

12-2018

Outcomes Teacher Mentoring Has on Professional Learning and Delivery of Instruction

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OUTCOMES TEACHER MENTORING HAS ON
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND
DELIVERY OF INSTRUCTION

A Dissertation

by

SUSANA A. ZAPATA - BURGUETE

Submitted to the Graduate College of
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

December 2018

Major Subject: Curriculum and Instruction

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December 2018

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ABSTRACT

Zapata – Burguete, Susana. Outcomes Teacher Mentoring has on Professional Learning and Delivery of Instruction. Doctor of Education (Ed. D.), December, 2018, 118 pp., 7 tables, 1 figure, references, 106 titles.

A qualitative study using grounded theory was conducted to discover how educational mentoring was transferred to subsequently transform instructional delivery in the second year of teaching for novice secondary school teachers. The study was conducted in a Deep South Texas public school district during the 2017-2018 academic year. After concluding a year of mentoring, interviews were conducted to reveal how the mentoring phenomena helped transform their present day delivery of instruction. Data was gathered through face-to-face interviews with seven participants. During this second year, the novice teachers primarily relied on both what was learned through their mentoring experiences and networking with experienced colleagues. The novice teachers' mentoring undertakings revealed a greater need to apply newly acquired learning experiences during the initial year of instruction. In addition, fidelity of implementation in the mentoring process played a crucial role in the viable success of the program. Teachers (mentees) were primarily motivated by individual didactic observations during their mentoring experience. Through constant comparative analysis and the use of memoing five key themes revealed how the effectiveness of the mentoring process was interrelated to the novice teachers' professional learning, development, and instructional delivery. Emerged themes from the data included: mentoring experiences, classroom management and curriculum, instructional practices, professional development, and student learning progress.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my beloved parents, Margarita Burguete Alvarez and the late Fernando Burguete Rovira who valued the importance of education. They were my first and most influential teachers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Life's ambitions are often accompanied with sacrifice and discipline. As I worked to fulfill the obligations of my doctorate degree, I was fortunate to cross paths with individuals, which I grew to admire and appreciate for their inspiration, guidance, and support.

The professionalism and accessibility of my dissertation committee has allowed me to remain focused and goal oriented. I am forever grateful to these individuals for the dedication to their profession and their mentorship. Dr. Bobbette Morgan, committee chair, has provided me with immeasurable guidance and encouragement through numerous consultations. Her enthusiasm, expertise, and professional advice have made this educational odyssey an exceptional chapter in my life. Dr. Zhidong Zhang has helped to pace my studies and has been the quintessential problem solver. Dr. Ignacio Rodriguez was a key influence in the focus of my research.

A special thanks to Dr. Patricia Quesada, a lifelong friend, for her guidance, interest, and support throughout my coursework.

I am especially grateful to my family for the foundation and support throughout this endeavor. My parents, Margarita Burguete Alvarez and the late Fernando Burguete Rovira, for instilling in me the will to work hard in order to achieve my goals with the ability to keep my feet firmly planted on the ground. My children, Fernando, Errol and Yvanna, I thank you for the privilege of being your Mom. Your love and faith has been the stimulus for my goals in life. Please know that nothing brings me more pleasure and satisfaction than to see smiles on your

faces, generosity in your hearts and your minds filled with hope and aspirations for the future. My husband, Rolando, I thank you for your love and encouragement during the challenges of graduate school. Thank you for standing by my side throughout all that I have undertaken, held me up during difficult times, and celebrated the simplest of things.

Foremost, I would like to thank God Almighty for the strength, knowledge and opportunity, which allowed me to persevere and complete this research study satisfactorily. Thank you Jesus Christ my Lord for answering my prayers.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The inception of each new school year also includes the first year teachers with the expectations of total preparedness and the enthusiasm to take on and manage classroom challenges. New teachers must be able to make consequential academic decisions, plan appropriate lessons, have knowledge of the curriculum and subject matter, differentiate instruction, and develop a positive educational climate (Hudson, Spooner, & Murray, 2013). A classroom must always be primed for students regardless of the teacher's experience or background. Without missing a beat, the novice teacher must be well organized and equipped to timely and effectively deliver instruction.

Yet, these novice teachers are inadequately assisted during their initial years of teaching. In recent years, it has been reported that an astonishing number of teachers are leaving the profession within the first three to five years of teaching. Anecdotally, this phenomenon is common throughout the United States. Studies on teacher retention have suggested that more than 40% of all teachers leave within the first five years and half of those who are leaving are the most effective teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Teachers with little to no preparation are more than twice as likely to leave teaching as those who are fully prepared. High-poverty, high-minority public schools have even greater attrition rates. Teachers in the top 20 percent of effectiveness- referred to as "Irreplaceables" because they are nearly impossible to replace, leave within five years interestingly enough (The New Teacher Project, 2012). These novice teachers,

all too often, vanish from schools as a direct result of neglect and inattention from school officials (TNTP, 2012, p.2).

Evidence of this existing trend includes the lack of qualitative research that supports an understanding as to how mentoring novice public teachers aids the delivery of instruction. Ingersoll and Smith's (2003) research focused on the working conditions of school districts as the main reasons for teacher shortage. Other than the research conducted by Ingersoll and Smith (2003), there is a lack of qualitative data available focusing on the experiences that drive teachers to leave the teaching profession.

Hence, it is vital that experienced educators help identify the challenges surrounding novice teachers in order to provide practical instructional support. It is worthwhile, then, to mention that while today's school districts frequently incorporate mentoring programs, they fall short in the monitoring of benchmarks for success. A clear description of the contemporary mentoring phenomena dates back to the 1980's. School districts began to focus on mentoring programs to provide support for new teachers in order to positively impact the effectiveness in the classroom (Bell, 2014). The objective of a mentoring program is to enrich the mentee's learning process in order to become resourceful, independent, and productive while transitioning into an effective and skilled educator (Bell, 2014). Reasonably, pairing an experienced individual with a novice educator should support the new teacher interpersonally, cognitively, and professionally.

Thus, mentoring can assist in lessening the new teachers' insecurities and overcoming the overwhelming feeling of failure and isolation. However, probable causes related to the setbacks include the absence of key components such as: mentor selection, mentor/mentee training, and planning time (Hudson et al., 2013).

Feasibly the mentoring phenomenon has been defined as a “nurturing process in which a skilled or more experienced person teaches, sponsors, encourages, and counsels a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter’s professional and/or personal development” (Anderson & Shannon, 1988, p. 40). Anecdotally, beginning education professionals need help on three different levels-professional, social, and emotional:

Kram analyzed the functions of mentoring phenomenon by dividing them into two broad categories that she termed “career functions” and “psychosocial functions.” Career functions are those aspects of a relationship that enhanced “learning the ropes” and preparing for advancement in an organization, while psychosocial functions are those aspects of a relationship that enhance a sense of competence, clarity of identity, and effectiveness in a professional role. Among the psychosocial functions described by Kram are role-modeling, counseling, friendship, acceptance, and confirmation. (p. 22)

Zey (1984) described the most useful function of mentoring as sponsorship. The mentor puts his or her reputation on the line by actively promoting the protégé and by giving him or her important responsibilities. Mentors use their organizational influence to provide an opportunity for the protégé to gain exposure and visibility in the organization. New teachers have reported that mentors provided the experience and support needed to assist them best during their learning journey (Mathur, Gehrke, & Kim, 2012). Mentor pairing expands the novice’s teacher opportunity for assistance and professional direction (Bullough, 2012). The developmental mentoring partnership fosters the conveying of knowledge, skills, and information while simultaneously complimenting the personal, emotional, and professional growth of another (Bullough, 2012). Mathur et al., (2012) in a yearlong study concluded that an increase in

teaching confidence, knowledge and lesson plan/curriculum familiarity was being communicated by novice teachers participating in mentoring programs.

Two additional studies showed how mentees benefitted from participating in a formal mentoring program. In a study conducted by Edwards-Groves (2014), participants expressed that they developed better communication skills and gained support in learning as well as professional growth. In a study conducted by Richter et al. (2013), mentored teachers benefitted more with instructional practices than teachers who received only emotional mentor assistance. Just as students need a teacher, it may be concluded that new teachers need a mentor. Teachers who worked with a mentor were more likely to transfer their new learning into practice (Richter et al., 2013). Mentors are credited with strengthening the new teacher's instructional practices and delivery and in formulating a greater appreciation of lesson planning (Ritcher et al., 2013).

Background of the Problem

Learning to teach evolves from theory and metamorphose into daily delivery of instruction. Mentoring, if implemented with fidelity, will assist a novice teacher in meeting the needs of his/her students by providing them with an array of instructional guidance and assistance. In addition, this will substantiate the existing skills that the novice brings to the classroom, which will in turn foster a professional confidence (Ross, Vescio, Tricarico, & Short, 2011). Generally, the first year in a classroom is the first time a teacher is by him or herself. During internship, college professors oversee student teachers in both theory and some pre-service classroom opportunities. Whereas the first year teacher is maybe pettily encouraged, coached, or guided by another classroom teacher. To add to an already stressful setting, commonly, the matching of the mentor/mentee occurs before they meet and without an opportunity to establish any type of professional rapport. Although considerable change has

occurred in the past decade, numerous school districts, to date, have reported that new teachers have trouble during the initial years of hands-on instruction while in the process of transferring theory into practice. Assistance of an experienced mentor during this time is most definitely crucial due to the fact that it gives the novice teacher an opportunity to implement differentiation of instruction under the guidance of an experienced mentor. There is a strong consensus that among the variables for improving student achievement, the teacher matters more than any other single factor (Rowan, Correnti & Miller, 2002). Nevertheless, we know that many novice teachers struggle and that approximately one-third of new teachers leave the profession within five years (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Because it may take up to five years for teachers to become confident and highly skilled (Moore, Johnson & others, 2004), the induction and mentoring of novice teachers to help them develop both competence and confidence is of critical consequence for student achievement. However, evidence from literature and documented interviews of novice teachers' experiences clearly show that a problem exists, justifiably, further need for research is indispensable. Clearly research, contains gaps and is limited in assessing the effectiveness of novice teacher mentorship in today's public schools.

Ordinarily, prospective teachers are educated in their chosen content area and eventually choose the teaching profession. However, they will only become confident teachers when an experienced colleague mentors them. Using the existing strengths that novice teachers bring to the classroom is an important step in facilitating the development of their skills as educators (Ross et al., 2011). When a new teacher accepts an employment contract, the expectation and assumption is that he or she is ready for the position. The new teacher will utilize what has been learned from previous experiences and is believed to be prepared to create a classroom environment that is available to educate students satisfactorily. Some of the challenges and

biases of a novice teacher include meeting the diverse needs of all students while providing rigorous engaging instruction in multiple subject areas and simultaneously organizing a classroom all while managing students' behavior and learning outcomes. Understandably, one way in which schools have moved to support new teachers is through mentoring (Feiman-Neiman, 2011). Thus, learning to teach is a continual process through exposure to innovative skills, curriculum, and overall instructional practices. It is the hope of educational organizations that the more training a teacher receives, the more instructionally competent the teacher will become. Gratefully, provisions are being enacted so that neophyte teachers are guided and supported during the onset of their educational careers. The state policy in Texas recommends that all first-year teachers participate in a 1-year formal mentoring program (Texas Education Code - EDUC § 21.458. Mentors). The program is to be structured and contain mentoring best practices (Texas Education Code - EDUC § 21.458. Mentors).

The purpose of the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring (BTIM) program is to establish or enhance an induction and mentoring program which will assist to increase retention of beginning teachers. Texas Education Code §21.458 states that public school districts and open-enrollment charter schools are encouraged to assign a qualified mentor teacher to each classroom teacher who has less than two years of teaching experience in a subject area or grade level. Furthermore, scheduled release time for mentors and the novice teachers to whom they are assigned for meeting and engaging in mentoring activities must be integrated into the instructional day. To what extent, however, is the BTIM program being monitored and implemented? Inasmuch, this makes this phenomenon worthy of further inquiry.

Contextually, an effective mentoring program is organized, structured, and goal oriented for both the mentor and the mentee (Poulsen, 2013). Effective programs are those that

concentrate on mentor selection and preparation, established responsibilities, and the mentor-mentee relationship (Poulsen, 2013). It is presumed that a mentor typically visits the first year teacher's classroom to observe and provide real-time feedback. However, scheduled meetings may not always follow this practice, where advice and possible next steps should ideally be addressed. Areas of professional development for novice teachers as well as interactive mentoring sessions are not ordinarily debriefed. It is worthwhile noting that novice teachers gain consequential experience working collaboratively with their colleagues. This enables the novice teacher to actively engage in professional learning with their mentors, thus, enabling them to become competent teachers (Feiman-Neiman, 2011). Through these experiences with colleagues, a novice teacher will acquire needed skills to become an accomplished and skilled teacher (Feiman-Neiman, 2011). Thus, a new teacher needs to identify with the school and his or her mentor as a continual support of all work towards proper instruction and student achievement (Feiman-Neiman, 2011). The quality of the mentoring program matters most in the learning of the mentee and the eventual impact on the new teachers' professional learning and instructional competence (Ulvik, 2013).

The ability of teaching adult learners involves the seasoned teacher/mentor to understand the concepts and principals of the adult learning theory in order to effectively recognize how to incorporate those concepts into their instructional practices. Mentors respond more effectively to the needs of the adult learners when they understand andragogy (Teaching Excellence in Adult Learning, 2011). As a result, mentors will facilitate learning while assisting adult learners with setting and accomplishing goals while selecting the options needed to achieve the set goals. Because adult learners have the essential need to recognize why, it is important for instructors to

include the experiences of the adult learner as they are applying the knowledge into their practices (Kearsley, 2010).

An area of need relative to educational mentoring practice is that while novice teachers are most certainly capable of using research-based teaching methods and effective teaching procedures, they still need additional support to further develop and refine these practices. Moreover, new teachers at times are pressured to adapt their practices to the status quo, even if that contradicted established research-based classroom teaching practices. Consequently, novice teachers were hesitant to confide in their mentors, implement research-based practices that went against the status quo, or ask for help for fear it would hurt their careers. Understandably, everyone involved in the school community from policymakers to parents and everyone else in between must take note and support changes to benefit new teachers and ultimately the students' academic success.

Statement of the Problem

Most mentoring research is centered on the mentees' perspectives of the mentoring process: how the mentor assisted the new teacher transitioning into a new career field and how the mentor supported the mentee emotionally and professionally (Kane & Francis, 2013). It is important to note that instructional expectations for new teachers are the same as for those who are experienced. In addition, the new buzzword in education, rigorous instruction, adds to an already stressful situation for a first year teacher. New teachers need to be provided adequate mentoring support to improve student learning (Gullen & Chaffee, 2012). Hence, the expectation is that new teachers have the skills to plan efficiently and deliver instruction (Gullen & Chaffee, 2012). Although many times it is the desire of school districts to support the instructional practices of the new teachers by implementing mentoring programs, the effectiveness remains

questionable. It is important to understand how new teachers develop professionally to ultimately become competent educators. The mentor must provide regular opportunities to plan and deliver instruction with timely feedback that yields professional growth. Nonetheless, to date, there is still disjointed and incomplete understanding in current research as to how professional learning and development are transferred to instructional delivery. According to Malcolm Knowles, andragogy is the art and science of adult learning, thus andragogy refers to any form of adult learning (Kearsley, 2010). Personalized andragogic practices of the new teachers after only 1-year of participation in a formal mentoring program must be thoughtfully implemented and monitored in order to experience professional growth and development.

Unquestionably, it is important to understand how new teachers sustain professional growth and augment their delivery of instruction after participating in a mentoring program.

Knowles suggested four principles that are applied to adult learning:

1. Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.
2. Experience (including mistakes) provides the basis for the learning activities.
3. Adults are most interested in learning about subjects that have immediate relevance and impact to their job or personal life.
4. Adult learning is problem-centered rather than content-oriented.

Thus, it is also essential to understand how new teachers learn to apply theory to practice as well as implement what their mentors have taught them about effective teaching after 1-year of mentorship. Just as important, being able to study how mentees implement their lessons and how daily instructional methods influence the outcome during the mentoring process will most certainly have lasting ramifications.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand how, after participating in a year of mentoring, professional learning and development are transferred to subsequently transform instructional practices during the second year of teaching. During their mentoring year, first-year secondary teachers should have had a mentor to guide them with delivery of instruction and provide them with feedback on individual instructional practices. After the completion of 187 school days, the novice secondary teachers will resume the second year of instruction and conceivably refer to their first-year mentoring experiences to transfer and implement daily instruction. During the second year, the teachers will typically work both in network with their colleagues and also learn to independently plan individual lessons and implement daily delivery instruction. After participating in a full-year of formal mentoring programs, the new teachers should ideally have grown professionally and have gained sound instructional practices. A qualitative case study will provide the best means of analyzing this issue. Of particular interest is the information gathered from second-year traditional track teachers as to what they learned and sustained in their instructional practices which may be missing from current research. When the new teachers' school district implemented the mentoring program concurrently during the time of this study, an opportunity presented itself by providing a logistical view of the program. Subsequently, the participants in this study will be asked to describe their experiences and professional learning and their perceived effectiveness of their own instructional practices. When teachers feel that they had a positive mentoring experience, they should feel that their instructional practices were impacted, and they were better prepared to work independently (Gardiner, 2012). This study, through face-to-face interviews using semi-structured questions, will seek to find out how and why second-year teachers perceived their mentoring experience

impacted their instructional practices. The participants will be asked to reflect on the same interview questions and respond how they perceive mentoring affected instructional practices, specifically lesson planning and daily delivery of instruction.

Theoretical Framework

Theories provide meaning and purpose for the traits, behaviors, and actions of individuals (Hoy & Miskell, 2008). In the field of education, methods are researched based on practices that educators explore and attempt to implement in developing an efficient and productive learning environment (Hoy & Miskell, 2008).

Mentoring theory is the framework for this study. Mentoring dates back as far as the ancient Greeks with expectations that an older, more experienced individual would guide a younger, less experienced person imparting needed knowledge to succeed in life (Gutierrez, 2012). While the mentee looks to the mentor for guidance and his knowledge, it is the relationship that develops which influences the mentee's life decisions more readily than anything else (Gutierrez, 2012). When mentors and new teachers work collaboratively, they gain knowledge from each other, plan together and create a positive relationship (Kadji, Zachariou, & Flogaitis, 2014).

Hence, mentoring is a transformational process that affects the individual. It assists the mentee to learn and grow through observation, practice, and reflection. It helps the new teacher to explore, discover, and acquire new skills and techniques that will enhance and strengthen their individual knowledge and abilities. Bullough (2012) concluded that mentoring assisted teachers with classroom practices, becoming active in curricular development, and assuming responsibility for professional learning. The adult learners' relationship that develops during mentoring assists all participants on how to best handle stressful situations, take risks, become

decision makers, become more confident, and positively impact student achievement (Galbraith, 2003).

Mentoring is supported by theoretical and empirical research in that it encompasses professional learning (Schunk & Mullen, 2013). One major way new teachers can learn is by collaborative mentoring. When mentors and new teachers work collaboratively, they gain knowledge from one another, plan together, create a positive relationship, and learn (Kadji, Zachariou, & Flogaitis, 2014). Thus, these principles are what can make mentoring useful as they relate to teaching and learning.

Research Questions

Increasing research indicates that mentees benefit from mentoring programs (Kadj-Beltran et al., 2014). Mentees learned new strategies and techniques for effective instructional practices and became better critical thinkers while understanding other adult learners (Kadj-Beltran et al., 2014). Communication skills are strengthened, efficiency and skills improved, and new teachers learned to be reflective learners and transformed their instructional practices through participation in mentoring (Kadj-Beltran et al., 2014). Nonetheless, it is important to understand precisely what new teachers gained instructionally from mentoring and how they transferred their new learning into practice. By having this information, school personnel will have the ability to develop and implement effective mentoring programs. The following research questions will be used to address how formally mentored new teachers transformed their instructional practices after one full school year of mentoring.

Q1. How do secondary public school teachers who participated in a formal year of mentoring perceive their professional development?

Q2. How did secondary public school teachers who participated in a year of formal mentoring transfer and subsequently transformed their daily delivery of instruction?

Nature of the Study

When reality sets in for many new teachers, they find there are many more challenges and learning that they need to address than they initially anticipated (Zachary, 2012a). Many first year teachers leave the profession because they feel inadequate, ineffective, and overwhelmed (Zachary, 2012a). Many mentoring programs have been developed to address these reports and have produced positive effects on teachers staying on the job and demonstrate instructional competence (Feiman-Neiman, 2011). One way in which the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has dealt with this concern is to require that each district assigns a mentor to the new teacher during their first year (Texas Education Code - EDUC § 21.458. Mentors). Nevertheless, there is minimal research regarding how formal mentoring affects new teachers after they complete the program.

The research utilized for this study will be a qualitative methodology with a case study design. A case study design will be best for this research as it is qualitative in nature and will allow the researcher to explore in depth the perceptions of a new teacher (Creswell, 2009). Case studies are typically used to seek answers to how and why questions (Yin, 2009). By using a one-to-one interview, the researcher will be able to collect data regarding what happens during mentoring as the mentee gains knowledge, support, and guidance from the mentor and translates it into instructional practices. Additionally, a case study will provide an opportunity to collect and present data in a descriptive manner (Yin, 2009). The research questions will be developed to explore the perceptions of novice secondary teachers as it relates to regular education, instructional implementation and daily practices. Questions will be used to examine how

mentored novice teachers perceived the transference of their learning on instructional practices during their second year when they are left to teach independently. A sampling of secondary school teachers from a Deep South Texas School District will be interviewed using open-ended questions relating to instructional practices. The approach and design of this study will be used to analyze interview data.

Significance of the Study

The state of Texas mandated changes to mentoring by law, affecting all districts in the state (Texas Education Code - EDUC § 21.458. Mentors). The lawmakers based their recommendations on mentoring research that clearly indicates it is important to support new teachers in the performance of their duties and in adjusting to challenges during their first assignment in order to reduce attrition, improve instructional effectiveness, and strengthen teacher's knowledge of curriculum standards and facilitate student achievement (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Mentoring is a professional development that assists new teachers emotionally, instructionally, and professionally (Achinstein et al., 2014). High quality mentoring improves collaboration and collegial relationships so that new teachers do not isolate themselves (Chu, 2012). This professional development and learning assists the new teachers with strengthening their instructional practices to be effective educators (Chu, 2012). Furthermore, it is important that new teachers learn how to take ownership of their learning and apply this to their classroom (Chu, 2012).

Definition of Key Terms

Adult learning - Adult learning takes place when adults participate in professional development or training. New teachers and mentors can support their adult learning during their

participation in a mentoring program (Kadji-Beltran et al., 2014). Mentoring programs can assist the adult participants with improving personally or professionally and can make a difference for all participants (Kadji-Beltran et al., 2014).

Andragogy - The term 'andragogy' is derived from Greek words meaning "man-leading" and it is distinguished from pedagogy which means "child-leading". Andragogy was originally coined by the German educator Alexander Kapp in 1833 (Knowles, 1990) and it was developed as an adult education theory by Malcolm Knowles, an American educator. Andragogy is an art and science which helps the adults to learn (Knowles, 1970, p.38). The theory believes that an individual becomes psychologically an adult when the individual at that point accomplishes a self-concept of necessary self-direction.

Delivery of Instruction - Students are the individuals to whom teachers provide instruction; thus, the teacher must deliver instruction. Of importance is that the teacher gains necessary knowledge and skills to be an effective teacher (Richter et al., 2013). Instructional practices include lesson planning, classroom management, instruction, and assessing students (Gullen & Chaffee, 2012).

Grounded theory - A research methodology that is characterized by inductive fieldwork and the goal of having theory emerge from the data (Merriam & Simpson, 2000, p.227).

Assigned mentoring - Assigned mentoring can be either state or locally mandated by statute or policy in which mentoring is intentional (Mullen, 2011). Mandated mentoring requires professional development and learning for new teachers and mentors (Mullen, 2011).

Mentor - The term mentor refers to the experienced teacher who provides emotional and professional support to a new teacher. The primary focus of a mentor is to nurture, thus suggesting that a mentor should have an understanding of mentoring and practical skills (Ulvik,

2013). Effective mentor characteristics include: being approachable, able to listen and communicate clearly, maintain the integrity of the mentee, and exude a quality of sincerity (Ulvik 2013).

Mentoring - Mentoring is a relationship that develops between two individuals that can affect the individuals interpersonally, emotionally, cognitively, and professionally (Poulsen, 2013). Mentoring has more to it than just assigning an experienced person to a new teacher. Key components of mentoring include mentor selection, mentor and mentee training, and planning time (Poulsen, 2013).

New teacher (mentee) - A new teacher is a novice teacher who has just graduated from a college or university with a degree in education (Texas Education Code - EDUC § 21.458. Mentors).

Pedagogical knowledge - Pedagogical knowledge is the instructional methods that are utilized by teachers to provide students with daily instruction (Hudson et al., 2013). There are many areas of pedagogical knowledge, including lesson planning, scheduling and timing, preparation, teaching strategies, content knowledge, problem-solving, classroom management, questioning skills, and assessment (Hudson et al., 2013).

Professional development - Professional learning and growth opportunities for teachers provided either formally or informally to enhance the teachers' career growth are considered professional development (Kane & Frances, 2013). The term is synonymous with professional learning.

Professional learning - Learning and growth for teachers are essential to their effectiveness in the classroom (Kane & Frances, 2013). When an individual enhances and

strengthens one's skill level, the individual can grow professionally, personally, and instructionally (Kane & Frances, 2013).

Summary

The goal of this study is to understand how one year of formal mentoring impacts instructional practices of new teachers. Developing new teachers professionally through mentoring and adult learning has been used by the educational system to improve teacher practice and effectiveness (Achinstein et al., 2014). This qualitative research study is designed to review the perceptions of second-year teachers formally mentored during their first year in a Deep South Texas School District. More specifically, the learning that new teachers have sustained from their work with their mentor and its effects on their instructional practices will be identified as benefits to enhance new teacher mentoring programs (Clark & Byrnes, 2012). New teacher mentoring can support and enhance the effectiveness of instructional practices; however, there is minimal empirical research that specifically reviews the impact of mentoring on mentee mastering as well as delivery. (Clark & Byrnes, 2012).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

While numerous studies have reported strong evidence connecting positive mentee/mentor relationships to teacher success (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Alliance for Educational Excellence, 2014), there is also compelling evidence that a novice teacher can adversely impact student achievement without the timely implementation of a mentoring program (Schmidt & McKnight, 2012). Thus, establishing effective mentoring networks is crucially significant in contemporary adult/higher education. Universities and public school districts must generate instructional and professional development programs that effectively support novice teachers throughout the implementation of the mentoring process.

Inasmuch, mentoring must be grounded on trust and provide essential feedback so that the mentor becomes the mirror that the mentee uses to initiate reflective practices (Efron, Winter, & Bressman, 2012). In this way the mentee is then able to use this critical feedback to make sound adjustments. Appropriately, the theoretical lens within which this study is grounded is on mentoring applied as a supplementary element in the context of professional development and adult learning. By and large, mentoring is a process in which an experienced mentor guides the mentee in the development of her or his own learning, philosophies, and personal/professional competence. The theoretical lens used in this study is mentoring, known to be a transformational theory via an analytical reflection and by engaging in a progressive mindset. According to Creswell (1998), in order to discover the qualities in transformational models, collective case

studies were considered (Creswell, 1998 p. 62). In addition, according to Yin (2003) this is also distinguished as a “comparative case” method (p. 14). As such, comparative case studies are appropriate when more than one case is studied. Mentoring similarly addresses the andragogical principle that views the mentor’s experience as an appropriate instructional path in adult learning and trainee mentorship. Applicably, in an educational setting, adult learning and development is fostered for both the mentee and mentor in a combined collaborative learning apprenticeship. Significant issues, however, in designing mentoring programs that effectively assist in the development of sustainable learning opportunities, to date, still present undeniable setbacks. Both anticipated and unexpected shortcomings in mentoring programs include the inconsistencies in application of new knowledge in daily instructional tasks. The gaps in individual and combined analysis of difficulties and potential solutions contribute to, at present, strain the mentoring platform for novice teachers.

Mentoring Overview

Contemporaneously speaking, the practice of mentoring novice teachers resurfaced in the early 1980’s. As a professional development strategy, mentoring was instrumental in guiding novice teachers to apply a wide range of research based instructional strategies. Forasmuch, one of the mentoring goals specifically focused on supporting novices teachers while the other goals focused on creating and sustaining a learning venue. The phenomena of teacher mentoring, then served to foster the potential benefits in three specific areas (Little, 1990). One of these areas was the new teacher induction programs which were ideally designed to transition and channel the novice teachers into the classroom. This transitional phase included adult learning strategies involved in implementation of the mentoring process. The other area considered, career enhancement, in essence provided an avenue for leadership and recognition. Skilled seasoned

teachers (mentors), who serve their schools and/or districts, were regarded as professional developers and contributors to curriculum and instructional improvement. The last area focused exclusively on professional development and program innovation, which helped build capacity for school and district program innovation in order to help guide local education reform.

Verloop, Driel, and Meijer (2001) found:

Although research published during the 1980's and 1990's had built a solid theoretical foundation concerning teacher expertise and its development, there is a lack of concrete, practical understanding of how teachers differ as they develop and gain expertise. Such an undertaking should be centered around teachers and what they do in practice, rather than the theories relating to what teachers do. (p. 446)

Clearly, the function of mentoring goes beyond providing individual teacher support, as mentoring may also require mentor real-time participation in a novice teacher's instructional practices.

Unsurprisingly, as reality sets in for many new teachers, they find there are many more challenges and learning that they need to address than they initially anticipated (Zachary, 2012a). Many first year teachers leave the profession because they feel inadequate, ineffective, and overwhelmed (Zachary, 2012a). Zachary considered the negotiating phase of the mentoring experience as the "business phase." The mentor and mentee should ideally agree on the goals and outcomes, ground rules, plan for logistical issues, and formulate a mentoring plan complete with criteria for success. This negotiating phase is about managing expectations, creating a mutual understanding, and building a foundation of responsibility.

As previously mentioned, the term mentoring has its roots in ancient Greece. Mentor was the name of the teacher to whom Odysseus entrusted his son, Telemachus, during the Trojan War,

circa 1200 B.C.E., in Homer's *Odyssey* (Shea, 1997). The mentor was also assigned to serve as a guardian to the entire royal household in Odysseus' absence. As the story reveals, the mentor guides Telemachus and accompanies him on a journey in search of his father. Ultimately, the mentor became the guiding force in Telemachus' full development. Since that time, the word "mentor" has become synonymous with wise teacher, guide, philosopher, friend, advisor and sponsor. Systematically, mentoring has the connotation of a senior person assigned to a younger person's career development and acculturation to the organization via advice and feedback.

Whereas mentoring has evolved since the initial purpose described in the epic poem, the original purpose and concept are modernly maintained, yet, there is no expectation that today's mentors are all-knowing. Grounded upon individual needs at a specific point in time, most individuals have several mentors over the course of a career. Thus far, however, novice teacher mentoring continues to yield unfavorable results. Echoing previous studies (Flores & Day, 2006; Zeichner, 2010), the findings highlighted the disconnections between university coursework with a strong focus on academic theories and knowledge and the mentoring of novice teachers in a complex school setting. Such disconnections generate conflicting demands for novice teachers and impede their identity development (Trent, 2010).

Present-day career mentoring practices are successful instructional methods implemented in a variety of professions, from medical to law practices, in need of experienced guidance. According to Crossley and Silverman (2016), experiences focused on grooming mentees as leaders in growing the field of public health, law education, and building a community of practice is the ultimate goal (Crossley and Silverman, 2016, p. 77). Innately, research suggests that having a mentor is associated with professional success. Yet, in the practice of teacher mentoring, Le Maistre and Pare (2008) found:

A plethora of studies over the past 20 years has painted a bleak scenario of the life of the beginning teacher. The increasing complexity of teachers' workloads has been explained by a number of factors: greater societal expectations and lower societal recognition; greater accountability to parents and policy-makers; pedagogical and curriculum changes being implemented at an increasing rate; increased need for technological competence; increased demands beyond the pedagogical task; increasing diversity among students; and more administrative work. (p. 560)

Hence, at the core of education, novice teacher mentoring is in need of reform. The goals of a mentor should be to contribute to a positive culture in which scholarly undertakings can develop a mentee's successful career as a teacher and scholar. This provides the mentee/novice teacher an opportunity to secure interpersonal connections in informed and supportive career development.

Still, additional findings captured the nature and the importance of the phenomenon.

Berliner (2001) study found the following:

Learning to teach is not simply learning how to survive the first week of school. It is primarily about learning to codify knowledge in order to draw on it again. And it is probably about complexifying and not simplifying the world. (p. 477)

Thus, it can be said that shifting the mentoring perspective/phenomenon in the instructional setting will serve to reevaluate adult guidance opportunities for professional learning and avoid any potentially missed leaning experiences.

Indeed, mentoring has become a major component of teacher preparation programs. In spite of well-intended mentoring efforts, mentors struggle to ensure that new teachers will effectively educate their students, stay in the profession, and have support during a potentially stressful year (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Although mentoring ideally is designed to ease the transition into the

teaching profession, identifying how they acquire qualities, skills, and the necessary knowledge are all are ways in which educators can further research this phenomena (Nasser-Abu Alhija & Fresko, 2014). If effectively implemented, mentoring can set the stage for new teachers to understand that professional learning must be an ongoing process throughout the length of their career (Wong, Britton, & Ganser, 2005). Formerly, most teaching was done in isolation from other colleagues and new teachers were left to their own devices to navigate the vulnerable first year (Ingersoll 2011). The stark reality of being alone in the classroom was in distinct contrast to the feeling pre-service teachers experience in their teacher preparation programs where faculty, classmates, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors address them in a safe learning environment. Once these new teachers were hired and begin teaching, they quickly realized that their time with other colleagues was reduced to a few hurried minutes at lunch, or before and after school. As such, in terms of the significance in higher education practice, mentoring programs ideally exist to make teachers-in-training and first-year teachers effective and to have them remain in the profession. In-depth preparation is essential to develop effective workflow linking first-year teachers, school districts, administrative leaders, and mentoring programs. This, in turn, would impact student achievement and retention results for new teachers.

In addition, it is important to note that mentoring is a transformational process that can affect an individual. If effectively implemented, it helps the mentee learn and grow through observation, practice, and reflection. It helps the new teacher to explore, discover, and acquire new skills and techniques that will enhance and strengthen their individual knowledge and abilities. Bullough (2012) concludes that mentoring assists teachers with classroom practices, aids in becoming active in curricular development, and helps in assuming the responsibility for professional learning. The adult learners' relationship that develops during mentoring, assists all

participants to handle stressful situations, undertake risks and become confident decision makers, which will ultimately produce a more positively impact on student achievement (Galbraith, 2003). Accordingly, mentoring can assist in lessening the new teachers' fears and overcoming the overwhelming feeling of failure and being alone.

Moreover, mentoring is supported by theoretical and empirical research in that it encompasses professional learning (Schunk & Mullen, 2013). Collaborative mentoring is one fundamental technique being utilized to assist in the training of novice and/or inexperienced educators. Increased subject knowledge, planning strategies and the development of professional recourses are just some of the elements impacted by the collaboration between the mentor and mentee (Kadji, Zachariou, & Flogaitis, 2014). The goal of mentoring is to help the mentee learn, to become self-sufficient, independent, be productive, and transition into an effective teacher (Bell, 2014). These principles are what can make mentoring useful as they relate to teaching and learning.

Delivery and Implementation

In addition, in terms of adult/higher education practice, mentoring is one of the major aspects of today's teacher education programs. Often, a collaborative effort between university supervisors (mentor), new teachers (mentee), and school administrators (He, 2010; Schwille, 2008) serves to better prepare educators for the increasingly challenging classroom environment. However, gaps in the delivery and implementation must be succinctly addressed. Studies demonstrate that mentors need to be better informed about the needs of the beginning and novice teachers they mentor (FeimanNemser, 2003; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009). While much of the research on mentoring focuses on the pre-service teachers, little research gives voice as to how the mentoring experience transforms the novice teacher's delivery of instruction. Growing

research demonstrates that the mentor-mentee relationships enhance the growth and professional development of the more experienced mentor/teacher and as such, this assertion is enduringly significant (Bullough 2012). Additional research has focused on the process of mentoring as it relates to the importance of giving voice to both the mentor and mentee in order to amalgamate the relationship (Achinstein & Villar, 2002, as cited in Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009).

According to He, the mentee or pre-service teacher needs significant guidance in both pedagogical and content knowledge throughout the mentoring process (He, 2010). In fact, He maintains that the mentoring experience is one of the primary factors that determine the success of the first-year or beginning teacher's experience.

Within the scope of higher education research and practice, another significant issue relative to mentoring is the changing landscape. Hence, the developing prospects in higher education makes it more difficult for less experienced educators to find persons willing and able to invest in and support their professorial development. Consistently, the more experienced academics point to the constraints of time (Ehrich et al., 2004) and the pressure to publish and research (Gilles et al., 2015) as significant factors in their limited involvement in the mentoring process. Thus, in this regard, this assertion is enduringly significant in terms of higher education practice and research. Still, other long-term academics have also pointed to inexperience and lack of skills. In institutions where no formal mentoring program exists, the issue of mentoring will be particularly problematic due to only a limited number of master teachers willing to interpret their role in academia in order to mentor others. This being said, mentoring literature suggests mentoring provides benefits which may act as a cushion against the challenges experienced by individuals facing organizational change (Viator, 2001). Mentoring encourages new teachers to

feel appreciated by the organization as mentors feel their knowledge and expertise is valued by their peers and it allows mentees to feel that the organization is prepared to invest in their future.

Alike, mentoring provides a safety vessel for career-related frustrations which allow mentees to discuss incidents that impact on their professional lives. It provides psychosocial assistance in the workspace, which assists mentees in dealing more effectively with role ambiguity, conflict, and perceived environmental uncertainty (Viator, 2001). It can also encourage new teachers to manage changing environmental issues relating to organizational culture and politics, which can impact negatively on self-esteem and performance if not appropriately managed. Mentoring is, therefore, a developmental tool that provides a number of organizational benefits beyond those of the individuals, such as professional development and career progression.

Within the context of higher education research and practice, another significant issue in relation to mentoring is support. Applicably, in examining the literature on mentoring, effective mentors offer wide-ranging, practical/andragogic, and personal support (Gilles et al., 2015). Mentors also offer support that is both pragmatic and pedagogical. The mentors' practical support includes knowledge, task-related assistance, and support that can be immediately used in classrooms (Hennissen et al., 2011). This includes pedagogical guidance in planning and organizing (Sosik and Godshalk, 2000), group intervention, and occasionally mentor tutoring for some students (Wong, Britton, and Ganser, 2005). Pedagogical support also includes monitoring performance and providing formative assessment of teaching practices and offering specific suggestions (Grossman and Davis; Howe; Hennissen et al., 2012). The mentor is an experienced, student centered and knowledgeable teacher (McCann and Johannessen, 2009) who helps develop the new teacher's identity (Chval et al., 2010). To provide support the mentor is collaborative and easily accessible (Howe, 1988), which includes spending time mentoring

(Grossman and Davis, 2012) and giving positive support (Hennissen et al., 2011). The effective mentor is often a successful teacher who shows genuine interest in the novice's development and learning needs (Chval et al., 2011). Thus, mentoring is an important part in developing performance. It supports and guides the mentor/mentee relationship through systemic curricula or informal mentoring relationships.

Still another issue evident within the sphere of higher education research relative to mentoring, is the implementation of reflective mentoring practices. By engaging in reflective planning, and employing research rigor and scholarly skills, the mentees should be able to adopt a new role in understanding of themselves as novice researchers, scholars, and producers of knowledge (Rai and Lillis, 2013). Moreover, reciprocal satisfaction should arise through inspiration and awareness of positive impacts deriving from discussions between mentors and mentees as co-authors and co-creators. As a result, benefits and gains of scholarly work, such as increased satisfaction and improved scholarly performance serve as key factors in motivating ongoing efforts and success in intellectual relationships. These rewards and lived transformations demonstrate that an intellectual research partnership is a sound modality of teaching and learning that strengthens connection among students and faculty, demystifies scholarly work, increases expertise, mobilizes talents, and fosters a community of practice (Coke, P., Benson, S., & Hayes, M., 2015). In this way, a welcome outcome of these benefits is the development of knowledgeable mentors who are committed to sharing and disseminating information in their communities of work (Tanaka, M. T. D., Farish, M., Nicholson, D., Tse, V., Doll, J., & Archer, E. 2014). Henceforth, a mentor who models reflective practices to the mentee and facilitates opportunities for the mentee's reflections is likely to influence the mentee's theoretical practices and subsequent pedagogical development.

Admittedly, significant and promising trendsetting research will continue to refine mentoring relationships significant to contemporary novice teacher mentoring practices. Notwithstanding, the aim of this individual research is intended to contribute in closing the gaps and corroborating on the positive mentee/mentor relationship for the success of novice teachers. While higher education has made gains in recognizing the need of establishing mentoring relationships, minimal research has investigated the affective change. This being the case, a great number of studies concluded in findings that the majority of mentoring research is incomplete and methodologically unsound (Budge, 2006, p. 73). As such, two important elements, rapport and relationship building, have been identified as essential in teaching, particularly as a way to engage mentees in education (Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2012) and facilitate productive collaborations between mentor and mentee (Ferguson & Johnson, 2010; Merrill, 2006; Romano & Gibson, 2006). Fundamentally, the implementation of these two elements can help facilitate effective communication and a strategic process in the novice teacher-mentoring platform. Notably, novice teachers are learning about the significance of relationship building alongside their mentors as they enter the school system. Although, they are required to work closely and regularly with their mentor teachers in order to initiate and maintain collegial rapport (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009). Mentoring novice teachers (mentees) also involves an awareness of the formative stages of learning and formulating a pathway to engage productively with a more experienced teacher. The mentoring relationship is then formalized within school experiences (practicum and internship) when the mentor accepts a mentee in the mentor teacher's classroom. At this point, the mentor-mentee relationship should begin to construct socially. Beutel and Spooner-Lane, assert that the success of mentoring relationships lies in the skills and knowledge of the mentors; yet this also necessitates developing professional-personal

relationships (Beutel and Spooner-Lane, 2009). Thusly, understanding the importance of relationship building is essential in teaching, particularly as a way to engage mentees in the learning process.

In terms of theoretical practice relevant and significant to mentoring practices, is the need to identify effective methods of guiding mentees through the instructional process. The state of Texas recommended changes to mentoring initiatives affecting all districts in the state (BTIM, 2017). The purpose of the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring (BTIM) program is to establish and enhance the increased retention of beginning teachers. The lawmakers based their recommendations on mentoring research that clearly focuses on the performance of new teachers. It specifically isolates duties and their ability to adjust to the challenges in their initial assignment in order to reduce attrition, improve instructional effectiveness, and strengthen teacher's knowledge of curriculum standards in order to facilitate student achievement (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Mentoring, then, must be acknowledged and validated as professional development practice that assists new teachers instructionally, professionally, and ultimately collegially (Achinstein et al., 2014). High quality mentoring improves collaboration and collegial relationships so that new teachers do not isolate themselves (Chu, 2012). This professional development and learning assists the new teachers in strengthening the effectiveness of their instructional practices (Chu, 2012). Furthermore, it is important that new teachers learn to take ownership of their learning while applying it to their classroom (Chu, 2012). Reasonably, it is important to understand how new teachers develop professionally and become competent instructors by learning to engage in mentoring relationships and learning opportunities.

Mentoring and Adult Learning

Still, in terms of 21st century practice, novice teachers need a committed mentor, a community of support, and a manageable assignment. They are involved in transitioning from theory to practice. The mentoring relationship is proven to play a key role in the novice teacher's transition (Jones, 2012). Mentoring supports novice teachers by building on theory, providing more instructional experiences, and expanding their knowledge into practical use (Jones, 2012). Mentoring is a significant professional development practice for new teachers as it impacts teacher retention, affects instructional practices, and contributes toward student achievement (Achinstein & Davis, 2014). Thus, the practice of mentoring is well-suited to helping teachers learn the method of teaching. Methodical teaching techniques are ultimately enhanced through the mentoring programs. In the field of education, both nationally and internationally, mentoring is a practice commonly used since the 1980's as an essential component in the induction of new teachers (Bullough, 2012). Mentoring is widely utilized as a professional development tool in that it is aimed at the learning of all those concerned (Bullough, 2012). Notably, mentoring is a transformational process that can affect the individual learning process.

According to Malcolm Knowles there are five assumptions concerning the characteristics of adult learners, and the four principles, mentioned in chapter one, concerning adult learning (andragogy). Although Knowles' adult learning theories and principles were introduced in the 1980's, each can be utilized today to help professionals create meaningful learning experiences for adult learners. The application of Knowles' five adult learning theories (assumptions) can be applied to the mentoring process via:

Assumption #1 (Self-Concept) A major aspect of designing adult mentoring experience is by having a system to offer guidance and help, while still giving the tools and resources adult learners need to learn..

Assumption #2 (Adult Learner Experience) Should include a wide range of instructional design models and theories to appeal to varied experience levels and backgrounds.

Assumption #3 (Readiness to Learn) Adult learners are ready to challenge themselves with new learning opportunities if they know it will help them to fine tune skills that pertain to their professional roles.

Assumption #4 (Orientation to Learning)

Emphasizes how the subject matter is going to solve problems that an adult learner may regularly encounter.

Assumption #5 (Motivation to Learn) There must be a valid reason behind every professional activity (Kearsley, 2010).

Thusly, mentoring is about education, training, and development as well as facilitating and reflection (Bott, 2012). It is about dialog, emotion, identity, and reflection; it is a process involving the building of a relationship between inexperienced and experienced individuals (Bott, 2012). Mentoring is the relationship between two individuals that affect the individuals interpersonally, cognitively, and professionally (Bott, 2012). To assist the mentor in all of these areas, mentors need to develop strong communication skills (Oproiu, 2015). Oproiu (2015) concludes in a study that mentors must give purposeful and constructive feedback; they need to ask probing and reflecting questions in addition to modeling effective practices. Communication is what will summarily facilitate learning for the mentee (Oproiu, 2015). During facilitated

learning, the mentor will ask questions, listen, give constructive criticisms that should encourage and motivate (Oproiu, 2015). Hence, if implemented with fidelity, mentoring will foster learning and development, allowing the mentor and mentee to learn from each other.

Furthermore, mentoring programs that have well-defined goals, promote a culture of professional development for both the mentor and the mentee, and administrator support have proven to have the best results (Poulsen, 2013). With participation in an effective mentoring program, new teachers develop effective teaching strategies and practices (Poulsen, 2013). An effective mentoring program consists of the following: a concentrated effort on mentor selection; providing common planning time and observations; reduced workloads for mentees; orientation for both the mentee and the mentor; and personnel consistently evaluating the program (Poulsen, 2013). New teachers have reported that mentoring has affected their classroom practices, decision-making, and confidence. They have also indicated that the relationship impacted them the most (Mathur et al., 2013). In schools, mentoring is about the one-to-one assistance provided to the novice by a master teacher (mentor). Mentoring can take on many forms; coaching, modeling instructions, and co-teaching (Mathur et al., 2013). However, what mentoring comes down to is the developmental relationship that is built on trust between the two individuals.

Summary

Conclusively, foundational knowledge from the field of mentoring/adult education can help mentors facilitate intentional learning. Innately, adult learners will best respond to learning when they are purposefully motivated to learn. According to Boyer, work effectively articulates the essential scholarship in the mentoring/adult learning processes and encourages educators to approach their work in new ways (Boyer, 1990). Educators/mentors must continue to explore the everyday aspects of their practice through research studies and then disseminate their findings to

improve the delivery of instruction. The intent of this practice should be particularly geared to further develop the cognitive and the ultimately emotional aspect of the mentee. Theories and models from the field of mentoring should be based on the assumptions that mentees bring life experiences to any learning event, that their learning needs are likely related to their changing social roles, and that they are motivated by internal rather than external factors. Thusly, this is significant to the larger body in the mentoring field in that helping mentees (learners) stay focused on goals, objectives, and learning will determine the success level of the mentoring relationship.

Summarily, mentees learn best when addressing real life issues and are motivated to apply what they learn candidly. Foundational elements grounding most mentoring theories are that mentees value self-direction, experiential learning, and collaboration. In isolation, self-direction involves the ability to select, manage, and assess many of the activities needed for a learning experience. Experiential learning or learning by doing means actually performing an activity, then reflecting analytically on the experience and imagining how the learning could apply beyond a particular setting. Collaboration involves sharing the responsibility for learning between adult learners; and thus, reducing hierarchical relationships between mentor and mentee. The enigma lies in having mentors and mentees become succinctly attuned to the subtleties of the mentoring relationship.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Over the past few years, knowledge regarding novice teacher mentoring as it relates to adult learning has extended far beyond the traditional principles of didactic instruction. Although mentors implement certain principles of adult learning within the mentoring relationships, much work remains to be done. Consequently, increased research indicates mentees benefit from effective mentoring programs practices used in teaching adults (Kadj-Beltran et al., 2014). However, in spite of the large number of school districts across the United States that are using mentoring as a means of retaining and preparing novice teachers, to date, many are leaving the profession within the first 3 years of teaching (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Clearly, additional research is required to determine how mentors and mentees can strengthen the mentor relationship and in doing improve delivery of instruction. The aim of this study is to understand how secondary novice teachers can benefit from a mentoring relationship and how their experiences can transfer learning into effective daily delivery of instruction.

As a result, various mentoring programs have been developed to address some of these outcomes, which have thankfully initiated promising results in helping retain high quality teachers while assisting in fostering collegial instructional competence (Feiman-Neiman, 2011). One way in which the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has dealt with this concern is to require that each district assign a mentor to the new teacher during their first year (Texas Education

Code - EDUC § 21.458. Mentors). Yet, there is minimal research regarding how mentoring affects new teachers after they complete one year of mentorship.

Background to the Approach

Using grounded theoretical methodology, the purpose of this qualitative study sought to understand and make sense of this phenomenon. It sought to discover how after participating in one year of formal mentoring, learning and development was transferred to successively transform delivery of instruction during the second year of teaching. The perceptions of the second-year teachers after their initial year of mentoring were methodically considered. The participants were asked to reflect via face-to-face interviews and respond as to how they perceived mentoring affected their instructional practices, specifically in their professional development and delivery of instruction.

Research questions which were utilized to guide the data collection and analysis, were developed to explore the perceptions of new general education secondary teachers and their instructional practices and implementation. The research questions:

How do second-year secondary teachers who participated in a formal year of mentoring perceive their professional development?

How do second-year secondary teachers who participated in a formal year of mentoring transfer and subsequently transformed their daily delivery of instruction?

The rest of this chapter includes a discussion of the method and design, participants, and instruments as well as a description of the data collection, processing and analysis that were utilized in this study. The chapter closes with methodological assumptions, potential limitations and delimitations, ethical assurances within the proposed study and ultimately, chapter summary.

Research Methods

The research for this study involved the use of a qualitative methodology. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research occurs in the natural setting. A qualitative researcher employs multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic. As such, the qualitative method excluded the necessity to yield quantitative research conclusions. Because qualitative research is emergent rather than prefigured, it is essentially interpretive to allow the researcher to gather rich data. Qualitative researchers view social phenomena as a whole, systematically reflect on who is in the inquiry, and are sensitive to personal biography and how it shapes the study (Creswell, 2012). Essentially, the qualitative method allowed for review of perceptual information, which was needed for this study in order to obtain thorough responses.

While most qualitative research yields rich description of the participants' perceptions, grounded theory looks for explanation of the phenomena being studied (Creswell, 2008). Grounded theory goes beyond what was said by participants to move into the exploration of why participants said what they said. Moreover, grounded theory provides a conceptual framework that would comprise underlying assumptions and their interpretations in making value decisions about the aims of education. Grounded theory allows the researcher to go beyond basic identification of patterns and themes; it makes room for in-depth description. Creswell (2008) noted that grounded theory, as a research design, is used to explain the phenomena at a far-reaching conceptual level, within the contexts of which the participants operate.

According to Glaser and Strauss in 1967, grounded theory was expected to allow the researcher to acquire theoretical concepts from the data rather than impose an outside theory that did not fit or entirely explain the phenomena being studied. Strauss and Corbin (1994) noted that "the emphasis is on conceptualization rather than description" (p. 274). Most contemporary

novice teacher mentoring studies have described what their data revealed. With grounded theory, description of data is not the focus, explanation is. The novice teacher mentoring phenomena has been described by research, but not explained by the data. Stanulis & Russell (2000) is an example of a grounded theory analysis regarding the role trust played between two individuals. Withal, this also further built the foundation of commitment and accessibility in professional relationships.

In addition, it is also noteworthy to mention that grounded theory methodology has gone through transformations and modifications, aside from notable controversy since its inception. It is this controversy and the transformations that has made it all the more essential that the researcher using grounded theory is clear about the methods being employed, as well as the processes and complete saturation of data analysis.

Grounded theory was created to allow the researcher to choose between an approach based upon positivist philosophy or a more constructivist approach, such as that advanced by Charmaz (2000). These approaches become distinctly evident during the data collection and analysis phases. Such as, an approach to data analysis often include three stages of coding, moving from codes to categories to concepts as data are analyzed (Dey, 1999). Charmaz (2000) using a constructivist approach, has less rigid coding methods as she moves the data along the process from individual words to theory. Notwithstanding of philosophical orientation, still, constant comparison of the data is essential in grounded theory. This is a movement between data from various sources, as well as that collected in the field and which include source comparison.

Considering quantitative analysis would not be ideal for this study, as perceptions cannot be supported by reliable statistical data (Creswell, 2009). It is, nonetheless, consequential to

protect the rigor of qualitative research and establish trustworthiness, in order to have researchers focus on validity (credibility and transferability), dependability, and confirmability during the course of their study (Guba, 1981; Schwandt, Lincoln, & Guba, 2007). Perceptions, thence, about how mentoring affects delivery of instruction and were meaningful when the focus is a small sample or when data is saturated; accordingly it is better to use inquiry (Cozby, 2009). Data was collected for this study using interviews comprised of open-ended questions. A semi-structured approach was chosen because it lend itself to the application of a conversational tone which made the participants feel relaxed. This also allowed for the expanding on techniques and experiences that highlighted the traits that made them a good fit for the position (Galletta, 2013). The aim of this study was be to gather and interpret interview data in order to understand how mentoring novice teachers affects their delivery of instruction. A case-study design was best for this research as it is qualitative in design and allowed the researcher to explore in-depth the perceptions of novice teachers. Case studies generally seek to answer how and why questions (Yin, 2009). A case-study provided an opportunity to collect and present data in a descriptive manner (Yin, 2009). This case study was created to garner the perceptions of new teachers who have participated in a year of professional mentoring. Thus, this case study involved use of an interactive approach to collect information using open-ended interview questions. The qualitative data gathered was applied to help obtain a better understanding from the perceptions of the participants. The use of this approach shaped the type of questions asked, the form of data collection, and the steps of data analysis.

To conduct the study, the researcher needed valid information such as the

definition related to the doctrines and practices of new teacher mentoring and any reasonable common characteristics to andragogy or adult education. Also required for the study was background and demographic information about the participants and school district.

The subsequent pages address these areas of information. Background information is provided to facilitate the reader's understanding in which the study was conducted. This approach is applied so that it helps guide the reader into a more in-depth understanding and with the potential for further studies.

Conclusions were made about the new teachers' perceptions about how formal mentoring impacted delivery of instruction during their second-year of teaching and how the mentoring experience possibly assisted with improving their professional development.

A small sample of general education secondary school teachers, seven participants, from Deep South Texas participated in this study. The information was gathered via open-ended interview questions related to delivery of instruction. Using one-to-one interviews allowed the researcher to describe what happens during mentoring as the mentee gains knowledge, support, and guidance from the mentor and how their learning was sustained and translated into their instructional practices.

The Setting

The study was conducted during the 2017-2018 school year. The mentoring program described in this study is set in Deep South Texas. The district served predominately Hispanic (98%) and a lower socio-economic (96%) population. The school district had a total of 7,217 employees: 3,180 teachers, 2,400 auxiliary staff, 760 education aides, 661 professional support, 205 campus administrators, and 10 central office upper level administrators.

A compiled district survey indicated that over 70% of teachers believe they needed additional professional development and instructional support. Teachers specifically indicated they needed additional professional development for technology integration, meeting the needs of special education students, dealing with the social and emotional (and disciplinary) needs of students, as well as differentiation of instruction for all students.

Some of the district's demographic needs included, continued support for students of poverty to receive the health and nutritional support necessary to be healthy students and increase attendance. In addition, other demographic needs included expansion of programs and services supporting parental, community, and business involvement with students and schools. The use of appropriate technologies to increase opportunities beyond those available in Deep South Texas were also identified as well as the need for the continued expansion of district early childhood programs and services.

The mentoring program was an in-house/internal program designed for novice teachers/mentees matched with a seasoned teacher/mentor. The purpose was to provide instructional support and reflective guidance for novice teachers in the school setting. The new teacher/mentee could have been new to the school or the profession. If the novice teacher is new to the profession, support in delivery of instruction, professional development, and class management were implemented.

The in-house mentoring program should ideally ease a new teacher's entry into the classroom and the school system. The mentors were certified experienced teachers who for the most part were campus department chairs or lead teachers. These mentors were assigned by school administrator(s) and/or district coordinator(s) and were considered skilled and accomplished teachers who were qualified to guide the novice teachers/mentees. The mentoring

program goals were to guide in implementing effective teaching practices, a collegial atmosphere that encouraged professional growth, and a comfortable transition for new teachers into the culture of the district.

Research Questions

Grounded theory, as a methodology, supports letting the data dictate the questions once the data is gathered. Corbin and Strauss (2008) noted that although it is necessary to have some questioning guidelines for groups, it is assumed that an unstructured interview that is based broadly on the research topic will be followed in grounded theory. The guiding question will look like “tell me what you think about ...” while questions may be prepared ahead of time for the study, the researcher will follow where the interviews lead and may introduce other questions as needed. The following research questions were used to address how formally mentored new teachers transformed their instructional practices after one full school year of mentoring.

Q1. How do second-year secondary public school teachers who participated in a formal year of mentoring perceive their professional development?

Q2. How do second-year secondary public school teachers who participated in a formal year mentoring transfer and subsequently transformed their daily delivery of instruction?

Research Design

Abiding by grounded theoretical methodology, this research study was initiated by interviewing seven novice secondary public school teachers utilizing a theoretical sampling method. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), theoretical sampling involves going back and forth between data and people as research unfolds with the purpose to “identify relationships between concepts” (p. 143). Saturation was more than the idea of no new data emerging; it is the idea of having an in-depth development of categories and concepts so as to theorize about the

issue being studied. Sampling is sufficient when “major categories show depth and variation in terms of development” (p. 149). This calls for no specific number of participants, but is shaped by the categories as they emerge.

Interviews were conducted after obtaining research approval in accordance with all policies, rules, and regulations as stipulated by the public school district. Participants were asked to participate in a 60 minute face-to-face interview where qualitative data would be gathered and revealed for this study. The interviews were semi-structured as this format allowed questions to be spontaneous which served to enhance the conversation and assisted the principal researcher in gaining an in depth understanding of the participant’s perceptions. These face-to-face interviews took place in the participants’ respective campuses in order to make them feel comfortable in a familiar environment. The vetted open-ended questions were implemented in order to obtain a thorough perspective of beliefs and experiences about the phenomenon being researched.

Participants were asked to elaborate on their individual experiences and professional learning practices. Participants were audiotaped and asked to reflect about how the mentoring experience impacted their current instructional practices and daily delivery of instruction. These face-to-face interviews were voice recorded and subsequently transcribed.

Field notes were taken by the researcher as the face-to-face interviews were conducted. This process allowed the researcher to attain an in-depth perspective from the gathered data. Likewise, this method also served to assist in making conceptual conclusions from raw data to abstractions that helped to describe the research phenomena. As such, these memos accumulated as written ideas about their mentoring experiences helped pave the road to trustworthiness. These notes, inasmuch, were used to tell what was going on beyond the interview questions. According to Charmaz (2000), “what respondents assume or do not

apprehend may be much more important than what they talk about” (p. 514). Charmaz additionally suggested that this is where the difference between positivism and constructivism come into focus. Aiming on the data without researcher field notes may not give an in depth or thorough account.

As the face-to-face interviews were transcribed, coded, and sectioned into themes, constant comparison between interviews were initiated. Drawing on researchers that have interviewed and explored novice teachers’ perceptions (such as, Stevens, 2001; Kunzmann, 2009), these were useful in coding and constant comparison as well. Gilgun (2001) noted that the use of constant comparison may call for the collection of data from a less than obvious source with respect to the study. According to Charmaz, with theoretical sampling, one can “expand the sample to include participants who differ on a significant variable” (p. 349).

Second year public secondary school teachers interviews began to yield rich and descriptive data. According to Charmaz (2000), interviews are not the only method of data collection to which grounded theorists are limited. Written accounts, done by other researchers, may contain some of the same codes and concepts if placed under line-by-line coding methods. As noted above, Gilgun (2001) had suggested the use of non-obvious sources for comparison in the study of a phenomena. Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggested the use of letters, written accounts and even fiction as possible sources when saturating a theory.

Participant Selection Process

Although the participants were exclusively secondary teachers from Deep South Texas, differences in backgrounds and upbringings were revealed. Diversity of participants within the novice teaching community was the researcher’s intention so that the sample would exemplify didactic differences. While these methods were employed, emphatic neutrality was the

researcher's position. Emphatic neutrality in research "seeks vicarious understanding without judgment" (Patton, 2002, p. 40). These novice teachers should have participated in a one-year of formal mentoring as prescribed by the Texas Education Agency. All this while being mindful of the participants' perspectives without imposing the researcher's thoughts and feelings. For this study, theoretical sampling was used to ascertain a purposeful selection. Specifically, novice teachers who have gone through a year of mentoring. This type of sampling allowed for a variety of criteria to be established in selecting participants who provide detailed information pertinent to this study.

In purposeful sampling cases are selected for their depth of information "from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research" (Patton, 2002, p. 46). Purposeful sampling, according to Patton (2002), is used to learn something about a phenomenon and open up areas of further research rather than for generalization. This pooled in nicely with theoretical sampling, common to grounded theory. Using theoretical sampling, the participants are selected as the theory emerges and new questions arise, rather than through set procedures.

This study involved the examination of seven participants who provided data that is sufficient in order to obtain the saturation needed to gain an understanding of the perceptions of the population. Charmaz (2000) noted that "throughout the research process, grounded theorists develop analytic interpretations of their data to focus further data collection, which they use in turn to inform and refine their developing theoretical analysis" (p. 509). Thereof, participation in this study was voluntary. New teachers were emailed an invitation. Only those participants who responded agreeably were accepted. The invitation included the purpose of the research,

interview protocols, as well as privacy and protection procedures. Only the principal investigator was involved in the recruitment process and responsible for obtaining participants' consents.

Additionally, only those participants who respond agreeably were accepted. An informed consent form was signed in person at the participants' place of choice. It is noteworthy to mention, while theoretical sampling was the goal, diversity in participant representation was equally as important in this study. Glaser and Strauss (1967) noted that proper saturation and sufficient sampling is easily recognized, as an underdeveloped theory "has too many obvious unexplained exceptions" (p. 63).

The researcher is the instrument in qualitative research since he or she "does not tend to use or rely on questionnaires or instruments developed by other researchers" (Creswell, 2009, p. 175). This is especially vital in the case of grounded theory as Charmaz (2000) noted, "the researcher's interpretations of data shape his or her emerging codes" (p. 515).

Sample

For this study, it is necessary to utilize purposeful sampling of participants. This type of sampling will allow a variety of criteria to be established in selecting participants who provide detailed information pertinent to this study (Silverman, 2009). Participants were chosen due to their participation in a year formal mentoring in order to attain their perceptions on how mentoring affected their delivery of instruction. Seven participants who completed a year formal mentoring and were general education secondary teachers were used to ascertain purposeful sampling (Wolcott, 2009).

Focus on grounded theory for novice teachers was considered the primary

goal of this research. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory offers an approach that opposes the setting of a rigid set of rules and the ‘standardization of methods’ because it will stifle the research process. Justifiably, a positive rapport needed to be established between the researcher and the interviewees. The researcher used face-to-face interviews in order to gain unguarded and honest responses from the interviewees. Lastly, the interview setting was one that is familiar to the interviewees (Russell & Ryan, 2008). Grounded by these principles, the interviews were conducted at the home schools of the novice teachers and during a time chosen by them. According to Charmaz (2000) interviews are not the only method of data collection to which grounded theorists are limited. Written accounts, done by the researcher, may contain some of the same codes and concepts if placed under line-by-line coding methods.

Qualitative research is the best for this study as it afforded the researcher the opportunity to ensure a quality participant sampling rather than using statistical or a specific number of participants. By utilizing this process, the researcher will be able to promote discovery of relevant information. Saturation will be attained when the information provided by the participant's responses revealed consistency (Russell & Ryan, 2009).

Thus, this study involved the examination of seven participants who provided data that is sufficient in order to obtain the saturation needed to gain an understanding of the perceptions of the population. This type of sampling allowed for a variety of conditions to select participants who provide detailed information relevant to the purpose of this study. Participation in this study was voluntary. New teachers who completed a year mentoring in a Deep South Texas School District were emailed an invitation. Only those participants who responded agreeably were accepted. The invitation included the purpose of the research, interview protocols, and protection of anonymity. The participants were all novice teachers, which meant that they had no prior

formal teaching experience and recently graduated from a traditional teacher's certification program.

Instruments

Through face-to-face interviews, qualitative information was revealed and gathered for this study. In Contrast to concise structures of quantitative research, the open-ended qualitative methodology allowed for differences in data and an experimental approach (Yin, 2009). The interviews were semi-structured as this format allowed questions to be spontaneous which enhanced the conversation as the researcher gained a better understanding of the participant's perceptions. Open-ended questions for these one-to-one interviews were planned to obtain in-depth feelings, beliefs, and experiences about the phenomenon to be researched (Yin, 2009).

Candid responses from the participants were vital to the perceptual information; hence, semi-structured open-ended questions were ideal for the participants so they could respond freely in order to gather the best perceptual information. There were a range of perceptions shared by the participants; therefore, it was necessary to categorize information for its relevance. This approach allowed the interviewer to examine the attitudes.

Establishing a comfortable environment for the participants was important to this research in order to elicit spontaneous and candid responses. The interviews took place in a location which is chosen by the participants and lasted approximately 60 minutes. The conversation was developed informally by using some unrelated topics so that the participants feel comfortable and a positive rapport is established between the researcher and the interviewee.

During the formal interview, seven open-ended questions relating to the perceptions of mentoring will drive the interview, in which the participants reflect upon their experiences during their year formal mentoring. Straightforward follow-up questions prompted details, which

were relevant to delivery of instruction. Each participant was provided the opportunity to add other pertinent information that they felt was relevant to this study. The following were the seven vetted questions utilized during the interview process:

Interview Questions:

1. Describe in detail what you learned about instructional practices during your mentoring experience. How did mentoring affect your instructional practices by way of professional development and guided learning experience?
2. How did mentoring affect your daily delivery of instruction? How are you using your mentoring acquired knowledge, skills, and experience in your classroom?
3. How did mentoring align/support your pedagogical efforts? How are you different now than you were at the beginning of your mentoring experience?
4. Describe your present-day instructional practices. What is the most challenging for you? What is the most rewarding for you?
5. How was the mentoring experience sustained and transformed into implementation of daily delivery of instruction?
6. What instructional skills/characteristics have been most important to you in your professional career, and how did you develop them?
7. Evaluation is an important function of teacher effectiveness. What has changed, such as, your instructional methods and/or delivery? How can you describe this experience and what have you learned would be valuable to share with an employer or graduate school?

Data Collection, Processing, and Analysis

Participants were selected and provided consent for their participation in this study. Face-to-face interviews were scheduled. Interviews were conducted over a two-month period. The interviews were digitally audio-taped and transcribed. Analysis of the data included coding and focus on overlapping perceptions of how mentoring affects delivery of instruction. Data was then sorted and categorized by its importance to the research question (Yin, 2009). Data collection and analysis which was important to the research, allowed the opportunity for the researcher to collect relevant information about the research topic and search for relevance (Cozby, 2009). Qualitative analysis afforded the researcher the opportunity to employ many multi-level steps for analysis (Cozby, 2009).

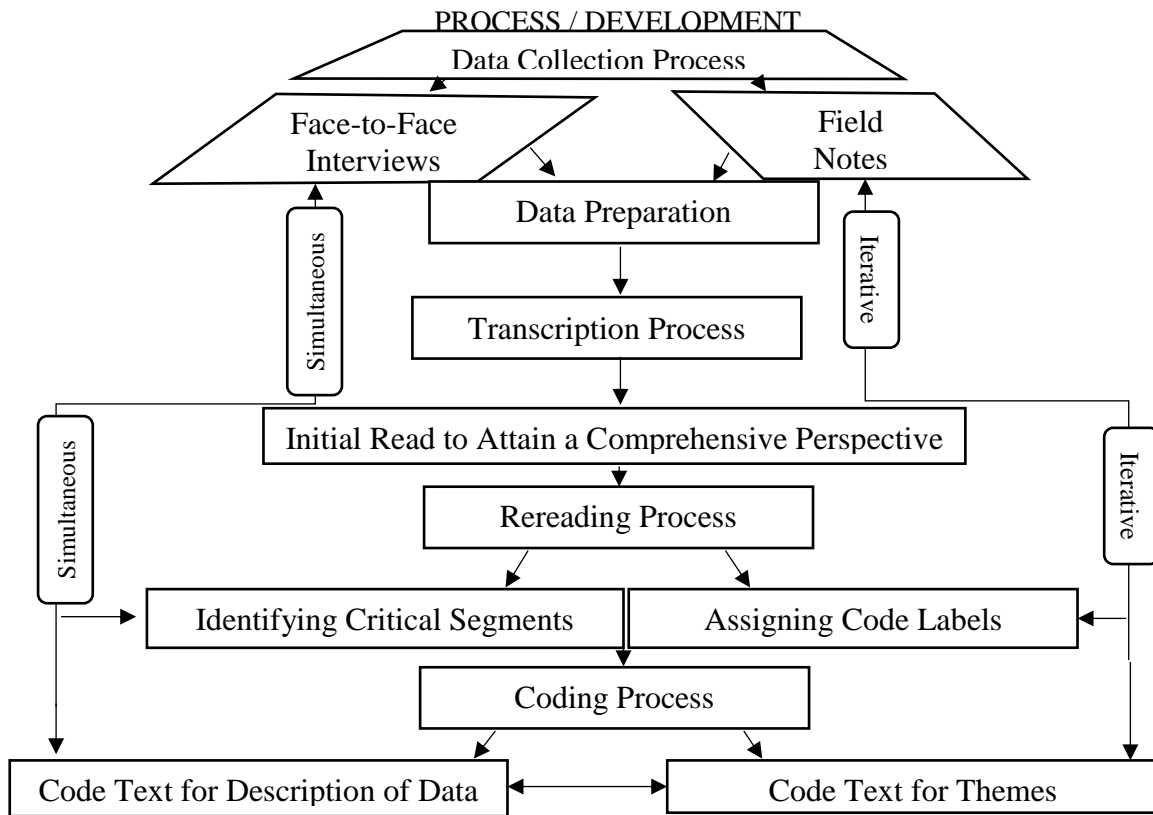
After interview data was collected, it was analyzed by reviewing and coding the participants' comments for significance, uniqueness, thematically organized comments, identified by frequency of collected data, while creating a composite of the mentees' experiences. All interviews were transcribed into a summary format so that the research is able to identify themes, significance and frequency. Thematically aligned quotes from the participants were revealed and considered as to their relevance to this study.

A systematic qualitative procedure was used to generate a theory that revealed at a conceptual level, actions, or interactions about how mentoring supported the transfer/transformation of the delivery of instruction during the second year of instruction. Simply stated, the researcher perceived the study from a theoretical perspective. Consequently, any number of events, activities, actions, or interactions comprised the purpose of the study. The researcher's anticipation was that grounded theory would explain how mentoring

transferred/transformed the delivery of instruction. The following chart illustrates the step-by-step process used in this study:

Figure 1.

A Systematic Process



The researcher determined the use of grounded theory by applying the following strategies: an explanation of the above chart served to assist in the step-by-step process of the diagram. The base of the diagram signified the onset of the research process. The information collected was designated as the data collection portion. This was comprised of face-to-face interviews and field notes. The the process continued with the completion of the interview transcriptions. The researcher subsequently read and reread each transcript to formulate a comprehensive study of individual interviews. This initial process helped the researcher gain a general sense of the data.

At this point, as stated in the research, the coding process began. The documents were coded and divided into segments/chunks. There were three stages of analysis: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding was the first stage of analysis and when the researcher read the transcripts to determine various types of categories found in the data. The researcher regarded this type of analysis as being open to what the participants were stating and to the various types of categories. The researcher implemented the coding process by circling chunks of texts and writing the name of the category next to a given chunk of text. During open coding, the researcher also conducted constant comparative analysis which served to continuously compare the data to the categories. This process helped ensure consistency in how the researcher was coding the data in each of the categories. During open coding, the researcher also conducted memoing by making notes which assisted in revealing how categories were formed into a theoretical model. At this point, open coding was completed when the researcher compared the data and categories repetitively.

Axial coding was the next stage in the analysis. The researcher used the codes and memos and analyzed the relationship of the categories. This was the part of the analysis that actually developed and formed the theories. Research was conducted for categories that revealed the core phenomenon, causal conditions, and consequences that connected these categories to each other. The research revealed these relationships/connections via the logic diagram offered in this chapter. As a final point, selective coding assisted in writing about the theories and explained the core process and how all the categories are related. This process was utilized in the overall revelation of the theories.

The data was also chronicled and detailed using both an iterative and simultaneous approaches. Subsequently, the researcher began with the process of the development of themes,

which were eventually designated as an interactive process (right portion of chart) due to the repeated practice throughout the course of the study.

The data collection was repeated prepared, read, reread, and coded. This method was repeated numerous times throughout the study. The description of the data was then formulated and reviewed numerous times. As the process developed, more interviews were added as well as the coding and the practice of the iterative method. Simultaneously (left portion of chart), the researcher began the emergence of themes. This process was repeated several times as also notated in the interactive portion of the chart. Data was continuously collected until sufficient material had been documented.

The process that followed was the processing of the data and the development of themes. Thus, the researcher identified critical segments and assigned code labels. As such, codes for the description of data and themes emerged. When writing about the themes, from time to time it necessitated the referencing of these individual pieces. Thick, rich descriptions were used as well as referencing of quotes as evidence of sub themes or sub-categories within the themes. The researcher then began to collapse codes in order to prepare for the refinement of themes. A variety of themes were studied until the themes which best illustrated the phenomenon were selected.

As a result of these interviews and observations conclusions were reached about the major themes that would describe how mentoring transfers/transforms the delivery of instruction of second year secondary teachers. This process was done using sticky notes. The codes that were suggested from this work were organized into themes and the sticky notes were placed underneath those themes and organized. It was helpful to have a visual means of organizing codes and themes that enabled the handling of the substantial amount of data collected. When

reporting the finding, a narrative approach was utilized in conjunction with the dialogue and language that was heard.

The idea being that the data collected would not only help in the development of the theme, but with help during the writing process. As previously mentioned, rich, thick descriptions were used when pulling quotes for the subject's phrases that were repeated often. The researcher referenced facial expressions, vocal inflections, and a person's body language. The environment as well as motivational factors were all part of the final analysis. Charts and tables were also created to present data that reflected demographics and prospective.

To recapitulate, the process began at the base of the chart. It began by reviewing numerous pages of text acquired from the interviews. The text was systematically proportioned into segments and chunked which were then labeled with codes. The codes were initially used to describe specific segments or chunk of the text. Although similar at times, the combined codes were collapsed into a certain number of themes. The themes became the focus and the abbreviated method of describing the phenomena. Anecdotally, the researcher utilized more formalized approach to this study. This was to some extent due to Straus's recommendation, which recommends this type of research as having a structure to follow.

Assumptions

The initial assumption was that each participant in this study was open, honest, and candid with their responses during their interviews. Interview questions should not contain right or wrong answers in order to encourage details from the participants. Interviews were conducted in a comfortable, quiet space in which confidentiality and anonymity was preserved as much as possible. Each interview was scheduled for approximately 60 minutes at which time the

participants were provided an opportunity to ask any questions they might have prior to initiating the interview process.

Limitations

The research did not dictate parameters in the participants' willingness to share their experiences in their mentoring program. Additional limitations could include inconsistencies in the quality of the teachers' preparation, educational and certification program as well as their mentoring experiences.

Delimitations

The study was limited to Deep South Texas Secondary novice teachers who were mentored first-year teachers. The data was limited to their perceptions of their participation in the district's mentoring program. Whether the results of this study was generalized to other mentoring programs was unclear.

Ethical Assurances

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) guidelines and institutional research board (IRB) approval was received before data collection began. The participants were informed of the goals, purpose and procedures to be used for this study. Participants received consent forms and agreed to participation. The names will be protected by pseudonyms.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand how, after participating in a year of formal mentoring, professional development and learning, transfer and successively transform delivery of instruction in the second year of teaching. Interviews were conducted as

the primary source of data gathering with a purposive sampling. All collected data was analyzed to identify trends, patterns, and differences. The researcher established deliberate procedures created to preserve ethical principles as the researcher was familiar to the participants. The researcher requested voluntary participation, allowed the participants to choose the location of the interviews, guaranteed confidentiality, and used pseudonyms.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how, after participating in a year of formal mentoring, professional learning and development was transferred to subsequently transform instructional delivery in the second year of teaching for novice secondary school teachers. Although the Texas Education Agency recommended assigning a mentor teacher to each classroom teacher who had less than two years of teaching experience, fidelity of implementation in the mentoring process played a crucial role in the viable success.

During their mentoring year, these novice secondary teachers should have had a mentor to guide and assist them by obtaining feedback on instructional practices. After concluding their first year of teaching, 187 school days, the novice teachers should have entered the second year equipped to deliver instruction. During the second year, the novice secondary teachers should be able to refer to their first-year mentoring experiences and realistically transfer learning (Achinstein, B., & Davis, E., 2014). These novice teachers should have primarily relied on working both in a network with their colleagues as well as learning how to independently plan individual lessons and implement their unique daily delivery of instruction. After participating in a full-year formal mentoring programs, the novice secondary teachers should have ideally grown professionally and have gained expertise in implementing a variety instructional practices. The participants in this study were asked to describe their experiences, professional learning and the perceived effectiveness of their instructional practices. When teachers felt that they had a

positive mentoring experience, they should deem that their instructional practices were impacted and they were better prepared to work independently (Gardiner, 2012).

This study, through face-to-face interviews used semi-structured questions, sought to find out how and why novice secondary teachers perceived their mentoring experience affected their instructional practices. The participants were asked to reflect on interview questions and respond as to how they perceived the effects of mentoring had on their teaching practices, professional development, and daily delivery of instruction. The study was conducted using a qualitative approach using grounded theory methodology. Seven subjects from a Deep South Texas public school district participated in this study.

Table 1.

Novice secondary teachers/mentees

Participant Demographic Data		
Name	Grade Level	Gender
Alberto	7 th – 8 th	Male
Samuel	6 th – 8 th	Male
Cynthia	10 th – 12 th	Female
Carolina	10 th – 12 th	Female
Lionel	10 th	Male
Jackie	10 th – 11 th	Female
Julie	10 th – 11 th	Female

All participants were selected through online recruitment efforts. All participants were afforded written and oral explanation of the consent form before signing and initiating the interview process. Also, all participants were assigned a pseudonym in order to protect their

identities and avoid breach of confidentiality. The mentees were novice teachers in their second year of teaching and newly assigned to their content areas. The participants' mentoring experiences were revealed through in-person interviews and the researcher's observations during these sessions.

This method was conducive to the study required for a qualitative grounded theory case study. Categories were developed into themes by using an iterative process and thus implemented an ongoing constant comparative analysis.

Face-to-Face Interviews

Alberto: A Concerned Novice Teacher

Alberto initially joined the district with the misconception that there would be no formal mentoring in place. This was in part due to the fact that no specific assignment of a mentor was ever officially made. Although understood, "this is going to be the person that you can refer to" there was a general sense of insecurity and hesitation. He was told to report to his (mentor) department chair/lead teacher if he had any questions or concerns. He stated, "I honestly feel that it was not what I expected it to be". Alberto felt his situation was "especially challenging coming from a charter school district where structure was the foundation of the school system".

Although Alberto had some previous teaching experience, it had been a bit overwhelming in part due to all the new policies and procedures involved when coming into a new district. He mentioned he found himself asking for assistance from colleagues who had slightly more experience than he did. Alberto stated, this was an unanticipated "learning curve, it was like, either you sink or swim".

He expressed, "I guess prior to working at a school setting, I used to work in a company (business sector) where the mentoring process was mapped out and monitored for success. So I

guess I'm very prone to having a plan.” Alberto’s professional background was path-driven where employees were directed on “the way an individual completed a task.” He stated, “I'm so used to having everything ‘like’ structured.” He further elaborated, that he would have wanted someone to guide him by saying:

You know, what you are probably going to encounter is this, and this is where you are going to find the information, uh, or you might encounter this, and this is where you are going to find it. Somehow, I felt that I did not get that.

Alberto recalled that when he was initially hired, his class assignment was comprised of two different disciplines. This only added to the challenges of the instability of his mentoring experience. He stated:

Ah, is it my ELA or is it my Social Studies trainings that I should attend? And there were times when I had meetings/trainings for both going on at the same time. So it was like, OK, so am I going to make this meeting or I am going to make the other one? How am I going to make it work? So again, I think part of it is because this is what the school needed, you know, you're certified, ‘go ahead and you can teach both subjects’, which I didn't mind and I enjoyed, but it was who do I approach about this challenge.

Alberto stated that more instructional guidance and curricular direction during his initial year would have provided him with the necessary professional development during his subsequent year in public school. He stated:

Uh, I was lucky enough that by the time I was working here for this district I had a masters, so, um, I knew a lot of things that an administrator would be looking for in a teacher. So, I didn't feel that the mentoring, uh, per se would affect me so much. I already had experience at a charter school, uh, you know, plus the two years that I had as a teaching assistant/tutor at the university helped be through the initial year of public school.

Samuel: An Involved Novice Teacher

Samuel although a novice teacher, comes from a military background, which has enabled him to see individual situations as opportunities of self-initiative. He recalled his mentor’s advice:

The first thing was like, OK, you must have classroom management. You need to control the class before you start instruction because if you don't have control of the classroom you won't be able to instruct.

So, before doing any instruction, you know, you should have everything pre-planned, so when you come in and teach you are ready to deliver the lesson to the students. If you are not prepared, you are going to lose. The kids are going to lose interest.

Samuel emphasized that his mentor continuously stressed the importance of classroom management. This was pivotal as the students walked into the classroom, during instruction, and as the students walked out the door. Without this important component, the teacher/student relationship would not be a successful instructional experience. Samuel's mentor was also instrumental in giving him professional advice prior to the first day of instruction. She (the mentor) guided Samuel systematically from the first day of instruction, setting the classroom rules, classroom procedures and consequences to the delivery of the lesson cycle (daily delivery of instruction) and the implementation of the district's curriculum scope and sequence.

Samuel elaborated on the approach his mentor had on the implementation of instructional feedback in relation to how mentoring and professional development were transferred to instructional delivery. Samuel stated,

So she gave me the feedback like, hey, you know, 'tone it down and break it down, make it a lot easier for them because it's so much information overload for them'. So that those (students) that do not understand are not left behind.

She taught me, like, you know, 'break it down, come to their level, slow down a bit, and always check for understanding' and you know, so on and so forth. So definitely, a more formalized type of modeling and also giving you feedback and letting me know what direction to take was regularly going on.

Samuel shared that mentoring affected his individual instructional practice by way of ongoing instructional guidance. He stated that during times of ineffective lesson delivery Samuel's mentor would provide timely (real-time) feedback and redirect him to an alternative instructional approach:

I learned from her feedback. She would say, ‘OK, do it this way, maybe you should try this. . . Or maybe you should direct the students a certain way or hey I didn't see you try this. . .’ She would say, ‘you just wrote down vocabulary and you didn't acknowledge students or go over the exercises’, you know, direct stuff like that. She would constantly remind me to check for understanding when students do not understand what I am trying to get across.

Interestingly enough Samuel stated that he was already planning for next year due to his mentor’s encouragement and advice. His mentor was likewise influential in getting him to refine his lesson plans and implement scaffolding instructional practices. He stated:

I am already planning for next year but I am changing it up. So next year I will already be better prepared, so when I come in I will have my lesson plans ready and know what to do. It's like, yeah, they're being refined, and I'm already thinking of different stuff to do.

Samuel’s mentor guided him in implementation of effective development of lessons plans that connect student prior knowledge to individual learning experiences. By screening student comprehension levels, Samuel has been successful in guiding students to write about their thoughts and opinions.

It was evident that accurate and ongoing communication between Samuel and his mentor helped develop trust. Samuel stated that this trust enabled his mentor to deliver content knowledge and thus eliminated the needless fact-checking that can slow down the mentoring process.

Cynthia: A Self-Assured Novice Teacher

Cynthia stated that she used to teach adults and now she was teaching secondary students, which is very different although she was still applying some of life’s basic lessons. Cynthia stated that she usually found something that her students would be interested in and uses that to engage them in the learning process. She relied on unique teaching methods in order to engage her students’ interest in learning. Cynthia stated that mentoring influenced her instructional delivery via classroom visits and timely mentor feedback. She stated:

I have somebody (a mentor) that has helped me in case I need some help and that's, you know, good. To know that there is always somebody that can help you in case you need instructional guidance is important.

Cynthia stated that her mentor provided her with goal-oriented feedback as well as with instructional approaches that were relevant to her students' real life individual situations. She also stated that her mentor was straightforward in her advice and recommendations. The mentoring experience prompted Cynthia to go back to the rules, which have been useful in her daily teaching practices. Cynthia reiterated that she could ask her mentor anything and she would illustrate and/or demonstrate how to carry out a particular lesson. Her mentor also shared some of her initial experiences as a novice teacher which helped set Cynthia at ease. Cynthia stressed that this approach in effect helped her compare her experiences with that of her mentor's. She found that she benefited from her mentor's professional experiences and thus felt she was better equipped to deliver instruction. Cynthia also emphasized this type of approach gave her an opportunity to step back and reflect.

Cynthia joined the district with many aspiring professional goals and dreams. Although at times, she found herself in unforeseen situations searching for answers to questions about the effectiveness of her classroom management.

Cynthia stated:

I attended required training sessions depending on what I thought I needed. Although these professional development sessions were useful, having a mentor was fundamental. She was there for me and she helped a lot and gave me confidence in my delivery of instruction and useful tips on classroom management.

I needed assurance and support and was successful in attaining this through my mentoring experience. It's really good to have this.

Cynthia was a novice teacher who knew her content area and who had creative instructional ideas. Whenever faced with challenging situations, her mentor was readily

available. Cynthia was grateful that her mentor played a prominent role in the initial steps to take relating to classroom management tactics for students at the secondary level. Fortunately, her mentor recognized Cynthia's potential and was ready to step in with support and guidance. Through ongoing follow through, Cynthia, was able attain the skills, knowledge, and self-assurance through a close-knit professional mentoring relationship.

She stated:

She's been awesome, but it's not only her, it's my administrator which is around the corner as well as my colleagues which have been guiding me through my first year. That has actually helped me since my prior experience was with adults and not secondary students.

Cynthia viewed mentors as a positive influence in her teacher quality. She believed that mentors should intervene in well-timed and suitable ways in order to help novice teachers develop expertise. Cynthia felt that with effective mentoring practices, a novice teacher would be capable of implementing instructional improvements quicker and demonstrate a wider range of instructional strategies than without a mentor. Cynthia also shared that her mentor implemented feedback methods for best practices and reflective thinking outcomes. She stated:

My mentor was supportive in helping me understand the importance of feedback practices because it gave me the chance to go back and think about how a lesson 'um' could possibly be improved or altogether revamped.

Cynthia expressed that she saw mentoring as a give-and-take shared learning bond between two people. It was a process where her mentor assisted in the learning and development of her delivery of instruction as well as in her lesson planning. She stated her mentor often served as a guide, expert, wise teacher, and most of all a role model.

Carolina: An Alarmed Novice Teacher

Carolina felt her mentor did not provide the necessary guidance or support during challenging times. She believed that successful novice teachers usually credit their rise to the strong guidance of their mentors but she did not experience this type of support.

Carolina stated:

Mentoring relationships matter in the workplace. But, harmful or inconsistent mentoring relationships are worse than no relationship at all. Although I believe that my mentor is not fully aware that she is doing anything incorrect. I believe you really have a mentoring experience when, you know, a mentor comes and sees you and says, 'hey, I think you need to improve this'. I didn't have that experience or any type of feedback of any kind. It was mostly like, 'oh, you have to do this and you have to do that and you had to do this and not that'. What would happen after that...would typically be that we would not talk about it, you know, we would not get together.

Carolina stated that effective mentors should act as guides rather than as supervisors who direct a mentee's actions. Carolina stated that mentors should guide, be sensitive to the difference between a role model and somebody who forces a mentee into a particular path. She highlighted that mentors should offer advice but recognize that it is a recommendation, not an order. Carolina pointed out the most important attribute for a mentor was not trying to solve problems but helping new teachers find possible solutions. She stated her mentor was not cooperative in guiding her to try alternate instructional approaches and reassuring her to not worry if things did not work perfectly the first time. Carolina stated:

My mentor would say that, uh, "you can get most feedback from administration after classroom walkthroughs". Again, just with the observations and no immediate feedback, I do not know if I am getting any better. Administrators usually observed once or twice per semester, sometimes only once.

Carolina stated that new teachers could often feel overwhelmed as she did. She felt a mentor would have helped her most through a role modeling approach to teaching and by giving her instructional recommendations. She believed that by implementing strategies that her mentor

could have possibly demonstrated, she could have adjusted her delivery of instruction instead of having feelings of seclusion and isolation.

Lionel: An Encouraged and Eager Novice Teacher

Lionel saw mentoring as a partnership between the mentor and the mentee and viewed both as learners. He understood this quality as the determining factor of the mentoring experience. He saw himself as an adult learner and assumed responsibility for his own learning and performance. Lionel saw his mentor as his guide and enabler of learning. He stated:

Mentoring has provided me with that structure, that type of guidance that I think is essential for someone like me to be an effective teacher. It has given me a foundation. And although I think each teacher has his own style, having a mentor has help me develop as a teacher. Mentoring gave me a visual representation—a roadmap—if you will—to follow.

Lionel also believed that mentoring should involve the cooperation of both the mentor and mentee. He stated that he was pretty much involved in all points of the learning process. Lionel suggested that a mentee showing respect for his or her mentor included being respectful of meeting times and being prepared for meetings. He stated that the best mentees attended mentorship meetings with lists of topics for discussion, including time lines for instructional tasks. Moreover, Lionel felt that both mentors and mentees needed to be respectful of the challenging demands at hand, including meetings with other mentees and prospective professional deadlines.

In particular, Lionel raised the concern that if mentees and mentors do not develop a rapport, it can open the doors for unnecessary stress for both mentors and mentees. In some cases, lead to burnout for the mentors who may provide similar services for many mentees. Fortunately, Lionel has experienced hands-on support and feedback opportunities. Lionel stated:

As a new teacher, I have been able to see instructional step-by-step guidance with the assistance of my mentor. He has role-modeled strategies that without a mentor would have been difficult. He listened to my ideas and concerns.

Lionel realized the importance in lesson planning but like most novice teachers was not familiar with the flow of the process. His mentor stressed that it was not just about writing the lesson plans, but it was about being able to deliver. His mentor was influential in helping him gain the confidence in his delivery. However, before this could occur his mentor asked to see his lesson plans. Although initially a little insecure, his mentor guided Lionel through the process of aligning his learning objectives and instructional activities to student assessment(s).

Well, I think, I think maybe not instantly, but progressively, it made me a better teacher, not just a better teacher but a better learner on how to prepare myself. My previous experiences, for example, from my previous jobs has help me tie it into the class, um, how to relate teaching to real life experiences.

Lionel also pointed out that his mentor's support in not only lesson planning but classroom management helped him acquire professional judgement which has been pivotal to student academic success. Lionel drew attention to his mentors approach on mentoring. Consequently the transition into the implementation of classroom routines and procedures have been well institutionalized.

Lionel stated that to some extent, part of the delivery of instruction was made relevant to his students' lives; and thus increased student engagement. He stated:

The students seemed to become interested when I shared stories about things that I have seen. Consequently, students become interested when it's something that I (their teacher) had experienced firsthand and appeared to pay attention and engage more in my delivery.

Lionel called attention to the fact that his mentor assisted in the development and teaching of applicable instructional strategies. His mentor was regarded as a career professional who had ideals and expertise.

Jackie: A Relentless Novice Teacher

Jackie believed mentors to be facilitators of techniques from which mentees can grow and have access to problem solving as well as an enlightening view of instructional methods. She believed that mentors must be flexible and willing to make adjustments in the learning experience based on the mentees' learning styles. Nonetheless, Jackie was not one of the lucky novice teachers who was appropriately assigned a mentor teacher. She fearfully initiated her first year only to find collegial assistance was not available. Jackie stated:

I haven't really learned much as far as instructional practices during the mentoring experience. The first year they kind of painted everything so beautifully and when I came in, um, I did not go to school to be a teacher. So, my degree is in biology; and I landed the job. And, I was really excited about it when he told me that they will provide a mentor teacher, I really thought that it was going to facilitate things for me and I was going to have a guide and someone to, you know, direct me in the right way and direct me in the right path.

It is important to mention that Jackie was aware that effective mentoring experience(s) include being accessible and able to support mentees. This is partially because her family is comprised of several educators. Early on Jackie was mindful that she was lacking support in the development of her potential strengths and skills. She stated that effective mentoring should include accessibility of a mentor, even if they were located at a distance. Although they may not be able to meet in person regularly, effective mentors used e-mail or other forms of contact to ensure accessibility and thus initiate rapport. Jackie elaborated on the campus mentor/department chair's approach:

My department chair's duties are more, uh, to aid. For example, for science fair and anything else the science department needs. She did say that we could go in and ask her questions whenever we would, you know, feel stuck. But she wasn't really our mentor. There was a lot of us that were new that year. Um, I want to say for the science department there were at least five of us that were new and I think another teacher had just been here a half semester. So there were about six of us that were new for the science department.

And so, um, I got discouraged because one of them went to go ask our department chair some questions dealing with safety and all of that. And um, her response wasn't very positive so I got discouraged and I decided to just do everything on my own and take it from there.

Jackie's self-initiative and willingness to persevere was clearly evident from the start of her teaching career. This was in spite of the lack of instructional feedback or support. She elaborated on her experience(s):

I know that we're supposed to be having meetings with our department and um, for the most part everybody's just out for themselves. Like you just come up with your own material and develop your own way in which you present it.

It's taught me a lot about myself and it's taught me a lot of different ways of communicating because little by little I had to learn that not all kids learn the same way.

So, I had to have a lot of visuals because I have a lot of ESL students that are English language learners. And I had to figure out a way to show them what I was talking about. So, I had visuals and a lot of vocabulary and I would translate for my students in English and in Spanish. Um, if I use PowerPoints and videos, I just try to reach every single one of my students the best way possible.

Jackie recognized she was lacking instructional guidance and encouragement. By instructional guidance, Jackie understood that effective mentors act as guides rather than as supervisors who direct their mentees' activities. She stated that mentors needed to be guides, be sensitive to the difference between guiding someone and one who just gives directives. She indicated that mentors should offer professional advice but recognize that it is assistance and/or recommendations not instructions.

Jackie insightfully revealed that she was not looking for someone to solve her instructional dilemmas but to help her find possible solutions. She found herself feeling isolated and at times feeling that her instructional ideas were unacknowledged and criticized by other department members. Jackie stated:

I really do try to incorporate as much real life experiences and technology into my classroom. We now have a garden out there and actually my first year, um, my branch

feeder/chair put that idea down and said that it was never going to work and it wasn't going to help my kids.

And so, in spite of the lack of support, I wanted to get started. It was one of the first things I wanted to start as a brand new teacher. It was my goal to start a garden as soon as I could with my kids. And when I heard that it wasn't going to fly, that it wasn't gonna be taken positivity that they want me to focus on the EOC (End of Course Test) and other things, I got discouraged and I've kind of put it off.

It wasn't until my fiancé told me to do my own thing and don't listen to what other people have to say. Some people are going to feel threatened. They don't want you to be doing all these new things. Just plan on doing things your way. So halfway through the semester I decided to just ask for a little piece of land that stands out there.

Jackie's self-determination and drive helped overcome the professional bumps and bruises she experienced along the way. Unsupported but motivated to have her students experience real-life hands-on practices, Jackie was charged and ready to deliver. She stated:

And I started my garden and my kids love it and they love interacting with the outdoors and being out there and going through the plants in my class. And I think the kids feel like they're not cooped up all day in my class.

Now they actually enjoy coming to my class because we're going to go water the plants or go check up on them. We actually have a lot of the instructional TEKS incorporated with the garden as well. So um, you know, it turned out to be fine and that's what made me realize that, you know, even though I am on my own, it kind of opens up windows for me to experiment and although I might fail at some things I will learn, you know, other things and that's pretty much how I take it.

And another thing that they had discouraged me from doing was to decorate my classroom telling me it was like kindergarten and this and that. But my kids love coming to my classroom because there's so many things to see and do.

Jackie eagerly described her classroom setting; and how it resourcefully and vibrantly encouraged her students in the learning process. She stated:

I have it divided by categories. We are related to the EOC. So we have some structure and function over there. We have a biological processes over here. Everything that has to do with genetics goes back there with evolution.

However, in spite of her self-determination, Jackie still wished her mentoring experience had been positive and grounded on support, communication, and professional rapport. She stated:

What I was looking forward to is having someone to not fall back on but someone that was going to be there for me if I had questions or if I had problems.

They pretty much just gave us a book and they're like, here you go. Or they say like the password for the online thing. And so it was. It was horrible.

My first year I was alone. I always thought it would be like my uncle who also works for the district. He's a department head; and he knows his department like a family. They all help each other; and they share everything they can with each other and it's not about competing with your neighbor. It's nothing like that.

Jackie was fully aware she still had a lot more to experience as a novice teacher. She mentioned she enjoyed creating innovative opportunities for her students, but would welcome feedback on potential prospects in refining her daily delivery of instruction. She viewed mentoring not only as a guiding experience, but also one that would help open doors to opportunities for professional growth, advising about the future, about avoiding mistakes, where to spend time and resources on things that matter instead of trying to do everything ... helping to reach a balance.

Julie: An Applied Novice Teacher

Julie mentioned that her mentoring experience had been an altruistic one right from the start. She recognized that, in general, mentors have an enormous responsibility in developing a mentee's potential. This includes making sure all guidance is in the best interest of the mentee's professional growth. Julie elaborated, a mentor not prioritizing the mentee's progress and wellbeing can lead to a disastrous mentoring experience. She specified that mentors should be honest, trustworthy, and active listeners. Julie identified straightforwardness and honesty as crucial characteristic for an effective mentoring experience. Her department head and the rest of

the department members were ready and willing to lend a helping hand. This help decreased the stress level because she did not start the year teaching at the school. Julie stated:

My department head was very helpful and the rest of the US history teachers were also very helpful. Even though I was teaching geography, they have a reputation of being like really great teachers. So like right off the bat they were like, oh, 'I used to teach geography, here's everything and when you go in there, don't worry about the content, because you were not present at the onset of the school year.'

'You need to worry about your discipline and your classroom management and you have to like build a rapport with the kids and you know, you need to have a little bit of fun before you start creeping the content into your everyday routine.'

And I found them very helpful in the sense that they were very upfront with what I should expect from the class and they talked to me about the reasons that they believed the previous teacher had left.

So because I was not present at the start of the school year, I was encouraged with the idea of trying to build a rapport/connection with the kids as being the most important, I think that was very, very helpful.

In addition to experiencing a positive reception, Julie encountered networks of colleagues and other campus coworkers that facilitated her mentee development. She stated that it was very helpful to have someone who knows the school system and is ready and willing to offer sound and reliable advice. Julie felt it was important to have a mentor who can open doors and can help jump-start and catapult her instructional delivery. She stated:

I think them coming up to me being like, we're here for you, here's everything, here's what you need to know. made it so that I felt like I could go to them with any kind of question.

I felt like my department was open enough that if I really needed it I could seek anyone out. Part of development I think was their reputation in that I want to be like them.

I want people to talk about me that way as a teacher and just like walking by the room and seeing like other activities that they have done and just the different ways that they vary their instruction because it's not bookwork. It's like very varied. I think that also changed how I wanted to teach.

Being an active listener required that Julie be acutely engaged in the mentoring experience. It gave her an opportunity to focus on identified instructional issues and prompted

her to address any potential concerns. Through active listening, Julie facilitated her own instructional goal setting. She elaborated that effective mentoring should require the mentor to have substantial mentorship experience because she can clearly see how this becomes particularly important as her instruction is now developing.

Julie also recognized that the mentoring experience helped identify her potential strong points and shortcomings as well as promoted her professional development. She elaborated that now she better understands what she is trying to instructionally accomplish and the range of both her strengths and limitations.

Mentoring definitely changed how I viewed instruction. I always viewed instruction, like what am I doing? I always thought of it like what are my objectives?

Talking to colleagues about lesson plans and things of that nature made it so that it finally clicked that it's like student oriented, which is like that's common sense, but when you're in school and you're like, you know, you've got to turn in a lesson plan. It's like what are your objectives? I was not thinking about the kids trying to learn something. So I think that's the major one that comes to mind. Student oriented goals, instead of thinking about like what are you going to teach, it's like what are they going to learn.

Undoubtedly, mentors and mentees should have the same chemistry, but not just at a superficial level. This should involve having an in depth instructional connection where the mentee feels a sense of inquiry about the mentor's instructional views and opinions. The mentoring experience functions when both the mentors and mentees were on a common ground, had similar philosophies and values. On the other side of the spectrum, perceived or actual opposition, conflicts of interest, and the lack of commitment only serve to deteriorate the mentoring experience.

Reflecting on Julie's experiences, she identified several contributing factors necessary for effective mentoring practices, including constant communication, commitment, and interpersonal comparability.

Themes

In this chapter, the researcher discovered five key themes that addressed the effectiveness of the mentoring process as it relates to a mentee's/teacher's professional learning, development and instructional delivery. As a result of face-to-face interviews, conclusions were revealed through a constant comparative approach. The researcher accomplished this by continuous interpretation of the gathered data and resulting themes. The chart below edifies the five major themes, defines the meaning, and provides evidence grounded in the acquired data.

Table 2.

Revealed Themes

Themes	Meaning	Evidence from the data
Theme 1: Mentoring Experience	Inconsistencies in application and effectiveness	7 of 7 participants
Theme 2: Classroom Management and Curriculum	Mentee's methods of organizing lesson and implementation	4 of 7 participants
Theme 3: Instruction	Organization and success of material presented via mentor's supervision	7 of 7 participants
Theme 4: Professional Development	Professional Expectations	6 of 7 participants
Theme 5: Student Learning Progress	Traditional and non-traditional assessment practices	5 of 7 participants

Table 3.

Mentoring Experiences

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Mentoring acquired knowledge/ skills	30	14.4	14.4	14.4
Practices during mentoring	62	29.7	29.7	44.0
Mentor teacher	13	6.2	6.2	50.2
Mentoring affecting instruction	104	49.8	49.8	100.0
Total	209	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.

Classroom Management and Curriculum

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Method of classroom management	18	21.7	21.7	21.7
Classroom management	46	55.4	55.4	77.1
Support pedagogical efforts	12	14.5	14.5	91.6
Instructional practices	7	8.4	8.4	100.0
Total	83	100,0	100.0	

Table 5.

Instructional Practices

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Delivery of instruction	48	34.8	34.8	34.8
Function of teacher effectiveness	37	26.8	26.8	61.6
Guided practice	11	8.0	8.0	69.6
Learned about instructional practices	42	30.4	30.4	100.0
Total	138	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.

Professional Development

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Professional development and guidance	12	24.5	24.5	24.5
Teacher effectiveness	22	44.9	44.9	69.4
Career development	8	16.3	16.3	85.7
Using mentoring	7	14.3	14.3	100.0
Total	49	100.0	100.0	

Table 7.

Student Learning Progress

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Learning curve	36	26.7	26.7	26.7
Guided learning experience	95	70.4	70.4	97.0
Learning process	2	1.5	1.5	98.5
Test scores	2	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	135	100.0	100.0	

Mentoring Experience

As the participants shared their experiences, one central theme became clear. The mentoring experience had a direct correlation with the manner in which the district, campus or department formalized their mentoring programs. All participants shared some views or experiences related to their mentoring or lack thereof. The participants’ experiences enveloped extreme variances, which had a direct correlation with specific components. The formal implementation of the program, the qualification of the mentor and the ability to appreciate the distinct roles of the mentor and mentee, were consistently referred to during the participants’ interviews.

Four of the participants expressed a positive experience with a number of professional areas being impacted and expectations realized. One mentee, Samuel, elaborated on the how his mentor took an active role in assisting him in numerous areas from the organization of the first day of school to the implementation of the district’s curriculum scope and sequence. These learned and acquired skills will be skills that Samuel and similar mentees will use and hone as they pursue their careers in education. An effective mentor will inevitably become a role-model

for the mentee and be used as a source of goals and inspiration. Mentees Cynthia, Lionel and Julie made reference to the manner in which their mentor became a role model which allowed them to emulate and pattern themselves after. This is not formed by a single event or characteristic, but rather by a culmination of dedication, sensitivity, and professionalism.

It became very apparent that the mentoring experience is not comprised of just a positive or a negative, but rather of a profusion of events and happenings that leave a lasting impression on the mentee. The participants indicated a number of times that they were not only looking for answers but rather problem solving skills that would become part of their lasting career toolbox. These skills involved daily organizational skills as well as lifelong lessons which would be used time and time again throughout their careers. The effectiveness of the program was not only incumbent on the strength of the mentor but also on the openness and willingness of the mentee to accept suggestions and opinions from seasoned educators. Julie recognized that the mentoring experience helped identify her potential strong points and shortcomings as well as promoted her professional development. Through active listening, Julie facilitated her own instructional goal setting.

Contrarily, three of the participants indicated a less than favorable experience with the effectiveness of their mentoring programs. This was due to the lack of an organized mentorship with specific objectives and methods of implementation. These programs presented themselves lacking a sense of direction or ownership. While two of the participants, Alberto and Jackie, indicated that there was never a mentor formally assigned to them, a third participant, Carolina, expressed that harmful or inconsistent mentoring relationships are worse than no relationship at all. Carolina indicated that her mentor had referred her to her administrative walkthroughs for feedback and suggestions. While Alberto and Jackie expressed a feeling of being isolated with a

sink or swim attitude. Alberto mentions that he was fortunate to have some teaching experience and a master's degree to help survive the crucial first year. Although it is understood that school districts and individual campuses are moving to implement strong mentoring programs, there is little doubt that the consistency between campuses and departments are at times not meeting expectations as expressed through the opinions of the participants.

While a strong mentor does not guarantee a successful teacher, the direction and foundation a mentor provides facilitates the mentees problem solving capabilities. Each participant began with a preconceived understanding of what their expectations were of their mentor. Carolina stated that mentors should be guides and serve as role models rather than a supervisor who forces a mentee into a particular path. Due to having several family members as educators, Jackie also had certain expectations of her mentor. Many of the participants' mentor expectations overlapped giving a fairly consistent view of what a mentor's role should be.

It is not difficult to see the wide range of experiences during the mentorship period and appreciate the need for well-defined perimeters and assessment of both mentors and mentees alike. While there may be various differences when addressing adolescent students versus mentees, there are certain key elements which should always be applied, a thorough knowledge of the subject matter, ownership of responsibility and respect for all involved.

Classroom Management and Curriculum

Four of the participants deemed classroom management as an essential part of the mentor guidance. For most experienced teachers it is understood that a well-managed class is an absolute necessity prior to instruction or class activity. Novice teachers tend to relate classroom management with a well behaved group of students. In reality comportment is only one of the elements that comprise classroom management. Another element which is of equal value in

instruction is the organizational skills of the educator. These two components work in harmony in order to present an environment conducive to instruction. A teacher ill prepared with materials and well defined objectives will need to address classroom behavior more often than that of a well-organized teacher with objectives and methodology in place. The four participants reflecting on the importance of classroom management were the same individuals that regarded their mentoring experience as positive. This, in all probability, was due to the mentor addressing the importance of the mentees need to organize the physical classroom as well as their mental preparedness.

Julie indicated the subtle but precise manner in which her mentor reviewed the importance of classroom management in relation to an atmosphere conducive to learning. Her mentor advised that she needed to address classroom management, build a rapport and have fun with the kids. Samuel's mentor was much more direct when characterizing the importance of controlling the class. He addressed the need to have classroom management (control) before the start of instruction. He was very emphatic in stating that without control of the classroom he would not be able to instruct. These distinct approaches demonstrate the versatility of application with the basic result remaining constant. This is very often the product of the diversified personalities of the mentor and mentee. Samuel's mentor was extremely aggressive in the importance of classroom control and organization. Cynthia's mentor was more equitable when describing the importance of each facet of the daily classroom experience. The pairing of mentor and mentee also played a role in the effectiveness of the mentor's guidance.

The organization of the daily class presentation involves numerous components that the novice teacher is either unfamiliar with or does not fully understand the significance as it relates to the daily delivery of instruction. The more essential components are lesson plans, Texas

Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), curriculum and lesson structure. These elements are not only needed to produce an effective lesson, but some are required by the state and local districts. The latter will have various forms of assessment and accountability. Mentors which are seasoned educators will understand the need to impress the importance of these components to their mentees. Lionel who expressed a positive and rewarding mentor experience, indicated that his mentor had elaborated on the importance of the lesson plans and his delivery. He also stated that his mentor took time to review his lesson plans before he submitted them or presented the lesson. Julio mentioned grasping the significance of the lesson plans when collaborating with colleagues. His lesson plan prospective became student oriented and not simply another document that needed to be submitted on time. Samuel, another participant with a strong mentor, stated that his mentor was influential in guiding him on refining his lesson plans and implementing a variety of instructional practices. Samuel also expressed how his mentor was very systematic when guiding from the first day of instruction to classroom rules, classroom procedures, delivery of the lesson cycle and the implementation the district's curriculum scope and sequence.

Predictably, those participants receiving minimal to no mentor support, failed to mention the significance of lesson plans and those components required by the state and district, such as the district curriculum. Alberto mentions that the experience was overwhelming due to all the new policies and procedures involved when coming into a new district. He found himself asking for assistance from colleagues with practically the same amount of experience as he.

Alberto, Carolina and Jackie in all probability would have prioritized and focused on more significant issues if guided and encouraged by a mentor with well-defined objectives.

Instructional Practices

Instruction is the fundamental component of education. This is the single factor which all others are founded on. Techniques, strategies, timelines, assessment are all grounded on the effectiveness of instruction. Educators throughout history have developed a variety of methodology for the delivery of instruction. Although many of these techniques have proven successful, not all are effective in every situation. It becomes the responsibility of the educator to assess delivery methods which best function with their specific discipline and personality.

While the instruction of a lesson can involve very well defined material with clear and specific parameters, the delivery can be an exceedingly personal undertaking. When a mentor addresses a mentee concerning the material that needs to be covered in a particular lesson, the guidance is well defined with specific goals and timelines with very little room for personal interpretation. On the other hand, the method of delivery is frequently in the form of suggestions based on personalities and personal experiences or those of their colleagues. Every participant addressed the importance of the delivery of instruction.

Those mentees paired with strong mentors exhibited an air of satisfaction and confidence when addressing instruction and the methods of delivery. Those participants with less active mentors relied on self-determination and drive to formulate an effective lesson presentation. Samuel mentions the manner in which his mentor guided him through various stages ranging from the first day of instruction through the daily delivery of instruction. He also stated that during times of ineffective lesson delivery, his mentor would provide real-time feedback and redirect him to an alternative instructional approach. Cynthia stated that her mentor influenced her instructional delivery via classroom visits and timely feedback. Jackie, with minimal mentoring, was aware of her lack of experience and mentioned she enjoyed creating innovative

opportunities for her students. She welcomed any feedback relating to refining her daily delivery of instruction. It is worth mentioning that observation without immediate feedback does little to improve the novice teacher. Carolina stated that the observations without the immediate feedback did little to assess her improvement.

Although the two distinct groups followed different paths to embrace an instructional delivery method, it was not uncommon for them to arrive at similar conclusions. The participants attempted various methods to connect personally with their students to promote participation and engagement. Although Jackie felt a lack of instructional guidance, she worked to connect with her students by drawing them into a gardening activity. As mentioned previously, Julie was presented with various suggestions to help her establish a relationship with her class. She was encouraged to establish good classroom management, built a rapport and have fun with the students before introducing her instructional objectives. These were basic ideas formulated by the novice teacher or through a mentor's guidance to prepare the class for the delivery of instruction.

Similarly, instructional practices were impacted in an identical manner. Those having guidance and encouragement expedited the formulation of their instructional practices while those reliant on their own aptitude instinctively became more resourceful and at times resorting to trial and error. Although the effort of the participants were similar in nature, the advantage of having a active mentor became evident during the culmination of the research interviews. Samuel shared that mentoring affected his instructional practice through continuous instructional guidance from his mentor. Cynthia concluded that with effective mentoring practices, a novice teacher would be capable of implementing instructional improvements quicker and demonstrate

a wider range of instructional strategies. Jackie declared that although unsupported, she was motivated to have her students experience real-life hands-on practices.

As mentioned earlier, instruction is the foundation for student learning and thus must be viewed as the element at the center of education. The fact that the delivery of instruction can vary greatly can be a great benefit to teachers in that it allows them to customize their instruction based on their personality, grade level, aptitude level and physical constraints. While this allows for a large amount of latitude, it also places a significant amount of responsibility on the educator to produce the most effective instructional delivery for a specific situation.

Professional Development

While all teachers develop and eventually are identified by their own unique strategies, not all develop at the same pace. Some teachers suffer from burn out at a very young age due to lack of guidance, encouragement and an overall difficult working environment. Six of the research participants referenced the impact of the mentorship program on their crucial first year. The professional significance of the program left some of the participants feeling fulfilled and enriched while other were left with a sense of disappointment. All of the six participants referencing their professional development had specific expectations from the district and the system.

Alberto stated that more instructional guidance during his first year would have provided him with the necessary professional development during his subsequent year. This indicates the lasting impact a strong mentorship program can have on an educator. Proper guidance equip young educators with tools which will be used a reference point for much of their career. Samuel elaborated on the manner in which his mentor implemented instructional feedback and how it affected his professional development and instructional delivery.

Effective mentors know that their role is to formulate a strong foundation that will enable their mentees to become independent and confident. Cynthia viewed her mentor in a very positive light and credited her with the quality of her teaching. Cynthia believes that mentors should have the ability to intervene in a well-timed and suitable manner which will which will foster the novice teachers' development. Lionel states that his mentor has helped him develop as a teacher. He was quick to credit his mentor for the structure and guidance necessary for someone like him to become an effective teacher. He goes on to mention that his mentor's support helped him acquire the professional judgement needed for student academic success.

An ineffective mentoring program can leave a novice teacher disillusioned and discouraged. Young teachers begin their careers with certain expectations that will encourage them to grow professionally and become more effective each year. A novice teacher lacking the essential motivational factors will have major obstacles to overcome. Early on Jackie was mindful that she was lacking support in the development of her potential strengths and skills. She viewed mentoring as a guiding experience as well as a method to open doors to opportunities for professional growth.

This shows the importance of the roles that the mentor and mentee play. A mentor must understand that they are responsible for the foundation of the novice teacher. Julie mentioned that mentors have an enormous responsibility in developing a mentee's potential and in keeping the best interest of the mentee's professional growth. Julie also indicated that the mentoring experience helped her identify her potential strong points and shortcomings while promoting her professional development.

The influence of a mentor becomes more evident as comparisons are made between effective and ineffective mentorships. The participants with a strong mentor had the obvious advantage of a strong foundation and the fundamentals needed for professional growth.

Student Learning Progress

Just as instruction is the focal point of education, learning is the method to assess the effectiveness of the instruction. Master teacher will accumulate a variety of delivery strategies that will best correlate to their discipline, activity and demographics of their students. These are the techniques which a mentor is expected to introduce to his mentee. There will be fundamental tools which a novice teacher will be expected to use in order to build their own methodology. Cynthia alluded to the skills, knowledge and self-assurance she was provided through her close-knit professional mentoring relationship. Ultimately it will be the responsibility of the educator to effectively deliver the instruction in order to maximize student learning. The student expectations of an educator must work in tandem with their ability to deliver the instruction effectively.

A teacher must analyze the progress of student learning by first reviewing the method of delivery. At times, educators are too quick to assess and categorize students without first reviewing the delivery of instruction. As note by George Evans, “they need to keep in mind that “every student can learn just not on the same day or in the same way”.

As the participants worked through their first year, they began to understand that the focus needs to be on student learning. Julie mentions that when talking to colleagues about lesson plans, things became clear in that it needed to be student oriented. She goes on to mention that when reviewing her objectives, she realized that she was not thinking about student

learning. She credits her mentoring team for helping her to have student oriented goals rather than thinking about what you are going to teach.

As mentoring experiences are reviewed, many of the procedures are geared for an atmosphere of learning. Activities and classroom management are essential in order to enable the students to assimilate the instructional material. Samuel emphasized that his mentor continuously stressed the importance of classroom management. Mentioning that without this component, the teacher-student relationship would not be a successful instructional experience. Cynthia stated that she usually found something that her students would be interested in and used that to engage them in the learning process.

Those participants with strong mentors were presented with a variety of methods to enrich the students learning process. Cynthia related the manner in which her mentor assisted in the learning and development of her delivery of instruction as well as in the lesson planning. Lionel also mentioned that his mentor's support helped him acquire professional judgement which has been pivotal to the students' academic success.

Along with the delivery, suggestions such as methods of engagement and student activities were presented and utilized. Mentors impressed the importance of student engagement in order to maximize their learning. As noted by H.A. VanderCook "no man can be rightly taught until he feels a real need in his life or in his work". Jackie, although self-motivated, realized early in her first year the importance of having students appreciate the material that was being presented during her lessons. She was able to incorporate a student garden in order to enable her students to fully understand the objectives of the lesson. Jackie stated that she made every effort to integrate as many real life experiences and technology into her lessons as possible. Although left to her own resources, Jackie was motivated to have her students

experience hands-on practices in order to augment their learning potential. Jackie's commitment to her craft was displayed in her classroom setting which encouraged her students in the learning process.

Samuel's mentor guided him to minimize doubts and insecurities when working for effective student engagement. He guided in the development of Samuel's lesson plans in order to connect to the students' individual learning experiences, this in turn motivated students to write about their thoughts and opinions. Samuel also elaborates on the trusting relationship between his mentor and himself which enabled his mentor to contribute content knowledge that in turn eliminated the fact-checking that can stifle the mentoring process.

Summary

All of the participants involved in the research were very much aware that all of the assistance provided by their mentors or other resources were basic tools to enable them to configure their own personal method of instruction. The effectiveness of engagement, activities, personalities and various other tools, would ultimately be reviewed and weighed based on the ability of their students to retain and conceptualize the lesson's material. This will be done through various means of assessment, including Q and A sessions and standardized tests such as End of Course and the STAAR test. While scores are an evaluation tool for everyone involved in education, the relationship between the teacher and her students will also play a major role in defining a successful teacher.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study was conducted during the 2017-2018 school year using the qualitative techniques of grounded theory. Data was collected through face-to-face interviews with seven participants in secondary public school settings in Deep South Texas. The face-to-face interview data was digitally tape-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Participants/mentees were second year teachers with one-year of teaching experience. Mentor teachers' were individually assigned to the seven mentees.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to determine how, after participating in a year of formal mentoring, professional learning and development was transferred to subsequently transform instructional delivery in the second year of teaching for novice secondary school teachers. Although the Texas Education Agency recommended assigning a mentor to each classroom teacher who had less than two years of teaching experience, fidelity of implementation in the mentoring process played a crucial role in the viable success.

After concluding their first year of teaching, 187 school days, these novice teachers returned to their respective campuses. During the second year, the novice secondary teachers elaborated on their distinctive practices as well as how their mentoring experiences shaped their daily instructional perspectives. These novice teachers, for the most part, generally relied on mentors whose professional temperament and expertise fundamentally varied.

The literature review documented in the earlier chapters of this study clearly revealed that a problem existed; justifiably the need for research was principal. Research was found to contain gaps and was limited in assessing the effectiveness of the novice teacher mentorship in today's public schools. Reciprocally, these same gaps, in individual and combined analysis, contributed to strain the mentoring platform for novice teachers in the public school setting.

The most frequently cited aspect of mentoring research was Kram's (1988) conceptualization of mentoring functions (Allen et al., 2004), which discussed specific actions provided via the mentoring experience. According to Kram these functions, grounded in data, were classified into two major categories: career functions, which enhanced professional development, and psychosocial functions, which helped to shape a mentee's competence and individuality.

Interpretation of the Data

Addressed by themes, the face-to-face interviews and open-ended responses provided depth of knowledge. This served to confirm how the mentoring experience influenced the participants' confidence, preparedness and their overall professional tenor. The data revealed a distinct and pronounced contrast on the participants who benefited from a strong mentor and those that did not. Those participants fortunate enough to be paired with a strong mentor were clearly better equipped to address their short and long term objectives. In the case of Samuel, a participant with strong mentorship, it became evident that accurate and ongoing communication between Samuel and his mentor helped to develop trust which enabled his mentor to deliver content knowledge and eliminate the needless fact-checking that can slow down the mentoring process. Contrastingly, Jackie had very different results due to her lack of mentorship. Jackie makes mention that she had not learned much as far as instructional practices during the

mentoring experience. Early on Jackie was mindful that she was lacking support in the development of her potential strengths and skills. She recounts a meeting with her department head where the response was not very positive. She states, “I got discouraged and I decided to just do everything on my own and take it from there”.

A second theme that developed during the collection of data was classroom management and curriculum. There were two distinct sentiments when it related to classroom management. The most obvious to the novice teacher was a well behaved and orderly class with the focus being on the comportment of the students. The other was a well-organized class with the priority being on the teachers ability to organize curriculum priorities in order to produce an effective delivery of instruction. This included the physical arrangement of the classroom to the preparedness of materials and activities in order to meet personal and district expectations. Some of the participants indicated the value their mentor’s placed on classroom management. Samuel recalls his mentors advice, “... you must have classroom management. You need to control the class before you start instruction because if you don’t have control of the classroom you won’t be able to instruct”. Cynthia viewed her classroom management as all-encompassing. She expressed that, “... (her mentor) was there for me and she helped a lot and gave me confidence in my delivery of instruction and useful tips on classroom management.

In addition, the data served to reveal how participating in a mentoring experience was grounded in the delivery of instruction. As such, valuable novice teacher experiences involved defined roles and expectations to facilitate the most effective means of instruction. All participants commented on the value of the instruction methodology. Participant Cynthia stated “she (my mentor) was there for me and she helped a lot and gave me confidence in my delivery of instruction.” Although the instructional material may be well defined and pre-selected, the

delivery of instruction encompasses a wide range of possibilities which will be grounded on the make-up of the class and the personality of the teacher. Whether the method of instruction was deemed structured or informal, the goal was to provide the mentee with the latitude to formulate a method of delivery which would be the most effective for their specific environment. Thus, if the past is a prelude to the future, it can be said that theory vs practice remains conceivably ungeneralizable.

In order to understand the context within the body of knowledge, the researcher interpreted the mentoring experience, as helping and supporting a mentee to analyze his/her own learning experience. Subsequently, if the delivery of instruction remained the focal point, this enabled the mentee to capitalize on his/her professional potential, develop individual skills, and improve performance.

Grounded in data findings, the overarching umbrella also included the theme of professional development. The scope of the study, composed of the mentee's responses and reflections, served to reveal plausible contributions to the enrichment of the mentee's professional growth. The mentoring framework, the mentees character traits, and the organizational setting served to influence the nature of the mentoring experience. Consequently, the presence of continuous guidance, or lack of, influenced the novice teachers' transition and subsequent transformation in their professional development. The real-time feedback helped to support and at times redirect the mentoring outcomes. Six out of seven participants elaborated on the need for professional growth. Jackie, a participant lacking a strong mentor, was fully aware she still had a lot more to experience as a novice teacher. She mentioned she enjoyed creating innovative opportunities for her students, but would welcome feedback on potential prospects in refining her daily delivery of instruction. She viewed mentoring not only as a guiding

experience, but also one that would help open doors to opportunities for professional growth, advising about the future, about avoiding mistakes, where to spend time and resources on things that matter instead of trying to do everything ... helping to reach a balance.

While the logistic culture and recognition system served to identify the contributions, it also amplified the lack of professional growth. As such, the content revealed that the mentoring structure in the secondary public schools settings, at times, created an atmosphere of obstacles for the novice teachers. Several teachers reported working in isolation, in the privacy of their classrooms, compelled by norms of autonomy. The context of the study within the body of knowledge revealed that all of the participants had little to no experience in relation to the mentoring spectrum associated with secondary novice teachers.

Also grounded in data, the findings also included the theme of students' learning progress. From the onset, mentees were mindful of their need to successfully connect with their students in order to have an effective delivery of instruction. However only four of the participants were provided with options to facilitate the effectiveness of their lessons. Thus, this contribution is a confirmation that mentoring initiatives required sufficient structure and built-in rigor to provide sufficient options that would allow the mentee to address student learning and assess their effectiveness.

Five out of seven participants elaborated on the significance of student learning. Julie mentions the manner in which her mentor and department helped her to understand that her lessons needed to be student oriented. While this may seem obvious to some, Julie's mentor helped her focus on the rationale behind her lesson plans. Julie commented, "it's like students oriented, which is like that's common sense, but when you're in school you've got to turn in lesson plans." Conceivably, the mentee was provided with the guidance and support needed to

redirect her priorities. On the other side of the spectrum, Alberto and Carolina, two of the mentees, lacking a strong mentor, neglected to mention the importance of assessing student learning and the effectiveness of their lesson implementation. Without this important foundation, the educational process is confronted with numerous obstacles to overcome. The context of the study within the body of knowledge revealed the mentoring experience to be instrumental in giving the mentee professional advice. Some of the components that were addressed with precision were the setting of classroom rules, procedures and consequences to the delivery of the lesson cycle (daily delivery of instruction) and the implementation of the district's curriculum scope and sequence.

Implications

Implications along with mentees' reflections attained during the study, provided tenable suggestions for future research as presented at the end of this chapter. In doing so, one of the researcher's goals was also to dispel some of the common misconceptions associated with the mentoring of novice secondary public school teachers.

Implications from the research presented in the preceding chapters served to increase the understanding of novice teachers' mentoring perspectives. Within the body of knowledge, the study uncovered needs, circumstances, and contexts that affected their professional growth. The face-to-face interviews pursued for this study addressed the aforementioned research questions that sought to discover how educational mentoring was transferred in the second year of teaching.

Stemming from the scope of the present study, novice teacher mentoring was marked by considerable variation in terms of priorities: planning, implementation, monitoring. The novice teacher-mentoring platform provided marginal guidance and/or direction as to the scope and

context of the study. Implications suggested that no observance was in place to determine how educational mentoring transformed instructional delivery. However, individual participants' self-motivation and desire to advance their professional development helped bridge the mentoring experiences, challenges and limitations.

Limitations

While the district selected for study provided some demographic distribution and variety in scope, the study was limited to only one district focusing on secondary public school novice teachers. The participants' responses, therefore, were not intended to be representative of second year teachers' mentoring experiences in similar secondary demographic institutions.

Digital transcriptions of audio recordings from the selected interviews were formulated; however, manual field notes also served as data records used for analysis. In addition, the researcher only used qualitative methods to obtain detailed descriptive responses from the seven participants' mentoring experiences in each of the secondary sites. As such, the study rendered an ungeneralizable outcome. Nonetheless, to some conceivable extent, this study may be of some value to others in similar situations.

The extensive diversity of each participants' positions, ages, credentials, and motivational teaching factors was widespread. The variances in each participants' exposure to classroom practices prior to their first year as professionals was extensive. Additionally, the diversity among the novice teachers was revealed via the interview process. Thereunto, five themes emerged edifying how novice secondary teachers perceived their professional development and how the transitional period impacted their delivery of instruction.

Recommendations

Grounded in the data, the iterating theme that challenged the findings was the lack of a single best method to amalgamate the novice teacher mentoring experience. Nonetheless, the body of knowledge acquired clearly recommends that, to some extent, effective mentoring must be inclusive in nature and responsive to the participants' individualistic needs. At the end of the day, all participants, regardless of demographic status, were adults and as such required conceivable implementation of adult doctrine mentoring strategies. To some extent, if mentoring is supplemented with adult learning strategies, the transfer and subsequent transformation in delivery of instruction will be feasibly affected. Additionally, certain support systems should include collegial classroom observations, teacher modeling, and continual feedback. Plainly recommended, an assortment of andragogic/adult learning support strategies should be inclusive in nature and ready for implementation. Mentees need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction. It is vital to appreciate how new teachers sustain professional growth and augment their daily delivery of instruction after participating in a year of mentoring.

Recommendations for the study's setting included an evaluation instrument to aid in the mentee's expectations of the mentoring experience. Recognizing that adults/mentees are most interested in knowledge that has immediate application to their performance, these evaluation instruments would take place at the onset, midpoint, and conclusion of the mentoring implementation. Just as importantly, the outcomes of these formal evaluations instruments would be shared with the mentees in an opportune manner. These sharing experiences provided the basis for future mentoring activities that acknowledged possible mentee shortcomings and blueprints that addressed plausible solutions. Viably, the novice teacher mentoring experience should not only be content oriented, it should be inclusive in problem centered applications.

Additionally, effective novice teacher mentoring should be more than a one-on-one experience. It should be a shared experience between mentee and mentor. Novice teachers should benefit from the support of a diversification of colleagues and supervisors.

Unequivocally, mentoring should be developed within a professional culture that favors collegiality and collaboration. Novice teachers must be afforded time to devote to effective mentoring and implementation without fear of potential setbacks.

As schools, to date, struggle to attract and retain teachers, dramatic changes are needed in the novice teacher-mentoring platform. Because mentoring is a form of andragogic/adult education, schools must accept the responsibility of developing mentoring programs that facilitates adult learning. Although the everyday business of schools revolves around educating children, it is necessary for schools to realize that the philosophies and strategies of pedagogy will not suffice when it comes to implementing effective mentoring experiences.

Contribution of the Study

Some of the potential contributions grounded within the body of knowledge include the consideration of one of the aspects within the larger mentoring scope, which focused on the novice teachers' delivery of instruction and professional development. Inclusively, this contribution potentially embraced the growth and continuous improvement of novice teachers' platform.

The study revealed mindful responses and reflections via mentee/novice teacher interviews. Therefore, expectantly this contribution could potentially lead to directional future qualitative studies and evaluative benchmark mentoring implementation in geographical areas similar to the one in this study. In essence, the contribution is a confirmation that can

conceivably serve in closing the gaps, as mentioned in previous chapters, via a continuous analytic mentoring practice.

In general, validating the mentoring of novice teachers must be grounded in professional knowledge and skill. As such, the body of knowledge and the practice of mentoring novice teachers requires a shift in mentoring experience, classroom management and curriculum, instruction, professional development and students' learning progress.

Conclusion

This study embodied an attempt to move forward to better understand secondary novice teacher mentoring experiences. Although many questions remained unanswered regarding the effectiveness of mentoring in Deep South Texas, the researcher identified five issues that support future research.

Through constant comparative analysis, five key themes revealed how the effectiveness of the mentoring process was interrelated to the novice teachers' professional learning, development, and instructional delivery. The emerged issues grounded in data included: mentoring experience - a need for all, classroom management and curriculum - foundation and essential, instruction - foundation of education, professional development - expectations and student learning progress - measurement of success.

Conclusively, there is an urgent need for evaluative benchmark mentoring implementation in geographical areas similar to the one in the present study. These evaluation practices should take place at the onset, midpoint, and conclusion of the novice teacher mentoring implementation. Clearly, planning with a focus on the mentee's needs and objectives could help reduce the pressure associated with a first year teachers' apprehensions. Thus, effectively supporting novice teachers, transform their daily delivery of instruction and refines

their professional development via a well thought-out action based mentoring plan which will yield fruitful outcomes. As Nelson Mandela said, "Action without vision is only passing time, vision without action is merely daydreaming, but vision with action can change the world."

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A



The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Email Recruitment

January 25, 2018

Re: Outcomes Teacher Mentoring Has On Professional Learning and Delivery of Instruction

Dear [Participant]:

My name is Susana Zapata. I am a Doctoral Student at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) in Curriculum and Instruction with a Specialization from the Department of Teaching and Learning. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study to understand how after participating in a year formal mentoring, professional learning and development are transferred to subsequently transform teacher delivery of instruction in the second year of teaching.

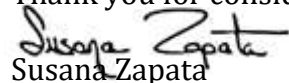
Participants were recruited via the Department of Assessment Research Evaluation from the Brownsville Independent School District (BISD). Please note that no sharing of any private information of the potential participant(s) will take place. This research study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB). Participation in this research is completely voluntary.

As a participant, you will be asked to take part in a face-to-face sessions using semi-structured questions and will seek to study how and why second-year teachers perceived their mentoring experience impacted their instructional practices. The interviews will take place in a location, which is chosen by you, the participant, and last approximately 60 minutes during the Spring Semester of 2018. All data will be treated as confidential and personal identifiers of participants will be kept in encrypted files in order to protect the identity of subjects from a breach of confidentiality.

Agreement to be contacted or request for more information does not obligate you to participate in this study. For your convenience, a Consent Form is attached to this e-mail and will be signed in person prior to the face-to-face session in order to clarify concerns or answer any questions. If you have questions related to the research, please feel free to contact me by telephone at 956-371-3408 or by email at susana.zapata01@utrgv.edu.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, please contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) by telephone at (956) 665-2889 or by email at irb@utrgv.edu.

Thank you for considering this research opportunity.


Susana Zapata

Doctoral Student, UTRGV

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
Audio Release Form

Outcomes Teacher Mentoring Has On Professional Learning and Delivery of Instruction

Researcher: Susana Zapata

Phone: 956-371-3408

Email Address: susana.zapata01@utrgv.edu

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Bobbette Morgan

I hereby give permission to Susana Zapata to audio record my responses during the interview for this study, Outcomes Teacher Mentoring Has on Professional Learning and Delivery of Instruction. I further understand that researchers will use a pseudonym to identify me and that neither my name nor any other identifying information will be associated with the audio recording or transcription of my recorded responses. The recorded material will only be used for research purposes. As with all research consent, I may at any time withdraw permission for audio recorded material of me to be used in this research project.

I acknowledged utrgv that there is no compensation for allowing myself to be audio recorded.

I am permitting the review and transcription of my recorded interview by the investigators. The recorded material will be securely stored in encrypted files only accessible to the principal investigator for approximately five years. After that time, all recorded data will be destroyed. No one other than the investigators will have access to the data.

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please keep a copy of this sheet for your reference

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

Outside Affiliations Disclosure (OAD) Form
Financial Conflicts of Interest in Research

This form should only be used for **students who are not employed by the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV)** and is used to determine the existence of potential conflicts of interest as per HOP 4.1.3. Please complete this form and submit as an attachment to your research protocol.

First Name	Last Name	UTRGV Email Address
Susana	Zapata	susana.zapata01@utrgv.edu

Please provide a descriptive title for the research project or study in which you are engaged. You may also provide the IRB number for the study in which you are engaged in, if available to you:

OUTCOMES TEACHER MENTORING HAS ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DELIVERY OF INSTRUCTION IRB number: 1168261-1
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By completing and signing this form, I certify that I am aware of the requirements found in HOP 4.1.3, Financial Conflicts of Interest in Research, and acknowledge my responsibilities to disclose outside affiliations that may be perceived as a potential significant conflict of financial interest. Examples of outside affiliations that may represent a significant financial conflict of interest include: outside employment and fiduciary positions in, or payments, royalties, gifts, and travel paid by, an entity that has a relationship with the research study that is being conducted.

Please mark with an "X" below in the blank space that applies:

I certify that, I and my covered family members (as defined in HOP 4.1.3), _____ have/ **X** do not have an outside affiliation that may be perceived by a reasonable person as a significant financial conflict of interest in research. *(If you responded in the affirmative, please also complete Attachment A. Otherwise, please sign and submit just this page with the research protocol).*

Please note that certifications are good for a year and pertain to the specific research project described above. If there is a change in circumstances, please notify it within 30 days of the change

Susana Zapata
Signature of Student

12/12/2017
Date

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley **Informed Consent Form**

Title: OUTCOMES TEACHER MENTORING HAS ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DELIVERY OF INSTRUCTION

Investigator: Susana Zapata, M.Ed. in Educational Administration
M.Ed. in Guidance & Counseling

Background: I am conducting a research study. The purpose of this study is to understand how participating in a year formal mentoring, professional learning and development are transferred to subsequently transform instructional delivery in the second year of teaching for novice public school teachers.

The study is being conducted as partial fulfillment of my Doctoral degree at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). The name of the Faculty Advisor/Committee Chair is Dr. Bobbette Morgan.

Procedure: You will be asked to participate in an audio recorded session during the 2018 spring semester in a location chosen by you (the participant) which will last approximately 60 minutes. You will be asked to describe your experiences and professional learning practices. I will ask you about how the mentoring experience impacted your current instructional practices. All gathered information will be treated as confidential and personal identifiers will be kept in encrypted files in order to protect your identity and to prevent any breach of confidentiality.

Audio Recording: Audio recording will specifically be used for research purposes.

Confidentiality of the audio recording will be secured and kept in a secured filing cabinet. Only the researcher (me) will have access to the audiotape. You can still participate if you do not wish to be recorded.

Risks or Possible Discomforts Associated with the Study: There are no anticipated risks associated with your participation in this study.

Benefits of Participation: Some of the potential benefits would be ascertain how pro-active suggestions through mentoring impact contemporaneous delivery of instruction.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is voluntary. If for any reason you decide that you would like to discontinue your participation, simply tell (me) the researcher that you wish to stop.

Anonymity and/or Confidentiality: All data will be treated as confidential. Names will be protected by pseudonyms and personal identifiers will be kept in encrypted files in order to protect your identity from a breach of confidentiality. An external hard drive will be stored in a

locked/secure file cabinet where only I, the researcher, will have access. Recordings, data, and signed consent forms will be stored for a minimum of three years after the project is completed. After this time, data will be de-identified such that individual identifiers will be destroyed by cross shredding so that in turn no one, including me, can re-identify you through the data analysis. All gathered information, forms, and recordings will be destroyed in an appropriate manner.

Who to Contact for Research Related Questions: For questions about the research itself, or to report any adverse effects during or following participation, contact the researcher, Susana Zapata at 956-371-3408 or at susana.zapata01@utrgv.edu . Faculty advisor: Dr. Bobbette Morgan at bobbette.morgan@utrgv.edu or at [956-882-7965](tel:956-882-7965).

Who to Contact Regarding Your Rights as a Participant: This research has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Protection (IRB) from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, or if you feel that your rights as a participant were not adequately met by the researcher, please contact the IRB at (956) 665-2889 or irb@utrgv.edu.

Signatures: By signing below, you indicate that you are voluntarily agreeing to participate in this study and that the procedures involved have been described to your satisfaction. I will provide you with a copy of this form for your own reference. In order to participate, you must be at least 18 years of age.

Please mark one of the following:

I will allow audio recording during the interview.

I do not want to be audio recorded during the interview.

_____ /_____/_____
Participant's Name Participant's Signature Date

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
IRB APPROVED
IRB# 2017-315-12
Expires: 02/08/2019



APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E

Vetted Interview Questions:

1. Describe in detail what you learned about instructional practices during your mentoring experience. How did mentoring affect your instructional practices by way of professional development and guided learning experience?
2. How did mentoring affect your daily delivery of instruction? How are you using your mentoring acquired knowledge, skills, and experience in your classroom?
3. How did mentoring align/support your pedagogical efforts? How are you different now than you were at the beginning of your mentoring experience?
4. Describe your present-day instructional practices. What is the most challenging for you? What is the most rewarding for you?
5. How was the mentoring experience sustained and transformed into implementation of daily delivery of instruction?
6. What instructional skills/characteristics have been most important to you in your professional career, and how did you develop them?
7. Evaluation is an important function of teacher effectiveness. What has changed, such as, your instructional methods and/or delivery? How can you describe this experience and what have you learned would be valuable to share with an employer or graduate school?

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Susana Zapata – Burguete has been a full-time doctoral student in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Higher Education at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley since 2015. She holds Bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts (double major) in English and Spanish Literature, Master's degree in Guidance and Counseling, and Educational Administration.

Susana was born and raised in Brownsville, Texas and is a second-generation college student. Her doctoral degree has been a seamless union of her master's degree and undergraduate degree in liberal arts from the University of Texas at Brownville.

Susana is the daughter of Fernando and Margarita Burguete. Susana is married to Rolando Zapata and is the mother of three children, Fernando Reyes, Errol Reyes, and Yvanna Reyes, all of whom are college graduates. During her charged time as an educator, she served Title 1 schools in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Her current position as a school administrator allows her to work closely with students, teachers, field professionals, and administrators. Her interests are in curriculum and instruction, cultural responsive teaching and educational administration. These areas have played a major role in her job embedded professional learning which have served to develop her educational knowledge and expertise.

Susana resides in Bayview, Texas where she lives with her husband and continues serving as a school administrator. Her e-mail is susana.zapata01@utrgv.edu. The degree of Doctor of Education was conferred during Fall Commencement on December 14, 2018.