is very good about giving each other help and teaching ideas. I think almost every teacher in the department has helped with something. Logan Aimone (another 1<sup>st</sup> year teacher) have worked together a lot, both being first year teachers at WHS.
- H. The teachers in my wing have been of great assistance. They are always willing to share info and give good suggestions. E.g.: safety fire drills, building's "supposed to knows," and procedures.
- I. Whole lotta ways. See other 5th grade projects and do them. Another teacher who taught fifth grade was able to help (materials) and connection with other fifth grade teachers. Community resource providing resource people.
- J. I have really enjoyed working with the Bilingual teachers. They also use "sheltered English" which is a new skill I am learning. They have been very kind, accepting and helping me feel welcome in a new school (I work with nine teachers and their students in one school, and five teachers and their students at my other school).  
Accepting: first couple of months they would check on me, and keep close contact.  
Help: "Do you know how to use that machine?" and "Have you seen the art room?"  
I work with six teachers in the day. Some distanced themselves. They were reluctant to work with me. Their teaching style communicated to me that taking someone out of their classroom for ESL changed the dynamic of their classroom (e.g.: small groups, "pull outs").
- K. I found myself in the teacher's room at lunch asking question after question, or going from room to room looking for resources.
- L. Administrator Chet Harum helped with his suggestions during observations.

Administrators helped in discipline problems - for the most part.  
Collegiality among teachers.

- M. My principal has been beneficial with feed back from observations. I always had something new to try after an observation.
-

# ***Teacher Assistance Program Questionnaire***

for  
Lynda Huson  
Central Washington University, Master's Certification in Education

## **1. Did your initial match with a mentor/teacher provide you with a positive foundation for your first year of teaching? Please explain.**

- N. I teach Kindergarten in the AM and ESL at the high school in the PM. My mentor teaches Kindergarten. I was helped with everything including scheduling and planning for the first four months. We meet together every Tuesday.
- O. I have not been assigned a mentor teacher and have not heard of this program. I do know of a person I can go to with questions, but it's not an official assignment.
- P. Yes it helped last year at Washington Elementary when I was hired half way through the year. The master teacher gave me lots of new ideas, information and help. She supported me and made my first experiences so much fun! I do not currently know of a mentor this year.
- Q. My mentor teaches the same classes as I do. She taught my exact schedule last year. She's an excellent resource with eight years of experience. I received help in syllabus creation, handouts and other materials. She was assigned at the beginning of the year.
- R. Yes, she was extremely helpful. She was always available if I had questions. She also would make extra copies of things for me.
- S. Yes, I was assigned a mentor prior to the school year starting. We laid out the school year and she lets me know what's going on. Help with questions is always available.
- T. Yes, we have similar philosophies. She's easy to get along with, talk to, and explain things to. We haven't used our one-day substitute allotment from the district yet to get together for a whole day. She was assigned two months into the school year. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade team has one prep period together on Mondays, which really helps with planning.
- U. Yes, my mentor teacher has been of great help to me. We both teach in the same department, which has also been beneficial. He has been most helpful in terms of classroom and lab ideas, both for curriculum and classroom management.
- V. Yes, although it would have been nice sooner. The planning I've done with my mentor has been invaluable. She has helped be determine relevant and fun activities, while helping me decide on assessment methods.
- W. No, my mentor is a consulting teacher. I'm unsure what her job is or what she does. She does not have a history or background in early childhood. She has provided no training, help, or time to meet with me. I teach developmental Kindergarten and two preschool classes. All students are on IEPs.
- X. Yes, she was very helpful with the ups and downs of getting started. She was available for questions. I did not get hired until November 1; I worked six weeks, then had six weeks of maternity leave myself.

Y. She is very helpful. We both teach special education. She helped with questions for papers, what papers to send home, writing IEPs, and planning for MDTs.

**2. If you are presently with a second mentor/teacher explain the reason for the transition.**

P. I have a new mentor this year since I changed school districts and was not employed a full year.

R. My first mentor had only taught one year prior to this year. I switched in the first quarter. I met with my initial mentor prior to the start of school in September.

**3. Describe some of your initial experiences (beneficial or frustrating) during your first months of teaching.**

N. Other teachers were helpful and supportive with lesson plans and ideas. No real frustrations occurred to me. The school district has been great help.

O. I had several frustrations: learning 642 names, establishing a grading system for music, last year's teacher gave all students "outstanding" for a grade. I had lots of freedom but not enough guidance.

P. A frustration is learning so much. A benefit has been great administrators.

Q. I was overwhelmed at first. The frustration came from teaching drama one period a day. I would like to meet monthly or even biweekly with other new teachers. Classroom management is getting tough at the end of the school year. I had one child removed from the district.  
The benefits of my first year were helped by my mentor. We have a 7<sup>th</sup> grade team of teachers that all have good rapport with each other.

R. Starting out can be somewhat overwhelming. Having my mentor teacher made the experience enjoyable and less stressful. She relieved my anxiety, gave me answers, and made me lots of extra copies.

S. One frustration was creating a discipline plan that would work. I'm trying to decide which plan to use. The benefits include working with others, especially the 6<sup>th</sup> grade team.

T. I was encouraged that my mentor was here to help with room set up and inform me of principal expectations for the room. It is easy to get along with the staff. I was discouraged by the lack of time to read materials ahead of teaching it. Time management has been discouraging for me.

U. I teach a variety of subject matter, from agriculture to mechanics to environmental science, so I'm always doing something new. For the most part, most of my experiences have been positive. I would say the most frustrating thing I deal with is the lack of motivation on the part of the students. This is not just at a particular grade level.

V. Oh wow! The frustrating experiences are and were all related to not having enough time and not knowing my subject material. I'm still flying by the seat of my pants, only I am more comfortable with the uncomfortableness of it. Beneficially, I was able to grab teachers before

class to ask questions and learn to be honest with my kids about everything being new to me too. They, even as 7<sup>th</sup> graders, are amazingly kind and patient with me.

- W. My frustration came from being hired the first week of school with no training from the previous teacher. During my first month all my paraprofessionals were substitutes. I do not have enough time for meetings such as all the IEP conferences including MDTs. I do have the support of the occupational therapist and school psychologist.
- X. The frustrating experiences include the fact that the initial two months were taught by a substitute. I felt like I was trying to follow another teacher's lead. I had a hard time feeling like the class was mine.  
A benefit is having a good relationship with the substitute who filled in during my six week maternity leave. I received great support from paraprofessionals.
- Y. It was frustrating trying to meet state and federal regulations at the beginning of the year without a mentor. I did not have one until January. I found it difficult to get a hold of the school psychologist or special education director.

**4. To what degree did your TAP connection alleviate your frustration level and/or affirm your immersion into the teaching profession?**

- N. It gave me assurance of how things would get easier.
- O. My unofficial mentor is the librarian. She volunteered after I asked questions that concerned or offended others. She said she would answer any questions I had.
- P. Last year I got ideas and positive feed back (when I had my mentor). We planned together since we taught the same grade.  
This year I have not been assigned a mentor. I teach a self contained K-4 class. The special education director spends one half of his time in this building and has been some help even though this is his first year also.
- Q. I recently took off a day with my mentor to plan the rest of this year and next year when I'll be teaching 8<sup>th</sup> grade. It's easy to talk to her, especially since she's assigned. I'm unsure what would happen if a mentor wasn't assigned.
- R. She was someone I could talk to, get ideas from, and lean on for any type of support I needed.
- S. It helped me to know there was one teacher I could ask questions of and she was expecting me to ask her. We used our district provided one day off for planning out the second half of the year.
- T. It's OK to not know everything. It is normal to feel overwhelmed; everyone goes through that feeling. I do not have enough time to talk or meet with my mentor. We don't have the same planning and she doesn't teach the same things at the same time. We don't have a set time to meet.
- U. My mentor teacher not only helps me, but also just listens when I have a bad day teaching. This has been very beneficial, as every day doesn't always go according to the plan. I would say that he is one of the reasons that I have enjoyed my first year of teaching.

- V. To a great degree! I have really whined to her about my feeling totally inadequate and lost. She's problem-solved with me and helped me anticipate pitfalls. It's been affirming hearing her experience. She gives me strength and hope.
- W. I have had no contact except an initial introduction to my mentor. She has returned once or twice during class time to ask how things were going. We have not had any prearranged meetings or time set aside to assist. I am the only early childhood specialist in the district.
- X. She is a resource room teacher. I am a self-contained middle school teacher. I could vent on her, share feelings with her, and get a renewed sense of perspective from her. She helped me go over curriculum, shared resources, and opened her classroom to me.
- Y. My mentor helped me meet state regulations for IEPs and MDTs. She really reduced my frustration level.

**5. Briefly describe how teachers or administrators, other than your mentor/teacher, have assisted you.**

- N. The principal evaluations gave me lots of feedback and support. Other teachers gave me anything they could.
- O. They have been wonderful. Two in particular have become my "mentors" of sort. I have called my previous mentors (college teachers in Kansas) numerous times for various reasons.
- P. I have received encouragement. The special education director tells me to not get discouraged and to look at months instead of individual days. I want to learn a lot.
- Q. I learned a lot from my student teacher mentor at Cashmere High School last year. He was difficult, but I learned a lot. We have a breakfast on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of each month which really helps with planning.
- R. Everyone has been wonderful. They have all been willing to help in any way. They have made my first year a very positive one. Everyone is willing to do anything I request.
- S. My 6th grade team gave curriculum to me. They are willing to give help, especially the principal and vice-principal in their observations of me. I also have banded together with other first year teachers in this building (there's 4).
- T. Other teachers are helpful and willing to give worksheets or other work for students. The principal and vice principal are encouraging through their observations and are open to questions about students or other help I need.
- U. Other teachers have assisted me in designing labs and other activities. I have also been very impressed with how our administration has handled discipline problems with students.
- V. My principal has been supportive with helpful evaluations and a lot of praise, which I needed. I knew other staff members as a substitute and community member, so I've been cradled here and looked out for. I always ask everyone questions and commiserate with others. I feel so loved here.
- W. Teachers and principals have open doors to me and are very supportive. They support my teaching style even though it varies from the previous teacher.

- X. My supervisor, the vice principal, was helpful by giving me two paid days to work with my mentor over Christmas break. He also has been very helpful during observation times. The school psychologist was helpful for venting frustrations, giving me ideas, and listening to my ideas.
  
  - Y. Others did everything they could, but they did not know special education rules or programs. It's harder to know without memorizing the rules.
-



APPENDIX D



## TEACHER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

### Beginning/Experienced Teacher Survey

**DIRECTIONS:** RECORD YOUR ANSWERS ON THIS FORM BY CIRCLING YOUR ANSWER

#### BEGINNING/EXPERIENCED TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

- Identify the age span which includes your own age:  
A) 21-25 B) 26-30 C) 31-35 D) 36-40 E) 41 and over
- Indicate your gender: A) Male B) Female
- Identify your ethnic background:  
A) American Indian/Alaskan Native D) Hispanic  
B) Asian American/Pacific Islander E) White  
C) Black/African American
- How well do you feel your college training program prepared you for being a teacher?  
A) Not at all well C) Quite well  
B) Fairly well D) Extremely well
- Identify your current teaching level.  
A) Elementary D) High School  
B) Middle School E) K-12  
C) Junior High
- Identify the geographical area in which your school is located:  
A) Urban B) Suburban C) Rural
- Identify the approximate number of students in your building.  
A) Less than 100 B) 101-299 C) 300-499 D) 500-699 E) Over 700
- Approximately how often do you meet with your mentor?  
A) 2-3 times a week D) once monthly  
B) once a week E) less than monthly  
C) twice monthly

9. How adequate is this number of contacts for your success?
- A) Too many?  
 B) The correct number?  
 C) Too few?
10. On how many occasions did your mentor formally observe you teaching a lesson?
- A) None B) 1-2 C) 3-4 D) 5-6 E) 7 or more
11. On how many occasions did you formally observe other teachers teach a lesson?
- A) None B) 1-2 C) 3-4 D) 5-6 E) 7 or more
12. How valuable has it been to have your mentor observe you teach a lesson?
- A) Not at all valuable C) Extremely valuable  
 B) Somewhat valuable D) Did not observe mentor
13. How valuable has it been to have your mentor assist you in planning and reflecting on teaching?
- A) Not at all valuable C) Extremely valuable  
 B) Somewhat valuable D) Not observed by mentor

HOW HELPFUL HAS YOUR MENTOR BEEN IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:

14. Instructional strategies
- A) Not at all helpful C) Quite helpful  
 B) Somewhat helpful D) Extremely helpful
15. Classroom management
- A) Not at all helpful C) Quite helpful  
 B) Somewhat helpful D) Extremely helpful
16. Building/district policies and procedures
- A) Not at all helpful C) Quite helpful  
 B) Somewhat helpful D) Extremely helpful
17. Morale and personal support
- A) Not at all helpful C) Quite helpful  
 B) Somewhat helpful D) Extremely helpful

18. Curriculum materials/resources
- A) Not at all helpful  
B) Somewhat helpful  
C) Quite helpful  
D) Extremely helpful
19. How likely is it that you will remain in the teaching profession?
- A) Very unlikely  
B) Somewhat unlikely  
C) Very likely  
D) Extremely likely  
E) I really don't know
20. Has having a mentor influenced your decision in the previous question regarding remaining in the teaching profession?
- A) No influence  
B) Some influence  
C) Much influence  
D) Great influence  
E) Don't know
21. To what extent do you think this year's overall experience was positively affected by having a mentor?
- A) Not at all affected  
B) Somewhat affected  
C) Quite affected  
D) Completely affected
22. How much assistance did your building principal provide you and your mentor?
- A) None  
B) Some  
C) A good deal  
D) A great deal
23. At the start of this year to what extent did you feel you needed a mentor?
- A) Not at all needed  
B) Somewhat needed  
C) Quite-a-bit needed  
D) Absolutely needed
24. Now, to what extent do you feel you needed a mentor?
- A) Not at all needed  
B) Somewhat needed  
C) Quite-a-bit needed  
D) Absolutely needed

AT THE START OF THIS SCHOOL YEAR HOW COMPETENT DID YOU FEEL ABOUT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:

25. Instructional strategies
- A) Not at all competent  
B) Somewhat competent  
C) Quite competent  
D) Extremely competent

26. Classroom management

- A) Not at all competent
- B) Somewhat competent
- C) Quite competent
- D) Extremely competent

27. Building/district policies and procedures

- A) Not at all competent
- B) Somewhat competent
- C) Quite competent
- D) Extremely competent

28. Curriculum materials/resources

- A) Not at all competent
- B) Somewhat competent
- C) Quite competent
- D) Extremely competent

NOW, HOW COMPETENT DO YOU FEEL ABOUT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:

29. Instructional strategies

- A) Not at all competent
- B) Somewhat competent
- C) Quite competent
- D) Extremely competent

30. Classroom management

- A) Not at all competent
- B) Somewhat competent
- C) Quite competent
- D) Extremely competent

31. Building/district policies and procedures

- A) Not at all competent
- B) Somewhat competent
- C) Quite competent
- D) Extremely competent

32. Curriculum materials/resources

- A) Not at all competent
- B) Somewhat competent
- C) Quite competent
- D) Extremely competent

33. Which one of the following activities did you find most helpful?

- A) Demonstration teaching
- B) Observing other teachers
- C) Observation dialogue/debriefing
- D) Workshops/classes
- E) Goal setting/problem solving sessions
- F) Other

34. What is your perception of the overall value of your district's mentoring program?

- A) Not at all valuable
- B) Somewhat valuable

- C) Quite valuable
- D) Extremely valuable

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APPENDIX E

**TEACHER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**  
**Beginning / Experienced Teacher Survey**  
**Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction    Olympia, Washington**

**Survey results from Neil Zobel**

1. Identify the age span which includes your own age:

- A) 21-25            4
- B) 26-30           3
- C) 31-35
- D) 36-40           2
- E) 41+

2. Indicate your gender:

- A) Male            4
- B) Female         5

3. Identify your ethnic background:

- A) Indian
- B) Asian/Pacific
- C) Black
- D) Hispanic       4
- E) White           8

4. How well do you feel your college training program prepared you for being a teacher?

- A) Not well            2
- B) Fairly well         2
- C) Quite well          3
- D) Extremely well     2

5. Identify your current teaching level:

- A) Elementary         5
- B) Middle School
- C) Junior High
- D) High School        4
- E) K-12

6. Identify the geographical area in which your school is located:

- A) Urban             2
- B) Suburban         4
- C) Rural              2

7. Identify the approximate number of students in your building:

- A) less than 100
- B) 101-299
- C) 300-499           3
- D) 500-699           2
- E) Over 700          4

8. Approximately how often do you meet with your mentor?

- A) 2-3 times a week   2
- B) once a week        3
- C) twice monthly      2
- D) once monthly
- E) less than monthly   1

9. How adequate is this number of contacts for your success?

- A) Too many?
- B) Correct number?   7
- C) Too few?            2

10. On how many occasions did your mentor formally observe you teaching a lesson?

- A) None                2
- B) 1-2                  6
- C) 3-4
- D) 5-6                  1
- E) 7 or more

11. On how many occasions did you formally observe other teachers teach a lesson?

- A) None                5
- B) 1-2                  2
- C) 3-4                  1
- D) 5-6
- E) 7 or more          1

12. How valuable has it been to have your mentor observe you teach a lesson?

- A) Not at all
- B) Somewhat           3
- C) Extremely           4
- D) Not Observed      2

13. How valuable has it been to have your mentor assist you in planning and reflecting on teaching?

- A) Not at all
- B) Somewhat           3
- C) Extremely           5
- D) Not Observed      1

**HOW HELPFUL HAS YOUR MENTOR BEEN IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:**

14. Instructional strategies

- A) Not at all helpful   3
- B) Somewhat helpful   1
- C) Quite helpful        4
- D) Extremely helpful   1

15. Classroom management

- A) Not at all helpful   1
- B) Somewhat helpful   4
- C) Quite helpful        4
- D) Extremely helpful   4

16. Building/district policies and procedures

- A) Not at all helpful   3
- B) Somewhat helpful   4
- C) Quite helpful        2
- D) Extremely helpful   2

17. Morale and personal support

- A) Not at all helpful   1
- B) Somewhat helpful   5
- C) Quite helpful        3
- D) Extremely helpful   3

18. Curriculum materials/resources

- A) Not at all helpful   1
- B) Somewhat helpful   5
- C) Quite helpful        2
- D) Extremely helpful   2



**TEACHER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**  
**Beginning / Experienced Teacher Survey**  
**Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction Olympia, Washington**

**Survey results from Neil Zobel**

19. How likely is it that you will remain in the teaching profession?

- A) Very unlikely
- B) Somewhat unlikely 1
- C) Very likely
- D) Extremely likely 8
- E) I really don't know

20. Has having a mentor influenced your decision in the previous question regarding remaining in the teaching profession?

- A) No influence 5
- B) Some influence 2
- C) Much influence
- D) Great influence 1
- E) Don't know 1

21. To what extent do you think this year's overall experience was positively affected by having a mentor?

- A) Not at all affected 1
- B) Somewhat affected 1
- C) Quite affected 6
- D) Completely affected 1

22. How much assistance did your building principal provide you and your mentor?

- A) None 3
- B) Some 2
- C) A good deal 4
- D) A great deal

23. At the start of this year to what extent did you feel you needed a mentor?

- A) Not at all needed
- B) Somewhat needed 2
- C) Quite a bit needed 4
- D) Absolutely needed 3

24. Now, to what extent do you feel you needed a mentor?

- A) Not at all needed
- B) Somewhat needed 6
- C) Quite a bit needed 1
- D) Absolutely needed 2

**AT THE START OF THIS SCHOOL YEAR HOW COMPETENT DID YOU FEEL ABOUT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:**

25. Instructional strategies:

- A) Not at all competent
- B) Somewhat competent 6
- C) Quite competent 3
- D) Extremely competent

26. Classroom management:

- A) Not at all competent 1
- B) Somewhat competent 2
- C) Quite competent 5
- D) Extremely competent 1

27. Building/district policies and procedures:

- A) Not at all competent 4
- B) Somewhat competent 5
- C) Quite competent
- D) Extremely competent

28. Curriculum materials/resources:

- A) Not at all competent
- B) Somewhat competent 9
- C) Quite competent
- D) Extremely competent

**NOW, HOW COMPETENT DO YOU FEEL ABOUT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:**

29. Instructional strategies:

- A) Not at all competent
- B) Somewhat competent 1
- C) Quite competent 8
- D) Extremely competent

30. Classroom management:

- A) Not at all competent
- B) Somewhat competent 2
- C) Quite competent 5
- D) Extremely competent 2

31. Building/district policies and procedures:

- A) Not at all competent
- B) Somewhat competent 3
- C) Quite competent 6
- D) Extremely competent

32. Curriculum materials/resources:

- A) Not at all competent
- B) Somewhat competent
- C) Quite competent 9
- D) Extremely competent

33. Which one of the following activities did you find most helpful?

- A) Demonstration teaching
- B) Observing other teachers 1
- C) Observation dialogue/debriefing 4
- D) Workshops/classes 2
- E) Goal setting/problem solving sessions 1
- F) Other 1

34. What is your perception of the overall value of your district's mentoring program?

- A) Not at all valuable
- B) Somewhat valuable
- C) Quite valuable 2
- D) Extremely valuable 5
- E) N/A 2

**TEACHER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**  
**Beginning / Experienced Teacher Survey**  
**Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction Olympia, Washington**

**Survey results from Lynda Huson**

1. Identify the age span which includes your own age:

- A) 21-25            2
- B) 26-30           5
- C) 31-35           2
- D) 36-40
- E) 41-+            1

2. Indicate your gender:

- A) Male            1
- B) Female          9

3. Identify your ethnic background:

- A) Indian           1
- B) Asian/Pacific
- C) Black
- D) Hispanic        1
- E) White            8

4. How well do you feel your college training program prepared you for being a teacher?

- A) Not well
- B) Fairly well       5
- C) Quite well        3
- D) Extremely well   2

5. Identify your current teaching level:

- A) Elementary       5
- B) Middle School    4
- C) Junior High
- D) High School      1
- E) K-12

6. Identify the geographical area in which your school is located:

- A) Urban
- B) Suburban        2
- C) Rural             8

7. Identify the approximate number of students in your building:

- A) less than 100
- B) 101-299        1
- C) 300-499        2
- D) 500-699        7
- E) Over 700

8. Approximately how often do you meet with your mentor?

- A) 2-3 times a week   3
- B) once a week       1
- C) twice monthly     1
- D) once monthly     2
- E) less than monthly 3

9. How adequate is this number of contacts for your success?

- A) Too many?
- B) Correct number?   8
- C) Too few?           2

10. On how many occasions did your mentor formally observe you teaching a lesson?

- A) None            8
- B) 1-2
- C) 3-4
- D) 5-6
- E) 7 or more        2

11. On how many occasions did you formally observe other teachers teach a lesson?

- A) None            6
- B) 1-2              2
- C) 3-4              1
- D) 5-6
- E) 7 or more        1

12. How valuable has it been to have your mentor observe you teach a lesson?

- A) Not at all
- B) Somewhat        1
- C) Extremely        1
- D) Not Observed    8

13. How valuable has it been to have your mentor assist you in planning and reflecting on teaching?

- A) Not at all
- B) Somewhat        1
- C) Extremely        4
- D) Not Observed    5

**HOW HELPFUL HAS YOUR MENTOR BEEN IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:**

14. Instructional strategies

- A) Not at all helpful   2
- B) Somewhat helpful   2
- C) Quite helpful        5
- D) Extremely helpful   1

15. Classroom management

- A) Not at all helpful   1
- B) Somewhat helpful   4
- C) Quite helpful        4
- D) Extremely helpful   1

16. Building/district policies and procedures

- A) Not at all helpful   1
- B) Somewhat helpful   4
- C) Quite helpful        4
- D) Extremely helpful   1

17. Morale and personal support

- A) Not at all helpful   1
- B) Somewhat helpful   2
- C) Quite helpful        7
- D) Extremely helpful

18. Curriculum materials/resources

- A) Not at all helpful   2
- B) Somewhat helpful   1
- C) Quite helpful        2
- D) Extremely helpful   5

**TEACHER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**  
**Beginning / Experienced Teacher Survey**  
**Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction    Olympia, Washington**

**Survey results from Lynda Huson**

19. How likely is it that you will remain in the teaching profession?

- A) Very unlikely
- B) Somewhat unlikely
- C) Very likely            2
- D) Extremely likely       8
- E) I really don't know

20. Has having a mentor influenced your decision in the previous question regarding remaining in the teaching profession?

- A) No influence            5
- B) Some influence        3
- C) Much influence        2
- D) Great influence
- E) Don't know

21. To what extent do you think this year's overall experience was positively affected by having a mentor?

- A) Not at all affected    1
- B) Somewhat affected    2
- C) Quite affected        5
- D) Completely affected   2

22. How much assistance did your building principal provide you and your mentor?

- A) None                    2
- B) Some                    2
- C) A good deal            4
- D) A great deal            2

23. At the start of this year to what extent did you feel you needed a mentor?

- A) Not at all needed
- B) Somewhat needed    2
- C) Quite a bit needed    2
- D) Absolutely needed    6

24. Now, to what extent do you feel you needed a mentor?

- A) Not at all needed      1
- B) Somewhat needed      7
- C) Quite a bit needed     1
- D) Absolutely needed     1

**AT THE START OF THIS SCHOOL YEAR HOW COMPETENT DID YOU FEEL ABOUT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:**

25. Instructional strategies:

- A) Not at all competent    1
- B) Somewhat competent    4
- C) Quite competent        5
- D) Extremely competent

26. Classroom management:

- A) Not at all competent    1
- B) Somewhat competent    7
- C) Quite competent        3
- D) Extremely competent

27. Building/district policies and procedures:

- A) Not at all competent    5
- B) Somewhat competent    5
- C) Quite competent
- D) Extremely competent

28. Curriculum materials/resources:

- A) Not at all competent    3
- B) Somewhat competent    4
- C) Quite competent        3
- D) Extremely competent

**NOW, HOW COMPETENT DO YOU FEEL ABOUT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:**

29. Instructional strategies:

- A) Not at all competent
- B) Somewhat competent    4
- C) Quite competent        4
- D) Extremely competent    2

30. Classroom management:

- A) Not at all competent
- B) Somewhat competent    1
- C) Quite competent        7
- D) Extremely competent    2

31. Building/district policies and procedures:

- A) Not at all competent
- B) Somewhat competent    5
- C) Quite competent        4
- D) Extremely competent    1

32. Curriculum materials/resources:

- A) Not at all competent
- B) Somewhat competent    4
- C) Quite competent        5
- D) Extremely competent    1

33. Which one of the following activities did you find most helpful?

- A) Demonstration teaching            2
- B) Observing other teachers            1
- C) Observation dialogue/debriefing    1
- D) Workshops/classes            2
- E) Goal setting/problem solving sessions    3
- F) Other                            1

34. What is your perception of the overall value of your district's mentoring program?

- A) Not at all valuable
- B) Somewhat valuable    2
- C) Quite valuable        6
- D) Extremely valuable    1
- E) N/A                        1