Investigating the complexities of mentoring teachers through an inquiry of mentors' perspectives

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Abstract

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Mentoring has the potential to benefit preservice, new teachers, and experienced teachers, but it is a complex process with few agreements about what might make it most effective. Furthermore, due to teacher demographics affecting the availability of veteran teachers, mentors are consequently drawn from various career points, and some of them have few years of teaching experience. The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the complexities of mentoring, particularly of the role that age, experience, and situational factors might play in their work. To pursue this study, I used these research questions: What are the goals and approaches of these six mentors in mentoring new teachers? How do these six mentors carry out that approach? How are mentors' perspectives impacted by situational factors within a formal program such as working conditions and expectations? I examined mentors' perspectives about their experiences to give insight as to how to develop the overall support structure of formal mentoring for new teachers. Through in-depth qualitative research interviews and document analysis, I investigated mentors' perspectives on their particular set of experiences within a formal mentoring program. Through inductive analysis, my study yielded information about whether and how mentors at different career points identify and understand their mentoring. Even though I anticipated experience would impact the goals and approaches of mentors, my first key finding was that these mentors with varying amounts of teaching experience shared similar goals and approaches. The second key finding was that situational and programmatic factors supported collaboration among the mentors and supported the development of common

goals and a common approach. The third key finding was that the structure of the VA program helped to foster collective responsibility for the new teachers amongst the mentor team, and this may have reinforced the mentors' similar goals and approaches. Given these findings that years of teaching experience may not always be a critical factor in mentors' approaches, this study shows the potential importance of shared experience and socialization within a mentor team, and scaffolding within a mentoring program.

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G.W.D

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my irreplaceable mentors: my mother, Claudia Jean Westby Duff; my father, David Wayne Duff; my sister, Christina Wood Duff; my brother, David Wayne Duff, Jr. and the love of my life, John Martin Keenan.

I am forever grateful for the ways you nurture my interests, encourage me to further the development of my abilities, and support me as I endeavor to reach my goals.

Thank you for your unconditional love, always.

Personal Preface

Despite an uneasy start to my teaching career, I ultimately decided to pursue a position and continue to work as an educator. I completed a K-12 public education and a liberal arts bachelor's degree without any education courses, and then I realized I wanted to be a teacher. The first point of entry to my career was at a public school where I witnessed and experienced some of the challenges for new teachers without guidance. It was an awful year, although it gave me valuable motivation to find a teaching job that made me happy.

I found that fulfillment and joy as a faculty member at a private boarding school. Those heartwarming feelings along with significant personal and professional growth continued there for 15 years. Much of that thriving was a result of mentorship even though I was never guided by a formal mentoring program. Over my 15 years working at the same school, I engaged with members of the faculty and administration at various points of their educator lifespans. Going from a brand-new teacher at 22 years old to a seasoned faculty member with various supervisory roles, I gained a perspective of the learning that happens within the close-knit work of a 50-member faculty. Those years opened my eyes to the amount of teacher learning that happens over the career lifespan.

Through that 15-year career, I grew to understand teaching as a social and cultural practice, which converged with a particular interest in early career teachers. In mentoring new faculty of various disciplines, I appreciated my role as teacher-leader to help these educators recognize their strengths, advance their self-efficacy, and foster their teacher identity. Working with new teachers showed me the power of my personal connection with them by creating opportunities for conversations about their interest in professional growth. In response to my exploration into the causes and needs driving the performance of early career teachers, I paired

with a former professor to create to design a model of five tenets to unify a coaching pedagogy

for foreign language teachers: Motivation Expertise Networking Techniques Organization

Reflection (MENTOR). We presented this MENTOR Model at the American Council of

Teachers of Foreign Language (ACTFL) national conference, and I really enjoyed being able to

contribute to the professional dialogue on teacher retention and professional growth for work

with early career foreign language teachers. The process of this project became a jumping off

point for me to do more mentoring in other arenas. I became a Master Teacher for the New

England Teaching Seminars, which are induction seminars for new teachers within independent

schools of New England. I also started to be an online mentor for ACTFL. I found mentoring

brought me a sense of renewal, and it has helped me maintain enthusiasm for the profession by

paying it forward in the sense of sharing my experience with those newer to the profession.

Overall, I have found mentoring to be something that stimulates my continual learning and

growth.

When I transitioned to being a doctoral student, I found myself being curious about

opportunities where I could support other early career educators. I kept my eyes and ears open

for a chance, and during my third semester I was offered a position to partner with another

instructor to help graduate students finishing their degrees. For 3 years, I was a part of the

instructional team that supported students as they organized and completed their integrative

projects for their Master's Degrees. While the cohort usually numbers around 20 students, the

nature of working on these projects requires individualized support, and so we split the group

and, usually, I guided 9 or10 students through their projects. Often, as a student was wrapping up

their project in the spring semester, they asked me questions about my professional trajectory

and inquired about any insight I might provide them. These chances to encourage their careers

really helped to reinvigorate me and remain invested in contributing to the educational field. I found this work so fulfilling and rewarding.

During the summer of 2019, I worked as a mentor for several new teachers at a summer school for adolescents that also acts as a teacher-development program for aspiring educators. I worked on a team of 10 mentors from all over the world and at various points in their careers. It was a fascinating experience for many reasons, though mostly for how we came together in different ways to share our thoughts on guiding early career teachers. Overall, we had a variety of ideas about our roles and goals as mentors, and this experience provided much food-for-thought as I considered my doctoral research.

As I started the dissertation process, I thought about how this thread of guiding new educators has woven itself through my career and emerged as my doctoral research interest. In looking back, I recognize that the ways in which I support new teachers has changed and developed as I have moved further along my teacher career path. Like any strong memories, whether they be positive or negative, I find all the experiences involving guiding early career educators have stayed with me, both the lessons I have given and received and all their learnings. I believe these experiences of mentoring provided a learning opportunity where I constructed new understandings about my own ways of learning and working with others in schools. These opportunities acted repeatedly as openings for me to consider the approaches to education that I value and find fundamental to the practices of being an educator. I have been drawn to supporting early career educators because these processes of guiding cause me to reflect on my own beliefs about teaching and learning and to grow in new and different ways professionally.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Mentoring is a multifaceted phenomenon that is seen as having the potential to play a central role in the preparation and induction of new teachers[1] into the profession, and mentorship has been researched in many ways. In this study, I focus on conceptions of mentoring, and the different perspectives and ways that it might be conceived by mentors at various points of their careers. I work with the general definition of mentoring as a relationship where mentors give guidance and insights in an effort to improve their mentee's practice (Kram, 1985). In this chapter, I explore the historical context of mentoring new teachers and focus on present day implications. I discuss how this study investigates the problem of recent implications on new teacher mentoring due to current teacher demographics. Through this exploration and discussion, I underscore that mentoring is a complex process with several different views of what might make it effective or how it is effective. Then I describe my rationale for my study and design, the purpose for pursuing my research questions, my conceptual framework, and the potential significance of this research.

Background to the Problem

The teaching population in the United States has undergone drastic changes in the 1990s and 2000s. Indicators of some troubling trends in the U.S. education system led to widespread concern about the quality of education and renewed interest in teacher retention (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). One of these trends is early career teachers tending to leave the field at a

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[1] For this term, "new teacher" I refer to a wide variety of teachers who are new teachers. This reference applies to those engaged in preservice programs as well as those in the first years of teaching. These teachers may have various backgrounds, including having a Bachelors degree with(out) student teaching experience to having a Master's degree with(out) field experience.

disconcerting rate of 30-50 % within five years of starting their career (Darling-Hammond, 2010;

Grissmer & Kirby, 1987, 1992, 1997; Hafner and Owings, 1991; Henke et al., 2000; Ingersoll,

2001; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Murnane et al., 1991; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Research shows

that this exodus is mostly due to job dissatisfaction that results from various factors, including:

lack of support, low salaries, accountability pressures, few opportunities for advancement, and

working conditions (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Interestingly, research notes

that, even with this attrition, the new teacher population is booming and becoming "greener"

with an expanding number of beginning teachers; however, at the same time, the teaching force

is becoming "grayer" - older and nearing retirement (Ben-Avie & Kress, 2008; Ingersoll et al.,

2014). Another way of looking at the changing teacher population is to consider the fluctuations

in the amount of experience for "the modal" or "most common school teacher" (Ingersoll et al.,

2014, p.11). Ingersoll et al., (2014) graph teaching experience of school teachers to show that in

1997-1998 the modal teacher had 15 years of experience, then in 2007-2008 it dropped to one

year, and then in 2011-2012 it climbed back to five years. Most recently, Ingersoll et al., (2018)

report that in 2015-2016 the modal teacher had between one to three years of teaching

experience. I juxtapose these statistics to highlight another complexity that derives from these

current demographics of the teaching population, implications for the practice of mentorship

which involves more experienced educators guiding those early in their careers.

Mentoring Defined

Though there are some expansive definitions of mentoring that include mentoring done in

groups, in general, mentoring refers to a reciprocal relationship between a less experienced

individual and a more experienced individual that have consistent contact over a period of time

with the intention to promote learning and development (Haggard et al., 2011; Kram, 1985;

Mullen, 2012; Ragins & Kram, 2007). Scholars highlight that mentoring can be either a formal or informal process (Desimone et al., 2014). "Informal" mentoring refers to impromptu partnerships that arise between a new and an experienced teacher whereas "formalized" mentoring is an organized intervention with requirements and/or guidelines for mentoring practice (Thompson, 2000). In some schools, formal mentoring is not available or required, which leads some new teachers to seek an appropriate informal relationship with another teacher who might be able to support their needs (Risser, 2013). Regardless if these mentorships are formal or informal, they are recognized as playing a vital role in the learning of preservice and new teachers (Hobson et al., 2009).

For the purposes of this study, I focus on mentoring with a formal program for prospective teachers. In K–12 education, typically, formal mentoring programs partner pre-service and new teachers with more experienced teachers who can adequately explain school policies, culture, and teaching philosophies; share methods and materials, and explain how to get other supportive assistance; help solve problems in teaching and learning; and provide both professional and personal support (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1993). Mentors offer instructional guidance related to content and practices, as well as emotional and professional support (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1993). The ways mentors go about providing these types of guidance and support may be different for each mentor depending on the new teachers' needs.

Mentoring as a Support for Preservice and New Teachers

Mentoring support can be provided at different phases of new teachers' careers, including preservice teaching. Preservice teaching refers to the field experience that occurs before a teacher has their own classroom, and this opportunity is typically organized between a school and a teacher education program at a college or university (Wasley, 1999). Preservice teaching is often

the most influential component of teacher education (Goodnough et al., 2009). In the traditional model of preservice teaching, the teacher candidate is placed with a mentor teacher and is, also, supervised by a representative of the teacher education program (Zeichner, 2002). In some situations, the preservice teacher gains increased responsibility for teaching the class while the mentor observes and provides feedback (Zeichner, 2002). There is also a co-teaching model where the mentor and the preservice teacher work side-by-side throughout the lesson planning and teaching (Bacharach et al., 2010). Mentors to preservice teachers understand their role as providing "a place for the preservice teacher to practice teaching" (Hall et al., 2008, p. 343). Mentors have also acknowledged that their roles were "providing the space for experience, modeling, facilitating reflection, and sharing knowledge" with preservice teachers (Leatham & Peterson, 2010, p. 99). Mentor teachers realize that the possibility of their impact varies depending on the length of field placements, which could be anywhere from one to four semesters (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 1998). Preservice field experiences provide a real classroom setting where new teachers are encouraged to experiment with pedagogy, classroom practices, building relationships with their students and colleagues (Feiman-Nemser, 1998). The experience and mentoring a preservice teacher receives during this field experience can have a profound impact on the development of habits, which may in turn have implications for their success and retention in the field.

Educational researchers refer to induction as the passage of beginning teachers from training into their first teaching job, and consider it as a systematic process of preparing, supporting, and retaining new teachers (Wang et al., 2006; Wong, 2004). To support the demanding experiences that early career teachers encounter and combat discontent, school systems often implement teacher induction programs to increase retention rates (Shakrani, 2008;

Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Wong, 2004). Mentoring components have been a consistent offering in teacher induction programs, acting as a mainstay of novice teacher support since the 1980s (Britton et al., 2003; Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999; Hobson et al., 2009; Strong, 2009). When induction has a positive impact, new teachers stay teaching. A quantitative study of almost 1200 new teachers found that those who received more comprehensive induction support reported a significantly lower rate of intention to leave the profession than those who received little induction support (DeAngelis et al., 2013).

Much of the research on mentoring has focused on mentoring once teachers have started teaching. In 2012, about 86% of first-year teachers indicated they had been assigned a mentor during their induction (Gray & Taie, 2015). If not through specified induction steps, many states have required formal mentoring programs for their teachers (Zembystka, 2016). Mentorship hopes to play a crucial role because it provides personalized support during the time when new educators are creating the foundation of their practice and learning the on-the-job skills that come with leading their first classrooms. The support of mentoring has been identified as a successful measure in beginning teacher development and retention (Hobson & Malderez, 2013; Hudson, 2013; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). With this support, policy makers and educational leaders have relied on mentoring as a way to reform teaching and teacher education (Feiman-Nemser, 1996).

Mentoring as a Support for Experienced Teachers

Whether mentoring is discussed as an element of preservice or induction, the focus is often on the impact on the mentee, not on the mentor; yet there are many reasons to believe that mentoring can be a powerful learning experience and support for experienced teachers as well. Research about teacher engagement throughout the career lifespan emphasizes both that teachers

may need additional challenges throughout their careers and mentoring might be one productive way to provide that challenge and support the development of teachers over time (Drago-Severson, 2004; Hanson, 2010; Moir & Bloom, 2003). In Huberman's (1993) discussion of his teacher career cycle model, he describes teachers in the 7-18th year range: "Having been a few times around the block, teachers may be ready for new challenges, new stimulation" (p. 34). Cochran-Smith (2004) explains that experienced teachers often find themselves on a "flat professional trajectory" (p. 391), which may result in teacher restlessness and/or boredom. In general, research indicates that there is potential difficulty for teachers to keep up their dedication and enthusiasm throughout a potentially long and monotonous career (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Griffiths, 2007; Huberman, 1993; Thornqvist, 2011). Giving back to the profession through leadership and new role pathways later on in their careers can help address these career span challenges and keep veteran teachers motivated (Gaikhorst et al., 2015; Hentges, 2012; Johnson, 2007).

Research has also shown that mentoring offers experienced teachers professional replenishment and renewal, retains teachers, and produces teacher leaders that can help make the focus on teacher development more central to a school culture (Drago-Severson, 2009; Hanson, 2010; Moir & Bloom, 2003). In a study of mentors in a preservice program, 70% of the mentors claimed to have benefited professionally from acting as a mentor (Lopez-Real & Kwan, 2005). Margolis (2008) suggests that the role of mentor may be uniquely suited to provide both "regenerative" as well as "generative" opportunities (p. 161). In his study of teachers with four to six years of experience, Margolis (2008) found that his subjects were interested in roles that kept them excited about their own teaching as well as those that provided opportunities to share their instructional expertise and to exert broader influence in school reform efforts. He suggests that

the role of being a mentor may be uniquely suited to provide such opportunities that these experienced educators desire (Margolis, 2008). One of the ways in which mentors learn is through reflection on their own practice (Simpson et al., 2007), whether it is on their own or during opportunities to talk to others about their mentees' or their own teaching (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006). These opportunities to talk about pedagogy and instructional strategies enhance relationships with peers and heighten a sense of professionalism (Sheetz et al., 2005). Additionally, the increased collaboration possibilities of mentoring may lead mentors to feel less isolated as teachers (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006; Simpson et al., 2007). Mentors notice that acting as a mentor has an invigorating impact on their teaching practice, enlivening it with a renewed energy and enthusiasm (Hobson et al., 2007; Moor et al., 2005). Yet, Hobson et al. (2009) claim that there is limited evidence for "whether [or not] participation in beginning teacher mentoring enhances mentor retention in the teaching profession" (p. 213).

Mentoring as a Complex Task

Another aspect of the educational research conversation about mentoring acknowledges this vital practice as a complex task with seemingly no set, one-size-fits-all approach. Mentoring skills rest on communicating and the ability to ask questions that elicit reflection on the issues by the participants. These conversations may allow for an exchange of teachers' understanding of their personal ideas and philosophies about their teaching methods. Mentor teachers vary in the examples of teaching moves, and/or actionable instructions for new teachers as they develop their own teaching practice (Barrett & Davis, 1995; Ronfeldt, 2015). This variance is perhaps partly due to the notion that mentoring new teachers is not necessarily a natural activity for experienced teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Schwille, 2008) and, therefore, they may not know how to adequately guide the practice of their mentees (Feiman-Nemser & Carver, 2012). With so

many variables involving the individuals and the context of their partnerships, the outcomes of these mentoring relationships have varying rates of success (Mullen, 2012).

Overall, mentoring is a complex process and the wide variety of mentoring programs and approaches suggests there is little consensus on shared approaches or, in any degree of specificity, common practices—nor even shared goals beyond retention. Many different approaches, structures, practices, and so on, come under the umbrella of "mentoring." There is more that could be known about the relationships between different approaches and their effectiveness because mentors may approach mentoring in different ways, which may have an impact on the effectiveness of the mentorship.

Statement of the Problem

Mentoring has the potential to benefit preservice teachers, new teachers, and experienced teachers, but it is a complex process with little agreement about what might make it most effective. There are a variety of ways to provide this guidance, and formal mentoring is a popular strategy for providing the support of helping new teachers simultaneously teach and learn to teach (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). The challenges of developing effective mentoring programs today are compounded by the changing demographics of the teaching profession.

Mentoring is based on the idea that teachers with experience help support new teachers, but now teacher demographics are affecting the availability of veteran teachers. The current PreK-12 educator population contains an increasingly smaller number of experienced teachers compared to the large numbers that are beginning their careers (Ben-Avie & Kress, 2008; Ingersoll et al., 2014). Given that mentors are drawn from a wide range of career points, the problem is that they might provide different kinds of advice due to their different levels of experience, which, in turn, might impact the ways they approach and carry out their mentoring.

Without years of experience, what support will mentors provide for new teachers? Will these mentors with different levels of experience envision their role, goals, and relationships in the same ways? By exploring mentors' perspectives and the support they provide, we can design assistance for the mentors themselves that can make them more effective, enhance their feelings of efficacy, and maintain their interest in continuing with this vital work.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the complexities of mentoring, particularly the role that age, experience, situational factors might play in mentor's work. In order to learn about these complexities, I explored the perspectives and practices of mentors from a formal mentoring program for prospective teachers. To gain a deeper understanding of mentoring experiences, I asked mentors at various points in their careers what they think new teachers need to learn, what kinds of experiences they believe foster such learning, and how they see themselves contributing to new teacher learning. I explored patterns, similarities, and differences of these perspectives to yield information about whether and how mentors at different points in their career carry out and understand their mentoring. The overall motivation behind this study was learning how to improve formal mentoring programs.

Research Questions

In order to further deepen our understanding of mentoring and its "complex interplay of personal, contextual, and programmatic factors" (Feiman-Nemser, 2012, p. 292), I pursued three questions:

1. What are the goals and approaches of these six mentors in mentoring new teachers?
2. How do these six mentors carry out that approach?

3. How are mentors' perspectives impacted by situational factors within a formal program like working conditions and expectations?

Rationale

There is a critical demand for mentors and literature indicates evidence that they are drawn from many different points along the teacher career span. In fact, there are early career teachers taking on mentoring positions after completing two or three years of teaching (Bullough, 2012; Catapano & Huisman, 2013; Daoud, 2017). During my exploratory study, I encountered evidence that suggests mentors at different point of their careers and/or with different levels of experience might approach mentorship differently. These observations suggest that mentors who come from different career points are bringing different kinds of expertise to their mentorship, which may or may not be matched to the needs of their mentee.

Research has shown that how mentors view mentoring and define their role impacts the kind of mentoring that they perform (Feiman-Nemser, 2001b). Mentoring can be a "force for continuity" or a "force for change" in terms of reinforcing traditional norms and practices of teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2012, p. 237). Research has also show that we do not have a good understanding of what mentors can do to provide the most effective support, what characteristics of mentors and the mentoring relationship might be the most powerful, or how to best support mentors doing this work (Evertson & Smithey, 2000; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Stanulis & Floden, 2009). With the reality that there are lots of different mentors doing lots of different things, we need more insight as to how mentors at different career points conceptualize their mentorship.

While mentoring programs may set parameters within which the mentorship works, mentors take up their practices of guidance differently. In my study, I investigated mentoring experiences with the interrelated aspects of the mentors themselves as individual educators, their relational view of mentorship, and contextual factors of the program to understand more about their thinking in terms of how they approach this work. By drawing on mentors' descriptions and insights about their practice, I considered the ways that they experience, construct, and internalize their approaches. Additionally, I explored what factors in their own experience led them to be one kind of a mentor or another. Learning more about the ways mentors describe their understandings and conceptions of this role may contribute to a richer discourse about mentoring practices and provide insights for supporting mentors at different points of their career.

This study used a basic qualitative approach, which is appropriate when examining the meaning participants make of their experiences, their perspectives, the context in which they act, and the process by which actions take place (Maxwell, 2012). Through four rounds of in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews, I provided opportunities to value the voices of mentors as they share their reflections with perspectives that will shed light on their experiences and contributions to the field of mentoring new teachers. I collected artifacts of the mentors' practice to triangulate their self-reported data in the interviews. I conducted a document analysis of materials from the mentoring organization of the participants to gather rich qualitative descriptions of the program and the interplay of those documents with the mentors' practice. Reviewing all types of mentoring documents from this program helped me "uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights related to [my] research problem" (Merriam, 1998, p. 118). Additionally, one of the most important uses of documents is to corroborate evidence

gathered from other sources; therefore, coupling qualitative interviews with document analysis assisted with "methodological and data triangulation" (Bowen, 2009, p. 29).

Conceptual Framework

Background on Educative Mentoring

In this study, I sought to explore the complexities of mentoring, and the perspectives of mentors at different career points, and I used elements of mentor research by teacher education scholar Sharon Feiman-Nemser to frame my work. Specifically, I drew from what she calls "educative mentoring" and the research that has been conducted on this concept. Feiman-Nemser (1998) defines "educative mentoring" as "mentoring that helps novices learn to teach and develop the skills and dispositions to continue learning in and from their practice [and also presents] the kinds of opportunities that enable mentors to develop such a practice" (p. 66). It is important to note that educative mentoring research highlights that it is not just the characteristics of the mentor that matter, but also the support and preparation that they received.

Feiman-Nemser (1998) brought together her findings from multiple studies of new teacher mentoring to show that thoughtful and serious mentoring of these teachers is different from just helping them get acclimated to their new classroom and address their immediate concerns (p. 70). She was exploring why teachers in mentor roles did not see themselves as teacher educators and wondering how to help teachers become thoughtful and serious mentors. She and fellow researchers were creating their framework of "mentored learning to teach" when they named this concept of "educative mentoring" as an approach to mentorship (Feiman-Nemser, 1998). Yet throughout Feiman-Nemser's research, she acknowledges that not all mentors take up their practice in this educative way, and her categorizing refers back to her earlier work with Michelle Parker. Feiman-Nemser and Parker (1993) identified three

perspectives mentors are likely to employ through their practice of supporting new teachers, one which embodies educative mentoring and two that do not.

Mentor's Perspectives of Mentoring

In 1993, Feiman-Nemser and Parker published a special report for the National Center for Research on Teacher Learning titled *Mentoring in Context: A Comparison of Two U.S. Programs for Beginning Teachers*. They observed and interviewed mentors to analyze and compare two mentoring programs for new teachers to show the critical role that the various contexts of mentoring play in mentors' beliefs about what they do and in the ways they provide mentoring. They explored the connections between what mentor teachers do as well as the organizational, programmatic, and intellectual contexts in which they work. Additionally, they reviewed working conditions, selection procedures, and preparation of mentors. They noted that it is important to draw the distinction between the social support that a mentor offers the new teacher and the professional support that advances the new teacher's knowledge and practice (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1993). While both are important, they maintained that the crucial aspect of mentoring programs is in its potential to foster new teachers gaining an inquiring attitude toward teaching and a critical eye toward developing standards for good teaching practice (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1993). Their work discovered that mentoring appears differently in different contexts, which led them to believe that designing more widely-accepted, effective programs is necessary if the benefits of the mentoring programs are to reach their potential (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1993).

By documenting differences in the way mentor teachers perceived of and carried out their work with new teachers, Feiman-Nemser and Parker (1993) identified three perspectives mentors are likely to employ through their practice of guidance. These differences, which were based on

mentors' outlook and practices, were linked to role expectations, working conditions, program orientation, and mentor preparation. The categories are: 1) mentor as "local guide," (p. 14) 2) mentor as "educational companion" (p. 14) and 3) mentor as "agent of change" (p.15) (See Table 1). From Feiman-Nemser's perspective, it is really this third category of mentor as "agent of change" that we should be aspiring to; these mentors are type of mentors who are really providing the support and the learning that new teachers are going to need in order to be successful. However, in this study, I drew on all three of these perspectives on mentoring in analyzing and exploring the work of mentors.

Table 1. *Characteristics of Mentor's Perspectives*[2]

Category of mentor's perspective			Possible Key words in data collection	Description of mentor's characteristics relating key words to category
Local Guide	Educational Companion	Agent of Change		
√			Short term mentoring	Back off supports when new teacher starts to gain confidence
√	√	√	Feel good	Help lessen the stress of new teachers
√	√	√	Advice	Share their experience, offer suggestions
√	√	√	Easing entry	Help new teacher acclimate
√	√	√	Showing the ropes	Gives information to help new teacher, understand school policies, get materials
√	√	√	Immediate needs	Answers pressing questions and uncertainties of the new teacher
	√	√	Evidence	Collects evidence to examine how things are going
	√	√	Long-term growth	Discusses long-term goals development for new teacher
	√	√	Student Centered	Putting students and discovering student thinking at forefront of teaching goals

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[2] These characteristics and their descriptions have been compiled from Feiman-Nemser & Parker (1993) as well as from Feiman-Nemser's discussion of mentor's perspectives in her research thereafter.

	√	√	Explanation	Illicit explanation of why new teacher is making a choice to develop sound teaching practices
		√	Integrate	integrate new teachers into the environs of the school to work against isolation
		√	Collaboration	break down barriers between the new teacher and their colleagues by fostering a culture of collaboration within their mentorship and with other educators
		√	Inquiry stance	Interacts with new teacher in ways that foster an inquiry stance
		√	Assess	Uses their knowledge and expertise to assess direction new teacher is heading
		√	Reasoning	Labels specific principle or strategy or offered a clear rational for particular intervention with new teacher
		√	Co-thinker	See themselves as a co-thinker with the new teacher, rather than expert
		√	Show & Tell	Weaves showing and telling when giving explanations to new teacher
		√	Foster conversation	Facilitates conversations about teaching with their mentees and colleagues

A mentor who operates as a "local guide" is mostly concerned with easing the mentee's entrance into their teaching practice (p. 14). The local guide perceives their job as basically *showing the ropes* by helping new teachers understand school policies, access materials, as well as sharing their experiences and helping solve immediate problems; they back off their supports once the new teacher starts to gain confidence (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1993). The goal of this mentor is to assist the new teacher in adapting to the new environment, answer questions, and offer advice when needed (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1993). Local guides view their role as helping the novice teacher fit comfortably into the school setting and learn to teach with minimal upset or disruption. These mentors take a short-term perspective on mentorship; they see their role diminishing as the new teacher gains more confidence and experience in the classroom.

The mentor as "educational companion" views their role as helping the mentee develop as an educator; they will help them deal with immediate problems, but they keep their eye on overarching professional targets like developing long-term goals that focus on teacher reflection and student learning (p. 15). Mentors who take on an educational companion role work at advancing the new teacher's knowledge base, help new teachers discover student thinking, and develop sound teaching practices. These mentors have a view of the role of mentor that goes beyond just helping the early career educator get acclimated to their classroom and teaching practice.

The mentor as an "agent of change" sees their role as fostering norms of shared inquiry by facilitating conversations about teaching with their mentees and colleagues (p. 15). Mentors that act as an agent of change work to break down barriers between the new teacher and their colleagues by fostering a culture of collaboration within their mentorship and with other educators. Feiman-Nemser and Parker (1993) concluded that the most effective mentors are those who see their roles as agent of change. These mentors take this stance because they understand the isolation most new teachers experience and seek to integrate these teachers into the environs of the school by way of various forms of collaboration (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1993). They create opportunities for new teachers to visit classrooms and discuss teaching methods and practices with experienced colleagues (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1993). Programs that include this type of effective mentorship create opportunities for conversations among teachers about best practice, and schools become learning communities that include more and less experienced teachers equally (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1993). Feiman-Nemser and Parker (1993) noted that the way mentors view their roles impacts the long-term effectiveness of the mentoring program in which they participate. They do not affix any personal traits to these

categories, although they note that program expectations, working conditions, and preparation all create a set of constraints and opportunities "influence how mentors conceive and carry out their work" (p. 3). Their conclusions underscore that the variations in mentors' perspectives and practices are not mutually exclusive from their work conditions and preparation.

Although Feiman-Nemser and Parker's (1993) categories of mentors' perspectives have been around for several decades, the mentor research conducted since that time continues to support many of their key ideas. Blase (2009) reviewed perspectives of mentors and noted a continuity between this framework of Feiman-Nemser and Parker and those developed in subsequent years. In the mid-1990s, there was the transmission or transformation model. Within these models, mentoring was viewed as either a relationship where mentors transferred their knowledge about teaching to the new teacher, or where mentors assisted teachers in gaining an understanding in order to reform classroom instruction and the impact of the school community (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). In the next decade, Wang and Odell (2002) constructed three perspectives of mentoring, including: 1) humanistic, 2) situated apprentice, and 3) critical constructivist. These perspectives have roots in conceptions of learning, emotional and psychological support, and standards-based teaching (Wang & Odell, 2002).

Potential Significance of the Study

By investigating how mentors view their goals, roles, and relationship at various career points within the context of formalized mentorship, this study looked to contribute to the literature on understanding mentors, mentoring, and formal mentoring programs. Understanding more about mentors' conceptions of their practice, and the different perspectives and ways that it might be conceived by mentors at various points of their careers is essential to developing and improving the overall support structure of formal mentoring for new teachers. Qualitative

investigation of mentoring through mentor-described data provides in-depth knowledge to inform both policy research and practice about factors that shape a mentor's understanding of their role, goals, and relationship. These data help to clarify the dynamics of the mentor role for administrators and policy makers, which could provide direction for designing programs that create conditions conducive to supporting mentors at various career points. This research revealed the professional needs of mentors and be informative for organizers of mentoring programs by offering suggestions for mentor preparation and support.

Learning more about how mentors' perceptions and conceptions play a role in how they act as mentors may help to contribute to the wider educational research on how formal mentoring programs select, train, and retain mentors. The overarching hope was that this research may also provide some indications as to what might to help foster a "culture of mentoring" within an organization such that there is habitual "teaching among teachers" that could extend teacher learning beyond the confines of individual mentorships (Feiman-Nemser, 1998, p. 73).

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study explored mentors' perceptions of their mentorship and the role that age, experience, and situational factors may play in their work. To ground this study, I reviewed literature related to the formal mentoring of new teachers, specifically looking at these topics: functions and purposes of mentoring; mentor models; age and experience in mentor selection; characteristics for effective mentors; characteristics for effective mentoring programs; educative mentoring; and supports for effective "educative" mentoring.

Functions and Purposes of Mentoring

Mentors serve a wide range of roles (Merriam, 1983) and those include helping new teachers learn content and pedagogy, navigate school contexts, and provide emotional support. The literature in teacher education conceives of mentoring as a key means of facilitating professional growth and the functions most often discussed for supporting this development are coaching and guiding. Mentors are leaned on to facilitate professional growth by acting as "coaches, cheerleaders, and model teachers" with "a goal of developing and retaining quality teachers" (Carver & Katz, 2004, p. 450). Odell (1986) found seven categories of support that mentors recorded as types of assistance they offered during the first year mentoring process; their findings, in order of need were: system information, resources and materials, instructional strategies, emotional support, classroom management, arranging environment of the classroom, and modeled teaching. Odell (1986) concluded that the two primary requests of new teachers to their mentors was regarding information that they felt they needed to know about their school and pertinent resources to the curriculum to be taught. In their review of international research literature on mentoring new teachers, Hobson et al.'s (2009) findings highlight the socialization

and social emotional supports that mentors provide. Their review emphasizes how a mentor may boost beginner teacher confidence, reduce feelings of isolation, and help new teachers develop capabilities to manage their classroom and workload (Hobson et al., 2009). During the induction process, mentorship has been considered as a way to continue the preparation of new teachers where teacher education programs leave off. Mentoring may provide the insight and contextual knowledge that new teachers need, creating a continuum of learning between their university coursework and their new classroom practices (Cochran-Smith et al., 2015; Feiman-Nemser, 2001a; Polikoff et al., 2015).

Mentor Models

There are different models for mentoring new teachers that provide a variety of sources and types of support (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Thus, some approaches use part-time mentors while others rely on full-time mentors; and in some cases, mentors work with an individual mentee while in other mentors work with groups. The most common mentoring models pairs a new teacher with an experienced teacher, thereby creating a collaborative effort between two practicing teachers. In some situations, districts use retired teachers and administrators to come back into the school to be mentors because the mentors may not be current with the school's daily routines, but they have years of experience and a flexible schedule to help the new teachers (Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, 2006). In other instances, the mentors are employed teachers who have been released partially or fully from their teaching responsibilities while they mentor a new teacher.

Several large school districts in the United States have developed models that rely on full-time mentors. California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program releases selected veteran teachers for one to three years of mentoring, during which they are

trained as support providers and worked with a group of 10-15 new teachers various schools in various districts (Lucas, 1999). Some of the sub-regions with the Los Angeles Unified School District implemented a different version of full-time mentoring through a program called Design for Excellence: Linking Teaching and Achievement (DELTA). In this model, new teachers are partnered with a mentor who helps develop their skills in curriculum development, delivery of instruction, and classroom management (Griffin et al., 2001). The mentors are paid through the district's personnel office and their focus is on individualized support rather than evaluation, encouraging flexibility in the support of the new teachers (Griffin et al., 2001). Another variation of the full-time teachers being released to mentor is with the new teacher internship program at Brigham Young University (BYU). This program allows new teachers who have completed all of their teacher education course work at BYU to complete the student teaching aspect of their degree in a partnered school district (Bullough, 2005). The new teachers are employed for a year full-time for half salary and full benefits and when two new teachers are hired in a school, a regular teacher from that school is on full-time release to serve as their mentor (Bullough, 2005).

Some mentoring models offer the opportunity to work with either a part-time or a full-time mentor. Currently, in the New York State Mentor Teacher Internship Program there are both options of part-time and full-time mentors to work with new teachers where the part-time mentors maintain 60% classroom instruction assignment (NYMTIP website). In 2013-2014, state education agencies in Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota collected survey data from school districts that offered new teacher mentoring and found that "about eleven percent of districts had part-time mentors" and "less than three percent of districts had full-time mentors" (DeCesare et al., p. 3).

Overall, there is mentor research suggesting that mentoring programs that have trained mentors who are able to take up this practice full-time have many benefits for both the new teacher and their students. Research that shows models with full-time mentors may work better for supporting new teachers (Brown, 2007; Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Fletcher & Strong; 2009; Gilles et al., 2006; Grossman & Davis, 2012; Wiebke & Bardin, 2009). For example, in one study Fletcher and Strong (2009) compared the impact of part- and full-time mentors who were provided with identical training; however, the full-time mentors were released from their teaching duties while the part-time mentors maintained their normal teaching responsibilities. They found that new teachers who were exposed to mentor support on a full-time basis showed a higher gain in growth of their students' achievement test scores than those new teachers who had a part-time mentor or none at all.

Age and Experience in Mentor Selection

The literature presumes mentors will have more seniority than their mentees, but there is a debate about using these criteria to identify potentially effective mentors. In the 1990's, Little (1990) explained that becoming a mentor was recognition for accomplished teachers and, similarly, Feiman-Nemser & Parker (1993) noted that the role of formal mentor was presented to teachers as a reward. Research also shows that a mentor has tended to be seen as a reflection of seniority with an implicit meaning that it is beneficial if a mentor has more years of experience than the new teacher (Bullough, 2012; Celano & Mitchell, 2014; Delaney, 2012, Vierstraete, 2005).

At the same time, theories and descriptions of teachers' development over the lifespan do not provide clear on when a teacher might be best suited to take up this work. Some researchers have examined the teacher lifespan and explain it by naming career phases that may or may not

be sequential, and that are assigned to the amount of experience not age. Berliner (1988) suggests that differences between new teachers and those with more experience results from a cognitive sophistication that can develop with experience. He names five stages that sequentially capture a teacher's journey through their career, including: novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and expert. Fessler and Christensen (1992) developed literature on the teacher career as a way of guiding and understanding the professional development (PD) of teachers. Their research de-emphasizes age as they explain how teachers move through a dynamic, non-linear career cycle (Fessler & Christensen, 1992). They describe that, at various times and rates, teachers move in and out of the following phases: induction, competency building, enthusiastic and growing, career frustration, career stability, career wind-down, and career exit (Fessler & Christensen, 1992). They also elaborate on the fact that teachers may go back and forth between various phrases over the course of their career, which has implications for a teacher's professional growth and needs.

Huberman (1993) gave a more structured overview as he described patterns in teachers' careers and developed a sequential model of the professional life based on his analysis of interviews with 160 secondary school teachers. He illustrates a thread from "early beginnings," in years one to three, when one is "finding their way" to a phase of "stabilization" in years four to six (pp.12-13). Then at the mid-career point he explains that multiple different possibilities may occur, including: "diversification," "reassessment," "serenity," and "conservatism" depending on career choices and orientations. These mid-career possibilities have profound implications for the final career phase which is marked by a period of "disengagement" (pp.12-13). His model of phases may act as ways of understanding the professional trajectory that

occurs during a teacher's lifespan, and give descriptors that illustrate the types of experiences a teacher encounters from an overarching perspective on one's career.

Furthermore, the empirical literature has not produced a consensus on exactly how teachers' expertise and experience might develop over time and when they might be best equipped to serve as mentors. In particular, research shows inconsistencies relative to the recommended age difference between new teachers and their mentors; yet, a number of studies suggest that there is an optimal age for mentors. Studies done by Hunt and Michael (1983) and Levinson (1978) warn that a mentor's age should not exceed that of the new teacher by fifteen years because if the age gap is too wide, then a sort of parent-child relationship may develop where the mentee becomes too depend on the mentor. Additionally, they believe that if the gap is less than five years, the mentor and new teacher are likely to experience each other as friends which might cause a more relaxed approach to the mentorship (Hunt & Michael, 1983; Levinson, 1978). Comparably, Galvez-Hjornevik (1985), Gray and Gray (1985), and Huling-Austin et al. (1985) agreed that one factor of successful pairing of mentors and new teachers is age, and they believe that an age difference of eight to ten years is optimal. Boreen (2000) completed research on inductions programs nationwide and similarly recommended that the age difference between the mentor and the new teacher should be at least eight to fifteen years "so that the mentor is viewed as experienced" by the mentee (p. 12). Nonetheless, when Carter and Francis (2001) explored the age and experience differences between mentors and beginning teachers they did not find support for the benefits of a smaller age and experience difference. They found that younger mentors are better at empathizing and recalling what it is like to be a new teacher, and they believe that this ability is an important condition that contributes to effective mentoring (Carter & Francis, 2001). At the same time, for other mentor pairings in their case study, they

found that larger differences in age and experience between mentors and beginning teachers were no impediment to successful and lasting relationships (Carter & Francis, 2001).

Literature on the requisite years of teaching experience to denote ideal mentors is just as inconsistent as research on the optimal age gap between mentor and the new teacher. Certain states give specified years of experience in order to be eligible for becoming a mentor: South Carolina Department of Education (DOE) requires two years teaching experience; Mass DOE and Alabama DOE requires three years teaching experience. Bullough (2012) discusses mentoring programs in California, New York, and Texas, and Utah; only two of these programs, in New York and Texas, give minimum years of teaching experience for the mentors. Both the Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program and New York State Mentor Teacher–Internship Program require mentors to have at least three years of classroom teaching experience to become a mentor. Melnick and Meister (2008) make the claim that by becoming mentors, teachers with at least three years of experience will further their own thinking, as well as that of their mentees.

Additionally, there is some empirical research that backs up the view that teachers with only a few years of experience can be effective mentors. In a qualitative case study of four new teachers in Hong Kong, Mann and Tang (2012) found that "it was not necessarily an advantage to have an experienced or senior mentor" (p. 484). They found that the factors of a mentor's availability to meet in terms of time and proximity to the location of the new teacher's setting are more important than whether the mentor is experienced. In a study on urban based mentors in their third year of teaching, the mentors reported that they were motivated to support newcomers because they wanted to improve the conditions of entry-level teachers (Catapano & Huisman, 2013).

Yet, a number of studies make the case that mentors should have at least seven years of experience. Levin and Ammon (1996) conducted a longitudinal study of novice teachers and concluded from their findings that the best mentors of novice teachers are teachers with at least eight years of experience. A study by Moir and Bloom (2003) makes the case for teachers with seven or more years of experience, as being ideal mentor candidates, since they have had opportunities for accumulated classroom experience, knowledge from working with their curriculum, and interpersonal skills from interactions in their school context. Appleton (2008) claimed the most effective mentors to beginning elementary science teachers were teachers with over ten years of classroom experience. Some studies indicate wide parameters for required years of experience, indicating that mentors should have anywhere from eight to fifteen years of experience (Ganser, 2000; Odell, 1990).

Adding to the complexity, a number of studies have raised questions about whether age and experience are the critical factors. Wong (2004) does not give a number but a qualifier that only those veteran teachers who are secure in their teaching abilities should be assigned a mentee. On the other hand, research also suggests that experienced mentors who have become complacent in their teaching and their thinking about teaching prove that years of experience as a teacher is not necessarily correlated with supporting the improvement of another teacher's practice (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Baron, 2006). Mann and Tang (2012) studied the effect of age and experience between mentors and their mentees and found that having an experienced mentor was not necessary, and that a smaller age or amount of experience difference helped establish a generative partnership. Additionally, mentor scholars like Feiman-Nemser (1998) and Knight et al. (2014) believe that experience is not always a reliable or trustworthy teacher, meaning that a more experienced teacher does not necessarily mean they will be a strong mentor.

Scholars have produced research that suggest that teachers' development may regress or progress at different times and for different reasons (Day, 2002; Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1993; Korthagen & Wubbles, 1995). Orland-Barak and Yinon (2005) challenge the idea that the shift from novice to expert mentor is a linear progression over the course of a career. They suggest that a mentor's reasoning and behavior may fluctuate between a novice and an expert stage depending on the situation. Beyond age and experience, Orland-Barak and Hasin (2010) developed several criteria for exemplary mentors: at least five years of mentoring experience to be an exemplary mentor, engagement in mentoring activities at least twice a week, and high rating from their school supervisors or project leaders. These theoretical rationales suggest developmental points exist within a teacher's career, and that more experienced mentors might be in a different position to support new teachers, but overall, there has been a continuation of studies that have questioned seniority as a basis for the selection of mentors (Corbett & Wright, 1993; Hanson, 2010; Kerry & Farrow, 1996; Smith & Alred, 2013).

Effective Mentoring

Characteristics of Effective Mentors

Research on the characteristics of effective mentors suggest that what mentors do, how they approach mentorship, and the skills they develop may matter more than their age and/or experience. Mentors' effectiveness has been studied from many perspectives including mentor characteristics, roles, and skills (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006). Effective mentors see mentorship as an opportunity for collaboration (Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Kent et al., 2012; Long, 2010). Such collaborations may involve reflective inquiry, developing goals and assessing progress, and confronting assumptions about teaching and learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Kent et al, 2012; Long, 2010). Many studies emphasize that effective mentors are teachers who were

always learners themselves, steadily improving their practice, and sharing that learning with their mentees (Kardos et al., 2001). Additionally, effective mentors model teaching and observe their mentee teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Kent et al., 2012). There is also some evidence that effective mentors maintain a consistent focus on modeling, analyzing, reflecting, and assessing the mentee's ability to teach (Feiman-Nemser, 1998; Wang & Paine, 2001).

There is also some evidence that having shared teaching subject may contribute to a successful mentor/mentee collaboration, as effective mentors support new teachers by sharing their knowledge from their experiences as a teacher (Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Kent et al., 2012; Long, 2010; Luft et al., 2007). According to Pirkle (2011), beginning teachers find greater value in working with a mentor who teaches the same content. Here again, however, other research indicates that school districts which pair mentorships based on subject matter, location proximity, or time of availability have sometimes proven ineffective (Kardos & Johnson, 2010).

Effective mentors act as facilitators of the socialization process to help new teachers adapt to a school environment and thus their personal demeanor impacts the mentorship (Rhoton & Bowers, 2003). McPhie and Johnson (1994) identified several key personal attributes of effective mentors, including ability to communicate, commitment to professional endeavors, ability to work with adults, and willingness to share their time. Additionally, effective mentors are people who are able to establish a collegial rapport and a sense of belonging (Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Long, 2010). Other studies acknowledge this type of rapport building by reporting that mentees identified empathy and trustworthiness as the most critical characteristics in an effective mentor (Farver & Holt, 2015; Martin et al., 2015; Opengart & Bierema, 2015).

Other researchers have pointed to the importance of a whole list of other elements that might matter for effective mentors, including: personality traits, and the ability to ask questions

and think aloud. Successful mentors usually have several characteristics in common, including: a commitment to mentoring, strong interpersonal skills, and the ability to accept the novice teacher (Rowley, 1999). Some research suggests that mentors must have leadership qualities, able to guide new teachers toward developing long term professional goals, including helping new teachers discover the ways that students think and assist in the development of students' critical thinking and reasoning skills (Kent et al., 2012). The ability to use questions is another important mentor attribute, which helps novices intentionally and systematically examine their practice to enhance student learning (Athanases, 2013). Another capacity of effective mentors is to share their thoughts and think aloud with novice teachers (Mutchler, 2011). In this regard, Gardiner (2012) discovered that effective new teacher mentors create space for inquiry, so the novice can seek clarification, articulate goals, thoughtfully analyze problems, and create future action steps.

Characteristics of Effective Mentoring Programs

Research on why mentoring is not effective reveals certain requirements not necessarily of the mentor themselves, but for their mentoring program. Will (2017) noted that in most public-school districts the quality of mentoring needs attention because mentors are not given a defined set of mentoring strategies to facilitate the professional growth of beginning teachers. If a program does not provide specific strategies and skills, then mentors are left to implement only what they know from their professional experiences (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015). Other research, such as Glassford and Salinitri (2017) indicate that effective mentoring requires an intentionally formulated set of strategies taught to the mentors so that their work will be conducive to the productive support and development of new teachers. A mentoring program that values professional learning, collaboration, and fosters a sense of collective responsibility for the success of all students as well as teachers is paramount in the success of mentorships (Kent et al.,

2012). Mentoring must be entrenched within the entire school's learning network, utilizing experienced teachers while centering on learning together (Long, 2010). Yet, since mentoring is the relational work between people there will always be a uniqueness that exists in each mentorship, and therefore there will always be challenges when implementing mentoring practices in different settings (Pennanen et al., 2016). A more recent consensus is that there is need for more empirical evidence on the ways in which these programs promote and support effective mentoring strategies (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Spooner-Lane, 2017).

Educative Mentoring

Complicating the picture of effective mentoring further is the fact that in the literature on the selection and characteristics of effective mentors there is no shared or common definition of what effective mentoring means. However, Feiman-Nemser's (1998) conception of "educative mentoring" (p. 66) has been widely used and serves as a way to focus on mentoring related specifically to helping teachers improve their practice and develop as educators. Feiman-Nemser's concept of educative mentoring emerged from her case studies of mentors like those that she did with Michelle Parker. In studying different mentors, Feiman-Nemser identified "common characteristics of thoughtful mentoring and test the usefulness of sociocultural perspectives on mentored learning to teach" (Feiman-Nemser, 2012, p. 248). These mentors showed that "mentoring depends on a vision of good teaching and a theory of learning to teach as well as a repertoire of mentoring moves" (p. 248).

Her concept of educative mentoring draws from Dewey's (1938) concept of educative experiences in that she believes mentors need to align their approach to mentorship to Dewey's belief that an educator arranges the physical and social conditions to promote growth and lead to richer experiences for the learner. Educative mentoring is composed of actions that focus on

creating opportunities for extending experiences, coupled with a deep reflection of those

experiences, during the process of developing classroom skills (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). The

mentor's responsibility is to create a relationship that goes beyond "situational adjustment,

technical advice, and emotional support" to one that is based "on an explicit vision of good

teaching and understanding of teacher learning" (Feiman-Nemser, 2012, p. 254); it is practice-

centered and inquiry-oriented. Feiman-Nemser explains:

> Educative mentoring rests on an explicit vision of good teaching and an
> understanding of teacher learning. Mentors who share this orientation attend to
> beginning teachers' present concerns, questions, and purposes without losing
> sight of long-term goals for teacher development. They interact with novices in
> ways that foster an inquiry stance. They cultivate skills and habits that enable
> novices to learn in and from their practice. They use their knowledge and
> expertise to assess the direction novices are heading and to create opportunities
> and conditions that support meaningful teacher learning in the service of student
> learning (p. 18).

Educative mentoring is about being responsive to the needs of the early career teacher and

providing appropriate and personalized challenge and learning opportunities. Feiman-Nemser

(2001b) describes actions of educative mentoring, including helping the mentor find

opportunities for overarching pedagogical discussions as well as conversations about the details

of teaching practices to assist the early career teacher in developing an analytic stance toward

their practice. In this conception of mentoring, it is important that the mentor give

encouragement by noting evidence of growth, demonstrating teacher moves, and following-up

with discussions afterward. The overarching goals of educative mentoring include mentors

sharing their expertise and expanding their role to becoming a teacher of teaching so that, at the

same time, mentors are assisting new teachers in the moment and supporting them grow their

practice over time.

Feiman-Nemser's concept of educative mentoring continues to evolve in empirical research. Sharon Schwille (2008) builds upon this notion of educative mentoring, emphasizing that mentoring "is a professional practice with a repertoire of skill sets that must be learned over time" (Schwille, 2008, p. 139). Bradbury (2010) helped to refine Feiman-Nemser's ideas by drawing comparisons between traditional mentoring and educative mentoring, and researching this type of mentoring in science classrooms. Bradbury echoes Feiman-Nemser's belief that educative mentoring has the power to create a more collaborative culture in the school so that new teachers feel safe and comfortable asking for help from any teacher so that all teachers share the responsibility for new teacher learning. With this notion of shared responsibility in mind, Bradury (2010) pushes back on the one-to-one model of mentorship and claims that "many people who work in close proximity to the novice teacher can and should collaborate to provide models of reform-based teaching and help the novice adopt an analytic stance" (p. 1066).

Supports for Effective "Educative" Mentoring

According to Feiman-Nemser (2003), "The goal of new teacher learning should define the mentor's role and practice" (p. 28). She explains that mentoring can feel unnatural, even for an experienced teacher; therefore, training is important to help position the mentor's focus on the new teacher's learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). Mentors should be given training opportunities to reflect and define their own ideas of good teaching, to study effective mentoring models, to develop skills in observation and discussion around teaching, and to learn to assess new teacher progress as well as their own mentoring practice (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). Mentors need to be able to take apart teaching enactments, talk about them, model them, and help someone else learn them in an integrated and principled way. PD is a possible vehicle for strengthening this process as helping them develop a mentoring practice. Additionally, PD may develop help the skills of

observation, analysis, and productive talk about teaching that educative mentors need. Overall, one of Feiman-Nemser's (2003) main conclusions is that educative mentoring programs must provide clear and concise goals and strategies for a mentor's practice.

In order to conceptualize mentoring as an educational support for novice teachers, mentors need "images of educative mentoring" and "opportunities for them to develop and articulate their practice" (Feiman-Nemser, 2012, p. 249). Leshem (2014), who takes up Feiman-Nemser's framework of educative mentoring, researched mentors in Israeli secondary schools and identified that mentors need training in how best to lead new teachers. The researcher interviewed two groups of mentors, who volunteered to participate in the study: one group of 15 female mentors, who had attended an intensive 2-year, 120-hour PD course for mentors and one group of 13 female mentors, who partnered with the local college but did not take the PD course for mentors. Leshem (2014) contended that teachers from the group with no PD course performed poorly in their roles as mentors because of the negative, often indifferent attitudes from administrators about teachers being qualified as mentors simply because they are "good" teachers and that mentoring is part of every teacher's job. As a result, mentors perceived themselves to be qualified mentors without the need for PD even though they acknowledged the poor quality of the mentoring they administered to new teachers (Leshem, 2014). Conversely, teachers who participated in the PD course chose to be mentors, acknowledged the importance of designating the role of mentor as different from that of a helpful teacher and sought to improve through collaboration with others. Leshem (2014) concluded that unless teachers receive PD on how to be a good mentor, they may see themselves as more qualified than they actually are just because administrators label them as "good" teachers.

Mentors themselves need substantial and targeted preparation (Stanulis & Ames, 2009) and the preparation of mentors plays a significant role in the success of the induction of new teachers (Barlin, 2010). Evertson and Smithey (2000) studied effective mentoring program characteristics and they argue that training and continuing PD influence the mentor's role and their effectiveness. In a qualitative study comparing three induction programs, Feiman-Nemser and Carver (2012), reported that although mentoring was a core component of the induction programs, only two of the programs mandated training for the mentors. From their study, they concluded that in order to support serious mentoring, induction programs need to provide mentors with contextual understanding of the goals of the program as well as initial and ongoing PD for mentors in order to effectively support and guide the learning of early career teachers (Feiman-Nemser & Carver, 2012). This reporting continues to be the case as more recent studies indicate that many mentors do not receive PD that correlates to enacting educative mentoring (Stanulis et al., 2017; Trevethan, 2017).

To investigate mentor training in the United States, the New Teacher Center (2012) conducted a sizable study from 2010-2011 that included a review of induction and mentoring programs across all fifty states. Their review cites that 15 states require both mentor training and PD; however, other states rely on local programs to provide the mentor training (New Teacher Center, 2012). The New Teacher Center (2012) induction model gives specific guidelines for mentor training, including the recommendation of PD for in the first two years and mentor forums. In response to these recommendations, Goldrick et al. (2012) explained that requiring continual support to deepen and develop mentor knowledge is essential, and noted that 18 states include ongoing PD for mentors. Achinstein & Athanases (2006) discovered that many

mentoring programs in the United States have professional development that rely on technical manuals and guidelines without a coherent theoretical or research foundation.

Literature also indicates that there has been more specific research about mentors' professional needs. A study that investigated mentor's PD needs found that mentors see PD as essential to understanding how to have effective and constructive conversations with their novice teachers (Wang et al., 2006). Bullough (2012) recommended that PD of mentors needs to go beyond training to include helping mentors to build their identity as mentors. In a New Zealand study, 13 mentor teachers from participated in a two-year PD program for enhancing their mentoring with a focus on conversational skills (Langdon, 2014). An analysis of mentoring conversations after this training revealed that interactions shifted from support and transmission of knowledge to novices to a focus on student learning and reflection on practice (Langdon, 2014). Likewise, Leshem (2014) explained that mentors who received PD were more likely to focus on their interpersonal relationships with their mentees and help them gain confidence.

Summary

From this literature review, I found that researchers have different notions of effective mentors and mentoring, and this variety of views could account for the plethora of different interpretations. Hobson et al., (2009) explain that since the 1990s "there has been explosion of research into beginner teacher mentoring" and within this research there are discrepancies that inhibit them from drawing "any particular established conclusions" (p. 213). Additionally, Spooner-Lane (2017) completed a review of ten empirical studies since 2000 on mentoring programs for new teachers and found that "these studies did not provide a clear definition of the term mentoring" (p. 268) and "it was difficult to determine from the descriptions provided in the reviewed studies the specific nature and outcome of the mentoring activities" (p. 269).

Within the literature I explored, I found that there are some theoretical reasons for thinking experience, subject matter, knowledge, and personality of mentors matter; however, there is debate and conflicting conclusions. Selection criteria for mentors imply that experience is important to successful mentoring, and there is often an emphasis on the number of years teaching or age as a particular criterion. There is some consistency in research that mentors should have at least three years of experience, and there might be an optimal range of eight to fourteen years, but having more experience might be beneficial as well. Literature highlights many different characteristics of mentors that might be important. Additionally, some research underscores the importance of a mentor having a particular skill, some say there needs to shared subject background, and others contextual knowledge for individualized support; however, the results are conflicting with no clear consensus.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the complexities of mentoring, particularly how the role that age, experience, and situational factors play in mentors' approach to their work. To pursue this project, I explored the experiences of mentors from a formal mentoring program to contribute to a better understanding of the potential and limitations of mentoring as a support for teachers' development. I focused on conceptions of mentoring, mentor's own perspectives on mentoring, and ways mentoring may be conceived by teachers at various points of their careers. To understand how mentors conceptualize their practice, through a series of in-depth interviews, I inquired about the goals they have when they are a mentor, the ways in which they pursue their role, the resources they draw on in the work, and how they envision the relationship with the new teacher. Additionally, I explored how the context and contextual characteristics of their mentoring program may affect their practice. Specifically, I addressed three research questions:

1. What are the goals and approaches of these six mentors in mentoring new teachers?

2. How do these six mentors carry out that approach?

3. How are these perspectives impacted by situational factors with the program like working conditions and expectations?

This chapter outlines how this research study was conducted and includes discussion of: (a) rationale for research approach, (b) description of research context, (c) overview of research design, (d) methods of data collection, (e) methods of data analysis, (f) researcher positionality, (g) ethical considerations, (h) issues of trustworthiness, (i) limitations of the study, and (j) presentation of the findings.

Rationale for Research Approach

A qualitative method aligns with the purpose of this study, which was to gain a better understanding of the complexities of mentoring, particularly how the experiences of the mentors and other situational factors may affect mentorship. Historically, qualitative methods are employed to achieve three goals: to explore, explain, or describe a phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). More specifically, qualitative research provides an opportunity to understand participants' experiences or as Merriam (2009) states "how people make sense out of their lives, delineate the process (rather than the outcome or product) of meaning-making, and describe how people interpret what they experience" (p. 14). This study used a basic qualitative approach, which is appropriate when examining the meaning participants make of their experiences because it allows a researcher to think in new ways and examine new ideas to meet research needs (Maxwell, 2012). Researchers use this type of approach to learn about an issue or find answers for their research question(s) (Maxwell, 2012), or to study participants' perceptions of certain practices and events (Percy et al., 2015). Additionally, these methodologies allow researchers to focus on learning the meaning that participants hold about a particular experience (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative researchers develop a complex picture of their research problem since these methodologies help report multiple perspectives, identify the factors involved in a situation, and sketch the larger picture (Creswell, 2013).

Since this study focused on how mentors conceptualize their practice, qualitative interviews are appropriate for making these perceptions explicit. In their international review of 170 empirical studies on mentoring new teachers, Hobson et al. (2009) noted this research is "based predominantly on mentees' and mentors' perceptions and accounts" (p. 209) and "most studies rely solely on the accounts of mentees or mentors (and occasionally both), normally via

interviews and/or surveys" (p. 213). Interviewing is an integral component of qualitative

research, and enables the researcher to learn the ways in which participants "understand the

world in which they live" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 36). Qualitative interviews allow the

researcher to capture the participants' perceptions and lived experiences, particularly when

considering that interviews are extensions of ordinary conversation with the distinction that the

interviewer listens "for what has not been said, as well as what has been said so as to hear the

meaning of what interviewees are telling them" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 13–14). A semi-

structured interview method allows documentation of mentors' views on the complexity of

mentoring while remaining flexible to change direction to pursue emergent issues (Fontana &

Frey, 1994; Simons, 2009). I interviewed each participant four times to enable participants to

place their comments within a context over a period of time with recurring encounters between

me and my participants. This process allowed me to check for internal consistency in what

participants said (Seidman, 2006).

Description of Research Context

Setting

To find a site for this study, I looked for what Feiman-Nemser (2001a) calls a "strong

mentoring program" (p.1037). Strong mentoring programs are programs that

> use careful processes to select, prepare, and support [mentors] in their ongoing work with
> novices. They insure adequate time for mentoring and appropriate compensation. Most
> programs provide training before mentors begin working with novices. Strong programs
> also bring mentor teachers together on a regular basis to talk about their work with
> novices and deepen their knowledge and skills as mentors. In general, this is only
> possible when mentors are full-time. (p. 1037)

I selected Venture Academy[3] (VA), a nonprofit education organization, as the site for this study because it embodies many of the characteristics in a strong mentoring program. I also selected VA because I worked there, know the program well, and have relationships at the site. I used the strategy of "convenience sampling" (Richard et al., 2009, pp. 56-57) because of my connections to the site.

For several decades, VA has promoted curiosity, engagement, and humanity by offering learning opportunities for both its elementary and secondary students who attend summer classes and the aspiring new teachers who teach them (VA website). It is a residential program, meaning that the students, new teachers, and support staff all live on the campus of the VA. These new teachers are soon to be graduates, or are recent graduates who have completed their undergraduate studies and are interested in gaining teaching experience in their major field of study. VA strives to create "dynamic environments of intellectual inquiry that bring aspiring teachers through a structured development process" leading up to and continuing over the summer (VA website).

While VA's goals include supporting the development of students and new teachers, the support of the new teachers' development relies on two different groups of mentors. The first group of mentors are "pre-summer" mentors, and the second group of mentors are "summer" mentors. Once hired, the VA teachers go through two phases of support with these two separate groups of mentors. The pre-summer group of mentors works with the new teachers up until one month before the teaching starts, and the summer group of mentors starts their work with the new teachers one month before the new teachers start teaching their classes. A month before the

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[3] Venture Academy is a pseudonym to protect the anonymity of the program and participants in this study.

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program, the new teachers are electronically introduced to their summer mentors and start their collaboration, which lasts throughout the 2 months of classes. During the summer I worked at VA, each summer mentor supported six to seven new teachers. To aid in the transition of support from pre-summer to summer mentor, when the summer mentors are introduced to their new teachers, they also gain access to documents which contain information about their new teachers. These documents include summary notes written by the pre-summer mentors about their time working with the new teachers. The summer mentors also receive reflective memos written by the new teachers while they worked on their curriculum and lesson plans during the pre-summer preparation. Additionally, the summer mentors receive autobiographical memos that the new teachers write to describe their previous teaching experience, if applicable, and a self-assessment on their strengths and growth areas during the pre-summer preparation. I sought participants who act(ed) as mentors during the summer months because these mentors support new teachers while they are actively involved in teaching students. The pre-summer mentors do not interact with the new teachers once the summer program starts; thus, these pre-summer mentors would not be able to describe their experiences supporting these new teachers in their classrooms.

I was a part of the summer mentor team at one of the VA locations in 2019. Summer mentors are required to have a B.A. or B.S. degree and a minimum of 2 years professional teaching experience. My nine summer mentor colleagues were teachers in contexts ranging from elementary to higher education at institutions around the world. Two months before arriving to the VA location, we worked collaboratively through electronic means to familiarize ourselves with one another and the VA mission. Our pre-summer tasks were plentiful and included team introductions, question and answer sessions, program document analysis, readings about mentoring, and opportunities for program veterans to share. During the summer, we continued to

work together as a group in an open office space from 7:30 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday, though many hours were spent outside of the office visiting the classes of the new teachers whom we were supporting. Even though all the summer mentors were managing their own schedules that aligned with their new teachers, we had daily morning meetings and evening meetings two or three times a week to come together as a mentoring team.

The work of the summer mentors looks "to fulfill a mission of facilitating moments of self- and world-discovery, encouraging students to be co-creators of their learning, and to deliver a safe and reliable space where both teachers and students can grow" (VA Handbook, 2019). The overarching tasks of the summer mentors' work are to observe classes and meet with the new teachers to provide direct feedback, guidance, and support for their teaching. The work of summer mentors is undergirded by group work centered on recognizing and meeting the needs of new teachers, strong classroom design, student-centered classrooms, and teachers as co-learners in the classroom. Overall, this work done by the summer mentors fits with the conception of educative mentoring in this study.

Once new teachers move onto campus, and before the students arrive and classes begin, the mentors meet with the new teachers over the course of 4 days to discuss curriculum, lesson plans, and goals for the summer and to set up the new teachers' classrooms. Additionally, the mentors help the new teachers attend to any needs of their classes, including technology assistance and classroom supplies. Once classes begin, mentors regularly visit the classes of their new teachers and schedule individual meetings with them. When I worked at VA there was no set requirement for mentors to do a certain number of class visits or individual meetings each day, though the expectation from our director was that these events would happen frequently. When I asked my director for guidance on creating my weekly schedule for class visits and

individual meetings, we came up with a plan for me to visit each class at least three times a week and meet with each new teacher three times a week. This schedule seemed to be similar to what my mentor colleagues did as well. There were some occasions when I had to meet more than three times with an individual teacher and/or I had to rearrange my class visit schedule so that I could see consecutive classes or specific lessons and activities.

Participant Selection

As I already have an established relationship with administrators at VA, I relied on these contacts as a point of entry to recruit participants (Bogden & Biklen, 2016). In preparation for participant recruitment, during the winter of 2021, I emailed the program director for preliminary permission [or "permission in principle"] to conduct research with mentors from the program, and he gave his approval.

For my initial recruitment, I invited my nine colleagues who had previously worked as VA summer mentors with me in 2019. They were a good group to start recruiting participants, since they reflect a range of teaching experiences that match the three experience groups I sought and they have had at least one year of experience as mentor at VA. To organize these experience groupings, I drew upon research about teacher lifespan from the models of Berliner (1988), Fessler and Christensen (1992), and Huberman (1993). I sent an invitation via an email letter explaining the focus and scope of the study, as well as specific participant requirements (Appendix A). Six of my colleagues were willing to participate: two mentors had 3 years or fewer of teaching experience, two mentors had 5 to 10 years of teaching experience, and two mentors had more than 10 years of teaching experience. During my initial contact with the participants, we discussed any questions about the study before they signed the consent form, and then we set up a time for the first interview (Appendix B).

Overview of Research Design

Exploratory and Pilot Studies

In the spring of 2019, I conducted an exploratory study about mentorship with my former

colleagues from VA. This exploratory study helped me to develop my focus on career points and

identify some of the key data sources to draw on, and some key themes to pay attention to in my

analysis. Two mentors replied to my request and agreed to talk with me about their experiences

as mentors. I interviewed them with an interest in investigating what mentors learn during

mentorship. During these exploratory interviews, I gained insight about how a variety of

professional experiences and personal beliefs contribute to a mentor's perspective. I did not

purposely select mentors at different career points, yet these two individuals were representative;

one participant had 18 years of teaching and mentoring experience and the other one had 7 years.

I started to be intrigued by what these mentors were drawing from in terms of career status and

experiences in order to frame their mentoring practice. Additionally, their discussion about VA

documents gave insight about how a mentoring program might steer the ways in which they

conceptualize their mentorship. Based on the nature of their responses, I reconsidered my plan

for this study about mentors to incorporate how career status might impact mentor perspectives,

as well as documents from the mentoring program. From these reconfigurations, I scripted

interview protocols (Appendices C-F) that align with the research questions described in this

proposal (Appendix G).

In the winter of 2021, I conducted pilot interviews that used the newly scripted protocols.

Conducting pilot testing is important because it allowed me to ensure that the "information being

gathered is germane to the concepts being studied when the concept is multi-dimensional,

lengthy and complex" (Bailey, 1978, p. 70). To further ensure relevancy, I completed these pilot

interviews with an educator whose background is similar to my desired study participants. Additionally, for me as the researcher, these interviews gave me opportunities to ensure the questions are clear and easy to understand and yield the desired information. This test run also helped me understand what it feels like to be a researcher conducting this type of research (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) and to understand that this kind of reflexivity is essential to conducting successful interviews. Additionally, I experienced the necessity of monitoring the flow of the dialogue so that it allowed for a conversational feel and helped me acquire "native language" (Spradley, 2016, p. 49) that I could work into my follow-up questioning. Overall, the pilot testing provided me with an opportunity to refine my questioning and probing techniques.

Research Design and Data Sources

The data sources for this study included: 1) a series of four semi-structured interviews with each mentor participant, 2) formal documents from the VA program, and 3) artifacts produced by the mentors. During the interviews, I solicited artifacts of the mentors' practice that went beyond just the reporting of their mentoring and asked about VA documents they used and any written materials they produced during their mentoring. I used the formal documents from the VA program and artifacts produced by the mentors to check on and deepen my understanding of the mentors' perspectives described in the interviews. VA provides a variety of formal documents for mentors to use as tools for their practice, including: community standards, teaching and learning standards, mentor expectations, PIE (personal, instructional, and emotional) safety checklists, classroom observation charts, new teacher advice, working with new teacher tips, difficult conversation suggestions, and pointers for recognizing and meeting the needs of VA teachers. My exploratory study revealed how valuable these documents could be to

the mentors therefore during the course of the interviews participants were asked if and/or how they used these tools during their mentorship.

Methods of Data Collection

Mentor Interviews

During the mentor interviews, I looked to understand how they describe and perceive their role, goals, and relationship in supporting the development of the new teachers. Each hour-long interview took place over the phone or via video call to keep with social distancing practices and peoples' personal comfort levels during the pandemic. Participants were asked for their consent to audio record the conversations so that I could transcribe them afterwards and proceed with data analysis (Appendix B). I developed the interview protocols, organizing them by my three research questions and allowing opportunities for probing and follow up questions based on information learned throughout the series of pilot interviews (Appendices C-F). These protocols followed a semi-structured format, allowing a balance between a systemic approach and an informal conversational atmosphere. In order to allow for this balance, I scripted questions that could simultaneously provide participants with structure and latitude with which to respond (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Additionally, based on the data collected, the information gathered during each interview informed the next interview(s) with that participant. Overall, the four interview protocols included a mix of background questions, knowledge questions, and feeling questions (Merriam, 1998).

The goal of the first interview was to discuss the mentor's role and goals in supporting their mentees, as well as serving as an introduction between me and the participant. In order to establish our research relationship, there were several fact-based questions to get sense of what they are doing as a mentor today or in the most recent past. There were also several open-ended

questions to get a sense of how past experiences shape their current mentoring practices. The

second interview focused on the mentor's career status and teaching experience and how those

relate to their mentoring. The third interview focused on how the program impacts their

mentoring practice. Questions in the third interview protocol asked about situational factors,

conditions, and tools used within the mentoring program. The fourth interview acted as a

"member check interview" (Koelsch, 2013, p. 12), during which I provided the participant with

relevant sections of my report and invite them to comment on the accuracy of the report. This

last interview was also a final opportunity to follow-up, wrap-up, and thank the participant

regarding their participation in the research.

Document Review

The review of official and internal documents for mentors allowed me to "[discover]

cultural nuances" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 195) within the mentors' work for VA. As with

all qualitative data collection methods, document analysis has both advantages and limitations.

This process was be less time consuming and more efficient than other research methods,

particularly since it required "data selection, instead of data collection" (Bowen, 2009, p. 31).

Another advantage was that reviewing documents is "unobtrusive" and "non-reactive" since they

are unaffected by the research process (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 108). As I reviewed

documents, my presence did not impact what was being researched (Merriam, 1998). The

limitations of document analysis center on two primary issues: insufficient detail and low

retrievability. Since documents involve a one-directional explanation, they generally do not

provide adequate information to answer research questions. Additionally, document access may

be restricted, making the ability to retrieve critical documents problematic (Yin, 1994); however,

since I worked for this program, I had access to past documents and asked my participants to

share the documents they received from the program. These documents included all those previously mentioned in the data sources section. I referred to these documents during the interviews to help focus participants on the ways they conceptualize their mentoring as they responded to questions regarding if and how the structures, parameters, and tools of the program impacted the ways in which they approached their practice.

Artifact Collection

For the purpose of this study, the term artifact refers to any original document(s) produced by the mentor themselves and/or any document created by VA that was annotated by the mentor, e.g., classroom observation chart with personal notes made by the mentor. These various artifacts were collected from the participants to support and enhance the findings about their mentorship collected from the interviews.

Methods of Data Analysis

Overview

Qualitative analysis is used to construct meaningful concepts and explanations of a particular phenomenon by following a structured interpretation of data collected through a variety of methods (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994). While analysis may be done in a systematic way, this process is ongoing and not linear; this iterative nature requires an analysis that balances efficiency and flexibility (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). I made the data collection and analysis a simultaneous activity in order to avoid becoming unfocused with overwhelming amounts of data. My data analysis began immediately after finishing the first interview and continued throughout my research (Maxwell 2012; Merriam, 1998).

Coding

      Coding serves as the primary categorizing strategy in qualitative research and began

immediately after the first interview (Maxwell, 2012). This process included: questioning the

data, identifying and noting common patterns in the data, creating codes that describe data

patterns, and assigning these coded pieces of information to the categories of the conceptual

framework (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). The conceptual framework presented at the end of

Chapter I served as both the organizing structure for the data collection and the foundation for

various iterations of the coding scheme (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). I began my data analysis by

reading the interview transcripts in order to identify words and phrases that related to my

research questions and conceptual framework, and then I followed this process with the

program's documents. After transcribing the first round of interviews, I did a preliminary

analysis by noting key ideas and initial thoughts as comments in the margins of the

transcriptions. This preliminary analysis was a process of open coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008;

Miles & Huberman, 1994), which helped me to be attentive to what the participants shared,

while also providing a way to start to make sense of the data and determine meaningful words

and phrases (Seidman, 2006). This open coding also helped me modify the interviews to respond

to emerging issues or themes, as mentioned in the mentor interview section. Thus, this open

coding helped me change the interview from one round to the next based upon the data collected

from the previous interviews.

      For the second round of coding, I listened to the interview again to reconnect with the

voice and ideas of my participants and allowed myself another opportunity to make note of

intonation and verbal emphasis. During this second listening and rereading, I color coded my

data electronically and made any additional margin notes about emerging or recurring ideas. I

used different colors to highlight key words and phrases that aligned with my research questions, and I indicated the characteristics of each kind of mentor that relates to my conceptual framework in a table (see Table 1). This process of rereading each interview transcript along with my comments enabled me to gain an overall impression of the statements made during the interviews, and helped me to identify tentative codes (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2014). The codes were based upon participants' repeating ideas and themes, as well as responses related to the conceptual framework. Some examples of these codes included: duty, goal, role, personal expectation, relationship, age, career, working conditions, and program expectation. I made a list of the codes I used for data analysis (Appendix H).

After these two rounds of analysis, I continued to use the color coding to help to categorize, analyze, and cluster the codes that I created and to determine themes amongst the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). At this time, I also consolidated redundant codes, by eliminating and renaming codes. After the third round was coded, I extracted excerpts that answer each research question. This process enabled me to condense the volume of data in each transcript. Additionally, reviewing the transcripts after the third round helped me determine whether I needed another interview, and also prepared me for the member check fourth interview. In order to facilitate the process of comparing codes across the transcripts, I created a document for each research question that was populated with responses that provided answers to that research question. Volpe and Bloomberg (2008) observe that the "coding process fragments the interview into separate categories, forcing one to look at each detail, whereas the synthesis involves piecing these fragments together to reconstruct a holistic and integrated explanation" (p. 85). From this process, I was able to identify patterns that existed in the data. Once the data were coded, I reread the interviews to see how consistent the responses were with the emerging

answers to the research questions. Additionally, I looked at counter-factuals and conflicting

information or things that I missed, especially when I reread the transcriptions.

<div align="center">**Researcher Positionality**</div>

Overview

  I primarily identify as an educator, have deep experience in mentoring partnerships, and

feel fortunate to have had several different opportunities to mentor. The process of organizing

and writing this dissertation proposal has afforded me time to reflect on the ways in which I have

been a mentor over my career. Most specifically, I realized that as I gained years of teaching

experience, I have become more willing to offer my mentee specific incidents in my career as a

vantage point to look at how things played out for me and what might have happened if I had

done something differently. I present these situations to my mentee not necessarily as examples

of the right or wrong paths to take, but I feel it is necessary for me to share my experiences and

offer opportunities to think about various ways a teacher might approach their practice. Also, I

have increasingly seen my role differently as a I became a mentor with advanced degrees and

participation in professional arenas of teaching. As I learn various educational theories and

classroom practices, I find myself sharing this information that I understand as vital to teacher

development. My experiences have heightened my awareness of the possible fluctuations in

perspectives and conceptualizations when people are navigating the development of their

mentoring practice; my research approach to understanding mentoring will employ these

insights.

Reflexivity

  I knew that I must activate my self-awareness and consider my own positionality as it

impacted all stages of my qualitative research. Qualitative research limits generalizability, and

document review involves a level of subjectivity in reading the forms and the meanings that I drew from them (Johnson, 1997). Fine and Weis (1996) argue that as self-reflexive researchers, we "have a responsibility to talk about our own identities, why we interrogate what we do, on whom we train our scholarly gaze, who is protected and not protected as we do our work" (pp. 263-264). As Peshkin (1988) instructs researchers, I had to "systematically seek out [my] subjectivity while [my] research was actively in progress" (p.17); I needed to be intentional about that reflection. For example, I needed to avoid presenting my research as knowing the subjects, giving them voice; I needed to be mindful of Peshkin's caution, "Untamed subjectivity mutes the emic voice" (p. 21).

Since I have a previous relationship with VA and some of my possible participants, I needed to heighten my awareness of my positionality during this study. I documented my biases and assumptions through analytic memos and a researcher journal as reflexive strategies to reduce the effect of researcher's bias (Bogden & Biklen, 2016; Johnson, 1997). I used these tools to examine my biases and conducts self-evaluations of my personality that might have influenced the research process and outcome (Berger, 2015). I used my researcher journal in an ongoing way throughout the course of this research process and, specifically, after completing each interview. Additionally, before I transcribed each interview, I wrote an analytic memo to reflect on the interview experience and attend to my understanding and interpretation (Maxwell, 2012). Each memo acknowledged what I found to be most significant in the interview and any initial key ideas that I noticed. I reviewed these analytic memos as a way of becoming more aware of my own biases. Through the act of writing these analytic memos, I tried to differentiate my bias from the ideas stated by my participants (Maxwell, 2012).

Ethical Considerations

The process of doing qualitative research evokes many different emotions in both the participants and the researcher (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010). Therefore, throughout all phases of the study, I operated at the highest standards of ethical practice to maintain participants' privacy and a sensitive approach to my research. By completing the Teachers College Institutional Review Board (IRB) application, I considered the potential harm(s) that may have been incurred by my participants. I believed that there were minimal risks associated with being a participant in this study, and those potential risks might have included: discomfort of discussing matters related to their work, disclosure of sensitive information related to their work, and/or boredom during the interviews. Therefore, I concluded that the overall risk to participants was extremely low. I accepted the responsibility of ensuring that all participants are protected from potential harm that may result from their participation in this study (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). In order to decrease any potential or unintended risks to participants, I adhered to all procedures outlined by the IRB, including: informing participants of the study's purpose, giving as Informed Consent Form to sign (Appendix B), and reminding them that participation is voluntary. Data generated from the interviews and document analysis are confidential and preserved in a private and secure space designated for these materials in my home. The data was published using pseudonyms for all participants and the mentoring program to preserve their anonymity. I will safeguard the data for two years after the publishing of my dissertation at which point these data will be destroyed.

Issues of Trustworthiness

In quantitative research, validity and reliability are the most frequently used standards to ensure convincing research. Since interpreting qualitative research contains an element of speculation, most indicators of reliability do not fit qualitative research. To establish

trustworthiness of a qualitative study, the design and execution of the study must take validity into account (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Validity of a qualitative study is the way in which the researcher "demonstrates that the inquiry was conducted in a manner that ensures the subject was appropriately identified and described" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 201). As a criterion, validity suggests whether the findings are accurate and credible from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants, and the reader. Validity does not seek to verify conclusions; rather it looks to test the conclusions reached. This testing of conclusions entails a concern with both methodological and interpretive validity and increases the study's credibility (Mason, 1996). Interrogating the methodological validity involves asking how well the logic of the method is matched to the research questions and the kind of explanation that the researcher is attempting to develop. Additionally, the interrogation must consider the interrelationship between the research design components, including: the study's purpose, conceptual framework, research questions, and methods.

I incorporated a variety of strategies to enhance validity, including triangulation, member checks, and clarification of researcher biases (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). As mentioned in the data sources, I collected artifacts of the mentors' practice to triangulate their self-reported data in the interviews. Additionally, in order to help prevent against any misinterpretation of participants' responses, I used member-checking to follow-up with participants during the final interview (Maxwell, 2012). These member checks were at the end of data collection when I shared a draft of my findings with participants to see if they had any concerns. Lastly, as mentioned in the researcher positionality section, I completed analytic memos and wrote in my researcher journal as reflective tools during the data collection and analysis process. Writing these analytic memos reminded me of my biases and assumptions that may have cloud my interpretations of the data.

Limitations of the Study

As with all research, this study contained certain limitations. This study was limited to one uncommon program; while this program met the criteria of a "strong mentoring program" (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a), the challenge was that it works primarily with a special group of teachers who just finished their undergraduate studies. Mentors involved in a different program or working with practicing teachers might have responded to these research questions differently. Yet, by investigating mentor's perspective in this program it allowed me to get in-depth insight on a well-supported group of mentors in a program that I know well. Therefore, I accepted this limitation with the benefit of investigating a robust outlet of mentoring new teachers. Another limitation was that I had a small sample size of participants, which may not be a representative sample of all mentors in the program. I believe having been a member of this community, while not being a current member, allowed me to develop a high level of trust and possibly receive candid responses. However, since I worked with the participants when I was employed by this mentoring program, there was the possibility for participant reactivity. This limitation emerges when interviewees have difficulty adjusting to the researcher taking on the role of interviewer (Maxwell, 2012). Another way that participant reactivity may emerge is if participants try to provide what they perceive as "correct" answers to the interview questions, which would diminish their actual mentoring experiences. In an attempt to decrease the likelihood of participant reactivity, I focused questions specifically on the participants' individual experiences with mentoring. The study's research design of using multiple participants also helped to counter this possibility. Additionally, I reminded participants that participation is voluntary, and there was a clear explanation of informed consent given with the right to withdraw at any time (Appendix B). Also, I reminded participants that all interviews are confidential and findings will

be free of personally identifiable information. I believe that doing so enabled participants to

share what they think without reservation, thereby allowing me to collect the desired information

for this study.

Chapter IV

FINDINGS

Mentoring is a complex and dynamic process and there are few agreements about what might make it most effective. The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the complexities of mentoring, particularly the role that age, experience, and situational factors might play in the mentors' work. This study explored the experiences of six mentors engaged in mentoring new teachers. The main findings come from interviews and documents collected from the participating mentors at the research site. In this chapter, I summarize the key findings of the study by addressing the three research questions: (a) What are the goals and approaches of these six mentors in mentoring new teachers? (b) How do these six mentors carry out that approach? and (c) How are these perspectives impacted by situational factors with the program like working conditions and expectations?

I asked these research questions and found that even though I anticipated experience would matter, I found that my participants all shared similar goals and approaches. In this chapter, I first discuss that regardless of the amount of teaching experience the participants had, they shared similar goals and approaches. In almost all the questions that I asked, for example, all of the mentors said similar things that I coded in a similar way. To answer research question three, I looked at the factors that might have contributed to these findings and I identified three critical elements. The first element is that these participants, even though they had different levels of teaching experience, all had significant experience with this mentoring program either as a mentee or a mentor. The second element was the situational factors of a shared workspace and schedule encourage the mentors to spend time together. The third critical factor was how key elements of the program design and the substantial resources and guidance mentors received also

supported their common responses and collaboration. In this chapter, I first report my findings on the mentors' common goals and approaches, and then explain the programmatic and situational factors that likely contributed to the evidence of these similarities.

Common Goals Among Mentors

Although my participants had significantly different levels of teaching experience, ranging from three to eighteen years, I found that all of these mentors described similar goals and approaches. I explain the mentors' goals by organizing them into two categories: process goals and outcome goals. I define outcome goals as the practices and dispositions the mentors wanted the new teachers to develop. The overarching goal shared by all the mentors was to support the new teachers in growing in their self-efficacy as teachers and reflexive and reflective teaching. In order to reach these "outcome goals," the mentors also shared a set of "process goals." I define process goals the specific processes of how the mentors performed, meaning the qualities and characteristics of the relationships they formed with their mentees. Their process goals were conditions that they hoped to establish with their mentees that they felt would enable them to reach specific outcome goals. Their process goals included: strong communication, a trusting relationship, a team mentality, and mental wellness. They also identified similar outcome goals, which were goals they hoped their mentees would achieve. Their outcome goals included: self-efficacy, and reflective and reflexive teaching. They also took similar approaches to achieving these goals including the ideas they emphasized, the types of feedback, and their focus. Both the process and the outcome goals were geared towards enhancing the performance of the new teachers by continually advancing their teaching skills and developing long-term personal and professional habits that will contribute to this success.

Mentors' Process Goals

Trusting relationship

In our interviews, every one of the participants mentioned four specific process goals: trusting relationship, team mentality, strong communication, and mental wellness and the one that all the mentors mentioned first was to create trusting relationships with their assigned new teachers (see Table 2). Their goal in creating a trusting relationship was to create a connection in which both people in the mentorship felt safe. The common idea behind this goal was that such trust would allow the mentors and new teachers to be more open and honest with each other, which the mentors believed was essential for a healthy and successful partnership. For Ryan, creating a trusting partnership started with learning about their new teachers in relation to their work, "getting a sense of how they felt about teaching, and getting a sense of how they think about teaching." Quinn expressed that a trusted partnership would enable new teachers to feel supported by saying, "[it's where] new teachers [feel] supported and that they had the tools to be successful." This statement also meant that Quinn's goals also included providing their novices the tools and/or to helping the new teachers realize they already had the tools or how to find them. Quinn felt that establishing a trusting relationship helped teachers to feel supported, and, in turn, feeling supported helped to strengthen the trusting relationship. Quinn also noted, "the sign of a true connection is when a new teacher feels comfortable talking about their struggles." Corey explained, "I always have felt that having a trusting relationship is vital to the work of mentoring and it's been a process of trial and error in learning how to build that trust with my mentees." Jessie emphasized the point of letting the new teachers "know that they were not alone on this path of being a new teacher." Jessie believed that by letting someone know that they are not alone in their journey the comfort of a partnership helps to build trust because it shows that the other person is willing to be supportive and understanding. It also demonstrates that the other

person is reliable and can be counted on to provide support and guidance. Taylor elaborated by saying that they believe that new teachers might not know what to do with their mentor, thus they focused on "building relationships." Corey also stated the goal to "make solid connections that will last beyond the time of the formal mentorship." Blake explained the importance of "creating a welcoming and safe space" and "being an empathetic listener that is non-judgmental." The overarching aim of building trusting relationships reflected the mentors' belief that achieving any learning and feelings of support in the mentorship depended on having such a relationship.

Table 2. *Process Goals Highlighted by Each Mentor*

	Years as teacher	Process Goals			
		Trusting relationship	Team mentality	Strong Communication	Mental Wellness
Jessie	3	√	√	√	√
Blake	4	√	√	√	√
Quinn	5	√	√	√	√
Ryan	9	√	√	√	√
Corey	15	√	√	√	√
Taylor	18	√	√	√	

Team mentality

All the mentors also talked in their responses in the interviews about aspects of forming a team mentality between the new teacher and their educator colleagues, where mentors aimed to integrate the new teachers with other teachers (see Table 2). This goal meant that that they all mentioned forming a team amongst the mentors and mentees and not just forming individual relationships, a process goal consistent with one of the stated goals of the VA program. Taylor and Corey talked about how they created a team dynamic with their new teachers by encouraging them to learn from the other teachers and mentors in the program. When asked what kinds of experiences foster learning in new teachers, Corey said that they tell them "Surround yourself

with good people." Corey encouraged their new teachers to have a unique path that was not just informed by their assigned mentor, and explained when they met with their new teachers in the mentoring office, they often pulled other mentors into the conversation. Taylor described bringing in another mentor or two into a meeting with their new teacher to think though a situation or get another perspective. Blake, Quinn, and Ryan each remembered when they were new teachers in the program that their mentors brought other mentors into their conversations to get another perspective, and so they did the same when they became mentors in the program. Jessie explained that they brought two or three of their new teachers together to talk through their lessons because Jessie thought it would be helpful for them all to bring their heads together. Jessie was demonstrating their advice of "Create a community for yourself." These instances of creating a team illustrate all the mentors' actions of bringing people together in efforts to rally behind one of the goals of the VA program.

Strong communication

Strong communication was also a process goal used by each mentor to support the growth of the relationship with their new teacher (See Table 2). Strong communication in their mentorships meant that the mentors aimed to actively listen to their mentees, show empathy and respect during their conversations, and remain attentive to corresponding with their mentees. When asked how they see themselves contributing to the learning of new teachers, Taylor said "regular outreach to establish the communication flow"; Corey said "have communication that is open and honest." Quinn also echoed this idea of openness by saying, "I wanted the conversations to be open and for the teacher to feel like they could talk to me about how they were thinking and feeling about teaching." Blake described that the conversations showed the new teachers' thinking and feeling, by talking through their classes like case studies and

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troubleshooting wherever necessary. Ryan brought in an interesting point about pacing the conversations with their new teachers, explaining "It's necessary to allow time to layer all this thinking together instead of talking about [the areas where the new teacher wanted to focus on growth] right before we send off a teacher to 'go teach'." Jessie explained that good communication was necessary in the mentorship and elsewhere in the new teachers' interactions, suggesting the importance of "talking with other teachers. And, also, talking with your students and getting to know them." It was evident that the mentors believed that strong communication would encourage a healthy partnership and stimulate thinking within the mentorship.

Mental wellness

All of the mentors except Taylor also mentioned supporting their mentees mental wellness as another process goal. This goal meant that that mentors led their mentees to seek opportunities to practice healthy habits that would, in turn, lead to positive mental health outcomes (see Table 2). Ryan connected the practice of teaching to this objective by explaining that "the emotional component of teaching is so huge so that when things don't go as expected you can react in a more prepared way." Jessie talked about optimizing the emotions of new teachers,

> I think they are going to be open to support if they are at ease, like if they are comfortable. I think they're in the right frame of mind to be okay with the emotions that are involved in being a teacher. And I feel like I can contribute to their learning by helping to reduce stress that teachers might feel. And that's why I always try to weave into the conversations talk about what brings them joy, and makes them happy as a teacher. And maybe sometimes trying to have them feel at ease means giving them reassurance that it was okay however they were feeling and that we're going to work together to help them feel their best.

Quinn and Blake echoed these sentiments about "feeling their best" as they remembered how their mentors were always checking in on them when they were new teachers at VA, and so they felt it was important to do the same when they became mentors at VA. Quinn said "My mentor

would send a quick email or text just to ask how I was doing, and it felt good to know that they

cared about me as a person, not just a teacher. So, I did the same for my new teachers." Corey

explained their reasoning behind having a check in with their new teachers at the start of their

meetings,

> Asking them about how they're doing builds rapport through showing that I care about them as a person, not just as a teacher. I'm also trying to get a sense of how they're doing without being intrusive.

This point of considering mental wellness with their new teachers helped the mentors address the

stress, anxiety and overwhelmed feelings that new teachers may encounter.

Mentors' Outcome Goals

Self-efficacy

All the participants described having goals for the development of their new teachers that

were not directly related to instruction or student learning but focused on the new teacher's self-

efficacy (see Table 3). With this goal in mind, the mentors aimed to work toward bolstering the

mentees belief in themselves about using their abilities to work toward developing their practice

as an educator. The mentors mentioned a number of valuable outcomes related to self-efficacy,

including encouraging mentees to develop a growth mindset, self-awareness, and confidence, all

of which they felt would help mentees to persevere through challenging situations. One of the

central tenets of the mentors' focus to support the new teachers' development was their universal

urging for the new teachers to adopt a growth mindset. During their orientation before the

summer program started, the mentor team read excerpts from Carole Dweck's book, *Growth

Mindset*. The reading had spurred on many lively discussions about what reminders could easily

be put into place to encourage such an outlook on personal development. Each of the participants

mentioned these discussions and referred to the team's universal decision to add "yet" to any

negative statements about their teaching that their new teachers shared with them. Quinn gave an example when helping a new teacher with technology, "The new teacher was really frustrated and kept saying 'Ugh! This doesn't work!' and I gently reminded them 'Yet, it doesn't work yet. We will get there!'" Specifically, Taylor and Corey explained how they made "…yet" badges to add to the lanyards to the mentor team and those of their new teachers. These lanyards were worn daily by all members of the VA program, and thus the "…yet" badges were a visual reminder of the push to adopt a growth mindset.

Table 3. *Outcome Goals Highlighted by Each Mentors*

	Years as teacher	Outcome goals	
		Self-efficacy	Reflective and Reflexive teaching
Jessie	3	√	√
Blake	4	√	√
Quinn	5	√	√
Ryan	9	√	√
Corey	15	√	√
Taylor	18	√	√

Within talking about building self-efficacy with their new teachers, some of the mentors talked about building self-awareness during their conversations with their new teachers, specifically how to maintain and/or develop positive self-perception. Taylor also gave an insight relative to personal growth that they learned over their time mentoring in the VA program,

> I learned you have to let new teachers be successful at their own pace. I learned this concept early on when there was a teacher who I thought was not going to make it past the first week and then by the third or fourth week they were actually doing pretty well and then they were pretty much the star by the end of the summer.

Jessie and Blake talked about how they aimed to have their new teachers keep an open mind about their early career position, and to have a growth mindset about the continual learning and developing of teachers at any stage of their career. Quinn, Ryan, Taylor, and Corey talked about how they would encourage their new teachers to consider how they want to grow themselves so

that they would feel successful as a person, not just as a teacher. Quinn and Ryan said that when they were new teachers at VA, their mentors asked them what they wanted to learn for themselves as if to put them in the position of being a student, and so they in turn asked their new teachers the same. All the mentors described giving some sort of career advice to their new teachers because they wanted to know about their pathways to becoming educators. Corey, Taylor, and Blake talked specifically about graduate work questions that their new teachers asked them and how there were conversations about strategies for pursuing that type of personal development.

All the mentors talked about helping their new teachers boost their confidence, though their conceptions varied from targeting new teachers' attitudes to providing reassurance through positive reinforcement (see Table 3). Taylor explained, "New teachers are at the center of this process of positive self-perception. The role of the mentor is to help the new teacher trust in themselves that they can be successful." Corey, Blake, and Quinn also discussed helping their new teachers find confidence and patience with themselves. Corey explained,

> New teachers need to build confidence, not just teaching skills. Sometimes you have to do some morale building when they are unsure about themselves and their abilities. You have to pump them up, especially if they're not feeling great about how something went, then you have to help them rally and let them know they'll do better next time.

Quinn noted how their new teachers had a more positive self-perception when they felt like they were successful in the classroom, which they noticed partially came from when the new teachers felt in control in the classroom. Quinn also noted that their new teachers were anxious when they were not in control and that impacted the teachers' self-perception. This idea about emotion and classroom management came out in how Ryan explained that "New teachers need to know that they don't have to be a really rigid and overly strict to have good classroom management." Jessie explained that when they were a new teacher at VA, their mentor emphasized confidence

because it would help them feel empowered to try new things in the classroom or tackle difficult situations that arose. Jessie believed from their experience as a new teacher that it was smart for the mentor to help the new teacher build their confidence, and so they did similarly when they became a mentor. These examples indicate that the mentors believed positive self-worth, satisfaction, and lower anxiety contribute to an overall favorable outlook and perspective. The mentors seemed to link healthy self-esteem with having confidence that would enable the new teachers to do their best.

The mentors valued supporting the self-efficacy of their new teachers because it could help them to become more successful, confident, and fulfilled in beginning teaching experiences. They felt it could also help them to develop new skills, gain knowledge, and become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, a focus on self-efficacy could help to improve relationships, increase self-esteem, and create a more positive outlook on their work as educators.

Reflective and reflexive teaching

All the mentors had an outcome goal of helping their mentees progress in becoming reflective about their practices and reflexive in their teaching (see Table 3). From their orientation mentor team meetings reviewing the program documents Good Teaching at VA (Appendix I) and TEACH standards (Appendix J), the mentors had a universal understanding that reflective teaching involves a teacher reflecting on their practices and its impact on their students, as in looking for evidence of effectiveness, and being reflexive in their teaching by making adjustments in order to better meet the needs of their students. All the mentors explained that they used their individual meetings with their new teachers to reflect on their teaching and find ways to be reflexive. For example, mentors would ask new teachers to reflect on how the

class went, what did or did not work, and what improvements could be made to improve student

outcomes. Each of the mentors described using discussion with their new teachers to think about

if students had success or difficulty with particular lessons or activities, then they problem solved

around any issues and identified modifications that could be used in similar lessons in the future.

Taylor described the process of initiating meetings after an observation to gauge the awareness

of the new teacher by guiding them through reflection,

> After our initial check in about how they are doing, I'll ask them about the class I visited or a specific activity I observed. I'll ask them 'So, how do you think that went?' That way I'd get a sense of their self-perception and where they were entering this process of reflection.

Taylor also gave a specific example of building awareness by helping their new teachers create

both short- and long-term objectives for their students. Often times the mentors used reflection

on their personal experiences to provide lessons from their past as well as helping encourage the

possible benefits of taking on a meta-cognitive contemplation about their practice as educators.

Quinn illustrates this contemplation by saying,

> I'd relate what I observed to my own experience as a teacher, and if possible, offer up any specific advice that I received or maybe if the situation didn't align exactly with a personal experience, then I would think about the more general advice that I'd accumulated over my years teaching and then try to translate that into feedback to give. And also, if it came full circle, I'd reinforce that I saw them reflecting if when I was in their class another time, I could see what we talked about in a feedback session had translated into a change in the classroom.

Ryan gave specific objectives for building a new teacher's awareness,
> We work together thinking about what are the objectives that they're trying to accomplish in this class and in the long term; thinking about what they want the students to be able to do with this knowledge; thinking about how they will know whether or not these students can do these things that they want them to be able to do with the knowledge.

Ryan explained how they worked toward these objectives,
> I would allow new teachers the time and space to think, and practice, and ask questions so that I could help them walk through their thinking. And if need be, then I would ask probing questions to get them to see the necessary overlaps in thinking about the lesson,

the students, and the objectives. I tried to push the teacher to remember any relevant conversations we had had and to circle back to the practicing or rehearsing that we did, so that they could reflect on what we talked about, what happened, and how they wanted to proceed in the future.

Blake noted how they shared about their own journaling for reflection to their new teachers, and encouraged it as a practice to try. They shared prompts they would suggest like: "What's something that I can improve on?"; "What was the strategy that I used? And what was the effect?" Jessie said that they shared with their new teachers about how they would ask students for feedback to gauge how the class was. Jessie offered some suggested methods to their new teachers, like giving an anonymous survey or talking with students during lunch or another down time in the program. These actions show how the mentors embraced reflection and reflexive thinking and encouraged the new teachers to take a step back, consider their thoughts, feelings, actions within the context of the classroom.

Mentors also encouraged the new teachers to reflect on the pedagogical skills that they used for the delivery of their lessons. Corey connected the nature of being reflective with what happens in the classroom, saying,

> I try to help new teachers think through situations that have happened in their classes so that when they are in the moment and something does not go the way they thought it would, then they can pivot and move on. So, this means talking about and helping them understand what are bad mistakes and what are happy mistakes, which are times when things don't go as planned but there is still good stuff that happened and good learning that came about for it for the students and/or themselves as the teacher.

Quinn noted that they wanted to ensure that their assigned new teachers did not get caught in routines of how they were taught when they were students, and thus it was important to take cues from the students in the room with them. Ryan noticed that there has been a shift now from the way mentees were before that they have been seeing where new teachers are more prone to dynamic constructivist teaching because that is what they had been exposed to as students

themselves. Ryan also talked about helping new teachers reflect on how their students might view their experience in the classroom, encouraging them to consider their teaching as if "they're crafting an experience with their students. They need to see teaching each class or a string of lessons as almost like storytelling with a beginning, middle, and an end that has a central theme." I understand Ryan's comment to mean that crafting an experience entailed the teacher creating a learning environment that was tailored to the students' needs and interests, include activities that are designed to engage the students and help them learn in a meaningful way. Ryan felt that being reflective about this crafting of an experience would help teachers. The mentors valued the idea of considering the overall design of their new teachers' lessons to maximize learner engagement and effectiveness of the lesson.

Common Approaches Among Mentors

While exploring the approaches of my participants, I found that they, regardless of years of teaching experience, described many commonalities in their ideas, feedback, and focus. I define the mentors' approaches as their modes of interacting and engaging with the new teachers through verbal or non-verbal communication. Initially, I expected mentors with less teaching experience to focus on helping new teachers solve their immediate problems and those with more experience to help new teachers discover student thinking, and develop sound teaching practices. The similar approaches of my participants included comparable ideas that they emphasized, feedback that they gave, and what they focused on. The ideas to their approaches incorporated bi-directional learning, teacher-directed support, and a safe space. Their feedback encompassed non-evaluative commentary from observation and hands-on practice together. The mentors used approaches that focused on close contact and individualized professional development. The mentors valued providing ongoing support and guidance to their new teachers, helping them stay

on track with their goals, and providing encouragement and motivation. Additionally, the

mentors wanted to ensure that the new teachers were making progress and had the ability to

provide feedback and advice continuously. These methods helped build a strong relationship

between the two in order to benefit both parties.

Mentors' Approaches: Ideas Emphasized

Bi-directional learning

Four out of the six mentors expressed a goal of positioning themselves to learn in this

process of mentorship, meaning that being engaged in mentorship would deepen their educator

knowledge (see Table 4). Taylor described their feeling that mentoring is bi-directional, meaning

that there is learning for both the mentor and new teacher. Taylor said,

> I don't want to come off as the 'know it all' expert in the situation, even though I have
> sometimes many more years of experience than the people that I'm working with. I work
> to flatten the hierarchy by reiterating that I am learning from my mentees.

So that led Taylor to create a sense of give and take in creating the foundation of the teamwork

in mentorship, with the feeling that every new teacher has plenty to offer, as much as the mentor

themselves might have to offer because of their experiences as educators. Taylor cited this

learner mentality as a reason for continuing to do this work, because in mentoring they are

"excited to help others, get to know other teachers, learn from them." Ryan echoed their

commitment to mentoring because of the learning aspect, saying

> I kept with it for 5 years because I knew after that first summer that my teaching
> improved from watching others teach. Also, the act of critically breaking down for a very
> real purpose what happened in a classroom relative to specific teaching objectives with
> the new teachers helped me see my own practice in a new way.

Jessie explained,

> When I was mentoring, my excitement for teaching grew and my appreciation for my
> mentees grew because I've started to see how there are so many approaches to this work
> and it is an ever-changing process because when you're dealing with human relationships

there are so many variables that it can never be formulaic and so I think my mind has become even more engaged to learn more and grow to be adaptable so that my practice as a teacher can be ever changing. I'd say that I've also adopted this mentality that I don't ever want my work to be static. The work of being a teacher is dynamic.

Blake said,

I love helping new teachers because it helps me think more about my practice. It forces the reflection that's so important. And I love learning from them. It's just interesting to learn why they make decisions or what ideas they're bringing to the table. And it's really interesting to consider those things.

From these descriptions, the four mentors that mentioned bidirectionality were positioning themselves to learn from the new teachers because they believed in finding opportunities for personal development. It seemed important for these mentors to consider themselves learners. Their talk about having a stance as learners in the mentoring relationship exuded a motivation and inspiration that comes from learning and growing as educators. As learners, the mentors gained new perspectives and affirmed a sense of community and collaboration with their fellow educators, which seemed to be central to the core beliefs and practices of the participants.

Table 4. *Mentors' Approaches: Ideas Emphasized*

	Years as teacher	Bi-directional learning	New Teacher directed support	Safe space
Jessie	3	√	√	√
Blake	4	√	√	√
Quinn	5		√	√
Ryan	9	√	√	√
Corey	15		√	√
Taylor	18	√	√	√

New teacher directed support

Since the mentors were hired by VA as their full-time summer job, their new teachers were the primary focus of their time and energy during their work (see Table 4). The mentors divided much of their time between being in contact and observing their new teachers, preparing

for meetings with their new teacher, and following up after those meetings. All six mentors shared that there was always an intentional plan to their meetings with their new teachers and they always allowed time to catch up informally at the beginning of a meeting to make everyone feel more comfortable.

Most of the meetings centered on the new teacher's classes, though some meetings were scheduled just to connect and see how they were doing. Jessie explained that there were a few instances when they met with their new teachers for coffee the morning before classes if previous day that had been particularly stressful. Jessie said, "I just wanted to offer a quick touch point before classes started to connect and see if they felt good going into the day." Corey offered their new teachers "lunch meetings with no agenda so that there was time just to talk, check in, or even just to make sure they felt that they had someone to sit with in the cafeteria." These opportunities for rapport building helped create a positive and supportive work environment while encouraging communication and improved morale.

In the ways that the mentors described their meetings with their new teachers, they explained that the agenda of the meetings were flexible to incorporate the new teacher's needs. Ryan said that they approached meetings this way because their mentor had done that for them when they were a new teacher at VA, and they really appreciated that flexibility. Jessie explained that they would make sure to ask the new teacher if there was anything that they wanted to discuss during their next meeting as they wrapped up the current meeting. Quinn emphasized the new teacher's role in these meetings,

> My goal for each meeting was to help the new teacher understand that they were central to the process of feeling successful. We'd identify the areas for where they wanted growth, then we'd talking through strategies to try and make that growth happen. The we'd discuss afterwards in our next meeting how progress was going, seeing if there needed to be readjustments or if the desired results had been reached.

Blake echoed this sentiment of centering the new teacher in these meetings, saying,

> In order to be a successful mentor, you need to be flexible and able to adapt to the needs of the new teacher, and not having a formulaic mentality like, 'Well, I have to say these things in order for me to be a good mentor to you.'

Taylor expressed a similar sentiment about not being formulaic in the way they see themselves contributing to the new teachers' learning,

> I would try to guide the conversations with my new teachers so that they have open and divergent thinking because I think that this lets the new teacher arrive at the solution or point through their own questioning and thinking. I would prompt with questions and brainstorm together with them.

Taylor went on to describe an instance when talking with a new teacher about what to do for a lesson for Romeo and Juliet. The new teacher decided to give streamers to all the students and have them act out and pretend to have a sword fight as the Montagues versus the Capulets with the streamers. Taylor explained that they felt that the new teacher got a sense of what it meant to ignite the imagination a little bit with their students and engage in new ways. Corey talked about "honing in on the natural instincts" of the new teacher as they had their meetings and discussed their classes. When I asked them to talk more about what they meant, Corey said,

> One thing that stands out about every summer, is that there's one or two instructors that I have that just come in with, like, absolute natural talent and are like shining stars. It makes think a lot in terms of how we think about teachers, whether they are born or made. In terms of like, a lot of folks can be coached into being really good teachers and other folks are just natural, they're just fantastic. I'm like, you were fantastic when you just walk into the room. And, you know, with our work I probably shouldn't be thinking like, 'Oh, well, you know some people are just born for this'. But some people just kinda are. So that's been interesting to me, to see the folks that kind of stand out right away. But I think the other big thing that I noticed is just sort of what I tell a lot of my instructors is that if you have the right instincts, then the rest can be coached.

Corey felt that if they could learn about the natural instincts of the teacher then they would be better positioned to help support the new teacher. Overall, the mentors viewed themselves as thinking partners that urged the new teachers to be the ones directing their conversations and/or

that they were meeting the teachers where they were at in terms of strengths and areas for growth.

Safe space

Additionally, undergirding all this communication was the process of delivering, receiving, and sharing information in ways that allowed a safe space for the participants to connect (see Table 4). The creation of a safe space is a corollary to the mentors' process goal of developing trusting relationships. Blake, Corey, Jessie, Ryan and Taylor all said that they would make it a point to ask the new teacher if they were comfortable meeting in the mentors' office before their one-on-one meetings. Quinn and Jessie explained a way of creating a safe space as trying to put their new teachers at ease to help them get in the right frame of mind for open conversation. They emphasized that their techniques aimed to help their new teachers understand their mentor as a person of support. The mentors shared that they occasionally had to give reassurance, explaining to their new teachers that it is okay however they are feeling; this empathizing sometimes acknowledged the possible stress(es) of teaching. These encouraging approaches of the mentors during the meetings was to help their new teachers feel their best about themselves and their practices as educators.

Mentors' Approaches: Types of Feedback

Non-evaluative observation

The main way in which the mentors developed their mentorships was through weekly meetings with their new teachers that were informed by their observations of the new teachers (see Table 5). All the mentors described part of their meetings with the new teachers as having a cycle of checking in, debriefing a lesson, asking the teacher how they felt it went, and how they want to proceed moving forward. This cycle was not required, but a process that the mentors

came to in their own ways. The mentors used this process to insert discussion about goals when reflecting, as in helping the new teacher see opportunities for incremental areas of growth. Blake gave insight about what they have learned over their time at VA,

> I always have the new teacher start by prompting them, 'Tell me something you did well,' because most of the instructors at VA are all really high performers or want to do really well. And so sometimes they would like dwell on the negative or they'd just be like, 'Yeah, I'm fine. Like, I'm good at everything.' So, I found it helpful to have an entry point into our conversation that was specific and positive.

Quinn explained the process of reflection as being connected to evaluation in the way that they both involve assessing a situation or experience. Both processes involve looking at the experience or situation from different perspectives and considering its implications. Quinn explained,

> I would ask questions to help the new teacher self-evaluate how the class is going. I would also ask them if anything that they wanted to focus on in the meeting, perhaps any issue that they were having, and sometimes that would be a nice segue into my observation, and if I noticed it, too. But sometimes there were things that I hadn't noticed either because they missed my attention, or things that happened when I wasn't in the classroom, so I wasn't aware of it. And if that was the case, we would focus on their issues first, because I always want to make sure they feel what was concerning them was my top priority.

Another way that the mentors described the work towards ensuring a new teachers' growth was to layer elements of previous conversations back into their current conversations, so that they did not just talk about a concept of a goal once and then let it fall off their radar. Taylor, Corey, and Jessie noted that they would review their notes from previous conversations with a specific teacher to refresh their memory for points to revisit with their new teachers. Ryan explained their process saying,

> If it was possible during our meetings, I'd push the teacher to remember any relevant previous conversations, so that we could circle back to their practicing and rehearing to we could reflect on what we had talked about and what happened in their class and how they want to proceed for the future.

The mentors used non-evaluative feedback that was informed by their observations, using evidence to point out the ways the new teachers were successful and to reinforce accomplishments or to rethink where they were struggling.

Table 5. *Mentors' Approaches: Types of Feedback*

	Years as teacher	Non-evaluative observation	Practice as feedback
Jessie	3	√	√
Blake	4	√	√
Quinn	5	√	√
Ryan	9	√	√
Corey	15	√	√
Taylor	18	√	√

Feedback in action

Mentors used hands-on ways to practice with their new teachers, allowing feedback to be given as they demonstrated teaching moves, rehearsed lessons, and/or role-played an activity (see Table 5). These types of meetings between the mentor and the new teacher were arranged in response to what the mentors saw in practice. Additionally, these sessions were a way the new teachers could prepare for a lesson before teaching it, as ways of previewing and familiarizing themselves with their plans for delivery and content. These strategies allowed both the mentors and the new teachers to anticipate any potential issues that may arise during the lesson and plan accordingly. Additionally, it allowed them to practice the delivery of the material and ensure that they were able to explain the concepts in a clear and concise manner. The mentors also provided resources and materials that could be used to further develop techniques. Some mentors demonstrated teaching techniques while their new teachers were rehearsing their lessons so the strategies could be observed and there would be a better understanding of how to use it. Ryan described how they modeled teaching strategies for their new teachers to explain the technique

and provide examples of how it can be used in different contexts. Ryan prioritized "rehearsing

time with new teachers because this kind of learning by doing process leads to growth." Ryan

also described that rehearsing was important because

> It can get really, really hard as a teacher to visualize something different than what you're used to. In general, it's important allowing new teachers time and space to think, and practice, and ask questions, helping walk through it with them and getting them to think, asking probing questions to get them to see the necessary overlaps in their thinking about the lesson, what the students are doing, and the objectives they're trying to accomplish.

Quinn also echoed this sentiment of how practicing something new for a lesson is helpful

because "new teachers might be embarrassed or nervous, but if they practice then they could

work up the courage to do it." Quinn also said that they would note specific things to practice

during observations, "I'd look for sort of indicators that made me think, 'Oh, there's something

that we might want to address.' Or maybe 'I can help run through that for next time'." Blake

talked about giving their new teachers specific strategies during these practice sessions,

> I was really passionate about was giving my new teachers tangible things to use with their classes because a lot of them were not in a place where they were comfortable enough as educators to just wing-it with a new task or activity. Like, maybe they felt really confident bonding with the students, but they didn't feel comfortable giving instructions. And sometimes when you're super stressed and exhausted, you need the tangible strategy. But you also need to know why that strategy works and how that strategy works is important too. So having those tangibles when you're stressed out is helpful.

The mentors role-played lessons with their new teachers by each taking turns playing the role of

the student and the teacher. By assuming and acting out these roles, they were able to explore a

particular lesson or activity, which in turn helped them better understand the lesson plan and its

implementation in the classroom. Taylor said,

> Role playing with my mentees gave us a change to encounter those wow factor moments that could be inserted into a lesson. They'd get a realization of those moments of discovery and a sense of what it meant to ignite the imagination of their students a little bit. They got a sense of what it meant to engage in new ways with their class. And I think modeling how to do that is crucial.

Mentors also prepared with their new teachers by going step-by-step through a lesson plan as if to walkthrough all the motions of the class in order to practice and also familiarize themselves with the material. Corey explained that they would ask the new teacher to pause as they were walking through a lesson in order to consider what questions students might ask and how to respond to them. Jessie noted that they would always be sure to ask their new teacher to walk through a lesson if it involved multiple materials, like a science lab activity, to ensure proper preparation and knowledge of how to handle all the materials. The mentors engaged the new teachers in these practice sessions to ensure that they were prepared to deliver their lessons effectively and that the activities were engaging and meaningful for the students. The mentors provided feedback and suggestions on how techniques could be improved. These practice sessions provided opportunities to identify any potential issues with the lesson plan or materials; allowed the teachers to become familiar with the content and practice the timing and pacing of their delivery; and identified any areas that needed further explanation or clarification. While the mentors viewed themselves as thought partners, urging the new teachers to drive their conversations, they also recognized the utility of having practice sessions where opportunities for growth could be uncovered.

Mentors' Approaches: Focus

Close contact

The mentors' goal of creating a relationship was carried out with communicative approaches (see Table 6). At the core of this communication was the fact that all the mentors shared their mobile numbers with their new teachers, even though they were not required, in addition to using their program issued email addresses, thus there were multiple avenues for

communication. Another key component to making this communication possible was the fact that the mentors and new teachers had to have weekly meetings; these conversations were the backbone to their mentoring approach. Taylor described their communication when meeting with new teachers by saying, "I aim to have three overarching objectives when communicating: ask questions, find ways to validate responses, and offer services, like giving resources." Overall, the mentors described their time talking with their new teachers as opportunities for: questions, discussion, hypothesizing, brainstorming, reflecting, and circling back to previous conversations.

Mentors gave examples of how they probed with questions to discover their new teacher's thinking and feeling, and then using those pieces of information to have discussions that aimed to bring awareness and development in the new teacher's work. Corey explained some typical questions when having a planning session with a new teacher, "What would it look like if you used the other supplementary materials for the textbook you're using?" and "I'm curious to know the advantages and challenges with incorporating the supplementary materials into your lessons." Blake gave an example for when listening to a new teacher address student need, "I wonder if that will help that student who struggles to keep focused in class?" and "Do you think that will work for all the students?" Ryan gave an example after a new teacher felt deflated by how a lesson went, when they would say something like, "It's sounds like you are unsatisfied with how that activity went. What would you do differently next time?" Jessie talked specifically about using questions to learn about their new teachers' previous experiences to gauge comfortability with the lessons that they were going to be teaching. These examples show that the mentors felt that probing with questions was a way to gain a better understanding of the new teachers' thoughts and feelings. These conversations could also help to uncover any underlying issues or concerns that new teachers' may have had. All in all, the mentors relied on

their communication with their new teachers to build a trusting and strong mentoring relationship.

Table 6. *Mentors' Approaches: Focus*

	Years as teacher	Close contact	Individualized Professional Development
Jessie	3	√	√
Blake	4	√	√
Quinn	5	√	√
Ryan	9	√	√
Corey	15	√	√
Taylor	18	√	√

Individualize professional development

All the mentors provided individualized professional development to the new teachers by offering personalized advice and guidance (see Table 6). Giving individualized advice requires taking the time to get to know the person you are giving advice to, and all the mentors described striving to get to know their new teachers by making efforts to understand their individual needs, goals, and values. The mentors also talked about being open to feedback from their new teachers and willing to adjust the advice as needed.

During meetings with their new teachers, the mentors identified areas where the new teachers identified their strengths and weaknesses, and together they developed strategies to improve their teaching skills. Based on what the mentors discussed, the targeted areas for skill development fell into the general categories at the heart of pedagogy, including: student engagement, classroom management, and the ability to make relevant connections between the content and their students. All the mentors believed that growth in these areas were crucial to the development of the new teachers' teaching knowledge. Additionally, there were instances where the mentors had to provide advice that went beyond the main areas of pedagogy. Taylor talked

about having to coach a new teacher on ways to remember the pronouns used by students who were non-binary. Corey and Quinn cited examples of spending extra meetings with their new teachers to practice using the technology available in the classroom. Blake described times when they had to coach a new teacher on what to do when a student said that they felt depressed. By working together, the mentors and new teachers created plans to help the new teachers feel prepared in their teaching roles.

During the stages of the classroom observation and individual meetings, the mentors seemed to provide the most detailed feedback, which they adapted to the needs of their mentees or their special circumstances. The mentors spent time utilizing strategies like practicing lessons, modeling, and providing feedback. Ryan recounted using the teacher movement chart (Appendix K) to show new teachers the limitations or expansiveness of the ways they moved around the classroom. Jessie explained how scheduling a walk-thru lesson with each of their new teachers every other week ensured that the new teachers felt prepared and comfortable trying out any new strategies that they discussed. They personalized their advice and suggestions depending on the situations and issues the new teachers were facing in their individual classes. All the mentors used books, articles, and websites, and, more specifically, a couple of mentors mentioned referencing conferences and workshops that they attended when they found that those resources aligned with the teachers' needs. Quinn cited times when they went to the campus library with their new teachers to put together portable book shelves of materials that could be kept in the classroom during a project activity. Corey referred to a time they spent extra time going over various websites and YouTube videos because their new teachers wanted to use debate-like activities in their classroom. Overall, the mentors' interactions with the new teachers at these

specific moments sharpened their focus, and grew their understanding of how to enhance the skills that their new teachers needed to develop the most.

In addition to these commonalities there were also some times when the mentors explicitly worked together to develop a common approach. And one that several of them referred to was where they developed a feedback approach in which they all engage with mentees around these badges. The way the mentor team came together to design a tangible use of the TEACH standards (Appendix J) illustrated how these comprehensive supports for socialization and collaboration bolstered the mentors. The team created a recognition system for their new teachers, by making badges that symbolized the standards. This badge system was a part of the culture of the program. All of the mentors and new teachers wore lanyards around their neck which held their identification card as well as keys. The lanyard also was a place where people could display badges. These badges were used to decorate an individual's lanyard and their meanings ranged from a gift made by one of their students to an acknowledgement of an accomplishment. The team of mentors created a system where they gave badges to their new teachers for acknowledging their achievements in teaching. There were five differently decorated badges and each one symbolized a TEACH standard: think, engage, anticipate, connect, and high expectations. These badges were the result of several conversations the mentors had when they were brainstorming ways of acknowledging the achievements of their new teachers at the same time as making the TEACH standards visible and more tangible to their new teachers. The actual making of the badges also became a fun activity for the mentors to join in together when they were in the office. And then when they had their meetings all together, mentors would share when they gave a badge to one of their new teachers, explaining both the standard the new teacher had met and what they did to earn this recognition. Overall, making these badges allowed

for the mentors work together and create objects that helped connect the mentors and their shared goals.

Contextual Elements that Supported Common Approaches

The mentors I interviewed demonstrated these similar goals and approaches despite significant differences in their years of teaching experiences and the participants responses also revealed a number of factors related to the setup of the program that may have contributed to their commonalities. Contextual elements explain both the situational and programmatic factors of the participants' circumstances for their work with the VA program. I define situational factors as the environment and the particular participants of my study. I define programmatic factors as the elements that were created by the program. The first critical element to these commonalities might have been that even though my participants reflected different levels of teaching experience, they all had significant experience with this program. The level of experience of participants with the program might be a situational and a programmatic factor since the program specifically recruited and encouraged mentees or previous mentors to apply. The second critical element was that the participants spoke extensively about how aspects of space and time created a foundation for joint work. The shared workspace and schedule with ample time for group conversations along with formalized training and other aspects reinforced similarities by encouraging mentors to work together. The third critical element were the programmatic aspects of the mentor team and program resources.

Situational Factors

Experience with VA program

All of my sample of participants had either been new teachers in the program for two summers or had spent several summers as a mentor in the program (see Table 7). My participants

accounted for 6 of 10 members of this specific mentor team from which I recruited. Blake, Jessie, Quinn, and Ryan were all new teachers in the VA program before they became full-time classroom teachers at a public or private school. It was during their summers as classroom teachers that they returned to work as mentors at VA. In fact, Blake returned to be a mentor because of their summers as a new teacher at VA. Blake explained,

> I knew that it was a place where I would grow as a teacher just being with a group of amazing people, and experienced educators. And I really wanted to be there for new teachers to support them. I knew how awesome some of the mentors were and knew that they were coming back so I wanted to work with them. And I was really excited to learn with mentors that I knew were really knowledgeable and approachable.

At the time of our interviews, Blake and Jessie were VA mentors for one summer after both being new teachers in the program for two summers. Blake was working on year four as a classroom teacher, and Jessie was working on year three. Quinn also taught two summers at VA and then became a mentor; they taught five years as a classroom teacher before taking a summer to work as a mentor for VA. Ryan has taught for nine years and was a mentor with VA for five summers after being a new teacher in the program for two summers. They stayed with it for five summers because of the impact it had on their teaching and mentoring. My other two participants, Taylor and Corey, who have the most teaching experience of the participants, never taught as a new teacher at VA though they spent several summers as mentors in the program. Taylor has over 15 years teaching experience and was a mentor for eight summers with VA. Likewise, Corey has been teaching for 15 years and was a mentor for four summers of the program. Of the four mentors from this team that did not participate in this study, two mentors were in their first year working with the program, while one had been a mentor in the program for two years, and the other had been a new teacher in the program for two years and a mentor

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for four years. Overall, this mentor team was composed of people who were very familiar with the VA program, and my sample was reflective of this fact.

Table 7. *Mentors' Years of Experience*

	Summers at VA as new teacher	Summers as VA mentor	Total summers at VA	Years as Teacher
Jessie	2	1	3	3
Blake	2	1	3	4
Quinn	2	1	3	5
Ryan	2	5	7	9
Corey	Ø	4	4	15
Taylor	Ø	8	8	18

Space and time

Mentors spent a significant amount of time outside the office working individually with their mentees, doing observations, etc.; nonetheless, the shared office space and the schedule also allowed for considerable time for them to meet together formally and informally. The VA mentoring office was the physical place that where the mentors' spent extended periods of time together. Several participants talked about how the office was conducive to collaboration. The physical layout created facilitated sharing, collaboration, and discouraged independent private work. The office was an open room that had a desk for each mentor, as well as an attached separate room where the two directors of the group had their desks. The desks were groups in trios that faced each other. This room also had a corner kitchen and an entrance area that had some shelving units. The office space allowed for walking between desks, though there was not much room since because mentors often had a folding chair open next to their desk for when they met with a new teacher. Each mentor did acknowledge that they sometimes did not want to meet with their new teachers within the mentoring office to allow for privacy. However, some decided that finding another space was difficult because there were limited locations on the

campus and it took time to find another meeting spot so they just met with their new teachers in the mentors' office. Quinn explained,

> It would have been nice if maybe we had more privacy or not had to sit around all these people, as we were talking about an issue or how things were going with their classes. I guess we could have had a walking meeting, or I could have found a random room, but that would have also been more time on me to find a location and communicate that; it was easier to have my new teachers come to our office.

Overall, this space and its arrangement allowed mentors to observe and overhear how their colleagues worked with their teachers.

Mentors talked about how the communal office offered multiple touch points with their mentoring colleagues throughout the days of the program and collective responsibility for the new teachers. Taylor described the tight quarters as "working in the submarine, a crowded space where we were all working together, through each other, and respecting each other in how we could use that space to work individually and/or as a group." Blake called the office a "think tank" because of the environment it created where they could rely on mentor colleagues to think aloud, bounce ideas off and use as a sounding board; they claimed "everyone had their strengths to support one another." Corey explained,

> I've never been a part of a working team where we were all in an office together all the time in this sort of fishbowl kind of situation, and that is certainly its own unique experience. I loved that if I didn't know how to handle something, I could turn to anyone else in the office and troubleshoot with them. I think it was also good for me to see the perspective and approaches of other people in the office and I think that it made me a better mentor.

This shared space also made it easier for the mentors to carry out their strategy of encouraging their mentees to interact with and get help from other mentors. The mentors explained that they encouraged the new teachers to stop by the office to get a question answered by whichever mentor(s) were there. Mentors described that if they were in the office and a new teacher

appeared, then they would help them regardless of whether or not that teacher was assigned to them. Corey explained their feelings about this situation by saying,

> It felt fantastic that if one of my new teachers was having an issue and I couldn't be available to them, then I could say, you know you can go into the office and talk to anyone and they'll help you. And so, I really, really appreciated that. The feeling of being all in it together and it wasn't just like, well, that's your new teacher, that's your problem. It was like, if someone's having a problem, then we're all going to try and fix it, which I really appreciated.

The collective responsibility felt by the mentors encouraged them to work together to achieve a common goal of supporting the new teachers. It also helped to create a sense of unity and shared purpose, which could have led to greater productivity and better results. Additionally, collective responsibility could have also helped to reduce the burden of individual responsibility, as everyone is working together to achieve the same goal.

Programmatic Factors

Mentor team

In addition to the shared space and time, several key elements of the program design also either encouraged or required mentors to work together and/or to develop and implement common approaches. The mentor team at VA is comprised of mentors and the mentor team leaders. This mentor team supports the new teachers that are instructing the courses for students that are taking courses at VA. Each mentor is responsible for six to seven new teachers and the team leaders oversee the team of mentors. Both the mentors and the team leaders observe the new teachers in the classrooms, although no new teacher is paired to work directly with a team leader. However, at the beginning of the program, the team leaders meet with the new teachers to explain that if at any time they feel unsupported by their mentor they should feel free to contact a team leader. The mentor team leaders work with the mentors in their work to support the new teachers in how they deliver the planned curriculum and develop as an educator. The mentor

team leaders also support the mentor and new teachers in procuring materials, setting up classrooms, and coordinating special events for their courses. They live on campus for the duration of the program and also serve as a member of the team of senior program administrators. Additionally, the mentor team leaders are a part of the recruiting and hiring process for VA. They look for and hire teachers who were new teachers at VA and are familiar with the structure and goals of the program. They provide orientation before the start of the program and or ongoing professional development during the program. There is some reporting structure between the mentors and the team leaders by way of individual and group meetings, and post observation forms that each mentor submitted weekly for each of their teachers. Working as a team certainly encouraged sharing and collaboration amongst the mentors, and the leadership structure of the mentor team also established collective responsibility for meeting program expectations.

There were multiple systems that brought together the VA mentoring team, created the ways in which they worked together, and may contribute to some of the similarities in their approaches. Firstly, there was a system to support new mentors in the program. New members of the team were paired with another returning mentor to act as a mentoring mentor. This match was made two months before the summer to establish a designated point person with VA experience before the new mentor entered into the group. This person remained as their point person if they needed support throughout the summer. Additionally, beginning months before arriving to the VA location, the mentor team worked collaboratively through electronic means to familiarize themselves with one another and the VA mission. Once on campus, one of the first things the team did together was to establish group norms. My participants were a part of a team that established a list of 20 group norms, most of them focused on being respectful and

supportive of one another (see Table 8). This list set the parameters of their hopes and

expectations for their time and space together; it was printed out and posted in several places

around the office as well as being archived on the team's shared Google Drive.

Table 8. *Mentor Team Norms*

Start and end meetings on time (or early!)	Vent safely within our office
Be Direct with each other	Levity is welcome
Disagree Respectfully	Support decisions once they are made
Assume good intentions and have good intentions	Take bio-breaks as needed
Show positivity	Take care of yourself
Be open to multiple perspectives	Engage in active listening
Think globally about our work, understand that there are competing needs	Embrace challenges
Food is welcome at meetings	Roll with it … go with the flow
Monitor your own air time	Ask for help
Hold each other accountable for the norms	Respect physical space

In addition to all the meetings with their new teachers each mentor was managing on

their own, the group had daily morning meetings and evening meetings two or three times a

week to come together as a team. The daily morning meetings were "walking meetings" where

meetings that took place during a walk around the VA program campus instead of in the

mentoring office. They served as a time and space to inform, collaborate, discuss, and plan along

with the added benefits of exercise, fresh air, and a change in scenery. These morning walking

meetings followed a specific routine that started with mentors talking about teachers of interest,

any new teacher(s) that mentors noted needing additional support, and WOWs, which were any

new teacher(s) that mentors wanted to praise or celebrate. Corey explained that these meetings

felt like a process of "collectively informing one another about progress and issues with the new

teachers." Participants commented that these thirty minutes were a valuable check in time for the

mentors, both personally to share their feelings about how they doing and about their new

teachers. Their meetings provided times to work together, sometimes with focused reflective

activities and other times just opportunities to share and gather insight from their peers. Quinn said,

> Our morning meetings were a great example of the collaborative mindset that our office operated on. Where it's okay, I'm having this issue with my new teachers or my new teacher is having this issue with their class, and then being able to toss it up to the group, bounce it around, and then laying down some strategies. It was great modeling about collaborative problem solving, which are also things we want our new teachers and students to be picking up on. We didn't have any formalized training where everyone is asked to come with a problem that they are having with their new teacher so we could go around solve everyone's problem. It was just more organic, and someone could say 'Nope, all is going well with my new teachers.' So, we weren't necessarily forced to hunt for a problem that didn't exist and it was a good exercise and resource allocation, those resources being our time and our energy.

These meetings allowed the mentor to experience both ownership and accountability for their mentoring. Ownership seemed to be key to ensuring that each mentor felt as if they belonged within the greater mentoring team. To a large extent, these meetings helped the mentors not only understand their responsibilities, but also how their role fits into the broader picture of the collective responsibility in supporting the new teachers.

PD meetings in the office happened at the start of the program during the initial orientation period. The session on how to have difficult conversations was the session that my participants remembered the most. The mentor group spent several hours on this session going over how to prepare, execute, and follow up a difficult conversation with a new teacher. Ryan said,

> I think being able to walk through the hypotheticals of what could be encountered, and also to walk through the potential discomfort of being in those situations was really helpful. So that when they happened, it didn't take you by surprise, I could focus more on what needs to happen rather than my own feelings of discomfort.

Mentors also came together to create optional PD sessions for new teachers. Working together in this way was an opportunity to develop a common approach, because like the one-on-one mentoring, these sessions used teacher-directed support, created a safe space, and allowed for

hands-on practice. For example, a couple of my participants came together to create a session on "Getting a Teaching Job" as an overview of the whole process, including resumé writing, cover letters, interviewing, timing, public versus private teaching, teaching abroad, the job search, and interview tips. Another couple of mentors came together to talk about "Teaching outside the Box," which provided strategies to think more creatively about lesson delivery and activities in the classroom. These sessions were opportunity for the mentors to offer group support for the new teachers.

Program resources and guidance for mentors

The Google Drive that the mentors shared included the individualizable forms used in the mentors' work. These forms included teacher needs assessment (Appendix L), mentor needs assessment (Appendix M), post observation chart (Appendix N), and teacher movement chart (Appendix K) (see Table 9). Twice during the summer, at the beginning of the summer and mid-way through, the new teachers were required to complete the 'needs assessment' form to give to their mentor. This form allowed the new teachers to indicate their level of need for assistance in certain areas on their work. The needs forms were just for the individual use of the mentors and the mentors indicated that this form had varying degrees of usefulness. Blake appreciated that it gave the new teacher a range of choices to express their feelings about what they needed from their mentor, as opposed to a binary choice of yes or no to needing support. Quinn believed that this form verified what they already knew,

> I found it helpful to get confirmation that things I was doing were being well received and were beneficial to the new teacher or if they weren't. It was helpful to get that confirmation that my actions, suggestions, etc. were being received by my instructors and they were feeling supported. Or get the information that there was something missing. And so that was great.

There were also need forms administered to the mentors at the same times to indicate any support that they might need from their supervisors. However, none of my participants spoke about these forms being of significance to their mentoring experiences at VA.

Table 9. *Usage of Program Documents and Forms*

	Jessie	Blake	Quinn	Ryan	Corey	Taylor
Years as teacher	3	4	5	9	15	18
Observation form	√	√	√	√	√	√
Teacher expectations	√	√	√	√	√	√
TEACH standards	√	√	√	√	√	√
Online handbook	√	√	√	√	√	√
Needs of new teachers	√	√	√	√	√	√
Difficult conferences	√	√	√	√	√	√
New teacher needs assessment	√	√	√	√	√	√
Class discussion	√			√		√
Advice for new teachers	√	√	√	√	√	√
Hook attention		√	√		√	√
Support ELL students	√	√	√	√	√	√
Working with new teachers	√	√	√	√	√	√
Mentor Needs assessment						

There were several different forms offered to the mentors to help complete with individualized information as they organized their observations and prepare for their meetings

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with new teachers. These forms provided tools for the mentors to provide evidence of what they saw during their visits to new teachers' classes and organize the discussion points for their meetings about those observations. Some mentors used these forms, while others just used their own way of taking notes. Either way, each mentor had to write up, review with the new teacher, and submit one post observation form per teacher per week. On this form, the mentor noted: 1) points of discussion from the evidence they saw during their visit, 2) the corresponding VA TEACH standard to that evidence, 3) strengths, 4) areas of improvement, 5) teacher's goals, 6) space for the mentor to note how they will start the meeting or any other points they want to include. After the mentor shared this form with the new teachers during individual meetings and then kept as record for program administration to review. Ryan said "that form for the teacher movement in the room was really helpful, because that was something that I found otherwise to be really hard to describe." Blake explained the usefulness of the post observation form for their meetings with new teachers by saying,

> I really liked the post observation form where we had to note directly observable behaviors. I felt like that was really helpful for me to go back and think about and analyze later. And that tool also helped me in the meetings, like having those directly observable things that I could bring up with them.

Mentors found that the post observation form requirement gave them an opportunity to reflect afterwards about how the meeting with their new teacher went. The supervisors of the mentor team reviewed these meeting summary documents, though only followed up with the mentor if they felt it was necessary.

Also on the shared Google Drive, the mentor team used VA specific documents to support their work with the new teachers, including: Good Teaching at VA (Appendix I), Mentor Expectations (Appendix O), and TEACH standards (Appendix J) (see Table 9). The "Good Teaching at VA" document guided mentors and new teachers to conceptualize the educator

practices that the program prioritizes, including: 1) teaching to learn in a manner that is relevant, meaningful, engaging, fun and memorable; 2) teaching is about caring, nurturing, and developing minds and talents; 3) teaching is mentoring between more and less experienced teachers and teamwork all together; and 4) teaching is about asking good questions of students, of yourself, of your peers and of your mentors. The mentors' goal of creating a team mentality is rooted in this "Good Teaching at VA" document (Appendix I). The "Mentor Expectations" document was shared with the mentors when they were hired. They expectations included: Be flexible; Be loyal; Be transparent; Be communicative; Be sufficient and take responsibility; Be on time; Be professional; and Be human, be a learner. This document helped guide a mutual understanding of the mentors' work. The goal of this document was to help mentors understands their roles and types of work as educators. It also asked mentors to embrace the idea that they are beings who are learning, feeling, and thinking and also that everyone is learning and growing in different ways. The TEACH standards (Appendix J) incorporated directives around the themes of thinking, engaging, anticipating, connecting, and having high expectations and they helped anchor conversations about teaching both within the mentor team and mentoring partnerships. These standards helped mentors determine what the new teacher was attending to and helped the mentors consider how they wanted to advise their new teacher.

The resource documents also included references pulled from various educational sources, including: a platform for difficult conferences (Appendix P), how to recognize and meet the needs of new teachers (Appendix Q), activity ideas for class discussions (Appendix R), advice for new teachers (Appendix S), how to hook students' attention (Appendix T), supporting English language learners in the classroom (Appendix U), and working with new teachers (Appendix V) (see Table 9). Jessie said, "There were a lot of forms and we had an online

handbook that we could use as a reference to all the terms and processes that the VA program uses so that was helpful." Corey said,

> All the documents that we had kind of helped us guide our work, like, whether it be the observation forms, or the expectations and standards. It's just, I feel as though there's something really useful about having all of the different supports that VA has for the mentors to use as they to do their work.

These resource documents helped establish further supports for the mentors. In turn, the awareness of the program's core values empowered the mentors to instill them into their work.

Summary

I found my participants had common goals and approaches regardless of experience, and perhaps that is not surprising given the three critical elements of the context within which they were working. The first critical element was that the participant selection process yielded a group who had all participated in the program in some way before. In looking at all the mentors on the mentoring team, including those who did not participate in this study, eight out of ten mentors on the mentor team had previous experience with the program. The common background could have provided a foundation that helped the mentors develop their relationships, familiarity, shared languages, and a sense of trust which could have helped them take advantage of all the time they had together. The similar goals and approaches of my participants may have come from socialization that was possible because of second critical element of space and time that the participants shared. The situational features of a shared office and multiple touch points throughout their workday gave them opportunities to collaborate, socialize, and grow collective responsibility for the new teachers. Additionally, the programmatic features of the mentor team and the resources that guided their work contributed to this infrastructure of support. The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the complexities of mentoring, particularly the role that age, experience, and situational factors might play in the mentors' work.

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As a result of these findings, and as many studies presumed, years of teaching experience alone may not always be the critical factor; this study shows the potential importance of shared experience, socialization, and scaffolding within a mentoring program.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study looked to gain a better understanding of the role that age, experience, and situational factors might play in mentor's work because nowadays they are being drawn from a wide range of career points, and their different levels of experience might have an impact. This investigation was rooted in the beliefs that mentoring is a "complex interplay of personal, contextual, and programmatic factors" (Feiman-Nemser, 2012, p. 292) and that "educative mentoring" (1998) is the most effective. The fundamental assumptions of this study were that mentors of various levels of experience would have different goals and approaches to their mentoring, and that contextual factors of a formal mentoring program would impact the ways they mentored. Through this research study, I was able to understand the goals and approaches of the participants and how the VA program influenced their mentoring. Through a qualitative analysis, this study highlighted the various circumstances which shaped the goals and approaches of the participants. As I explore below, the mentoring I investigated had many of the characteristics of educative mentoring, and, therefore, has the potential to be powerful. What is important about my findings is that the absolute quantity of experience did not appear to have any significance in this particular study and mentors without a deep quantity of experience can support this kind of mentoring and learning. However, the VA program has substantial support and infrastructure in place that other mentoring programs may not have the resources to do which likely contributed to the quality of the mentors' experience.

This chapter presents overall conclusions and implications and are rooted in the findings, which indicated that the sample group of mentors that represented varying years of teaching experience had similar goals and approaches to their mentorship. I detailed the qualitative

findings that led to these larger conclusions in the preceding chapter. In this chapter, I will synthesize the three key findings through the lens of educative mentoring: 1) similar goals and approaches across experience levels, 2) group collaboration, and 3) collective responsibility. Then, I discuss their implications for practice, research, and policy. Lastly, I end this chapter with my concluding thoughts from reflecting on what I have personally learned as a practitioner and a researcher.

Discussion of Findings

Even though I anticipated experience would impact the goals and approaches of mentors, my first key finding was that these mentors with varying amounts of teaching experience shared similar goals and approaches. The second key finding was that these mentors felt that they were collaborating because of the situational and programmatic factors that supported their collaboration. The third key finding was that structure of the VA program helped to create a collective responsibility of the new teachers amongst the mentor team, and this may have been one of the elements that urged the mentors to have similar goals and approaches. The findings suggest that the mentors' work may have been positively impacted by situational and programmatic features that allowed for collaboration and collective responsibility of the new teachers in their care.

First Key Finding

Even though I anticipated experience would matter, the first key finding of this study was that these mentors with varying amounts of teaching experience shared similar goals and approaches. I learned even young less experienced mentors could be educative, which had not been evident in mentoring literature. There were two types of similar goals amongst the participants: process goals and outcome goals. The process goals of the participating mentors

included: strong communication, a trusting relationship, a team mentality, and mental wellness. The ways that these mentors aimed to create spaces for honest conversations and reflections, and allowed for vulnerability in open sharing with their mentees to discuss what did not go well as they taught and what they would do differently embodied educative mentoring (Feiman-Nemser, 2001b; Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005). The team mentality of the mentors echoes the educative mentoring tenet of breaking down barriers between new teachers and their colleagues by fostering a culture of collaboration within their mentorship and with other educators (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1993). The outcome goals of the participating mentors targeted: self-efficacy and reflective and reflexive teaching. As mentioned earlier, the mentors focused on self-efficacy by way of emphasizing the importance of a growth mind-set, which is central to educative mentoring (Feiman-Nemser, 2001b; Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005). Additionally, their goal of reflective and reflexive teaching embodies educative mentoring because of its focus on reflection and critical thinking in response to learners' needs (Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005; Palombo & Daly, 2022).

The participating mentors' similar approaches to these goals included comparable ideas that they emphasized, feedback that they gave, and what they focused on. Their approaches incorporated: bi-directional learning, teacher-directed support, and a safe space. The participating mentors acted in educative ways in how they saw themselves as both a holder of and receiver of knowledge and how they viewed their mentorship as one that develops the practices of each partner (Feiman-Nemser, 1998; 2001b; Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005). Additionally, these approaches reflected educative mentoring because the mentors spent time exploring content together with the novice (Feiman-Nemser & Beasley, 1997) and were mentoring toward something, such as a particular practice, and then focusing their work on

helping the novice learn the practice (Stanulis et al., 2012). During hands-on practice together,

the mentors enacted educative mentoring by weaving showing and telling when giving

explanations for different teaching strategies (Feiman-Nemser & Beasley, 1997; Schwille, 2008;

Pylman, 2016). They made their thinking accessible by explaining the reasoning behind these

instructional moves they were practicing with their mentees. These types of explanations where

the mentor makes their thoughts and decisions explicit and visible are also part of an educative

mentoring approach (Feiman-Nemser & Beasley, 1997; Pylman, 2016; Schwille, 2008). The

participating mentors gave feedback that was non-evaluative and informed by observation.

Mentors who enact educative practices support their mentees by gathering evidence through

observations and use it to generate feedback (Feiman-Nemser, 2001b; Kemmis et al., 2014;

Stanulis & Floden, 2009). The mentors focused on keeping close contact and individualized

professional development. This focus on close contact reflects the tenet of educative mentoring

where the mentor works with their mentee to integrate them into working with their colleagues

and work against teacher isolation (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1993; Langdon & Ward, 2015).

Additionally, the ways in which the mentors discussed long-term professional goals are also

consistent with educative mentoring. Due to the infrastructure of the VA program, the mentor

team had a number of shared routines, tools, and other resources, which could have encouraged

and contributed to them doing the same things in similar ways.

Second Key Finding

A strong sense of mutual collaboration amongst the participating mentors in this study

was the second key finding and the VA programmatic features may have contributed to a feeling

of interconnection amongst the team of mentors. The process of educative mentoring centers on

a shared exploration of questions that develop practice; thus, working through problems of

practice that face beginning teachers centers on collaboration (Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005). The time the mentors shared together, their meetings, the program documents they used, and situational factors appear to have contributed to their collaboration. During the interviews, I learned how much these mentors relied on the opportunities of having contact time with the other mentors. While there was a fair amount of individual work in supporting their new teachers, the mentors described their work time to be interwoven with opportunities to connect with the other mentors. The participants spoke in depth about the impact of being on this team and feeling the collaborative approach to helping one another in their mentoring work. Specifically, when asked about how VA supports the mentors Corey described the support felt from being a member of the mentor team as a "we are all in this together" type of feeling. Mentoring literature discussed these feelings of camaraderie, saying that they are necessary because mentors cannot learn to mentor effectively alone (Bullough, 2012) and working in isolation is likely to result in poorly conceptualized and individualistic mentoring practices making the educative approach unlikely (Langdon & Ward, 2015).

From all the mentors' responses, being a part of this team was a meaningful way for them to help each other learn and grow. Recent empirical research showed that for mentors to be able to initiate and maintain educative mentoring relationships there need to be features of an expansive school workplace environment (Palombo & Daly, 2022). Expansive environments are those which support the learning of all practitioners, recognizing that collaboration is key (Hodkinson, 2009). There is literature consistent with these findings about an expansive work environment that emphasizes the importance of collaborative culture. Discussions in mentoring literature that answer this call for collaboration in educative mentoring focus on the need for ongoing professional development to support the work of mentors in their mentorships. For the

most part, however, these studies focus on periodic professional development experiences as a means of developing that collaborative culture. Empirical research shows evidence of interventions done for mentors or periodic sessions for mentors working together within a mentoring program to collaborate with each other about mentoring; yet, there is no evidence of the type of shared working environment like that of the VA program, which may help account for the learning amongst the mentors. This study helps to broaden our understanding of the factors that can support issues of informal and formal socialization, including having a shared workspace and having shared downtime. The mentorships investigated in this study could be characterized as being a part of an expansive work environment due to their close collaborative nature and how the mentors were mutually supportive of each other's learning (Palombo & Daly, 2022). In this study, when mentors were in the mentoring office, they were able to see and overhear mentoring conversations between the members of the mentor team and their mentees. Additionally, they had daily time set aside to discuss their successes and struggles within their mentorships. The context of the VA program created an abundance of time and space for them to work together and these specific factors likely contributed to the ways in which even young less experienced mentors could be educative.

Third Key Finding

The third key finding of this study was that the structure of the VA program helped to create a collective responsibility of the new teachers amongst the mentor team, and this may have been one of the elements that urged the mentors to have similar goals and approaches. None of my participants described the mentor group as having top-down management with an accountability structure, and no one gave examples of being told what to do by the mentor team leaders. None of my participants said that they had to have these goals or that that there was an

evaluation structure in place that led them, required, or rewarded them to have these goals or act in similar ways. There was no formal evaluation structure that they referred to that rewarded or required them to act in similar ways. In all of the interviews, when I asked, the participants explained there were no formal evaluation structures. Instead, in the program, it was not only set up for the mentors to provide, formative feedback to the mentees, it was also set up for the mentors to get formative feedback from the mentor team leaders. They also discussed how the whole mentor team leaned on and supported one another in their pursuits of supporting their new teachers. Within the mentor team there was a context in which mentors were encouraged to bring problems forward and address them as a group to support one another.

Synthesis of Findings

Mentoring teachers anywhere will bring about challenges, but having a strong team environment in place can act as a support mechanism for mentors, and the situational factors of VA promoted a cohesive mentoring team. The VA program developed systems that allowed them to collaborate efficiently, and through their work together the mentors were aware of their own capabilities and those of the group. The context of the VA program allowed the mentors to build bonds of trust and reliance on each other, which seemed to be important when navigating their mentorship. The situational factors of VA provided opportunities for relationships amongst the mentor team members to develop naturally, especially given the amount of space and time that allowed them to share about their mentoring work and experiences. These bonds created a culture of ideas and innovation where team members felt comfortable offering suggestions and ideas. The respectful and trusting team environment enabled the mentors to have productive and collaborative mentorships that worked toward unified visions of how to support new teachers and a feeling of collective responsibility for them.

These findings also suggest that the context within which the mentor team operated was a site for mentor learning and support. Some literature echoes this suggestion with the belief that social and contextual factors are integral to the development of mentoring expertise (Langdon, 2017; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). The mentors in this study stated that the team offered them a chance to share and discuss any questions or concerns they have in their work with their new teachers. They shared that they appreciated hearing how their colleagues recognized the successes of their new teachers as well as the challenges that they were facing. They valued the opportunity for peer-to-peer learning and recognized the role of the mentor team in their development. They appreciated the opportunities to discuss and share about mentoring practices with their peers. They were able to gain both strategies that worked for themselves and just-in-time solutions to problems they were facing with their mentees. With this sharing, they felt comfort to have a group working through the same tasks so that they could share progress and get support as needed.

In interviewing my participants, I believed that these mentors helped one another adapt to the VA environment and process of mentoring new teachers. Teacher socialization is a communicative process that happens when individuals acquire values, attitudes, norms, knowledge, skills, and behaviors of the teaching profession and of the particular educational context where they work (Staton, 2008). The prevalence, nature, and influence of socialization around mentoring and mentor-mentor interaction was not something I intended to unearth in my exploration, nor did I read about it in mentoring literature. This possibility of mentor socialization seemed evident as I learned how much time each mentor had spent as a part of the VA program and how much time they spent with each other during their work. This process of socialization came to the forefront as I found interesting information about how these mentors

participated in mentoring-like relationships with each other. When I was asking about the

training that they received through the program, they struggled to pinpoint explicit activities

when they felt like they were being trained. Some noted reviewing program protocols as a part of

what they felt like was training. Their overall feeling was that they had not gone through any

explicit training, but described almost a socialization process given the time and space shared

with the others on the mentor team. Ryan explained, "I feel like there wasn't actually like that

much like explicit training on how to actually do the mentoring work. I feel like any explicit

instruction we received was talking a lot about just like the philosophy behind the program

and the engaged learning kind of stuff." They felt that the 'training' for this work was implicit

learning that came from talking about the philosophy of VA, especially the TEACH standards

(Appendix J) and mentor expectations (Appendix O), and, in general, the collaboration of

working with their mentor colleagues. These discussions as a group led to organic coaching

about being a mentor. We know that socialization can have a powerful effect on teachers, and

this study shows a potentially similar effect on mentors and mentoring. At the same time, it is

important to consider all impacts about having a strong mentoring culture and common

approach.

Literature Reconsidered

This study builds upon the literature on mentoring new teachers by exploring the role

age, experience, and situational factors might play in mentor's work. The literature on the

optimal amount of teaching experience for effective mentors have been mixed, and so with this

study, I am showing how situational, social, and contextual factors can help explain those mixed

results. This study extends the literature by pushing for a deeper conceptualization of situational

and programmatic features that allow for mentor collaboration and collective responsibility of

the new teachers. As I went back over the literature after I completed my study, I found an empirical study that presented an overview and discussed the impact of the Alabama Teacher Mentor Program initiative which echoed some similar findings. Kent et al., (2012) completed a mixed methods study over the course of the first two years of this program to see how both active experienced and retired teachers mentored new teachers. They discovered the mentors felt that the supports they were provided enabled them to meet the needs of their mentees, especially the sharing of ideas between mentors and the principals where they mentored (p. 9). However, unlike my study, Kent et al., (2012) reported that the mentors felt they had a hard time finding time to engage in mentoring activities (p. 9). Kent et al., (2012) concluded that a mentoring program that values professional learning, collaboration, and fosters a sense of collective responsibility for the success of all students as well as teachers is paramount in the success of mentorships. Together with studies like Kent et al., (2012), my study suggests we need to pay more attention to socialization of mentors in studies and the impact on designing mentoring programs.

Mentors with Varying Teaching Experience

The empirical literature has not produced a consensus on exactly how teachers' expertise and experience might develop over time and when they might be best equipped to serve as mentors. Literature that looks at how much teaching experience might be ideal for mentors is just as inconsistent as research on the optimal age gap between mentor and the new teacher. Additionally, there is some empirical research that backs up the view that teachers with only a few years of experience can be effective mentors. Yet, a number of studies make the case that mentors should have at least seven years of experience. Adding to this complexity, a number of studies have raised questions about whether age and experience are the critical factors.

Additionally, mentor scholars like Feiman-Nemser (1998) and Knight et al. (2014) believe that experience is not always a reliable or trustworthy teacher, meaning that a more experienced teacher does not necessarily mean they will be a strong mentor. There are theoretical rationales that suggest developmental points exist within a teacher's career, and that more experienced mentors might be in a different position to support new teachers. This study helps to explain why there may be mixed results of studies trying to determine how much teaching experience might be ideal for mentors, because it shows that factors like socialization and shared experiences as mentors may enable even less experienced teachers to be effective mentors.

This study builds upon that research by describing how mentors with various years of teaching experience have similar goals and approaches in their mentorship. These mentoring possibilities came from a group of mentors who worked together as a team while sharing an office and frequent daily touch points. Prior experience also had another meaning with this group, too. A possibly critical experiential factor to their similar goals and approaches was that these mentors had all participated in the research site program as either a mentor and/or a mentee. There was sparse literature that discussed the impact of mentors having prior experience within the mentoring program where they mentor. There was some literature that explained how some districts use retired teachers and administrators to come back into the school to be mentors because they have years of experience in those schools, though it did not clarify if those individuals had previously been involved with mentoring at the school (Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, 2006). This study pushes for more literature that looks to understand the possibilities of mentors who have previous experience within the programing where they are mentoring.

Mentor Collaboration and Collective Responsibility

Research on why mentoring is not effective reveals certain requirements not necessarily of the mentor themselves, but for their mentoring program, and it has been found that school contexts can potentially constrain or enable effective mentoring (Langdon & Ward, 2015). There are three conditions critical for the successful implementation of educative mentoring 1) support and development of mentor teachers, 2) the necessary school culture and 3) the implementation of appropriate policies and systems (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Langdon & Ward, 2015). This study found three critical elements for fostering common goals and approaches amongst a group of mentors, including: 1) experience with the program, 2) time and space with the other mentors, and 3) program resources for their guidance. The mentoring programs mentioned in Chapter Two do not explain any criteria for the mentor to have prior experience with the program, nor any recruiting of previous mentees to be mentors. Their requirements mostly focus on the training of the mentors and the ongoing supports for the interactions between the mentors and the mentees. Therefore, the training of mentors seems to be the majority of the possible touch points amongst mentors. These training sessions are described as happening before and throughout the mentorship. Since these sessions bring together all the mentors, collaboration could be possible during these required touch points, though it is unclear if socialization could be possible. Only two of the programs, New Teacher Center (NTC) and California Teacher Induction (CTI) formerly BTSA, explain specific structures in place for the mentors to collaborate with the other mentors in the program. CTI mandates that mentors participate in "mentor forums" that are offered online and/or in person six times per year (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2023). The CTI mentor forums are opportunities to develop the mentor craft, collaborate with other mentors, and reflect upon personal mentoring goals (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2023). NTC also incorporates mentor

forums though theirs are called "Mentor Academies" and are a monthly requirement, where mentors brainstorm and problem-solve together on how to meet specific teachers' needs or common needs across many teachers (New Teacher Center, 2021). The way that NTC offers the possibility that the mentors within the program would come together to look at the similar needs of the mentees was the only hint at collective responsibility amongst the mentors. Similar to the VA program in this study, NTC has developed instructionally focused tools and protocols that support mentors in structuring their mentoring sessions with beginning teachers (New Teacher Center, 2021). NTC uses these tools to ensure that the conversation and activities of the mentorship work towards specific instructionally focused objectives (New Teacher Center, 2021). Overall, the mentor programs in the research literature only had a few of the factors in place that parallel those of the VA program, which might explain some of the inconsistency in the literature regarding the optimal supports that are in place for the mentors.

Limitations

In this qualitative study, I aimed to describe and analyze teacher mentoring in a formal mentoring program for prospective teachers and in the process, I recognized a number of limitations. This study was limited to one uncommon program; while it met the criteria of a "strong mentoring program" (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a), the challenge was that it works primarily with a special group of teachers who just finished their undergraduate studies. Since this study reflected the context of a single mentoring program, it was not meant to be a study that was generalizable to all mentor programs. It is possible that these results could only be achieved in a mentoring program in the summer where all the mentors worked in a shared space. I knew that this group could be special, but I have learned that this group was even more special than I thought because they all had experience as either a mentor and/or a mentee in the program. This

study shows what a program that provides extensive supports for mentors looks like. It may not be a common situation, but it suggests a worthy endeavor in exploring which of these elements could be adopted in existing programs like the New Teacher Center, and others that I have discussed in this study.

Implications of Findings

The findings and connections in this study suggest several directions for future practice, research, and policy. This study looked to shed light on a current problem of ensuring mentoring for new teachers even though there is a decreasing population of veteran teachers. One of the implications that comes directly out of my findings is that mentoring program infrastructures that generate collaboration, socialization, and collective responsibility amongst mentors can encourage them to have common goals and approaches regardless of their years of teaching experience. From the literature, we know that implementing training and providing tools for the mentors are key components of almost every mentoring program researched; yet, this study sheds a new light on the possibilities when mentors are a part of a team that shares daily common time and space to interact and have previous experience with their mentoring program.

Implications for Practice

The practical applications of this study rely on the basic notions of giving mentors a space to learn from one another and thinking about ways to provide them with resources and supports to develop their knowledge and practice. Research shows that models with full-time mentors may work better for supporting new teachers (Brown, 2007; Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Fletcher & Strong; 2009; Gilles et al., 2006; Grossman & Davis, 2012; Wiebke & Bardin, 2009). However, in 2013-2014, state education agencies in Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota collected survey data from school districts that offered new teacher mentoring

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and found that "about eleven percent of districts had part-time mentors" and "less than three percent of districts had full-time mentors" (DeCesare et al., 2016, p. 3). Structuring mentoring programs to rely on full time mentors might not be easily feasible, though there are programs that are making this model possible. Recently, McDole and Francies (2022) reported that since 2003 the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project (ASMP) has been employing select retired teachers as full-time mentors for first and second-year teachers based on the model developed by NTC. It is unclear from this report and others that discuss the use of retired teachers as mentors, if the retired teachers had been mentored themselves by the mentoring program where they would work. My study suggests that potential mentors could exist in the population previously mentored within the program, meaning that mentoring programs could tap their alumni for potential mentors.

A second implication for practice is the seemingly advantageous work setup of a shared office with multiple touch points throughout the work day. In this study, the ability to exchange mentoring experiences helped the participating mentors gain a different perspective on topics and inspired their mentoring practice. This study suggests that having mentors working together as a team that shares daily contact might create similar approaches and goals regardless of their amount of teaching experience. The VA program deliberately structured the mentors' work by creating time, space, communication methods, and, overall, by establishing a model of integration which compelled joint work. The mentors' shared work space may have helped account for the feeling of collective responsibility by encouraging collaboration and communication between them and the new teachers. Their office provided seating areas, open workspaces, and other amenities that allow employees to interact with each other as well as seeing and overhearing conversations between mentors and mentees. Additionally, having a

shared space appears to have contributed to fostering a sense of accountability, community, and team spirit, which possibly increased the mentors' motivation, productivity, and possibly even, the pleasure they seemed to take in their work. This model could be used by other mentoring programs as they consider ongoing mentor support and development. This study calls for mentoring programs to consider the work environments of the mentors and how time, space, and communication systems create a team mentality with similar goals and approaches regardless of teaching experience.

Although it might be more expensive than other approaches, the findings of this study suggest some less expensive design features that other programs could incorporate. These features might include: hiring mentors who were mentees and a pathway for mentees to be mentored into being mentors. Additionally, programs could create meetings where the mentors can come together and develop connections. Building on what I learned about informal and formal structures within a mentoring program, even a school without a lot of resources can create a positive mentor culture. If a mentoring program is not restricted by costs, this study implies creating a workspace that is shared by the mentors and a daily meeting for them to connect are pivotal.

Implications for Research

This study points toward implications for future research, and in particular, to discovering the value of previous experience within a mentoring program. As previously mentioned, the participants in this study had all had been either mentees and/or mentors in the VA program and their approaches and goals for their mentorship were similar. I did not find that any other research that investigated the level of experience mentors had as mentees within the mentor program where they are mentoring. Therefore, a possible next set of studies would investigate

what factors matter, including but not limited to previous participation and familiarity with the program; situational factors that possibly enable socialization like a shared workspace, and programmatic factors that support the mentors' work. Other possible studies in the future could look to compare systematically the performance of those familiar with the program and those who are not. This line of inquiry could start by talking with mentors, who did not participate in this study and were not part of the program previously, to see if they shared similar approaches and goals to the group that participated in this study or if they develop them or how they develop over time. Additionally, the VA program had two other locations with similar setups to the one in which I investigated. Other future studies could look at the mentor teams in these locations to see if their groups shared similar goals and approaches within their location and across the various VA campuses. Furthermore, these studies could also explore the perspectives of the new teachers who were mentored to see what they report about the mentorship and to get a sense of what the impact of the mentoring might be.

Implications for Policy

Through public education policy, the United States has implemented systems to assess teacher performance which has heightened interest in mentoring beginning teachers and, in turn, steered the expectations of their mentors. Regulations such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 called for school accountability by setting forth processes to evaluate teachers and their measures produce conclusions about teachers (Zinskie & Rea, 2016). The aim of mentoring has moved towards teacher quality and effective teaching, thus there has been an increased shift to educative mentoring with the aim that mentoring goes beyond guidance and towards a co-constructive to learning to teach between mentor and mentee (Langdon & Ward, 2015; Richter et al., 2013). Research on mentoring new teachers continually

advocates that policy makers need to be convinced of the power of mentoring new teachers in order to facilitate the barriers of implementing mentoring programs, especially sourcing mentors, outlining their obligations, and compensating them. Cost effectiveness and funding is key for policymakers and this research supports the importance of funding for mentoring programs. Programs that are following the guidance of research by enlisting full-time mentors are not always receiving funding to continue this type of commitment to their new teachers. For example, when the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project (ASMP) was removed from the Alaska legislative budget in 2016, ASMP had to secure funding through a partnership with the University of Alaska and also by asking school districts to cost share with them (ASMP, 2023). There needs to be studies of costs and benefits associated with formal mentoring programs, as well as exploration of various funding models like the one used by ASMP. Perhaps these future studies would allow policymakers to see the evidence that might encourage them to value and prioritize this type of mentoring program. Policymakers need to be looking into the questions of who will be the mentors, what will be their commitment to the mentorship, and how will they interact with one another.

Additionally, the consideration for how to create spaces for mentor collaboration and work towards collective responsibility of new teachers is hard to legislate, yet there are concrete steps that policymakers can take. District and school leaders can facilitate scheduling changes to allow for regular blocks of time for teachers acting as mentors to collaborate and plan curriculums together and possibly look for work spaces where mentors could convene. Increasing opportunities for collaboration and a more productive working environment is smart policy both because the benefits of experience are greater for mentors in working environments where they can interact frequently. This study extends that call so that there is a commitment to

making it possible so that every new teacher has a willing mentor whose arrangement allows them to meet with their mentees as well as with their fellow mentors on a frequent basis.

Concluding Thoughts

This chapter detailed my analysis of the findings presented in the previous chapter and included corresponding conclusions and recommendations for practice, policy, and research. In summary, this study illustrated that experience does not have to matter; a well-designed and supported program for mentors of varying levels of experience can be successful. My hope is that this research will contribute to a growing body of literature that can inform the thinking of those who will be a part of building mentoring programs for success in the future.

At the close of this study, I consider how this process affects me as a practitioner and as a researcher. As an educator, I remember all too well the struggles I had my first year of teaching without guidance from a formal mentor. Once I changed schools, the kindness, collegiality, and goodwill of other teachers helped guide me through my beginning years of teaching. My teaching philosophy stemmed from those supportive experiences and also plays out in my work as a mentor; I believe that getting to know my students and my fellow colleagues by making personal connections helps inspire both them and me to work to our potential. As a mentor, working as a part of the mentor team at VA before this study began, allowed me the reflective space to review my practice and grow to be a better teacher and mentor. The VA mentor team created a network of support for me to interact with teachers of other disciplines and experience the enculturation process of being a part of the VA program, as well as providing me opportunities to observe and be observed as a mentor. This network of support served as a powerful mechanism of professional development for an experienced teacher like myself. Taking on the role of researcher, I was able to see formal and informal supports for the mentors in the

program and how they were not all intentional parts of the program design that I did not recognize when I was a mentor. In a similar way, this dissertation experience has afforded me ways of growing and developing because of networks of support in place. In this sense, as a researcher, this study has been an inspirational and illuminating experience, learning with and from practitioners, and also challenging my beliefs, knowledge, and assumptions. Preparing, enacting, and analyzing this study provided opportunities for me to gain understanding of what it means for mentors to work together as a team supporting prospective teachers and to reflect as a practitioner and researcher. I have come to learn that formal mentoring programs are contexts for generative understandings of mentoring new teachers. By engaging in this research, I simultaneously expanded my understanding of how mentors developed their mentorship, and I acquired experience in the craft of qualitative research. The responses of the participants caused me to reflect on my own understandings of mentoring and how I will go forward in my work as a practitioner and researcher.

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Dear _____,

As you may know from our time working together, I am a doctoral student working toward my dissertation research. I am at the point of embarking on this work where I will be conducting a qualitative interview study of how mentors, such as yourself, describe and understand their practice. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the complexities of mentoring, and an exciting component of my research is talking with mentors to explore their perspectives about their experiences. I am conducting this research because I am deeply interested in the experiences of mentors. Thank you very much for your thoughtful consideration of my invitation.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, your commitment would involve a series of four 60-minute interviews conducted by me. I would work around your schedule to find dates and times that are convenient for you. We would discuss your mentoring history, your personal understanding of what it means to be a mentor and how you go about your practice. I will give you a small gift of a book of your choice as a thank you for your participation.

The interviews will be recorded; however, you will be given a pseudonym and your name will not be used in any publications or material I share from the dissertation. Please note that your name and personal information and anyone you happen to mention in the interviews would never be revealed to anyone; your name in all transcripts of interviews and documents would appear in written reports under a different name—a pseudonym. Additionally, the program where you work(ed) as a mentor will also be given a pseudonym.

Thank you very much for your consideration. I sincerely hope you will volunteer to participate. I would be delighted to answer any questions you might have, and you may contact me by telephone or email if you would like more information. I ask that you please reply to this message to say whether or not you would like to participate. If you would like to participate, then I will follow your message with a short phone call to make sure you do not have any questions and to go over the informed consent form.

Sincerely,

Georgina W. Duff

Phone: 617-817-2277
Email: gwd2108@tc.columbia.edu

Investigator: Georgina W. Duff
Teachers College, Columbia University
Curriculum and Teaching Department

Research Title: *Investigating the complexities of mentoring through an inquiry of mentors'*
perspectives

Investigator's Statement:
I am inviting you to help me as I research how mentors describe and experience their practice.
This research is part of the requirements for my doctoral dissertation work at Teachers College,
Columbia University. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the
complexities of mentoring, particularly how the role that age, experience, and situational factors
might play into their work. I am interested in the topic of mentoring because mentors are critical
to supporting new teachers in the profession. I believe that cultivating and supporting new
teachers is one of the most important tasks in ensuring the development of educators. I believe
that there is much to be learned about how mentors support new teachers, especially considering
their mentoring experience and the context within which they mentor. Due to teacher
demographics effecting the availability of veteran teachers, mentors are consequently drawn
from various career points and some of them have few years of teaching experience, and it is my
hope that this study might contribute to a need for qualitative research on mentors at different
points in their career. This study is important because it may give insight as to how to develop
the overall support structure of formal mentoring for new teachers.

Risks and Benefits
You are not likely to benefit directly from this study, but I hope it will contribute to a broader
understanding of how mentors at different points in their career take up their practice.
The harm or discomfort anticipated in the research is not greater than what would normally be
encountered in an information-gathering interview. You will not be required to reveal
information such as specific project names, technologies, or proprietary information that would
be inappropriate to share with external parties. Your participation is strictly voluntary, and you
may discontinue participation at any time with no penalty or fear of recourse. There is no penalty
or consequence for not participating.

Procedures
If you decide to participate in this study, I would like to interview you during the summer and
fall of 2021. Participation involves four semi-structured, in-depth interviews that will last
approximately sixty minutes each. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded
and then transcribed. During the fourth interview, I will share a draft of my findings with you to
correct any inaccuracies. I anticipate the interviews to take approximately four to six hours.

Data Storage to Protect Confidentiality
Your confidentiality as a participant is of the utmost importance and will be a priority in the
research process. You will not be personally identified in any report or publication resulting from
this research. You and your work location will be given pseudonyms. No names will appear on
any of the digital audio records. All digital audio records will be labeled by pseudonym and will

be stored on my password-protected computer. I will maintain the data, in their coded form, on my password-protected server only for any post-dissertation research.

Compensation
I appreciate your voluntary participation in this study, as it will be adding to the body of knowledge on the topic of mentoring new teachers. No payment is implied or provided for your voluntary participation.

How Results will be Used
I will use the results of this study for my doctoral dissertation. In addition, I may present my findings at meetings or use the information for educational purposes.

Participant's Rights
·   I have read and discussed the Research Description with the researcher. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures of this study.
·   My participation in research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time, with no penalty or fear of recourse.
·   The researcher may withdraw me from the research at her professional discretion.
·   If, during the course of this study, significant new information has developed that may relate to my willingness to continue to participate, the researcher will provide this information to me.
·   Any information derived from the research project that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
·   If at any time I have questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the researcher, who will answer my questions. The researcher's phone number is (617) 817- 2277. The researcher's faculty advisor, Dr. Thomas Hatch, at Teachers College, Columbia University, can be reached at th2127@tc.columbia.edu.
·   If at any time I have comments, or concerns regarding the conduct of the research or questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact the Teachers College, Columbia University Institutional Review Board /IRB. The phone number for the IRB is (212) 678-4105. Or, I can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY, 10027, Box 151.
·   I should receive a copy of the Research Description and this Participant's Rights document.

Check one:

_____ I give my permission for the researcher to digitally record my interview.

_____ I DO NOT give permission for the researcher to digitally record my interview.

_____   _____   _____

Signature of Participant   Printed Name   Date

Introduction
Thank you so much for participating in this study. I appreciate your willingness to be interviewed and share your thoughts. This interview will last about 60 minutes and please know that I sincerely value your time and want to make sure that you feel comfortable as a participant. If you want to stop or you do not want to answer a question, then please just let me know.

Purpose
As you may recall from the introduction letter, I am interested in learning how mentors describe and understand their practice to gain a better understanding of the complexities of mentoring.

Recording
I will record our conversation in order to ensure I do not miss anything you share and I can work with the information you share exactly as you say it. I know that you already agreed in the consent form to be recorded, but I want to check again. Do I have your permission to record?

Confidentiality
Taking steps to ensure your confidentiality is an essential part of conducting ethical research and it is very important to me. I will refer to you by a pseudonym of your choice, not only in the interview but also in all the writing that will accompany this project. What pseudonym would you like me to use? You can tell me now or we can revisit it at the end of this interview. I have assigned the pseudonym "Venture Academy" to the mentoring program where you work(ed) and so any reference made by you about this program will be transcribed with that pseudonym.

Artifacts
When we set up this interview, I mentioned that you are welcome to bring in any documents, etc. that you use(d) in your mentoring. If you have brought anything, please feel free to refer to it at any time that seems appropriate. If you think of something that you would like to share but do not have it on hand, you can always bring it to the next interview.

Questions
1. Are you currently mentoring anyone now? If not, when was the last time you did?
2. What do you think new teachers need to learn? What kinds of experiences do you believe foster such learning? How do you see yourself contributing to this new learning?
3. When you first met with this mentee, what were your goals? How is the knowledge you think new teachers need to learn and goals related?
4. Is this current process what you used to do as a mentor? If not, how did that evolve over time?
5. Looking back, would you do things differently? How?
6. If you were advising another mentor, what would you tell them success as a mentor looks like?

Wrap Up
Before we end our time today, is there anything else you would like to add about what we have discussed? Is there anything relevant that we missed talking about today? Thank you so much for sharing with me. Let's discuss a date and time that will work for you for our next interview.

<u>Recording</u>
Once again, I will record our conversation in order to ensure I do not miss anything you share and I can work with the information you share exactly as you say it. I know that you already agreed to the previous interview being recorded, but I want to check again. Do I have your permission to record?

<u>Confidentiality</u>
I will continue to refer to you by a pseudonym of your choice, not only in the interview but also in all the writing that will accompany this project. I have assigned the pseudonym "Venture Academy" to the mentoring program where you work(ed) and so any reference made by you about this program will be transcribed with that pseudonym.

<u>Artifacts</u>
When we set up this time to meet, I mentioned that you are welcome to bring in any documents, etc. that you use(d) in your mentoring. If you have brought anything, please feel free to refer to it at any time that seems appropriate. If you think of something that you would like to share but do not have it on hand, you can always bring it to the next interview.

<u>Questions</u>
1. How do you look at your teaching career? Do you see it in phases? Where would are you now?
2. When did you first start mentoring? Why did you start mentoring at that point?
3. What did you feel about being a mentor at that point?
4. How has that feeling changed over time?
5. What teaching experiences do you bring to your mentoring role?
6. Do you foresee yourself continuing to mentor? Where do you see yourself going in terms of mentoring?

<u>Wrapping up</u>
Before we end for today, is there anything you wish to talk about more? If you have brought anything you wanted to share and we did not discuss it yet, we can do so now. Is there anything relevant that we missed talking about today? Thank you for taking the time to share with me. Let's discuss a date and time that will work for you for our next interview.

Recording
Once again, I will record our conversation in order to ensure I do not miss anything you share and I can work with the information you share exactly as you say it. I know that you already agreed to the previous interview being recorded, but I want to check again. Do I have your permission to record?

Confidentiality
I will continue to refer to you by a pseudonym of your choice, not only in the interview but also in all the writing that will accompany this project. I have assigned the pseudonym "Venture Academy" to the mentoring program where you work(ed) and so any reference made by you about this program will be transcribed with that pseudonym.

Artifacts
When we set up this time to meet, I mentioned that you are welcome to bring in any documents, etc. that you use(d) in your mentoring. If you have brought anything, please feel free to refer to it at any time that seems appropriate. If you think of something that you would like to share but do not have on hand, you can always bring it to the next interview.

Questions
1. Did you receive any training from Venture? If so, please describe. What was most helpful? Least helpful?
2. From your standpoint as a mentor, what drawbacks, if any, did Venture possess?
3. How did you determine the nature of the needs of the new teachers you mentored?
4. How does Venture support your work with the new teachers? Does it constrain it? If so, how?
5. Looking at these instruments (show Venture mentor observation charts, etc.) that you could use, which ones of these did you use? Why did you use them?
6. Could you please give me a walkthrough of a session with your new teacher, describing the work you do together?
7. Were there any situational factors related to your own school/work, or that of your mentees, or of the pandemic etc. that impacted your mentorship?

Wrapping up
Before we end for today, is there anything you wish to talk about more? If you have brought anything you wanted to share and we did not discuss it yet, we can do so now. Is there anything relevant that we missed talking about today? Thank you for taking the time to share with me. Let's discuss a date and time that will work for you for our next interview.

<u>Audio Recording</u>
Once again, I will record our conversation in order to ensure I do not miss anything you share and I can work with the information you share exactly as you say it. I know that you already agreed to the previous interview being recorded, but I want to check again. Do I have your permission to record?

<u>Confidentiality</u>
I will continue to refer to you by a pseudonym of your choice, not only in the interview but also in all the writing that will accompany this project. I have assigned the pseudonym "Venture Academy" to the mentoring program where you work(ed) and so any reference made by you about this program will be transcribed with that pseudonym.

<u>Purpose</u>
The purpose of this interview is for me to share a draft of my findings with you and for you to correct any inaccuracies.

<u>Wrapping up</u>
Before we end for today, is there anything you wish to talk about more? If you have brought anything you wanted to share and we did not discuss it yet, we can do so now. Thank you for taking the time to share with me. I am truly grateful for your participation in this study. As I mentioned when you first agreed to this study, I will purchase a book of your choosing as a thank you gift. Could you please let me know what book you would like and where you would like me to send it?

Interview questions with follow ups	RQ #1 What are the goals and approaches of these nine mentors in mentoring new teachers?	RQ#2 How do these nine mentors carry out that approach?	RQ #3 How are these perspectives impacted by situational factors with the program like working conditions and expectations?
Interview 1 goals: -Introduction to person -Fact-based questions to develop the relationship -Get sense of what they are doing as a mentor today or in recent experience -Get sense how past shaped current practice			
1. Are you currently mentoring anyone now? If not, when was the last time you did?			
2. What do you think new teachers need to learn? What kinds of experiences do you believe foster such learning? How do you see yourself contributing to this new learning?	√		
3. So when you first met with this mentee, what were your goals? How	√		

are your role and goals related?			
4. Is this current process what did you used to do as a mentor? If not, how did that evolve over time?	√	√	
5. Looking back, would you do things differently? How?	√	√	
6. If you were advising another mentor, what would you tell them success as a mentor looks like?	√		
Interview 2 goals: -where do they see themselves in their career -get sense of when teachers perceive they are early, mid, or end of career -how does mentoring fit into the status of their career			
1. How do you look at your teaching career? Do you see it in phases? Where would are you now?		√	
2. When did you first start mentoring? Why did you start mentoring at that point?		√	
3. What did you feel about being a		√	

mentor at that point?			
4. How has that feeling changed over time?		√	
5. What teaching experiences do you bring to your mentoring role?	√		
6. Do you foresee yourself continuing to mentor? Where do you see yourself going in terms of mentoring?		√	
Interview 3 goals: -insight about program			
1. Did you receive any training from Venture? If so, please describe. What was most helpful? Least helpful?	√		√
2. From your standpoint as a mentor, what drawbacks, if any, did Venture possess?			√
3. How did you determine the nature of the needs of the new teachers you mentored?	√		√
4. How does Venture support your work with the new teachers? Does it constrain it? If so, how?	√		√
5. Looking at these instruments (show	√		√

Venture mentor observation charts, etc.) that you could use, which ones of these did you use? Why did you use them?			
6. Could you please give me a walkthrough of a session with your new teacher, describing the work you do together?		√	
7. Were there any situational factors related to your own school/work, or that of your mentees, or of the pandemic etc. that impacted your mentorship?	√		√

Potential Codes for Data Analysis

Potential Code	Description
Goal	Any talk about goals of mentoring or mentorship
Personal expectation	Any talk about internal standards that the mentor feels they should have themselves of their mentees should have for themselves
Role	Any talk about their role as a mentor
Skill	Any talk about particular skills they bring to their role as a mentor
Duty	Any talk about the obligations they feel as a mentor
Relationship	Any talk about the relationship with the new teacher
Commonality	Any talk about commonality between mentor and their new teacher
Difference	Any talk about difference between mentor and new teacher
Teaching experience	Any talk about teaching experiences the mentor brings to their practice
Age	Any talk about the mentor's age
Career	Any overarching talk about mentor's teaching career in general
Gap	Any talk about the gap between the mentor and new teacher whether it be age or experience
Early-career	Any talk about beginning stage of mentor's career
Mid-career	Any talk about middle stage of mentor's career
Late-career	Any talk about late stage of mentor's career
Evolve	Any talk about changes over career span
Conditions	Any talk about working conditions within the mentoring context
Program expectation	Any talk about expectations within the mentoring context
Training	Any talk about training received within mentoring context
Impact	Any talk about contextual factor that impacted mentoring

Good Teaching at

1. **GOOD TEACHING** is as much about passion as it is about reason. It's about not only motivating students to learn, but teaching them how to learn, and doing so in a manner that is relevant, meaningful, engaging, fun and memorable. It's about having a passion for it, and conveying that passion to everyone, most importantly to your students.

2. **GOOD TEACHING** is about substance and training students as consumers of knowledge. It's about doing your best to keep on top of your game. It's about getting kids excited about learning!

3. **GOOD TEACHING** is about listening, questioning, being responsive, and remembering that each student and class is different. It's about eliciting responses and developing the oral communication skills of the quiet students. It's about pushing students to question, to wonder and to engage with each other in worthwhile projects and activities; at the same time, it's about being human, respecting others, and being professional at all times.

4. **GOOD TEACHING** is about not always having a fixed agenda and being rigid, but being flexible, fluid, experimenting, and having the confidence to react and adjust to changing circumstances. It's about "reading" your students and constantly assessing whether what you're doing is working. It's about changing up your lesson plans in the moment to address teachable moments as they present themselves.

5. **GOOD TEACHING** is also about style. Should good teaching be entertaining? You bet! Does this mean that it lacks in substance? Not a chance! Effective teaching is not about being locked with both hands glued to a podium or having your eyes fixated on a slide projector while you drone on. Good teachers work the room and every student in it. They realize that they are conductors and the class is their orchestra. All students play different instruments and at varying proficiencies. A teacher's job is to make these instruments come to life as a coherent whole to make music. Good teachers facilitate well-planned student-centered activities.

6. **GOOD TEACHING** is about humor. This is very important. It's about not taking yourself too seriously. It's often about making innocuous jokes, mostly at your own expense, so that the ice breaks and students learn in a more relaxed atmosphere where you, like them, are human with your own share of faults and shortcomings. Remember, though, there is a difference between jokes and sarcasm, which has no place at Explo.

7. **GOOD TEACHING** is about caring, nurturing, and developing minds and talents. It's about devoting time, often invisible, to every student. It's also about the time spent reflecting and redesigning courses, and preparing materials to further enhance instruction.

8. **GOOD TEACHING** is supported by strong and visionary leadership, and very tangible instructional support resources, personnel, and funds. Good teaching is continually reinforced by an overarching vision that transcends the entire organization and is reflected in what is said, but more importantly by what is done.

9. **GOOD TEACHING** is about mentoring between senior and junior staff and teamwork.

10.   **GOOD TEACHING** is about asking good questions of students, of yourself, of your peers and of your mentors.

11.   **GOOD TEACHING** is about facilitating good activities that have students *DOING* and *EXPLORING* and *DISCOVERING*.

12.   **AT THE END OF THE DAY**, good teaching is about having fun, experiencing pleasure and intrinsic rewards…like locking eyes with a student in the back row and seeing the synapses and neurons connecting, thoughts being formed, the person becoming better, and a smile cracking across a face as learning all of a sudden happens. It's about the former student who says your course changed her life. It's about another telling you that your course was the best one he's ever taken. Good teachers practice their craft not for the money or because they have to, but because they truly enjoy it and because they want to. Good teachers couldn't imagine doing anything else.

GOOD TEACHING happens purposefully and daily at   !

TEACHING + LEARNING
expectations

Think
- Learn and maintain professional standards
- Prepare + utilize open-ended questions to facilitate students' exploration
- Consider how to help students make learning meaningful

Engage
- Create a safe and immersive learning environment with multiple points of access
- Implement ▮▮▮▮ methods + resources to optimize participation
- Provide opportunities for students to collaborate, share ideas and opinions, and to challenge each other through civil discourse
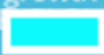
Anticipate
- Ensure classroom and materials are well-provisioned
- Accurately integrate subject knowledge and thoughtful preparation
- Adapt lesson plans and optimize the ▮▮▮▮ experience in response to student needs and interests

Connect
- Get to know each student individually - in and outside of class
- Connect ideas to the real world using age-appropriate examples
- Build in formal and informal opportunities for collaboration and reflection

High expectations
- Hold yourself and your students accountable to high expectations
- Maintain and encourage a growth mindset
- Make clear and represent ▮▮▮▮ Mission in all that you do

Teacher Movement Chart

Date

Classroom Observation Location Drawing
Copy and share with instructor

Instructor   CA

Course/Workshop Title

Purpose: CAs use this form to gather evidence of teacher movement and equity of attention toward students. CAs diagram the classroom layout and locations of students and track teacher movement. Use the columns on the right to assign each student a number, and track instructor's interactions with each student. Intended for use in combination with Observation Notes and Goals Summary.

CLASSROOM MAP	STUDENT	GENDER	INTERACTIONS
	1		
	2		
	3		
	4		
	5		
	6		
	7		
	8		
	9		
	10		
	11		
	12		
	13		
	14		

	15		
	16		

Comments:

Teacher Needs Assessment

Teacher _____

CA _____

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Teachers

Dear Teachers,

Now that you've been through your first session at _____ (congratulations!) you are probably more aware of your needs. Please fill this out so that your CA can help you in more specific areas during Session 2. Keep up the great work!

Possible Responses:
- A. **Little or no need** for assistance in this area
- B. **Some need** for assistance in this area
- C. **Moderate need** for assistance in this area
- D. **High need** for assistance in this area
- E. **Very high** need for assistance in this area

1. _____ Finding out what is expected of me as a teacher

2. _____ Getting to know

3. _____ Communicating with administrators

4. _____ Communicating with other teachers

5. _____ Organizing my classroom

6. _____ Managing my classroom

7. _____ Gauging student engagement

8. _____ Obtaining instructional resources and materials

9. _____ Planning for instruction

10. _____ Managing my time and work

11. _____ Diagnosing student needs

12. _____ Evaluating student progress

13. _____ Motivating students

14. _____ Assisting students with special needs

15. _____ Dealing with individual differences among students

16. _____ Facilitating active group discussions (ECDM if required - Wellesley and Yale only)

17. _____ Using a variety of teaching methods

18. _____ Keeping students involved

19. _____ Effectively grouping students

20. _____ Understanding what to expect from classroom observations

21. _____ Understanding the CA/teacher relationship

22. _____ Dealing with stress

List any professional needs not addressed by the preceding items.

_____
_____
_____

_____

As modified from Gordon, Stephen P. and Susan Maxey, <u>How To Help Beginning Teachers Succeed</u>. ASCD 2000.

CA _____

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Curriculum Advisors

Part A. Please choose the response for each item that most closely indicates your level of need for assistance in the area described.

Possible Responses:
   A. **Little or no need** for assistance in this area
   B. **Some need** for assistance in this area
   C. **Moderate need** for assistance in this area
   D. **High need** for assistance in this area
   E. **Very high** need for assistance in this area

   1. _____ Learning more about what is expected of me as a mentor
   2. _____ Collecting observation data
   3. _____ Diagnosing the needs of my teachers
   4. _____ Developing my interpersonal skills
   5. _____ Developing my conferencing skills
   6. _____ Developing my ability to diagnose classroom issues
   7. _____ Assisting my teachers with classroom management
   8. _____ Helping my teachers develop a variety of teaching strategies
   9. _____ Socializing my teachers into   culture
   10. _____ Helping my teachers set meaningful, attainable, measurable goals
   11. _____ Finding resources and materials for my teachers
   12. _____ Providing emotional support for my teachers
   13. _____ Managing my time and workload
   14. _____ Problem-solving strategies
   15. _____ Helping my teachers motivate students
   16. _____ Balancing support and challenge for teachers
   17. _____ Helping my teachers diagnose student needs
   18. _____ Helping my teachers deal with individual differences among students
   19. _____ Helping my teachers evaluate student progress
   20. _____ Engaging in expert coaching of my teachers
   21. _____ Helping teachers deal with stress
   22. _____ Dealing with my own stress
   23. _____ Helping teachers implement ECDM (Wellesley and Yale only)

List any professional needs not addressed by the preceding items.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Date

Classroom Post-Observation Form
Copy and share with instructor

Instructor	CA

Course/Workshop Title

Purpose: CAs use this form <u>or</u> another planning tool to plan their post-observation meeting with the instructor.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION (EVIDENCE)	TEACHING STANDARD *listed on reverse*

STRENGTHS	AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

Teacher Summer Goals:	Type of Meeting Anticipated: *Directive* or *Collaborative*
	Justification for Above:
How will you begin the meeting?	

	TEACHING STANDARDS	
1	The teacher shows understanding of the central concepts, methods of inquiry, and structures of the subject matter and creates learning experiences that make the content meaningful to all students.	
2	The teacher provides learning opportunities that support the expression of student thought and ideas by creating an active learning environment where all students are encouraged to participate.	
3	The teacher creates an environment that encourages positive social interaction by promoting and celebrating the diversity among students through lessons, activities and living groups.	
4	The teacher responds to the diverse needs of students by using a variety of instructional strategies to encourage the development of critical thinking, problem solving, and subject-related skills.	
5	The teacher maintains standards of professional conduct, and provides leadership in all aspects of life, in the classroom, on the playing fields, in dormitories, etc. to improve student learning and well-being.	
6	The teacher maintains a safe environment (i.e. classrooms, science labs, kitchens, sports-related locations, on trips) inclusive of, but not limited to, modeling, posting, and enforcing all safety rules and procedures, being aware of student allergy, medical problems and special needs, properly storing and discarding materials and waste, including food, chemicals and biological specimens, and keeping learning spaces organized, clean and uncluttered.	

Curriculum Advisor Expectations

1. **Be Flexible**
   - Asked to help with programming, finding a lost child, a million things happen at
     -- sometimes you just need to drop everything and help out.
   - Be open to changes and shifts in the schedule. Things will change throughout the
     summer (our systems might shift, teachers might be switched around, curriculum
     may change). When something comes up, be willing to adapt and move with it.
2. **Be Loyal**
   - To   , to the OTL, to each other
   - No trash-talking or venting down to instructors
3. **Be Transparent**
   - If you're not sure how to do something, ask.
   - Share when you have a heavy load and need help! (This will happen to all of us
     this summer).
   - Share when you make mistakes so we can work together to fix them.
   - Share challenges with teachers/classes/feedback meetings + ask for input from us
     and your fellow CAs.
   - Be open about your strengths and weaknesses so that we can support you.
   - Be open to receiving feedback with open ears/heart/mind
4. **Be Communicative**
   - Communicate clearly and promptly
   - Don't wait to bring up something important
5. **Be Sufficient + Take Responsibility**
   - Work the right amount, take your off time (self-care is important!)
   - Get the job done
   - If there is an issue with a class, teacher, etc. take ownership and work to find a
     solution (but pull in others where necessary!)
6. **Be on Time**
   - Self-explanatory!
   - People need to be on time to make   run
7. **Be Professional**
   - Know your role as a Middle Manager, have fun, but also be a professional,
     someone that staff trust and look up to
8. **Be Human, Be Learners**
   - Embrace the idea that you're a human being who is learning, feeling, and
     thinking.
   - Embrace the idea that you are learning this summer and that everyone in the
     office is learning and growing in different ways.

Platform for Difficult Conferences
(as excerpted from Research for Better Teaching, Inc ©2006)

Honesty
- state the purpose of the conference first
- state your concerns and feelings directly

Evidence
- use your notes
- read quotes, examples, etc to illustrate the concern
- stay concrete

Active-Listening
- tolerate silence
- resist premature advice

Refocusing
- move from listening to discussion

Checking in
- check with the teacher for understanding

Mutuality
- identify common values, commitments and goals
- remind teacher of Explo mission and teaching standards

Ownership
- continue the process until you're sure the teacher takes ownership of the issue

Planning
- make a plan to put into place immediately
- brainstorm possible activity ideas
- support the teacher by helping to gather materials, secure a space, contact other staff or outside speakers, etc
- clearly state the expectations moving forward

Recognition
- acknowledge positive contributions, motives, skills of the teacher

Summarizing
- ask the teacher to summarize what's been said, concerns, steps to follow

Follow-Up
- be clear as to how you'll follow up with this teacher and follow-through on the plan

All difficult conferences should be reported to CO administration beforehand to plan and afterwards to let them know what plan is in place.

How to Recognize and Meet the Needs of New Teachers
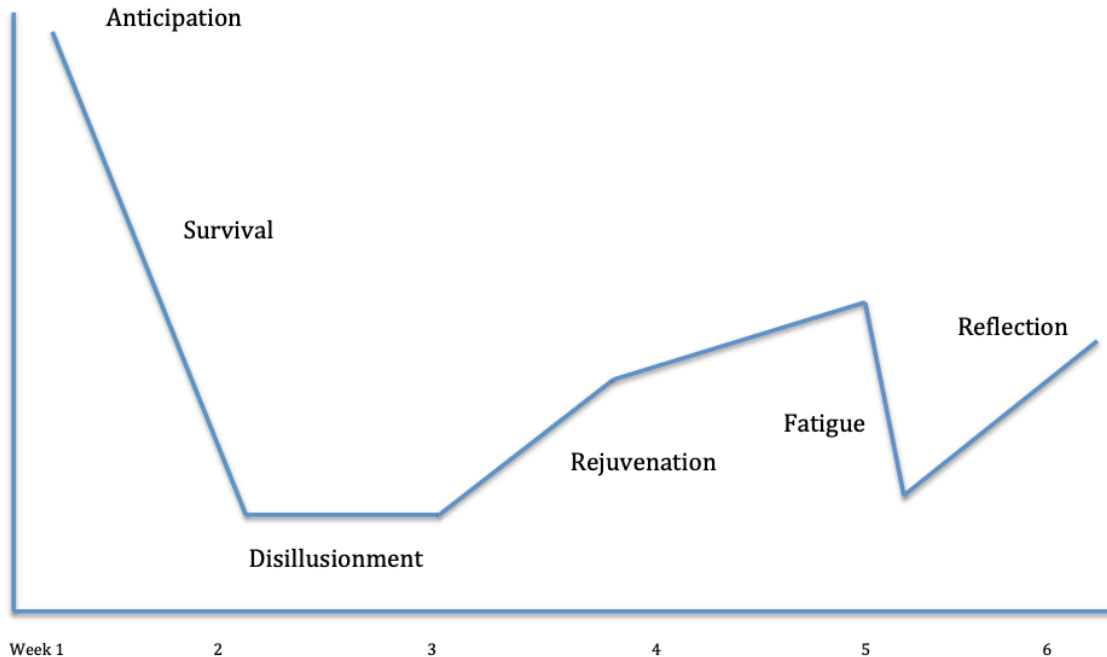
Awareness of these phases assists mentors in balancing support, challenge and vision when working with teachers.

Anticipation: Our teachers arrive   with carefully prepared lesson plans and a vision of what teaching will be like. Major concerns during orientation include establishing relationship with peers, the Curriculum Office, administrators, locating materials, setting up the classroom, ___ routines, establishing themselves as an authority figure and developing relationships with students.

Support:
- Establish a professional trusting relationship with each teacher EARLY during orientation week.
- Review lesson plans, materials, student arrival and first day activities.

Challenge:
- Set realistic teacher learning goals for the first week
- Establish meeting norms and expectations for both you and your teachers
- Assess each teacher's needs through the Teachers Needs Assessment Questionnaire

Facilitate Vision:
- What is your teacher's vision of the ideal teacher?
- Share your vision of professionalism.
- Make connections to teaching standards and first week learning goals.

Survival: Teachers begin to realize how much is involved in teaching, how few "tools" they have to deal with the day-to-day issues they face with little time for reflection or revision.

Support:
- Use the needs assessment doc to provide one-on-one professional development during meetings to address classroom issues.
- Share what has worked for you in similar circumstances around managing routines.
- Actively listen as concerns arise and frustrations are shared.

Challenge:
- Ask questions that help your teachers to recognize effective choices.
- Offer ideas as a menu from which the teachers may choose.
- This is the time to leave notes in teachers' mailboxes that go beyond support and ask them to write a few words about a significant event this week and what they learned from it, what they need to know more about, or what they're most proud of. Ask them to bring this to your next scheduled meeting.

Facilitate Vision:
- Celebrate goals achieved and set new ones moving forward.
- This is a good time to discuss what drew them to   and connect it to professional vision.

Disillusionment: This is the time when teachers have been stretched as far as they believe possible in meeting their professional responsibilities. Depending on their classroom success until now, teachers may question their capabilities in the classroom and become discouraged with the prospect of revising curriculum for the incoming group of students second session.

Support:
- Continue to share tips for managing day-to-day issues and managing stress.
- Focus on how far each teacher has progressed since Week 1.
- Work with teachers to make their classroom routines more effective.
- Acknowledge their feelings without dismissing them or exacerbating them.
- Assure your advisees that many teachers feel this way at this point in the program but reassure them it will pass.
- Check in often to assess needs and address them.

Challenge:
- With a few solid weeks behind them, help each teacher learn from session one experiences.
- Review the pitfalls of the first session and work to revise curriculum and/or teaching methods to avoid them during second session.

- Leave a mailbox message note asking what (s)he is excited for, something the teacher is struggling with, is curious about or something new (s)he wants to try.
- Watch for signs of stress.

Rejuvenation: Many teachers will feel re-energized with the end of the first session and a night to themselves before new students arrive. This marks the "great do-over" for teachers since second session provides them the opportunity to re-teach their curriculum, using what they learned first session, to a new group of students. They return to their classrooms with a clearer and more realistic vision of teaching their courses. They have more confidence in routines and relationships and many have an improved sense of timing and organization.

Support:
- Celebrate, share and mark goals achieved.
- Proactively assist your teachers to revise his/her lesson plans to address the needs of the new group.

Challenge:
- Focus on instructional outcomes – the degree to which students are engaged and activities are hitting their mark.
- Ask teachers to verbalize what they're doing differently this time through their plans and the impact the changes are having on students' experience.
- Ask teachers to connect the perceived impact to evidence. – Ask "how do you know?"

Facilitate Vision:
- Work with your teachers to assist them in seeing how what they do in a classroom impacts the Explo community, as a whole.
- Encourage teachers to work with peers to develop and maintain a teaching collaborative by sharing strategies learned.

Fatigue: This is the time period when energy begins to falter and teachers are feeling tired. They need your encouragement and support more than ever now.

Support:
- Remind teachers that that they're working hard and it's noticed and appreciated citing specific examples of what you've seen.
- Continue supporting creativity and ingenuity in revising lesson plans.

Challenge:
- Encourage teachers to stretch just a bit further and try something new in class – even if it's small.
- Ask teachers to verbalize what is going well this session since it can feel like we notice more errors than successes.

Adapted from Moire, E. (1999) The Stages of a Teacher's First Year. In M. Scherer (Ed) <u>A Better Beginning: Supporting and Mentoring New Teachers</u>. Alexandria, VA: ASCD

Vision:
- Talk with teachers about how the   nission connects to what they're doing in class.
- Encourage teachers to think about how their teaching role has expanded beyond the walls of the classroom and how they impact students beyond the classroom.

Reflection: As second session winds down, advisors should encourage teachers to reflect on all they have learned since arriving at   It's time to broaden their focus beyond the current week and acknowledge just how far they've come since orientation. This can be an emotional time as teachers prepare to leave the community to which they've worked so hard to contribute.

Support:
- Outline what teachers need to do in order to pack up their classrooms, etc before leaving
- Leave a note in mailboxes congratulating teachers for the completion of their teaching for this year and the positives you'll take away from your professional relationship.

Challenge:
- Facilitate reflection on practice and progress in your final meeting with teachers, including insights and goals.

Facilitate Vision:
- Do a gap analysis – What was missing in the classroom this summer? What would the teacher do differently if they were to teach the course a third time?
- Make connections between what was expected, what was desired and what actually occurred.
- Mark specific turning points for each teacher.
- Ask teachers to articulate what they'll take away from the summer experience and how they'll make use of what they've learned about teaching and about themselves.

CELEBRATE!

All planned discussions must have starter discussion questions included in the lesson plans. These discussion strategies encourage teachers to move away from the raise-your-hand and wait-to-be-called-on method of managing a discussion to more active participation on the part of more students. Some activities are more appropriate for certain ages than others. The activities listed are coded according to the program it is best suited for (Wh = Wheaton, We = Wellesley, Y = Yale). If you're unsure if an activity is appropriate, ask your CA.

Losing My Marbles: Each student starts with three marbles (or chips, paper clips, rocks, etc). Each time they participate, they add one marble to a jar. By the end of the discussion, all students should have contributed all of their marbles. **(Wh)**

Musical Questions: A series of high-interest discussion questions are posted around the room. While the music plays, students circulate among the questions. When the music stops, they write their answer on the nearest question. **(Wh)**

Carousel: (similar to above) A series of high-interest discussion questions are written on poster-boards or large construction paper (1 question/poster board). Students are divided into groups with one designated scribe. Questions rotate group-to-group so that each group can discuss and write their responses to each question. The process continues until each group has answered each question. **(We, Wh)**

Jigsaw: Each group member becomes an "expert" on one area of a topic, and then teaches the group about his or her area of expertise. Ideal for subjects that have multiple parts, such as different characters in a story, vocabulary words, theories about a problem, smaller steps in an important event, etc. Groups create memorable visuals to use during instruction. **(Wh, We, Y)**

Take a Stand! This technique is used when questions are asked of the group and each member will need to make a choice of the best answer when given no more than 4 choices. This works well with yes/no (pro/con) questions. Designate one wall in the classroom as "yes" and another as "no". Ask your students a series of difficult questions that don't have a right answer like, "Are you for or against the death penalty"? Have them show their answer or opinion by taking a stand and walking to the correct wall. Once everyone has chosen an answer, have students share their reasoning and some fascinating discussion can take place. After the discussion, you can have students take another stand on the same subject to see if their position changed after participating in the discussion. **(Wh, We, Y)**

Group Reporter: During group work, designate one student per group as the reporter who will take notes during group discussion and summarize the discussion to the class when it reconvenes. **(Wh, We, Y)**

Post-It: A variation on "Take a Stand!, the teacher gives students post-it notes as they enter class. Students are asked a thought-provoking question with limited choices that are listed on poster board as a bar graph with the choices on the x-axis (horizontal axis). Students are asked to place their post-it note above their choices. 1 student = 1 vote (choice). Placing the post-its creates a quick visual. The result is read as a bar graph and discussion develops from how the class, as a whole, voted. **(Wh, We, Y)**

Change Up the Setting: Move your class to a different location. You'll be amazed at how moving your class can get them to talk. If possible, move to an area that is a part of the discussion, to a field for a sports discussion, a pond for biology, a trail for ecology or habitat, etc. Check with the program staff to see what restrictions there might be at your campus. **(Wh, We, Y)**

Role Play:
Beginning a discussion with, "What do you think of animal testing?" may get some responses and get a discussion started but may not cover all sides of the issue. Instead try assigning roles to students and having them discuss the issue from their viewpoint. You can even structure it as a Talk Show with guests and an audience that asks questions. Students could be given research to do first – or the roles may be such that only a point of view is necessary. One person can be a scientist who believes they are on the verge of an important scientific discovery that will save many lives, but needs to run tests on animals. Another scientist could want to test on animals for the development of cosmetics. Someone could be the patient that would benefit from the research. Someone could be the rabbit that gets tested. Someone can be the person that believes it is wrong to kill animals for any reason, etc.
You have been called upon to present the results of your research to the Board of Directors of the National Science Association. You have mysteriously appeared in an art gallery in which you are the guide for museum visitors, a famous paleontologist giving a presentation on a newly discovered species of dinosaur, or a news anchor reporting on a natural disaster. Giving your students a scenario to buy into can challenge their imaginations, their quest for knowledge and free up some inhibitions about participation. Some courses have role-play built into the title but role-play can be added to any course to enhance learning and participation. **(Wh, We, Y)**

Question of the Day: Begin class by presenting the class with a thought-provoking question related to your lesson (It might be your essential question). Give them a few minutes to informally brainstorm and write their thoughts/hypotheses down. After completing the day's activities, leave some time to close the lesson by having students revisit their earlier writings and add/discuss their original perceptions and what they think now. **(Wh,We,Y)**

Case Studies: Have students analyze case studies to apply/reinforce key concepts. Case studies provide a real world connection that helps to connect students to the curriculum content. Students can work in groups for discussion. **(Wh, We,Y)**

Think-Pair-Share: When posed with a thought-provoking question, students take time to think independently, possibly jot down a few thoughts then find a classmate to share with. Gather the class together for sharing thoughts. **(Wh, We, Y)**

Playing Devil's Advocate: Beginning a discussion with "Let's discuss the role of schools in the lives of young people." Will get a lot of stares and maybe a few short remarks. The topic is abstract; it refers to a generic population and is not very exciting. Instead try beginning with "I think you should go to school everyday, 365 days a year, with no vacations." This will hit close to home and they will have strong feelings about it. There is nothing abstract about going to school everyday. Defend it with statements like "students waste time when they are out of school," "spending summers at camp or programs like Exploration is a distraction from real learning," or " How can anyone learn anything outside of school?" The role of school in their lives or what they think it should be will be made clear. You may get some students who actually agree with you. It is important not to be attacking or vindictive when being controversial. Creating an environment where students feel comfortable thinking and expressing themselves is one of the prime directives of Exploration. **(Wh, We, Y)**

Academic Controversy: This works best with older students, **Wellesley and Yale Programs.** Establish "ground rules" for acceptable behavior before this activity. This works best with a pro/con dilemma. Students are randomly assigned a position to investigate with a group. Each group member is paired with a member who prepared the opposite position. Each person in this pair has a limited time to present their position while the other partner takes notes. Each person then critically analyzes the opposing position in an attempt to refute it. Each partner now presents the opposing position as his or her own based on the information the opponent gave. Students may switch seats to help them "gain a new perspective". Ultimately, each pair works to come to their best-reasoned judgment about the issue having taken ownership of both sides. **(We, Y)**

APPENDIX S:
Advice for New Teachers

Advice for New Teachers From Mentors: Compiled from mentor comments by Barry Sweeny

THE CRITICAL STUFF:

1. ASK A LOT OF QUESTIONS AND SHARE YOUR PROBLEMS. As mentors we want to help and we need to know the best way to provide that help, so your questions are important to us. We know that you have a lot to learn, especially the first 2-3 years, so don't feel inadequate or embarrassed asking often for suggestions or help. We all are professionals & are always learning. Be willing to take some time from "today" periodically to develop yourself as a professional for the children you will serve "tomorrow".

2. EXPECT IT TO TAKE A LOT OF WORK. You may be expecting to assume the full load of an experienced educator but you will be doing that without the benefit of that experience. There is so much to learn and some of the "lessons" are easier than others, so for the first year or so you'll be working very hard to do your job as well as you want. Just remember that as your experience and skills grow, so will your ability to work efficiently and effectively. If educating children was simple, it wouldn't be a profession!

3. DON'T TRY TO DO IT ALL NOW. No matter how experienced any of us becomes, we find that the work is NEVER done. It is not possible to do enough for the children about which we all care so much. The most important things are:

   * to care about the students and your professional colleagues,
   * to stay involved in your school, and
   * to stay informed and on track with curriculum priorities.

In this way the essentials will receive your best effort.

4. JOIN THE "SCHOOL TEAM", DON'T GO IT ALONE. We all discover that the most significant results are achieved when we work as a team. Each of us has strengths and limitations as individuals, but as a team our diversity creates more strengths & fewer limitations on what WE can accomplish. This means that WE can respond better to the differences in children and that their learning will improve because their needs are met. The more open we are to learning from and sharing with others the truer this becomes.

5. LISTEN TO YOUR MENTORS AND DEFER TO THEIR JUDGMENT WHEN YOU FIRST TRY THINGS. Mentors are trained to limit the amount of advice they offer, particularly after the initial orientation period. If your mentor advises you to try something you should definitely consider it. Try it once, then when you have that experience you'll be better able to judge for yourself what is right for you and your classes. Ignoring the mentor's advice often means learning "the hard way", by trial and error.

MORE ADVICE:

1. Don't assume very much. Ask for clarification or check it out.
2. Don't apologize when you ask questions. You need to know, so asking is what you should do.
3. Use the resources that we provide you. Read the handouts, articles, and manuals.
4. Be yourself. We liked you when we hired you!
5. Be flexible and willing to adapt to situations. Rigidity wins a battle but loses wars and friends.
6. Keep your sense of humor and enjoy the children and your colleagues.
7. Celebrate the successes, but realize that we do not always succeed.
8. Plan some time for yourself. Protect your great attitude.
9. Listen a lot. Speak up when it's appropriate.

You may copy and distribute this paper as long as you do so for free and maintain the following credits:

Captain of Hooks

What can I do to crank up the volume in here?

Here is a helpful list of tactics and techniques that can boost engagement in your courses and workshops. Return to this resource when you feel the energy in your classes lagging. CAUTION: Enthusiasm in delivery is critical.

The Hands-On Hook: Getting kids up and out of their seats.

- *Walk and Talk*
- *Simulations*
- *Musical Chairs*
- *Role Play*
- *Gestures*
- *Interpretive Dances*
- *Relay Races*

The Artsy Hook: Using the arts to your advantage.

- *Finger Painting*
- *Music*
- *Sculptures*
- *Videos*
- *PlayDoh*
- *Pipe Cleaners*
- *Origami*
- *Clay*
- *Performances*

The Safari Hook: Taking the class out of the classroom. (Alert CA before changing location.)

- *Common Spaces*
- *The Library*
- *Soccer Field*
- *Under a Tree*
- *Down by the Lake*
- *Amphitheater*

The Puzzle Hook: Use some mystery to spice up the day.

- *Jigsaw Puzzles*
- *Riddles*
- *Teasers*
- *Treasure Hunts*
- *Challenges*

The Real World Hook: Bring in some outside perspective.

- *Current Events*
- *Pop Culture*
- *Social Media*

Supporting English Language Learners in the Classroom

Monitor and adapt speech

- Restate complex sentences as a sequence of simple sentences avoid or explain use of idiomatic expressions
- Restate at a slower rate when needed, but make sure that the pace is not so slow that normal intonation and stress patterns become distorted
- Pause often to allow students to process what they hear
- Provide specific explanations of key words and special or technical vocabulary, using examples and nonlinguistic props when possible
- Use everyday language
- Provide explanations for the indirect use of language (i.e. sarcasm).

Adopt Universal Design

- Use nonlinguistic examples that help to explain or clarify the content such as bring in objects, photographs, or other materials as examples
- Use demonstrations or role playing to illustrate a concept
- Provide notes to students for their later review of what was presented
- Allow time for students to discuss what they learn and generate questions in
- Do not rely exclusively on oral responses when assessing how well ELL students have learned specific content. Include written work, demonstrations, or special projects.

Encourage Work with Peers

- Allow students to speak their language but encourage target language.
- Utilize peers to help translate
- Share language with the class.
- Have ELLs work in groups with English speakers

Maintain High Expectations

- Teach grade level content to English language learners.
- Make appropriate modifications of assignment length or form of assessment.

References:
Zehler, Annette. (Summer, 1994). Working with English language learners: Strategies for elementary and middle school teachers. NCBE Program Information Guide Series, Number19.

"Being a mentor keeps me current. When I have to answer my mentee's questions it makes me ask, "Why am I doing what I'm doing?" In discussing philosophy, problems, or techniques with this new teacher, I find out what I really believe. That makes me a stronger person and a better teacher." - A Beginning Teacher's Mentor

Potential High-Priority Needs of New Teachers

- ❖ Classroom Management
- ❖ Acquiring information about program system
- ❖ Obtaining instructional materials and resources
- ❖ Planning, organizing, and managing instruction and professional responsibilities
- ❖ Assessing students and evaluating progress
- ❖ Motivating students
- ❖ Using effective teaching strategies
- ❖ Recognizing and dealing with individual students' needs, interests, abilities and problems
- ❖ Communicating with colleagues, including administrators, supervisors and other teachers
- ❖ Adjusting to the teaching environment and role
- ❖ Receiving emotional support

These needs can manifest themselves as a result of and within environmental influences like:

- Challenging work assignments – Do teachers need help balancing their roles?
- Unclear expectations – Do teachers understand their responsibilities?
- Inadequate resources – Do teachers have the resources they need?
- Emotional Isolation – Do teachers have support systems and know how to and feel comfortable accessing them?
- Role Conflict – How can young teachers be both young adults and teachers?
- Reality Shock – How do you manage the difference between the idealized vision of teaching and its reality?

Gordon, Stephen P. and Susan Maxey, <u>How To Help Beginning Teachers Succeed</u>. ASCD 2000.