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An Evaluation of Perceptions of a Mentoring Program of Beginning Teachers in a Rural East Tennessee Secondary School.

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An Evaluation of Perceptions of a Mentoring Program of Beginning

Teachers in a Rural East Tennessee Secondary School

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ABSTRACT

An Evaluation of Perceptions of a Mentoring Program of Beginning

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Teachers, especially beginning teachers, continue a trend of leaving the profession at alarming

rates within the first 5 years resulting in excessive costs to school systems and diminished

instructional quality. Some programs, however, have shown impressive results. The purpose of

this qualitative study, using an emerging interview process, was to examine the perceptions of

beginning teachers in their 1st or 2nd year and those of veteran 3- to 5-year teachers regarding

the effectiveness of mentoring and other guidance they received as beginning teachers in a

secondary school and to understand their vision of how mentoring should be structured for

beginning teachers. Specifically, the study addressed satisfaction with 1st year experiences

specially designed to support the personal and professional well-being of beginning teachers.

The study included 8 beginning teachers, 7 of whom had received mentoring in their first year of

teaching and 1 who had received no mentoring and 13 veteran teachers, 7 of whom had received

mentoring in their first year of teaching and 6 who had received no mentoring. The study was

conducted in a secondary school in rural East Tennessee.

Findings of the study are congruent with the literature in terms of perceptions of both beginning

and veteran teachers regarding effectiveness of their mentoring experiences and

recommendations for enhancing mentoring programs. Most beginning and veteran teachers

indicated that mentoring could be helpful given certain conditions such as motivational support, encouraging communication, routine guidance in day-to-day school operations and mentor/mentee compatibility. Some said they felt that their own mentoring experiences actually helped them to remain in the profession. However, obstacles to effective mentoring such as lack of adequate time, lack of physical mentor/mentee proximity, lack of mentor interest in the process, and lack of mentoring skills were identified.

Recommendations of beginning and veteran teachers for enhancing mentoring program effectiveness include using only those teachers who have a real interest in mentoring, matching mentor/mentee personalities for compatibility, creating clear guidelines and providing dedicated time for mentoring, logistically arranging mentors/mentees in close proximity, and providing appropriate mentor/mentee training.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife, Kathy, and four children: Heath, Ryne, Justin, and Leah. Much love and thanks for allowing me this opportunity. I realize you sacrificed much during this process.

To my mom who gave many prayers for this process to come to fruition.

To my deceased grandmother, Maude Sherlin, to whom I will forever cherish for her unselfish love for me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It was clear even before the 21st century dawned, that teacher retention/attrition was problematic. Issue Brief (2005), using data from the National Center for Education Statistics, estimated that the cost to a school district of each teacher leaving the profession in 1999 was $12,546. The cost nationally was estimated at $2,158,074, 356 (Issue Brief, 2005). The National Education Association (2006), referencing mentoring and professional development among other solutions to teacher retention, reported predictions by experts that 2,000,000 new teachers will be needed in the next decade. Even if a sufficient number could be trained, the chances of retaining more than half of them are slim because 30% to 50% of new teachers leave the profession in their first 3 to 5 years (Ballinger, 2000). Darling-Hammond (2003) emphasized the increasing hiring pressure on systems because of the increasing gap between exits from the teaching profession and entrants into the profession. Despite a variety of efforts to retain new teachers, nearly 1,000 teachers were still leaving the field of teaching every day in 2003 (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003).

New teacher attrition impacts school systems in two important ways. First, it diminishes the number of teachers gaining experience and growing in competence as professionals. This is particularly significant in larger cities where students in high poverty areas and minority schools are almost twice as likely as others to have novice teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Second, attrition creates a great economic burden on the profession because early attrition prohibits recovery of the cost of preparing a beginning teacher. Issue Brief (2005) estimated the cost to Tennessee in 1999 to be $32,378,057.

To positively affect retention, some states instituted mentoring programs as a means of providing support and training to beginning teachers. The American Federation of Teachers in

"Mentor Teacher Programs in the States" (1998) reported that 30 states had mentoring programs of which 21 were mandated and only 14 funded. Tennessee was reported to have no mentoring program, no mandated mentoring program, no funded mentoring program, no mentor training, no mentor stipend, no mentoring requirements, and no release time (p. 7). In 1998, the *Tennessee Standards for Teaching: A Guide for Mentoring* ("Tennessee Model for Teacher Mentoring," 2006) was developed for the content and focus of teacher mentoring and was accepted by the Tennessee School Board Association. However, as reported in Issue Brief (2002), the legislature failed to fund the program. The Board policy included stipends, release time, professional development, and mentor qualifications; however, with no accompanying funding, the policies could only be implemented at the will of local school districts. Some districts, according to Issue Brief (2002), did implement parts of the program on their own.

Relative to the *Education Reform Act* of 2001 in the Tennessee Legislature, Senate Bill No. 1881 (11 - Public Acts, 2001) proposed the following concerning mentoring:

1. To improve new teacher performance, reduce new teacher attrition, and improve student learning, a beginning teacher mentoring program is hereby established. In the year 2001-02, trained mentors will provide support during the 1st year of teaching to one-half (1/2) of all teachers with no prior teaching experience. In the year 2002-03 and thereafter, trained mentors will provide support during the 1st year of teaching to all teachers with no prior teaching experience.

2. Mentors shall receive training and shall have a defined set of job responsibilities beyond their regular teaching duties for which they shall be paid a salary supplement established by the Commissioner of Education and included in the general appropriations act.

3. The Commissioner of Education is authorized to make grants to local education agencies for mentoring subject to guidelines established by the state boards and subject to appropriation.

4. The Commissioner of Education shall evaluate the effectiveness of the program in reducing the turnover rate of beginning teachers as compared to previous years and report the results of the evaluation to the state board of education.

   (a) The Commissioner of Education shall develop criteria for the selection of teachers applying to be mentors, including evidence of successful teaching and attention to the new teacher's area of specialization.

   (b) the Commissioner shall develop and recommend to the state board, for its approval, policies regarding the duties and responsibilities of mentors. (n. p.)

Although the Bill outlined mentoring policies that might prove to have a positive impact, it failed to pass the legislature.

In a 2002 joint document, the Tennessee higher education commission, the Tennessee department of education, the Tennessee state board of education, and *Tennessee Tomorrow* cited two significant pieces of data from the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB, 2001; Tennessee Department of Education, 2002). Tennessee must rely heavily on new and reentering teachers to fill open positions in the teacher workforce and 42% of new teachers who entered Tennessee schools in 1995 left the profession by 2000, up from a 13% to 17% attrition rate in the previous 5 years. Any threat of continuation of this trend clearly is cause for concern. Querying 1,354 individuals who left Tennessee public schools after the spring 2000 semester, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission found that 76% of the 487 respondents reported having received professional development and only 51% were provided with a mentor as a beginning teacher. Respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of their mentoring program in preparing them in the areas of content knowledge, teaching skills, classroom management, special needs, and overall. In none of the categories were the "very effective" ratings above 31% although "somewhat effective" ratings were as high as 38.7% (Tennessee Department of Education).

Using the resources of a 3-year Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant (TQE) in collaboration with the TQE task force, URBAN IMPACT, and Vanderbilt University, the Tennessee state department developed and piloted a mentoring curriculum and trained and certified approximately 1,800 educators ("Tennessee Model for Teacher Mentoring," 2006). Positive responses were reported from both novices and mentors and strategies for local school systems to train their own mentors were considered. Mentor Training academies were offered in each division of the state in 2003 ("Tennessee Model for Teacher Mentoring").

Kershaw et al. (2005) reported 5 years of data indicating that the Teacher Mentoring and Induction Program (TMIP) developed and implemented through the URBAN IMPACT grant has had a positive effect on participants. "Although teacher turnover rates may not on the surface appear to have improved significantly, the researchers reported, "Previous research has documented that the reasons for teachers leaving the school have been affected" (p. 2). Additionally, "The numbers of teachers leaving a given school for another school within the same school system at the same level have been reduced in a majority of the schools that have strong induction programs" (p. 2). Based on their TMIP research, Kershaw et al. (2005) claimed that "Effective mentoring and structured induction have been validated as research-based practice to reduce teacher turnover and to increase student achievement" (p. 33) and they suggested a need for further study.

The TMIP research is based on implementation of funded program development and research in a limited number of schools and with a variety of "perks" not available on a widespread basis among local systems throughout the state. No research has been done to determine the effectiveness of the state's mentoring program in secondary schools that are not involved in special programs but are expected to implement a mentoring program as a matter of course in the routine of the education delivery process.

Because mentoring programs differ greatly in terms of goals and other characteristics such as resources, time allocation, structure, and other elements of mentoring, case study

analysis of individual programs are necessary to determine the type of mentoring programs that might be effective in a particular situation. Before planning a new mentoring program or in the process of assessing the effectiveness of an existing one, attention should be given to what was or was not helpful and implications for future action. Although novice teachers' perceptions have been researched extensively, these studies have been approached through surveys and questionnaires with fixed questions that restricted understanding the nature of expectations by novice teachers (Wang & Odell, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

The directors of schools for school systems across the state of Tennessee informed all principals that all new beginning teachers, upon assignment to the school, must be assigned a mentor. No instructions were provided as to the mentoring process, qualifications or competencies of a mentor, or financial or work release time for mentoring. A common practice across the state involved the directors of schools instituting a 1- or 2-day training session during the week before school began in the fall with all new hires and instructional supervisors, federal project supervisors, special education supervisors, the directors, and assistant directors of schools in an orientation to their individual systems. Generally, principals were invited but not required to attend. Except for a reminder at the beginning and end of each year to appoint mentors for new hires, little or no assistance regarding mentoring was provided to building level administrators from the central office. Individual principals designed their own concepts of mentoring in their respective schools and implemented whatever policies and procedures were deemed appropriate for the individual school.

Exceptions to the general practice described above are funded pilot programs for testing various aspects of a mentoring program's effectiveness. Those programs involved extensive training, remuneration, and, in some cases, college course credit for individual participation as well as significant support for the individual school systems involved. Although positive

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mentoring results have been reported for individuals and systems involved in funded pilot programs, two questions arise: (1) Is the state's mentoring program effective in schools that have no particular special status as part of a pilot or research project? and (2) What are the perceptions of teachers in schools with little or no central office or state level support, especially in terms of funding, training, and implementation of building-level programs, regarding the mentoring process? For many schools the answers are unknown.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the perceptions of beginning teachers in their 1st or 2nd year and those of veteran 3- to 5-year teachers regarding the effectiveness of mentoring and other guidance they received as beginning teachers in a secondary school and to understand their vision of how mentoring should be structured for beginning teachers. Specifically, the study addressed satisfaction with 1st-year experiences specially designed to support the personal and professional well being of beginning teachers. To that end, six questions were formulated to guide the research.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of beginning teachers regarding the effectiveness of the mentoring they received as 1st-year teachers?

2. What are the perceptions of veteran teachers regarding the effectiveness of the mentoring they received as 1st-year teachers?

3. What are the perceptions of beginning teachers concerning their satisfying and dissatisfying mentoring experiences as 1st-year teachers?

4. What are the perceptions of veteran teachers concerning their satisfying and dissatisfying mentoring experiences as 1st-year teachers?

5. What are the perceptions of beginning teachers regarding the elements of an effective mentoring program for 1st-year teachers?

6. What are the perceptions of veteran teachers regarding the elements of an effective mentoring program for 1st-year teachers?

Significance of the Study

This could be useful to administrators and mentoring teachers in terms of both format and results. The format involved an emerging interview design and process that allowed respondents to provide information that could have been individually unique to them while also providing general information about the effectiveness of mentoring they experienced in their 1st years of teaching. An emerging interview process that collects unique and general data could be useful in future research to establish a core set of characteristics of effective mentoring and a sampling of unique mentoring needs. Thus, principals could have access to a core set of effective mentoring characteristics that could be built into any mentoring program while accommodating unique mentoring needs of the beginning teacher. Additionally, the emerging interview process is easily replicable and could be used by principals to collect accurate data specific to their own schools on which to base a tailored mentoring program.

The results of the study could also be used by mentoring teachers to evaluate the types of support needed by all beginning teachers and to open a dialogue with their mentees to facilitate understanding of specific and unique needs.

Definitions of Terms

1. *Beginning teacher*: Consistent with the glossary of terms from the U.S. Department of Education (2000) that describes the beginning teacher as a teacher in a public school who has been teaching less than a total of 3 complete school years, for purposes of this study, a beginning teacher is a teacher in his or her 1st or 2nd year of teaching.

2. *Mentor teacher:* As defined by Crewson and Fisher (1997), the mentor teacher is an

experienced colleague willing to share expertise with a beginning teacher and serve as a resource for the beginning teacher.

3. *Mentoring program:* For purposes of this study, as defined by Blank and Kershaw (2002), a mentoring program is a process that pairs a veteran teacher with a new teacher to provide support through open communication, analysis, and reflection designed to help the new teacher succeed.

4. *Secondary school:* A school that hosts grades 9 through 12.

5. *Veteran teacher:* Extending beyond the NCLB definition of a beginning teacher as one who has been teaching fewer than 3 full years, for purposes of this study, a veteran teacher is defined as a teacher in his or her 3rd, 4th, or 5th year of teaching.

Delimitations and Limitations

This study was delimited to teachers in a secondary school and may not be generalized to educators who teach in an elementary, middle, or post-secondary setting. It was further delimited to teachers who had taught 1 to 5 years as opposed to those who had more than 5 years experience and to teachers in a public school setting as opposed to private, charter, or magnet school systems. Because the study involved a purposeful sample of 21 teachers in one school rather than a randomly selected sample, the results are not widely generalizable. The study was limited to teachers who had been mentored but who had not been involved in an organized mentoring program.

Overview of the Study

Chapter 1 contains an introduction to the study, the statement of the problem, research questions, the significance of the study, definitions of terms, and delimitations and limitations of the study. Chapter 2 is a review of literature that provides detailed background and summarizes relevant research. Chapter 3 presents the research methodology including the design of the

study, how and why particular samples were selected, and how the data were collected and analyzed. Chapter 4 contains research findings linked to each research question and is further organized according to topics suggested by interviewees' responses. Chapter 5 provides a summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Alberg (2006b) reported to the Tennessee Association of Colleges of Teacher Education on March 31, 2006, that the need for teachers was so great as to approach the "warm body conundrum--we'll take what you have" (n. p.). He was explaining the role of the U.S. Department of Education Transition to Teaching (T2T) project in training professionals from other fields to become teachers to meet increasing demands in Tennessee. Surveying 2,647 individuals who had obtained certification through alternative routes, the National Center for Education Statistics (2004) found that 62% indicated that they expected to be teaching in kindergarten- through 12th-grade classrooms for more than 5 years. Compared with the attrition rate among new teachers of 51% still teaching within the first 5 years, as reported by the National Center for Educational Statistics, the T2T project appears to prepare teachers with greater staying power. Nick (2006), the director of recruitment for Memphis City schools, that employs completers of the T2T Project administered by the University of Memphis in conjunction with the Tennessee Department of Education, attributed the success of the Memphis project to two strong points. Nick related:

> One of the T2T's strongest points is that the program prepares each teacher before they even enter the classroom. Another reason T2T is unique is because the program offers support through every stage of the process, through mentors and program staff. (p. 2)

Kershaw, Blank, Benner, and Cagle (2006) credited mentoring with having enormous impact on teacher attrition, "With few exceptions, the percentages of 'leavers' in schools that have participated in the program are far lower than the state average (14% vs. 42%) and the percentage of novices as 'leavers' is even smaller" (p. 14). Mentoring has been linked to teacher retention with mixed results. Those programs that reported success seemed to be those that were sufficiently supported including funding and were carefully designed and implemented. The

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history of mentoring in general reflects the powerful impact mentoring can have when, either by design or by circumstance, there is a symbiotic mentor/mentee relationship.

Historical Background of Mentoring

Almost 400 years before the birth of Christ, Plato and Socrates formed perhaps the most famous of all mentor/mentee pairs. After Socrates' death, Plato, mesmerized by the spell of Socrates, devoted the rest of his life to extending the Socratic philosophy. A testament to the power of the mentoring process, it is said that Plato "shaped the mind of Western man" and that "the moral philosophy and the scientific tradition of Western civilization are essentially the achievements of Plato's thought" (Stumpf, 1971, p. 49). In a later time, certain men were similarly mesmerized by the powerful spell of Jesus: "One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples'" (Luke 11:1 New International Version). The mentoring of his disciples by Jesus, again a testament to the power of mentoring, launched a religious movement that has lasted for over 2,000 years.

History can be written through the listing of mentor-mentee pairs. From a list compiled by Carr (2006) for the Mentor Hall of Fame, a selection of just 10 mentor-mentee pairs attest to the power of mentoring in the shaping of historical events, trends, and philosophies around the world:

1. Aristotle – mentor to Alexander the Great
2. Archimedes – mentor to Galileo
3. John Stuart Mill – mentor to Jeremy Bentham
4. Dadabhai Naoroji – mentor to Mahatma Gandhi
5. Sigmund Freud – mentor to C.G. Jung
6. Bourke Cockran – mentor to Winston Churchill
7. Joseph Stalin – mentor to Sergeyevich Khrushchev

8. Yitzhak Rabin – mentor to Ehud Barak

9. David Ben-Gurion – mentor to Moshe Dayan

10. Margaret Thatcher – mentor to John Major

Similarly, a selection of 10 pairs from Carr's list attested to the importance of mentoring in shaping America and American thought:

1. George Mason – mentor to Thomas Jefferson

2. Ralph Waldo Emerson – mentor to Henry David Thoreau

3. Elizabeth Cady Stanton – mentor to Susan B. Anthony

4. Franklin D. Roosevelt – mentor to Lyndon B. Johnson

5. Dr. Benjamin Mays – mentor to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

6. Lewis Powell – mentor to Sandra Day O'Conner

7. Casper Weinberger – mentor to Colin Powell

8. William Fulbright – mentor to William J. Clinton

9. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – mentor to Jesse Jackson

10. Malcolm X – mentor to Louis Farrakhan

Socrates modeled the mentoring strategy of questioning that is used today and is known as the Socratic method. Jesus modeled other mentoring strategies: that of direct instruction, as in the sample prayer that he taught the disciples, and of analogies, as in the parables designed to elicit understanding by linking to something with which mentees were already familiar. Throughout the ages, mentoring has proven to be an effective way to induct new "disciples" into a school of thought, a religion, a trade, a profession--or into any aspect of life that requires replacement of knowledgeable or experienced persons with novices to carry on. Even today, the ancient practice of mentoring through apprenticeship is used in a wide range of industries. Registered Apprenticeship, a training system that boasts over 37,000 program sponsors representing over 250,000 employers, industries and companies, claims to produce highly skilled

workers "by combining on-the-job learning with classroom theory supported by a strong mentoring component" (Registered Apprenticeship, 2006).

To understand the importance of mentoring in the education professions, it is important to look at some general theoretical bases for mentoring, the relationship of mentoring to new teacher attrition, and current mentoring best practices.

Mentoring Defined

Mentoring has been defined in many ways through the course of history. Harking back to Greek mythology, Bednarz, Bockenhauer, and Walk (2005) identified the character, *Mentor*, as the counselor and surrogate father to Telemachus and Athena as the teacher and guardian of Telemachus. Bednarz et al. described mentoring, based on the Greek model, as the process by which a mentor serves "as a role model engaged in a developmental process that combines intentionality nurturing, insightfulness, support, and protection" (p. 105).

Smith (2005), director of a voluntary music education program to mentor beginning teachers, asserted that at its basis, mentoring is a relationship:

> It is about one caring and more experienced professional reaching into the life and practice of a generally younger and less experienced colleague, offering to assist that person in the development of a range of professional and, to some extent, personal behaviors. (p. 59)

Smith added that this relationship could range "from casual encounters that grow into longtime bonds to highly structured, formal arrangements with specific obligations and expectations" (p. 59).

In *Education Topics* (2006), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) described mentoring as "when a role model, or mentor, offers support to another person. A mentor has knowledge and experience in an area and shares it with the person being mentored" (n. p.).

Although the definitions and descriptions of mentoring vary, the common thread among them seem to support Socrates' definition of mentor when he described himself as "a mid-wife

assisting the labour of the mind in bringing knowledge and wisdom to birth" (as cited in Kapur, 1997). The concept of the experienced, knowledgeable, and wise practitioner in any field ranging from concrete skills to abstract philosophies facilitating the induction of the novice into the field is at the core of all mentoring definitions.

The notion of mentoring, as reflected in the literature, was prominent in the field of education during the 1980s, more so in the 1990s, and is now at the beginning of a new century. Much of the literature of the 1980s and 1990s, especially that dealing with the needs of the novice and the roles of the mentor, is congruent with current literature and continues to be applicable in the study of mentoring as an induction tool. The Educational Service Unit (1986) described the role of the mentor as one who provides novice teachers with support before the 1st day of school in preparing the classroom and aiding in the adjustment to the facilities and staff. After school begins, the mentoring roles include that of confidant, counselor, and guide. The mentor must slip into these different roles for assistance on a daily basis and serve as a model and guide for development of good instructional habits and practices.

Kagan (1992) reviewed 40 studies of beginning teachers' development and found a teacher could only become concerned with meeting all the needs of the learner if that teacher had received adequate support to move past his or her own self-involvement and fears. The results showed that beginning teachers were so overwhelmed with their transition from student to teacher that their focus was limited to surviving the classroom experiences. Within a few weeks, without assistance, the beginning teacher had lost sight of the learners.

According to Kling and Brookhart (1991), teaching involves much more than passing information from one mind to the next. There are personalities with which to contend, differences in learning styles, multicultural, ethnic, and economic differences, and a wide variety of other factors the teacher is expected to mesh into a cohesive, workable, and effective whole. Beginning teachers are often overwhelmed by expectations, responsibilities, and the abrupt changes from being a student to teaching students. Mentoring is seen as one means to support

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the personal and professional development of the novice teacher through this transformation (Robinson, 1998).

Truly effective mentoring programs aid the beginning teacher through more than just the 1st year of teaching (Darling Hammond & Scalan, 1996). The mentor must also be knowledge-able of the needs of a beginning teacher and be able to meet those needs as the beginning teacher progresses through the school year and subsequent years. The needs change as the beginning teacher proceeds through the five stages of development identified by Berliner (1988). These stages are novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and expert teacher. Although these stages refer to the entire teaching career, the beginning teacher will pass through many of these stages in his or her 1st years of teaching. A mentor must be able to identify the stage of progression of the beginning teacher to provide assistance and guidance throughout the stages. A mentor must possess strong interpersonal skills to help the beginning teacher sort through the emotions generated in the 1st years of teaching. The mentor must be supportive and encouraging, yet able to help the novice see reality and develop alternative ways of viewing problems and developing proactive responses. The mentor must also be able to challenge the beginning teacher. By helping a beginning teacher master critical thinking skills, the mentor helps the teacher bring all of his or her talents into the struggle for mastery of teaching (Covey, 1997).

Mentors must be able to model appropriate behaviors both inside and outside the classroom. They are guides to the beginning teacher's development of a sense of community with other faculty and with the students. The mentor leads the beginning teacher through difficult personal relationships often exhibited in school settings by setting an example. This is particularly important as beginning teachers often find themselves reacting to situations without applying critical thinking skills or evaluating all of the differing viewpoints and personalities. Beginning teachers often fail to view themselves as the role models that the students perceive them to be (Hawkey, 1997).

Current literature about the needs of the novice and the roles of mentors iterate some of the earlier assertions but seem to move away from the traditional model of the dyadic relationship in which the knowledgeable "higher authority" passes on his or her knowledge to the novice. Hargraves and Fullan (2000) indicated, "The old model of mentoring, where experts who are certain about their craft can pass on its principles to eager novices, no longer applies" (p. 52). Instead, mentoring becomes a mutual process in which both the mentor and mentee are changed. Schlicte, Yssel, and Merbler (2005) found that beginning teachers wanted their mentors to be helpful, concerned, and the source of empathy and unconditional support. Street (2004) found that the specific social relationship with mentors was what mattered most to new teachers. Cummins (2004) explained that mentoring facilitated empowerment and success through dialogue with other professionals and that mentoring was a relationship built on mutual trust and openness for both parties to grow and learn rather than a supervisory relationship.

Leadership Theories and Mentoring

A bedrock of many successful mentoring practices is a relationship built on mutual respect that leads to mutual growth. Studies and scholarly argument in the 1980s and 1990s began to point to a leadership focus that involved relationships and ownership of the bigger picture as opposed to an apprenticeship focus geared toward skill development and compliance with established procedures. Sergiovanni (1987) explained that by sharing mission statements and developing a sense of ownership, the principal provided guidance for the novice teacher to define his or her own classroom atmosphere to achieve the stated goals. Both formal and informal leadership in the school influenced the novice teacher's picture of the vision for the school.

Leaders from the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2003) argued for the establishment of goals that would encourage teachers to strive to continue learning and to develop the ability to look critically at their practices within the classroom. This willingness to

engage in self-analysis could lead to the will and ability to change when change is appropriate and desirable (McElroy, 1990). Freeman (1991) wrote about beginning teachers who indicated that dialogue and communication enabled them to develop an educational philosophy and an explicit belief system regarding learning.

The successful "Urban Specialist Certificate, Mentoring, and Induction Program" (Kershaw et al., 2006), for instance, reported that mentoring in high implementation schools was characterized by a culture of trust and collaboration that encouraged active challenges to the status quo. Referencing Feiman-Nemser's (2003) definition of induction as "a shared responsibility and a professional culture that supported collaboration and problem solving" (p. 22), and Sagor's (2003) claim that professional culture of the organization was the single best predictor of student success, Kershaw et al. (2006) credited the mentoring core teams in their study with providing the structure to build the type of school culture that nurtured novices and promoted the professional growth of mentors (p. 17).

The evolving concept of mentoring as a mutual growing process as opposed to an apprentice/master relationship is congruent with such leadership theories as visionary leadership, transformational leadership, situational leadership, and path-goal leadership. All of these theories established that leadership involves some form of mentoring based on relationships that are mutually beneficial and promote personal well being and confidence as well as creative, higher order thinking, and problem solving abilities.

Seven Pillars of Visionary Leadership

Rock (1999), a proponent of emotional intelligence as a foundation for leadership, named mentoring as Pillar V in *The Seven Pillars of Visionary Leadership* and stressed the need to have trusted guides. Such guidance was referred to as the leadership value path that included all seven Pillars (Cox & Rock, 1996). The true mentor, according to Rock, coaches individuals to believe they can travel the path. Using Pillar I, visioning, the mentee comes to believe that he or she

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knows where he or she is going. At Pillar II, mapping, the mentee comes to believe that he or she knows how to get there. At Pillar III, journeying, the mentee is willing to start. At Pillar IV, learning, the mentee is open to change. At Pillar V, mentoring, the mentee is open to others. Through the first five Pillars, the mentee is growing and learning professionally. At Pillar VI, leading, the mentee has moved to a higher plane and takes on mentoring responsibilities as well as continuing the mentee mindset of growing and learning. At that Pillar, he or she begins to set an example. At Pillar VII, valuing, the mentee/mentor models valuing by doing what is right (Rock).

Transformational Leadership

The transformational leadership model was particularly relevant to mentoring in that mentoring is a transforming experience for both mentor and mentee. In mentoring programs that worked in schools, mentors often cited their own personal and professional growth as being one of the most important rewards of the mentoring process. Clement (2000) explained that pairing a veteran teacher with a new teacher could lead to rejuvenation for the veteran. According to Ponick (2003), Essig, a mentoring teacher at Terraset Elementary School in Reston, Virginia, credited her mentoring with challenging her to be more creative in her own teaching. Pavia, Nissen, Hawkins, Monroe, and Fillimon-Demyen (2003) examined the mentor-protégé relationship between six mentors and six protégés and reported that mentors credited the mentorship project with opening their eyes to their own professional growth.

Burns (1982) coined the term transformational leadership to explain a type of leadership that included an emotional bond between the leader and the led in which the leader did not merely wield power but appealed to the follower's values. A central idea in Burns' (1982) leadership model was that people could be lifted into their better selves. The process was not one of mere skill and procedures training but motivational relationships through which leaders and followers could work toward goals that satisfied the wants, needs, aspirations, and

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expectations of both followers and leaders. In his own quest to understand what made leadership

work, Burns (2004) expanded his theories on how leaders cultivated transformational leadership

skills in themselves and their successors. Based on his expanded knowledge of psychology,

particularly that of Maslow's theory of human wants and needs, Burns (2004) said he was struck

by the great potential of the human needs theory for understanding leadership and change. This

perception caused him to expand his own theories on the cultivation of transformational

leadership skills. He concluded that effective leadership must include both a "traits" approach

and a "situational" approach that took into consideration both the individual needs of the leader

and the led and the environment or context the leader and his or her followers faced.

Situational Leadership

Similar to the transformational leadership model, situational leadership calls for

supportive behavior including maintaining open two-way communication channels, offering

encouragement and support, and including the follower in a meaningful way in decision-making.

Blanchard, Zigarmi, and Zigarmi (1985) included a caveat, however, explaining that the follower

might not, initially, be ready to take full advantage of the supportive behavior half of the

situational model but might need more precisely structured assistance. Thus, the other half of the

model involved directive behavior in which the communication was one-way and there was close

supervision of followers as they performed in roles that were clearly defined. Hersey,

Blanchard, Johnson, and Blanchard's (2000) notion that followers go through developmental

stages requiring a leader to be cognizant of their developmental stage and adjust leadership

behaviors accordingly was congruent with mentoring needs indicated by novice teachers' for

evolving relationships that begin with basic how to, where to, when to information and evolve as

they progress through survival stages to collegial, mutually encouraging, and supportive

relationships. A mentor in an East Stroudsburg University study recalled that her relationship

with a mentee had progressed from teacher stage, to coach stage, and on to a colleague stage

(Sheetz, Waters, Smeaton, & Lare, 2005). Rice (2002) identified 12 themes deemed important to the success of mentoring in professional development programs through 20 case studies. Of these themes, nearly half focused on the mentor teacher's capacity to develop relationships and communicate effectively.

The combination of direction and socioemotional factors as considerations in leadership style require that the leader have a degree of flexibility and competence in choosing the appropriate style for the appropriate situation moving, perhaps, through all four styles of directing, coaching, supporting, and, finally, delegating (Hersey et al., 2000). A directive approach in situations involving task behaviors might be appropriate and quite effective but could be completely ineffective in situations that require relationship behaviors. Such flexibility in mentoring styles appeared to be appreciated by novice teachers who needed to be directed and told what to do as they entered the profession with little knowledge of how the real world of schooling worked and who needed to engage in more collegial, supportive relationships as they learned the ropes and were ready to move to a higher professional level of competence (Hersey et al.).

According to Black (2004), the assumption that beginning teachers progress along a straight line from novice to expert is flawed. They are more likely to learn through a process more in keeping with constructivist theories of learning. Thus, the mentor must be adept at determining when the mentee needs directive leadership and when the mentee needs supportive leadership. Whereas in some professions the learning curve might be linear and easier to follow, in teaching, the learning curve could be a convoluted knot requiring a greater degree of emotional and intellectual agility in the mentor (Black).

Path-Goal Leadership

House (1971) focused on participative leadership and achievement-oriented leadership. Participative leadership involves consulting followers and giving credence to their ideas in the

decision-making process. Achievement-oriented leadership involves setting both professional and personal goals and working toward success. According to House, path-goal leadership is the process of clarifying the path so that followers will know which way to go, removing any roadblocks that could interfere with their progress, and increasing rewards as they successfully proceed along the path. The situational factors that define the path-goal theory are the personality of the subordinate and the characteristics of the environment. House delineated five steps in the achievement-oriented process:

1. set challenging goals,

2. seek continuous improvement,

3. expect highest performance,

4. develop confidence toward achievement, and

5. assume more responsibility. (p. 321)

The participative process includes sharing work problems, soliciting suggestions and concerns, and being included in making decisions (House).

　　According to House (1971), if novice teachers had the luxury of practicing several years before being thrust into school operations, the two distinctive path-goal components of situational leadership and participative and achievement-oriented leadership might seem "over the top" for novice teachers. However, many new teachers become part of a school improvement team in their 1st year and all are required from day 1 to meet local, state, and national standards. The path-goal components could be particularly relevant in those situations.

　　Much of the literature relates to the administrative leader's role in developing and managing a successful mentoring program focused on support, relationships, confidence building, guidance, and other roles and behaviors that are congruent with transformational, situational, and path-goal leadership. Brock (1999), calling for a re-examination of traditional leadership theories and practices in the urban school context, suggested that the principal must be positioned as a catalyst for transformative leadership. Of particular importance was placing the

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right mentor with the right mentee so that appropriate relationships could develop. Brott and Kajs (2001) described the mentor-mentee relationship as the creation of a working alliance through a dialogue consisting of listening, reflecting, clarifying, challenging, and confronting. Brott and Kajs contended that by using these techniques, effective mentors could assist beginning teachers in working through personal, professional, emotional, and psychological problems and other issues on the way to developing their identity as educators. Bamburg (1994) stated that principals needed to develop a school atmosphere that encouraged teachers to try new teaching methods without fear of failure. Novice teachers often have many new and exciting ideas but many lack the confidence to implement these strategies. By successfully involving the teachers in experimentation to promote students' learning, principals, teachers, and students reportedly have been able to develop a shared vision for achieving school improvement (Newmann, 1993).

According to Bennis and Nanus (1985), both formal and informal leadership in schools influence the novice teacher's picture of the vision for the school. Formal leadership involves actions that principals and other school administrators transmit to new teachers. Informal leaders are those among the staff who transmit their true vision for the school. Allocation of time, conversational topics, prioritizing of problems, and enthusiasm for specific projects are the means by which both formal and informal leaders embody and reinforce the values they hold and the vision they hope to achieve. The formal leadership members of the school must be aware of all the influences on the novice teacher. Correction and reinforcement are needed to assure that the vision is shared accurately.

Mentoring Programs

Successful mentoring programs are likely to reflect many of the guiding principles of leadership theories developed around relationships and values. Effective programs must aid the novice teacher beyond the 1st years of teaching. Needs change as the beginning teacher

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proceeds through the five stages of teacher development, as identified by Berliner (1988): novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and expert. Although these stages refer to an entire teaching career, the beginning teacher will pass through many of the stages in his or her 1st years of teaching. According to Kajs, Alaniz, Willman, Maier, Brott, and Gomez (2001), the mentor must be able to identify the stage of the beginning teacher in order to aid and guide the teacher through the progression. A key element of selecting an effective mentor is to find a match between the mentor and the beginning teacher. Principals and mentoring committees must take the time to place a compatible mentor with the beginning teacher or the two will not be able to connect. It is this sense of connection that determines a successful mentoring program more so than does a personality match. The mentor must be able to appreciate the beginning teacher's capabilities and preparation for the classroom even as the struggle for proficiency occurs on an ongoing basis (Kajs et al.).

The successful URBAN IMPACT Mentoring and Induction Model included the basic principles of transformational, situational, and path-goal leadership theories. Kershaw et al. (2005) explained the focus of this program by citing Feiman-Nemser's (2003) definition as an "explicit endorsement of induction as a shared responsibility and a professional culture that supports collaboration and problem-solving" (p. 28). The URBAN IMPACT program's mentor core teams "provide the structure to build the type of school culture that nurtures novices and promotes the professional growth of mentors" (p. 29). In the URBAN IMPACT program, all nine types of mentoring support that was consistently ranked among the highest in satisfaction, had to do with the quality of the relationship between mentors and novices and the support provided by mentors in helping novices with establishing positive relationships with students. Supportive relationships were cited as the reason for turnover rate decreases. Mentors attributed improved classroom management to a reciprocal and open mentor-novice relationship that promoted interactive sharing and trust among teachers (Kershaw et al., 2005).

Although no particular leadership theory was mentioned as the theoretical base for the training of the URBAN IMPACT program's mentors, those principles of leadership theories that considered the professional development stages and personal needs of the follower were evident in the strategies and practices described in the program (Kershaw et al., 2005).

Mentoring Best Practices in Tennessee

Sweeny (2003) quoted Yogi Berra as saying, "In theory, there is no difference between theory and practice, but in practice there is" (n. p.). Berra's statement is apropos in a discussion of mentoring in education. The literature abounds with strategies--some suggested and others tested--for mentoring processes and mentoring programs in schools. Nearly all states require some type of mentoring process. Everyone seems to agree that mentoring is a good thing. However, the application of mentoring in education is inconsistent at best and in shambles perhaps. Nationwide, teachers decried the effectiveness of mentoring as it was applied in the schools. Some complained of difficulties in forming meaningful relationships ("Tips for Creating an Effective Mentoring Program," 2003); others found a mismatch of mentors and mentees that failed to facilitate emotional support (Schlicte et al., 2005). In many cases, mentoring was mandated and a mentor was designated in name only, providing little or no support (Odell, 1990).

In Tennessee, some systems are served by effective mentoring programs with trained mentors and on-going professional development (Kershaw et al., 2005; Nick, 2006) whereas others receive no funding for mentoring and little support beyond occasional workshops provided by the state or the local system for system representatives. In this researcher's school system, for example, the mentoring program consists of instructions from the office of the superintendent to school principals to establish a mentoring program by assigning an experienced teacher as a mentor to each beginning teacher. No funding is provided for stipends, release time, training, or other monetary requirements of a quality-mentoring program. Consequently,

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mentoring amounts to little more than the veteran teacher "showing the new teacher the ropes" in an unplanned, informal setting. Despite the requirement by the state board of education on teacher education and licensure (Rules of the State Board of Education, 2005) that beginning teachers receive "regular and frequent contact with teacher mentors throughout the school year" (p. 4) and that "mentors, along with principals, shall provide periodic and frequent formative evaluation designed to provide feedback and support to the beginning teachers" (p. 4), the document makes no provision for "outside" help in financing such activities but simply indicates that the beginning teacher program "shall be planned by the local school system with significant input from principals and teachers" (p. 4).

Before the 21st century began, the state of Tennessee, attempted to develop a mentoring policy. In 1999, a mentoring program, URBAN IMPACT, was developed that aligned with the state's initiative, was awarded a Title II grant in 2000, and expanded to a statewide model in 2002 (M. Blank, personal communication, February 16, 2006). Although the model has proven to be effective in those systems within which it has been tested, it is available only in those systems that comprise a small fraction of the number of systems in the state. Deaton and Schutz in 2001 reported to the Tennessee Higher Education commission that although the literature revealed mentoring to be an effective tool for new teacher retention, results of their study showed an apparent lack of widespread and quality mentoring in Tennessee. The Master Plan for Tennessee Schools (2005) for 2006 indicated, "While the teaching force is stable with a low 8% turnover rate overall, Tennessee loses almost half of its new teachers in the first 5 years" (p. 23). One of its goals was to "expand the beginning teacher mentoring program to improve new teacher performance, improve student learning, and reduce teacher attrition; require mentor programs to be research based; and evaluate the effectiveness of existing teacher mentoring programs" (p. 24). A budget of $3,200,000 was recommended to be implemented FY 2006.

Although the literature did not indicate widespread effectiveness in mentoring programs, some programs have proven to have a positive impact on teacher retention and on student

learning. According to Issue Brief (2002), the NGA Center for Best Practices reported that as far back as 1992, California was involved in providing successful induction/mentoring support for new teachers. After piloting a project to examine alternative strategies for supporting and assessing new teachers, the California state legislation established the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA) to provide new teachers with supervised experiences in schools. Consequently, retention rates for 1st- and 2nd-year teachers among 129 of 133 programs reporting were collectively 96% and 94% respectively. The 5-year attrition rate was 9% for beginning teachers in the BTSA program compared with 37% among non-BTSA participants. The NGA reported data from several other programs claiming new teacher retention success resulting from induction programs with mentoring components. The retention rate in 1999 for participants in the Armstrong Atlantic State University branch of the Pathways to Teaching Careers Program was 100% over 5 years (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). The Santa Cruz New Teacher Project that supported beginning teachers through mentoring programs, cohort meetings, and individual counseling retained 95% of its participants over a 12-year period (Missouri NEA, 2001). Cities adopting the Toledo teacher induction model that funds veteran teachers to work intensively with beginning teachers experienced dramatic positive results. Columbus, Ohio, retained 98% of its 1st-year teachers, Seattle retained more than 90%, and Rochester, New York decreased its turnover rate by 70% (National Association of State Boards of Education, 2000). Charles County schools in Maryland brought in retired teachers to serve as mentors to new teachers, teachers who were new to the system, and 2nd-year teachers who needed additional support. Mentors regularly met with new teachers and assisted them in areas identified by the new teachers and by the mentors themselves ("Tips for Creating an Effective Mentoring Program," 2003).

A large proportion of claims of success for mentoring programs and mentoring components of induction programs are based on increased new teacher retention rates. However, because of inability to control for other variables, it was not always certain that a causal

relationship existed between mentoring and retention although a correlational relationship does appear evident. Whether causal or correlational, mentoring planned and implemented effectively is acclaimed as one of the keys to new teacher retention. Common elements of successful mentoring programs and strategies provide insight into what could be considered best mentoring practices in education. Most reported successful mentoring programs included mentor training, sufficient funding, release time, coordinated scheduling, appropriate mentor-mentee match in terms of interests and personalities, and building level, local, and state administrative support. These factors are exemplified in mentoring programs in Tennessee that have proven to be effective not only in teacher retention but in student learning as well.

In response to attrition rate patterns indicating that 39% of new teachers in Tennessee leave within the first 5 years (SREB, 2003) and cognizant of the adverse impact on student learning from novice teachers exiting the profession before they developed a level of expertise necessary to promote learning (Darling-Hammond, 2003), mentoring programs and a mentoring component of an induction program were developed and tested in the state of Tennessee. These programs were found to be sufficiently effective to serve as models for further development and expansion of mentoring in schools across the state. The T2T program conducted by the University of Memphis and federally funded through Transition to Teaching grants supported alternative routes to licensure for critical positions such as math and science teachers. The program included a comprehensive mentoring component combined with online coursework to support licensure candidates through every stage of the process. The program was offered as a model of alternative licensure for the state of Tennessee and was embraced by the state of Tennessee and TBR universities (Alberg, 2006a).

At the University of Memphis, a New Teacher Center modeled after the New Teacher Center at the University of California was established to provide professional development and mentoring to increase new teacher retention rates and improve student achievement in Memphis City Schools (Tennessee Board Of Regents, 2003). The foundation grant funded an intensive

mentoring component whereby a group of veteran teachers was released from full-time teaching positions for 2 years to work with new teachers. These veterans met on a weekly basis with novice teachers, observed in the classroom, demonstrated instructional strategies, coached new teachers, and provided emotional support. Almost $500,000 was provided by Memphis City Schools in salaries for mentor teachers and release time for new teachers to participate in the program. A strong, supportive relationship between the advisor (mentor) and beginning teacher was touted as fundamental to the success of all support strategies of the New Teacher Center.

The Teacher Mentoring and Induction Program (TMIP) (Kershaw et al., 2005) developed at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and tested in 26 urban schools was likely the most heavily researched project of the three discussed. The project originally tracked "longitudinal teacher retention statistics, novice teachers' perceptions of their induction experience, mentoring teachers' perceptions of their mentoring experiences, and mentor/administrators' perceptions of the school-based systemic induction program" (p. 10) and has been expanded to document reasons novice and experienced teachers leave a school, the impact that mentors have on their students' achievement, and the impact of an additional layer of support services piloted by the partnership school system to support selected novices in highest-need schools. The TMIP model includes five essential components: alignment with school improvement planning, leadership teams, professional development, databased formative assessment, and financial support. Mentor Core Teams were established to create and implement induction plans, to serve as lead mentor models, and to coach colleagues assigned mentoring roles. Each team was provided professional development specifically designed to support their leadership roles and to train them in the use of databased formative assessment to enhance effectiveness. Using the same New Teacher Center model as that used by Memphis University, a New Teacher Academy was established for the purpose of training mentors and novices to apply theory to practice in the novice teacher's classroom and to accelerate the learning curve so that novice teachers reached a high proficiency level earlier in their careers (Kershaw et al., 2005).

In conjunction with the TMIP, a special certification, the Urban Specialist Certificate, was created to recognize specially trained mentors in participating school systems (Kershaw et al., 2006). Expected learning outcomes for Urban Specialists are:

1. understanding and acquiring leadership abilities and change strategies;

2. enhancing their understandings and abilities to demonstrate an array of teaching/learning strategies or instructional models aligned with the needs of students and families in urban school communities;

3. enhancing their ability to assess student learning and achievement;

4. enhancing their ability to create effective partnerships among educators, with parents, and with the total school community; and

5. enhancing intellectual and reflective skills as an educator committed to professional growth and renewal (p.5).

Although it has not happened as of now, the stated intent is to expand the Teacher Mentoring and Induction Program (TMIP) to systems beyond the original 26 inner-city systems. The TMIP project validated effective mentoring and structured induction as research-based practice to reduce teacher turnover and to increase student achievement (Kershaw et al., 2005). Additionally, it highlighted "the critical need for overt support and clear expectations and structure at the district and school levels" (p. 33).

Mentoring in Tennessee is a long way from the goals set prior to the 21st century and iterated year after year. However, there are now models showing promising possibilities assuming sufficient support can be provided to implement the models or programs based on the models. Among strategies proposed by the state board of education for meeting the goal of attracting qualified individuals who complete strong professional preparation programs and continue to grow professionally, was the expansion of the beginning teacher mentoring program to improve new teacher performance, improve student learning, and reduce teacher attrition; to require mentoring programs to be research based; and to evaluate the effectiveness of existing

teacher mentoring programs. It is likely that the evaluation will reveal the need for state-level

financial support and system-level administrative support to implement truly meaningful

mentoring programs statewide.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Overview

Wong (2004) indicated, "After 20 years of experimenting with mentoring as a process for helping new teachers, few comprehensive studies validate its effectiveness" (p. 106). Wong claimed, "In far too many instances, a mentor is simply a veteran teacher who has been haphazardly selected by the principal and assigned to a new teacher" (p. 106). However, officials at the Flowering Wells Schools of Tucson, Arizona, told another story, crediting the new teacher induction process with having produced 12 finalists for teacher of the year--more than any other school district for the state of Arizona.

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of beginning and veteran teachers regarding the effectiveness of mentoring and other guidance they received as beginning teachers and to understand their vision of how mentoring should be structured for beginning teachers. Specifically, the study addressed satisfaction with 1st-year experiences specially designed to support the personal and professional well being of beginning teachers.

Because the resulting data were based on the personal experiences of a small but information-rich number of participants, the study was qualitative and phenomenological in design. This chapter will identify the participants and describe the data collection procedures, the interview process, and data analysis strategies.

Design of the Study

The design of the study was a qualitative phenomenological study as described by Creswell (1998) that allows the researcher to be an active learner and tell the story from the view of participants who have experienced the phenomenon. The emerging interview design is

compatible with such research and served as the data collection instrument. Because induction into the teaching profession is a very personal experience, the phenomenological research approach to studying the mentoring aspect of the induction process was particularly appropriate. Qualitative research lends itself to the interview as a primary source of data collection (Creswell). Thus, individual interviews deliberately using the emerging interview design were used to collect all phenomenological data (see Appendix A). The researcher had the opinion that all participants had experienced the phenomenon of mentoring; however, as the interview progress began, it was found that not all participants had experienced the mentoring process.

Interview Design

The interview structure was originally designed with specific questions along with specific procedural strategies, including specified times allotted for answers to ensure that each interviewee would hear the same questions with the same amount of time to respond. Through practice interviews with an educator using various constructions of the questions, it was determined that the rigid procedural structure placed restrictions on the free expression of the interviewee's feelings. Consequently, the rigid procedures and time restrictions were deleted from the interview process and greater emphasis was placed on the emerging aspect of the interview allowing for unique, reflective responses while ensuring that specific questions related to each research question. Table 1 portrays the links between interview questions and paired research questions.

Table 1

Research Questions and Emerging Interview Questions Matrix

Research Questions	Emerging Interview Questions
#1. What are the perceptions of beginning teachers regarding the effectiveness of the mentoring they received as 1st year teachers?	1, 4, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 22, 24
#2. What are the perceptions of veteran teachers regarding the effectiveness of the mentoring they received as 1st year teachers?	1, 4, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 22, 24
#3. What are the perceptions of veteran teachers concerning their satisfying and dissatisfying mentoring experiences as 1st year teachers?	6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19, 21, 25, 26
#4. What are the perceptions of veteran teachers concerning their satisfying and dissatisfying mentoring experiences as 1st year teachers?	6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19, 21, 25, 26
#5. What are the perceptions of beginning teachers regarding the elements of an effective mentoring program for 1st year teachers?	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 20, 22, 23, 26
#6. What are the perceptions of veteran teachers regarding the elements of effective mentoring programs for 1st year teachers?	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 20, 22, 23, 26

There is some matrix overlap in interview questions as they relate to research questions in that interview questions 4, 6, 12, 14, 22, and 26 relating to personal mentor/mentee experiences addressed in research questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 have a shaping effect, to some extent, on respondent recommendations for effective mentoring programs addressed in research questions 5 and 6.

Following a pilot study of the revised emerging interview instrument using five non-participants (three beginning teachers and two veteran teachers) with similar experiences to the participants and designed to establish clarity of understanding of the emerging interview design,

interviews were conducted with provisions for all respondents to discuss their experiences in response to guiding questions with no time limits or other restrictions. The revised instrument proved to be satisfactory in that respondents indicated satisfaction in their ability to answer the direct questions and to express their unique feelings and experiences using the more relaxed procedure with no time limits. Review of tapes of the pilot interviews as well as debriefer and auditor reviews corroborated the feedback from the pilot test respondents.

Interview respondents were determined through purposeful sampling to ensure that all participants had actually experienced the phenomenon (beginning teacher mentoring) and therefore had sufficient understanding of the phenomenon.

The director of schools in a southeast Tennessee county school system was approached for approval to conduct specific research in the system (see Appendix E) contingent on approval by the principal of a secondary school in the county. After permission was granted by the principal (see Appendix F), he was asked to identify those teachers on his faculty who were in their 1st or 2nd year and those in their 3rd, 4th, or 5th year who had experienced the mentoring process for new teachers as advocated by the Tennessee State Board of Education and the Tennessee School Board Association. With the principal's approval, all eligible teachers were invited to participate in the study.

All interviews were scheduled at the convenience of participants and were conducted by the researcher using audio-taping and researcher transcription. An independent auditor listened to and transcribed the tapes for comparison with the researcher's transcription to ensure accuracy.

Participants

Participants in this study were selected because they fit the definition of a beginning teacher in his or her 1st or 2nd year of teaching or of a veteran teacher in his or her 3rd, 4th, or 5th year of teaching and had participated in 1st-year teacher mentoring as advocated by the Tennessee State Board of Education and the Tennessee School Board Association. All teachers

fitting that description in one particular secondary school in southeast Tennessee were invited, with appropriate administrative approval, to participate. Only those freely willing to participate with no coercion on the part of school administrators or the researcher were selected for the study.

Although some studies regarding the state's mentoring program have been done at the elementary school level, no studies have been conducted at the secondary level at this time. Thus, a secondary school in a county that had a mandate from the director of schools that all schools in the system would provide mentoring to new teachers as advocated by the Tennessee School Board Association were selected for purposes of the study. The particular school was chosen because it had a faculty sufficient in number to provide a reasonable sample for a qualitative phenomenological study.

The principal of the chosen school was asked to identify all beginning teachers (those with 1 or 2 years experience) and all veteran teachers (those with 3, 4, or 5 years experience) who had experienced beginning teacher mentoring. Those teachers were contacted and informed of the purpose of the study along with the types of questions to expect. Those who were willing to have their responses tape-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and summarized in the research document were invited to participate in the study. Those electing to participate were provided a written document guaranteeing confidentiality and explaining the purpose of the study and were asked to sign a consent form authorizing the tape-recording and transcription of the interview.

Data Analysis

Both the researcher and an independent individual transcribed each of the interviews. The transcriptions were compared and any discrepancies were reconciled by both the researcher and the independent person who listened to the portion of the tape on which the discrepant understandings appeared and reconciled the discrepancies. All participants reviewed the transcript of their interview to ensure the accuracy of their statements.

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Transcriptions of participants' responses were searched for themes and commonalities in the perceptions of beginning teachers and veteran teachers as reflected by responses to the emerging interview design. Conclusions were drawn to answer the six research questions that addressed the perceptions of beginning teachers and veteran teachers regarding the effectiveness of the mentoring they received as 1st-year teachers, their perceptions regarding their most satisfying and dissatisfying mentoring experiences as 1st-year teachers, and their perceptions regarding the elements of an effective mentoring program for 1st-year teachers. Because the six questions were actually three paired sets of questions, comparisons could easily be made to determine similarities and differences in perceptions of beginning teachers and veteran teachers.

A peer debriefer who holds a current Certificate of Compliance Education in Human Subjects Research from the East Tennessee State University Office for the Protection of Human Research Protections met with me on a regular basis and reviewed the final research document as well as emerging aspects of the research (see Appendix B). An auditor with appropriate credentials assured legitimacy of the interview procedures and the accuracy of data collection and presentation (see Appendix C).

Summary

This chapter presented a description of the qualitative phenomenological design of the study to examine the perceptions of beginning teachers in their 1st or 2nd year and those of veteran 3- to 5-year teachers regarding the effectiveness of mentoring and other guidance they received as beginning teachers and to understand their vision of how mentoring should be structured for beginning teachers. This chapter also identified participants in the study and explained the data gathering and data analysis process. Chapter 4 provides a summary of the research findings. Chapter 5 contains a discussion of the results, provides recommendations for further research, and delineates possible implications for further research.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

In collecting data for this phenomenological study, the ultimate goal was to examine the

perceptions of beginning teachers in their 1st or 2nd year and those of veteran teachers with 3 to

5 years of experience. The data focus on the effectiveness of mentoring and other guidance the

participants received as beginning teachers in a secondary school as well as their vision of how

mentoring should be structured for beginning teachers. Specifically, the study shows participant

satisfaction or dissatisfaction with 1st-year experiences designed to support the personal and

professional well being of beginning teachers.

The study involved 21 participants who currently are teachers in a secondary school in a

rural southeast Tennessee school system. These 21 participants were selected and asked to

volunteer in this research study because they fit one of the following three criteria: (a) a

beginning teacher in his or her 1st or 2nd year of teaching, (b) a veteran teacher in his or her 3rd,

4th, or 5th year of teaching, and (c) a teacher who has participated in 1st-year teacher mentoring

as advocated by the Tennessee State Board of Education and the Tennessee School Board

Associations. The researcher had the opinion that all participants had experienced the

phenomenon of mentoring; however, as the interview progress began, it was found that not all

participants had experienced the mentoring process.

Without exception, all participants were accommodating and gracious in working to set

up face-to-face interviews. Each interview lasted from 40 to 90 minutes. Each participant was

cooperative and professional during the interview process. Before the interviews began, the

Informed Consent process was explained in detail and each participant was asked to sign a

consent form to show that he or she was a voluntary participant (see Appendix D). Participants

were then given pseudonyms in order to protect their identities. When each interview was completed, the tape of the interview was transcribed verbatim. An independent auditor (see Appendix B) listened to the tapes for comparison with the researcher's transcription to ensure accuracy. The research questions then guided a search for themes and emerging data that could give insight to the research topic.

This study was comprised of 13 veteran and 8 beginning teachers. Of the 13 veteran teachers, 7 had participated in a mentoring experience. Six veteran teachers had no experience in a mentor-mentee relationship. Of the eight beginning teachers, seven had experienced mentoring in their 1st year of teaching, and one had no mentoring experience. Of the 13 veteran participants, 4 were male and 9 were female. Of the seven beginning teachers, five were male and three were female. Table 2, using pseudonyms, is a graphic display of relevant participant demographics.

Table 2

Summary of Participants

Name	Gender	Status	Participated in a Mentoring Experience
Deana Davis	Female	Beginner	Yes
Ichabod Ivy	Male	Beginner	Yes
Lannie Lippard	Male	Beginner	No
Millard Melton	Male	Beginner	Yes
Olive Oyl	Female	Beginner	Yes
Patsy Pell	Female	Beginner	Yes
Stefan Stephens	Male	Beginner	Yes
*Uriah Underwood	Male	Beginner	Yes
Adam Abbott	Male	Veteran	Yes
Bob Barton	Male	Veteran	Yes
Clara Clark	Female	Veteran	Yes

Table 2 (continued)

Name	Gender	Status	Participated in a Mentoring Experience
Ella Elder	Female	Veteran	No
Francis Fuller	Female	Veteran	Yes
Gerald Grisham	Male	Veteran	No
Helen Hall	Female	Veteran	Yes
Jeanie Jump	Female	Veteran	No
Kitty Kerbo	Female	Veteran	No
Nancy Nugent	Female	Veteran	No
Quincy Quinn	Male	Veteran	No
Roberta Roberts	Female	Veteran	Yes
Tina Tippen	Female	Veteran	Yes

* Although having 20 years experience, this participant was considered a beginning teacher as he was in his 1st year at the current school.

Perceived Effectiveness of Mentoring

Perceptions of Beginning Teachers

Research question 1 asks, What are the perceptions of beginning teachers regarding the effectiveness of the mentoring they received as a 1st-year teacher? Responses to emerging interview questions 1, 4, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 22, and 24 revealed mixed reviews of the mentoring process indicating overall belief that mentoring was helpful but that sufficient time with the mentor was not possible, or, at least not facilitated resulting in their mentoring experiences partially but not sufficiently meeting their needs. At least one respondent attributed her remaining in the teaching profession directly to her mentoring experience while another respondent attributed her unhappiness in the profession directly to the poor quality of her 1st year of mentoring.

Seven of the eight 1st-year teachers had some type of mentoring experience while one beginning teacher had none. Of those seven, four stated that their 1st year of mentoring was a positive experience that met their needs while one said that mentoring had no effect at all and two expressed mixed views. One indicated that his 1st-year mentoring experience was helpful but that his current experience was ineffective while the other indicated that mentoring had helped him to become a better teacher but that it had no effect on him personally. Of the four who were most positive toward their mentoring experience, all cited elements related to encouraging relationships as helpful. One respondent indicated that mentoring was a good thing but she personally did not receive effective mentoring. The perceptions of beginning teachers regarding the effectiveness of the mentoring they received as a 1st-year teacher is answered thusly:

1. four of seven respondents perceived their 1st-year mentoring as effective,

2. one respondent perceived her own experience as ineffective but maintained that mentoring could be effective,

3. one respondent reported effective mentoring for his 1st year of teaching but ineffective mentoring in his 1st year in his current school, and

4. one respondent reported effective mentoring in his teaching but no effect personally.

Ichabod Ivy is one participant who had a mentor. During his interview in the office of the football coach, upon being asked to describe his experience as a beginning teacher who had a mentor, he paused a moment to reflect and then stated:

> I'll say it is very valuable to a 1st-year teacher. It's very easy for the 1st-year teacher to get discouraged and get down on yourself. The mentoring really helped out. It helps out. It can be overwhelming but when you had someone there more experienced to talk to you that had been there and done that, they can smooth everything out and it really helped.

Olive Oyl is a young energetic teacher who conveyed a very positive perception of mentoring programs; in fact, she said her mentoring experience kept her from leaving the teaching profession. She explained, "It was excellent. It helped me not to be discouraged and to

not be tempted to leave the profession, you know, when I was going through hard times with my students."

Patsy Pell another young innovative teacher who shared Olive's positive views on the overall concept of mentoring, stated:

I think it's a very good process that should be taken care of because I think it determines how long a teacher will actually stay in the field. If they can get enough help that 1st year, and enough mentoring, then they can overcome anything that would come their way and it gives them a good base foundation into the field of teaching.

However, she said that she, personally, did not receive sufficient mentoring. She even mentioned her own thoughts of leaving the teaching field as she responded further:

My experience was . . . I didn't get that. Very down cast. I'll be honest, I've almost thought of finding something else to do, and that's sad, because I love to teach, but I'm to the point that I'm not happy and I think it's because I didn't get enough mentoring that 1st year.

Stefan Stephens, a middle-age man who started teaching several years later rather than right out of college, said that mentoring had no effect on his 1st year of teaching. He added, "I had very positive views going in, my 1st year of teaching last year, and it neither diminished those views nor enhanced them."

Although Uriah Underwood has over 20 years of teaching experience, he was considered a beginning teacher for the purpose of this study because this was his 1st year of teaching at the current school. Uriah's prior mentoring experiences were positive; however, his current mentoring experiences were viewed differently. Uriah related:

Well, from the mentoring standpoint, there were minor amounts of that time we spent together. We spent most of the time trying to teach and working as a team, and trying to resolve how better to teach the kids—to get them to learn better. Mostly a teamwork thing, rather than a mentoring student relationship. I have many years of experience as a teacher in various fields. I'd have to say that this time it didn't work very well. But I have enjoyed being associated with [Name]. Just wish there had been a way.

Millard Melton said he became a teacher so he could coach young men and women. His comments were somewhat contradictory. Even though he admitted mentoring helped him to become a better teacher, he also stated that it had little effect on him, personally. He observed,

"It helped me to become a better teacher; it showed me how things should be done and how I should do things. I don't believe it affected me that much. I just don't believe it did."

Deana Davis, who returned to her old high school to teach, said she viewed mentoring as a positive experience in that it helped her to understand the daily procedures and routines in the school's environment. She explained:

> It has been very helpful. Figuring out not only what to teach, but that's only a small part of teaching; being able to figure out how to go find a certain form for a field trip or for a substitute or just all those little things. If I didn't have someone there that I could go talk to, I could see myself very overwhelmed and very stressed out, because there are lots of little things that you can't learn on the 1st day that you come to teach school that you do need someone there you can ask   So having that load off me I think it's helped in the classroom just being able to go get the information needed. I don't have to spend so much of my energy looking for it. I can spend my energy in the classroom with students.

She continued by saying that she also perceived a mentor as a person who could encourage a positive attitude when times were difficult. She related:

> I think it's affected me positively, because as a 1st-year teacher, I don't have a lot to compare my experiences with this year, so being able to talk to someone else—say, if I had a bad day—that person could put in perspective for me; someone who has been here longer. So that has helped me just have a more positive outlook overall, I think.

Lannie Lippard was a teacher who began his career in the middle of a school year. He was also a teacher who probably slipped through the cracks. He said he was unable to comment because he had no mentor assigned to him.

Perceptions of Veteran Teachers

Research question 2 asks, What are the perceptions of veteran teachers regarding the effectiveness of the mentoring they received as 1st-year teachers? Responses to emerging interview questions 1, 4, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 22, and 24 revealed a less positive perception of mentoring among veteran teachers than that of the 1st-year teachers. Almost half of the veteran teacher respondents did not have a mentor and among the seven who did have an assigned mentor, most indicated little effect of mentoring on their experiences as 1st-year teachers. Those who did express positive mentoring effects named better understanding of procedures and

routines and dealing with cultural differences as most helpful. They decried the absence of mentoring guidance regarding classroom management and discipline.

The perceptions of veteran teachers regarding the effectiveness of the mentoring they received as a 1st-year teacher, is answered thusly:

1. three of the seven veteran teachers who received mentoring perceived their mentoring experiences to be effective,

2. two of the seven veteran teachers who received mentoring perceived their mentoring experiences to be of no consequence, and

3. two of the seven veteran teachers who received mentoring perceived their mentoring experiences to be negative experiences.

Among the six veteran teachers who did not have mentors, one indicated that she knew there was a mentoring program in place and it was her impression that it works. Three indicated that they imagined a mentoring program would be helpful. Two veteran teacher respondents indicated that they had no formal mentor but that they had formed informal mentoring relationships with teachers on their halls and that it was very effective.

Thirteen veteran teachers were interviewed for this study; 7 of the 13 veteran teachers had received mentoring experiences during their professional career. Six of the 13 veteran teachers said they had received no mentoring experiences. Of the seven veteran teachers who had mentors, four teachers expressed positive experiences with learning how to deal with procedures, routines, and cultural differences.

Bob Barton, in an interview in his classroom during his planning time, said that mentoring helped him learn to work with a team. He explained:

It was very helpful. I wouldn't say it changed my views about teaching, but it changed my views about the teamwork involved in teaching. I understood a lot of the importance of what we are doing and all that, but it's the team aspect of it that was more enlightening to me.

As a veteran teacher, Clara Clark is a traveling teacher who has "nowhere to call home and nowhere to lay her stuff." She goes from one hallway to another to teach her students. She

received no mentoring in her previous school system; however, she said she viewed the

mentoring experience as constructive in her current system. Clara elaborated:

> I think mentoring programs are great. I've been in school systems where they haven't had any at all and the one they have here is pretty good. Well, I love to teach, but the mentoring program does make it a lot easier to have somebody who has been there for a while to ask questions so you don't feel like you're always interfering with the principals.

Roberta Roberts appeared to be one of those teachers who, if you gave her an assignment,

she would hit the teaching path running. Roberta conveyed that she used the mentoring process

to gather ideas and information to develop her own procedures for dealing with the classroom.

She expounded:

> They gave me advice. They gave me things that they used and how they do things and that just helps you. I didn't do it exactly like they did but it gave me ideas how they did it then I could make up my own. I used their forms but came up with my own so . . . everything they used I took from them just so I could come up with my own procedures and practices. I did every thing I could for discipline procedures. Very helpful, I mean, after that 1st year I think . . .

She paused to gather her thoughts and then gave examples, saying:

> . . . for instance in high school, you need the same planning period if you're going to have that mentor there's two or three things you need to make sure you have. Because if you don't have the same planning and if you don't prepare, then you are not going to get the mentoring that you need. So, the planning time together and setting more time to do things like that--I think is more helpful. My overall experience was great for the 3 years that I had it. It helped me use their guidance. They knew what to expect, they prepared me how to interact with the kids. Gave me advice on how to interact with kids.

Tina Tippen, a teacher who came to the area from a school system in a state southwest of

Tennessee, made several comments about how difficult it was for her to understand her students'

conversation and that she had to ask them to repeat their words several times before she could

comprehend. She was in a good position to compare the cultural differences of the two systems.

She said she used the mentoring process to help her deal with student behaviors. She noted:

> Obviously, I'm not from Tennessee and I kind of got into the clique with other teachers that weren't from Tennessee, because most people who teach here are from around this area. So, they had already known each other through their children, and we basically were just trying to figure out how things worked in this school and Ms. [Name] probably was one from here. She is my mentor and she actually asked me over to her house just to kind of make me feel more at home and have a friend and not just a mentor. She's the

only person from here that I really got to know the 1st year. Ms. [Name] teaches Algebra II, which it takes a bit longer to take Algebra I, and she helped me to understand.

Tina then began to speak of the differences in culture from where she grew up and her current environment. She explained how the mentor helped her understand her students' behavior:

> I'm from another part of the South, but there's a little bit of culture difference here. She [mentor] helped me to understand that sometimes when kids are rude to you they may not even understand that they're being rude, so just kind (pause) . . . if you ignore them sometimes it's better than to get on them. They'll just calm down instead of . . . they won't be confrontational with you; if you just ignore them, they stop. Cause that's entertainment to them, to have some kind of confrontation with the teacher. My problem with that is . . . this is my third year coming and I came from a really rough school, so this was a smooth transition.

Three veteran teachers who had mentors stated that they had negative experiences. Mentoring either occurred after the fact or not at all. Although mentors were assigned to these three teachers, very little interaction occurred. Francis Fuller, although small in stature, seemed to be a large package of dynamite as she spoke excitedly during our interview. She stated that she was "on her own." She recalled, "It kind of told me that I was on my own. I was the only one who was going to make sure that I was doing a good job."

Helen Hall related that she considered her mentoring experience as ineffective in a "sink or swim way." On being asked to explain, she stated, "My mentor met with me to tell me, 'You're on your own. Sink or swim.'"

Adam Abbott, a tall young man with the features of a basketball player, indicated that he had, indeed played basketball and was currently a coach at the school. He admitted that his mentoring experiences were not effective because he lacked interaction with his mentor. He observed:

> I don't believe it affected it either way. Again, there was nothing (pause) . . . there was no interaction with mentoring teachers so all my perceptions about teaching came pretty much from myself and what I just observed and not from a mentor.

Six veteran educators had no formal mentoring experiences. Nevertheless, both Nancy Nugent and Ella Elder said they developed informal mentoring relationships by finding their own

mentors. Speaking at length, Nancy seemed to enjoy the interview as she made positive

comments about everyone at her school. Nancy soon divulged that she was battling a serious

healthcare issue and said it seemed as if all the other teachers in the school "were fighting right

along" with her. She said she developed a close relationship with other teachers in her

department and collaborated and gathered ideas from those teachers, explaining:

> Any time that I had a question or problem, I generally went to the people on my hall, and
> they were helpful to me every time with suggestions or perhaps how to do something
> better or to improve. Little suggestions that helped me improve the class organization
> and trying to get everything done in the limited time that you have with the children in
> any one class period. And this may come up later but among biology teachers, which is
> what I teach, we share a lot of ideas, materials, that kind of thing.

> Ella was in her 5th year of teaching. At first, she seemed reluctant to talk about her lack

of a formal mentoring experience during her 1st year; however, she soon began to describe her

own actions in finding an "informal" mentor whom she said helped keep her on track and to

remain in the profession. She detailed:

> Being that there wasn't an established mentoring program my 1st year teaching, I can't
> speak to the program. I can say that my mentor made a lot of difference. I don't know
> that I would have really kept the position had it not been for her. I do know that there is a
> mentoring program in place now and it does work well. I think it kept me on track. It
> helped me sift through what was important and what I needed to let go of.

> Jeanie Jump and Kitty Kerbo had positive comments on the overall mentoring process

even though they did not have mentors during their 1st years of teaching. Jeanie was a very

personable young teacher in her 5th year of teaching at the school. She was engaged to the

football coach and seemed very excited about their upcoming wedding. She said that she knew

mentors were able to help teachers with policies and procedures, but she was not aware that she

was supposed to have a mentor. She explained further:

> I have heard that it is really helpful when you have a mentor, as far as getting set up in a
> classroom, offering suggestions for management, for teaching strategy, maybe as far as
> what the teachers have seen that works. I would imagine that would be extremely helpful
> for a 1st-year teacher. And probably more so even the policy (pause) . . . to further
> discuss the policies or just have that one person to answer all your questions--because
> you have so many questions that 1st year.

She then sadly summed up her thoughts by saying, "Well, it didn't affect me at all. I wasn't even aware that we were supposed to have a mentor."

Kitty Kerbo, who was anxiously awaiting the birth of her first child, spoke in a very confident manner during the interview with strong emphasis on certain words. She pointed out that a mentor could have helped her during her 1st year of teaching:

> I think it would have helped me a *lot* to have had a mentor just to help me deal with a lot of things that were going on in my classroom, because I had a *very bad* 1st year here and I don't know very many teachers were aware of the fact that I was having so many difficulties. Not that they didn't care, it was just probably that they didn't realize what was going on with me. And with a mentor, it could have helped, but it may not have made much of a difference.

Gerald Grisham seemed the type of person who preferred to "think on his feet." During the interview, he sporadically jumped up to walk around the room. As the interview continued, he periodically paced back and forth. He discussed the cultural differences between the current system and his previous system. He said he did not have an identified mentor before confiding, "I had help next door. And, I have some other administrators who helped me in any way I needed." Quincy Quinn seemed to drift away from the interview's topic rather than staying on the task of mentoring. Finally, he said he did not have an identified mentor but conceded that he had done fine without one. He shared:

> It didn't bother me that I didn't have one. I think I've done all right without one as long as I had someone to talk to. It probably would have helped a little bit. I don't see what it would have hurt.

Satisfying and Dissatisfying Mentoring Experiences

Perceptions of Beginning Teachers

Research question 3 asks, What are the perceptions of beginning teachers concerning their satisfying and dissatisfying mentoring experiences as 1st-year teachers? Overall, the 1st-year teachers' responses to interview questions 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19, 21, 25, and 26 indicated satisfaction with the support their mentors gave them when they could find time to spend

together and dissatisfaction with it being virtually impossible to find mutual times for extended communication. Results of the interviews answered research question 3 thusly:

1. four of eight beginning teacher respondents indicated satisfaction with their 1st-year mentoring experiences, and

2. four of eight beginning teacher respondents indicated dissatisfaction with their 1st-year mentoring experiences.

It should be noted that while responses indicated general satisfaction or dissatisfaction, responses were often qualified indicating neither total satisfaction nor total dissatisfaction with 1st- year mentoring experiences.

Ichabod Ivy, who had a mentor, said he was just glad to have had someone who cared. After relating that he was very satisfied with his experience, Ichabod added:

> To have someone there that cared. To actually take their time to explain to you how things are actually run within the school. The administration basically throws all this paperwork at you and they just say do it. It was nice to actually have a mentor there to actually go through it little by little and explain what to do exactly. I don't really have any negative thoughts. It was a positive experience. It was outstanding.

Deana Davis explained that she would have felt isolated without the help and support from her mentor. She continued by saying that she would have liked to have had more time with her mentor and other 1st-year teachers; however, she had nothing to compare it to because this was her 1st year teaching. She said her experience with her mentor was of high quality. She shared some examples:

> Whenever I got to speak with her [mentor], sometimes it can feel as though you are isolated out there, especially in the secondary school, and whenever I would tell her about struggles or triumphs I'd been going through, she had been through the same thing. And that made me feel secure and that was satisfying to me. It let me know that I was doing the right thing and that I was striving to do the best I could in the classroom.

Deana went on to make suggestions for improving the program:

> If I could improve it in any way, I would like to have more time with mentors and 1st-year teachers, maybe in the same setting. More of a group time to be able to talk and if it were scheduled every so often, I think that would have been a little better. Even if we could get people from other schools in the area, other 1st-year teachers, I think that would

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be something nice. Having nothing to compare it to, I would say that it's been very high quality. I've felt very comfortable approaching my mentoring teacher or the administration, for that matter, with any kind of problem I've been having. It's been very helpful.

She reflected for a moment, and then continued:

On the other hand, I would say, with my personality, knowing myself, whether or not I had a mentoring teacher, I would still probably go to other teachers and ask things. I don't know if that . . . if my feeling like it was very beneficial is a result of the mentoring process altogether or just that I'm not afraid to ask questions for the most part, but it has been very beneficial to me. It has been helpful overall.

Millard Melton stated that he thought it was good to know that he was not alone in the teaching field. He granted that he had a very positive experience with the mentoring program and then expounded by making suggestions that could help him personally:

My mentor experience was very good. Probably I would have liked to have set aside a class period where I could actually observe how this teacher does it officially. I mean, I get to see her sometimes when she is in the gym, but I would actually like to sit down sometime and talk to her about my classroom management and how to do things that are required by the administration. She gave me great ideas every time I did get to talk to her. Great mentor.

Olive Oyl, with a perception similar to Melton's, said she would have liked more time to collaborate with her mentor. However, she shared how mentoring helped her with classroom management and that she was happy with the mentoring she had received. Olive Oyl explained:

It helped me a lot with the classroom management. I'm pretty happy. I would have liked to have spent more time with my mentor. I think probably there should be a schedule for the administration—to give more time with our mentor.

Patsy Pell and Stefan Stephens both said they were dissatisfied with their mentoring experience. Patsy said she thought a mentor should be someone who *wanted* to be a mentor. She observed:

I don't think I was satisfied. We hardly ever met, and when we did it was no constructive criticism, or uplifting. It was all negative, down casting remarks. No help at all. I think it was something to say, "Oh, I met with her," and I think that was pretty much it.

She continued by giving suggestions that would have made her experience better:

I think I would have a scheduled meeting once a week, and it would be a lengthy meeting to where that person could vent, ask questions, or deal with issues that might come up.

Definitely, not necessary to keep close tabs on that person, put check in, pop in once in a while and just say, "Hey. How are you doing? Thought I'd stop by and say hi. Got any questions?" A few minutes ago I said it's all about giving that person a place to come to and a place to help with and if that teacher has a problem then just to guide them in the right direction and to be there to support them in a right direction. We all have to learn by fire sometimes and if you have a buddy to go through it with it helps a lot.

After pausing, she went on to share her views about those who become mentors and then suggested the need for mentoring guidelines:

I think a mentor should be somebody who *wants* to mentor. I don't think they should be assigned to mentor. I think it's somebody who cares enough about the students, about the school, and about helping young teachers get their feet planted. Because if a young teacher does not feel like they are welcome, they definitely are not going to be happy. And I think that . . . and I think there needs to be some guidelines about it because the mentors themselves don't have any guidelines: "What am I supposed to do, how am I supposed to do it?" Maybe even some teacher training there.

After Stefan Stephens said he was "dissatisfied with the whole process," he added:

I don't know if it was very satisfying, my mentor experience. It wasn't very helpful. The whole thing was not very satisfying. It didn't provide me any help. If I were the mentor, I think I would set down with the person I was helping and we'd work out maybe a weekly schedule where we'd meet maybe once or twice a week and we'd discuss what's happened in that beginning teacher's classroom during the week, or whatever the time period was. And, I would offer ways to support that teacher.

Uriah Underwood, commenting on his mentoring experience, answered with one word, "insufficient." He then explained his viewpoint:

I felt if there were problems with my teaching, I should have been apprised of it in a period of time that I could have made corrections to avoid what has happened. I was completely blindsided by it--by losing my job my 1st year here. No help with the mentoring process here.

When asked to share his mentoring experiences, Lannie Lippard stated that he "didn't really have one." He explained further, saying, "It wasn't anything that was even mentioned. I found out from another teacher that I should have had a mentor."

Perceptions of Veteran Teachers

Research question 4 asks, What are the perceptions of veteran teachers concerning their satisfying and dissatisfying mentoring experiences as 1st-year teachers? Satisfying experiences

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reported through interview questions 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19, 21, 25, and 26 were far less prevalent among veteran teachers than among beginning teachers. At best, veteran teachers seemed to feel positive toward the fact that someone was supposed to be available to answer procedural and practical questions related to clerical obligations and routine "get through the day" information, but they appeared negative toward the fact that mentor/mentee relationships were practically nonexistent because of lack of time or lack of interest.

Research question 4 was answered more adamantly as satisfied or dissatisfied with mentoring experiences among the seven veteran teachers who had mentors:

1. three of seven veteran teacher respondents indicated satisfaction with their 1st-year mentoring experiences, and

2. four of seven veteran teacher respondents indicated dissatisfaction with their 1st-year mentoring experiences.

While extended remarks by beginning teachers seemed to qualify and soften any dissatisfaction with their mentoring experiences, extended remarks by veteran teachers tended to prove or heighten their dissatisfaction.

Seven veteran teachers said they had mentors. Three of those teachers had satisfying experiences, and four were dissatisfied with their mentoring experiences. Adam Abbott discussed his negative experience by stating, "There was nothing satisfying, because I don't feel like I was mentored by anybody." When asked to elaborate, he explained:

> Well, I feel like I was thrown to the bulls. Five regular freshmen English classes . . . I had all the behavior problems, well, I'm not going to say all, but I had behavior problems in every single classroom and my mentored teacher never said one word to me about . . . never even offered to help, is I guess was the least satisfying. You know, it would have been nice if they had at least offered it, but they never said a word to me.

Not having had a mentor in the same subject area was a concern for Clara. She stated:

> Having a mentor chosen for me that was not in a classroom so they didn't know all the information in all the situations that would occur. I think it would have been easier if I had had one who was actually in the classroom teaching. I think if they are going to have a mentoring program, it should be a little more organized, a little more specific as to what it's for.

Francis Fuller said the attitude of her mentor was less than welcoming. She recalled, "Well, I didn't feel that I was totally welcome to use her as a mentor. I would say the experiences have been poor, both of them."

Roberta said she had a mediocre formal mentoring experience during her 1st year of teaching. She said she found an informal mentor who was more helpful. Although, during the next year as situations changed, her mentoring experience became more positive. Roberta explained:

> It was mediocre the 1st year. I got more from another teacher than I did that 1st year from my mentor teacher. Because of the time situation, the next year was different. Well, the next year we had planning together, everyday, 4th period. If I was on something I didn't understand, we just had a lot more time to converse and I would get ideas from her. We also taught the same thing--whereas the 1st year, I can't remember. We were teaching same thing, therefore, we could talk every day about where we were, where we were going, just a lot more time together it was just a lot different.

The veteran teachers who had positive mentoring experiences discussed confidentiality, practical ideas, timely suggestions, and procedural questions. Bob Barton said, "I liked the fact that she gave me practical advice and kept it confidential. I could ask her something and she wouldn't say 'stupid 1st-year teacher.' No put downs."

Helen Hall confessed that having her mentor "close by" helped. She explained:

> It wasn't proactive. It was always after the fact that we discussed issues, after a problem had erupted or I didn't know how to do something. I think it was fine. I didn't have anything major happen. I didn't have, you know, catastrophes. She was next door and I could always step over and say, "What do I do?"

Tina Tippen pointed to the security of "knowing somebody is there for me if I got in over my head." She also discussed the need for support, saying:

> Just to have somebody there . . . Sometimes just even to be reminded to turn this paper in and clerical things. Maybe it could be more structured just in how to set up your lesson plans and help you with resources.

Four veteran teachers had no formal mentoring experience. However, three of the four veteran teachers admitted they developed a mentoring relationship on their own with a peer. Ella Elder, when asked about her mentoring experience and whether it was satisfying or dissatisfying,

commented, "With my established mentor? That would be hard to say. The teacher who ended up being my mentor was very good, but it [her/she] wasn't an established mentor."

Nancy Nugent's informal mentoring experience led her to acknowledge the willingness of others to help. She said:

> I think it was the friendliness and the willingness to help. I never felt like there were any boundaries as to what I could ask with any of these teachers. Just another way of saying, I never felt restrained about asking for advice or sharing things.

Elements of an Effective Program

Perceptions of Beginning Teachers

Research question 5 asks, What are the perceptions of beginning teachers regarding the elements of an effective mentoring program for 1st-year teachers? Interview questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 20, 22, 23, and 26 indicate that beginning teachers have a hopeful attitude toward the potential of formal mentoring programs to enhance 1st-year experiences. Generally, the beginning teachers said they felt a mentoring program would be more successful if only mentors who wanted to be mentors were used and that time should be allocated for substantial mentoring such as observing in the classroom with follow-up conferences in addition to providing practical information regularly. They said they felt that a more effective mentor/mentee relationship with the mentor as an encourager or motivator would develop if personalities were matched or complementary and if mentors and mentees worked in the same content or grade level area or in near physical proximity.

Research question 5 is answered thusly:

1. Use only those as mentors who want to be mentors,

2. Allocate sufficient time for quality mentoring including classroom observations and follow-up conferences,

3. Match mentor/mentee personalities to facilitate relationships,

4. Provide mentors from the same grade level or content area, and

5. Arrange for mentor and mentee to have work spaces in close physical proximity.

Among important elements mentioned by the beginning teachers were communication, dedicated mentoring time, procedural duties, and informal observation times. Uriah explained that communication should flow from administrator to mentor to mentee. He commented:

> Just open up the communication because in this case, there was a total lack of communication—from the administration to the mentoring teacher and from the mentoring teacher to the mentee teacher. There was very little communication.

Ichabod agreed that an effective mentoring program should be established by the administration and that dedicated time for the mentoring process should be allocated. He said:

> I think the program is good. One thing that could be improved is to give more time-- a lot more time. The days we have inservice or faculty meeting had lots of time for new teachers and mentors to get together.

Stefan stressed that more importance should be placed on the mentoring process as a whole. He said, "I think we need to have everyone place more importance on it. Not to take it lightly. If it's worth doing, it's worth doing correctly."

Patsy stated that she thought mentors should be chosen carefully. She also brought up a suggestion about establishing mentoring guidelines and the need for mentors' training. She explained:

> I think I would have scheduled a meeting once a week, and it would be a lengthy meeting to where that person could vent, ask questions, or deal with issues that might come up. Definitely, not necessary to keep close tabs on that person, but to pop in once in a while and just say, 'Hey. How are you doing? Thought I'd stop by and say hi.' It's all about giving that teacher a place to come if he/she has a problem.

Deana commented on the importance of a mentor who can act as a safety net for beginning teachers. She gave some suggestions for what she thought mentors should do:

> To familiarize teachers with the way this school does things, the way they handle, I guess, discipline, attendance procedures, all those type things, and, also to provide a safety net or a source of security for a new teacher.

Deana commented on what she visualized as a "perfect world" for new teachers:

> In a perfect world where there is limitless time and money and energy, we would have several books that we get to read. We would go to conferences together on teaching, whether it was for teaching, whether it was for 1st-year teachers, or teaching methods;

perhaps have luncheons together or dinners and have a system-wide session or two with all of the new teachers and all the mentors, just to get everyone together a few times also.

Millard noted that more time for observations should be provided. He explained:

During your 1st week of teaching, maybe, it's just observing that teacher to see how they get things done. The 1st week of actual classes, you know, I think that's the biggest key--seeing how somebody else does it wanting to incorporate your way into how it is done.

While Lannie did not have any formal or informal mentoring experiences, he stated that he thought a formal mentor should be assigned to everyone. He added, "I'd make sure every new teacher had one. I don't feel comfortable answering because I don't know what a real mentoring process is. I didn't experience one."

Establishing time to develop mentoring relationships was important to Olive Oyl. She also expressed a need for more training on classroom management. She suggested:

Well, I think I would set more time aside to consult the new teachers, to have meetings with the new teacher, and I think it is *very, very* important nowadays to know classroom management. That's the only thing I regret. I like my mentor program.

Perceptions of Veteran Teachers

Research question 6 asks, What are the perceptions of veteran teachers regarding the elements of an effective mentoring program for 1st-year teachers? Interview questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 20, 22, 23, and 26 overwhelmingly indicated that communication and specified regular times for communication are essential if a mentoring program is to be successful. Ten of the 13 respondents cited these two elements as their top priorities. While veteran teachers agreed with beginning teachers on the need for mentors who wanted to be mentors and for adequate time for quality mentoring, they were much more specific in terms of what constituted effective mentoring asking for clear guidelines, dedicated meeting times, mentor training, time for informal and formal observations, physical proximity, and compatible personalities.

Research question 6 is answered thusly:

1. use only those mentors who want to be mentors,

2. establish clear guidelines for mentoring including the responsibilities of the mentor,

3. establish dedicated meeting times,

4. allocate time for informal and formal observations with follow-up conferences,

5. match mentor/mentee personalities to ensure compatibility,

6. arrange for close workspace proximity of mentors and mentees, and

7. train mentors and mentees in the mentoring process.

Helen shared the need for guidelines in order to have an effective mentoring program. She also stressed the need for accountability. She maintained:

> I think accountability should be set up so there are milestones that everyone has to adhere to from the principals, to the mentor teachers, to the new teacher. This is the expectation we have, if you're failing too many students this is what needs to be done. I was failing a lot of students and I dropped it on my mentor teacher's desk, I dropped it on the principal's desk, I said, "This is not working. Either my expectations are too high or something is wrong here." There was a disconnect. And that 1st year I really had no clue where it was. That's just one example. Usually I see things as milestones. When I get to the end of the six weeks, when I get to the end of the semester; what are the expectations, what do I do during exam week? I did not know until the sixth six weeks that I had to turn in both semester exams for every student. Fortunately, I'm a pack rat so I had kept them all.

Clara discussed the need for a mentor to have knowledge of policies and procedures at the school. She also said she felt the mentor should be approachable. She contributed several elements that she thought would contribute to a successful mentor's duties, "To make 1st-year teachers more comfortable and to be able to be an outlet of information where they can go and ask questions about some of the policies and things that weren't listed . . . everyday issues."

Adam added other characteristics of an effective mentor. He suggested:

> First of all I would be sure that the administration assigned particular mentors . . . I think they need to hand pick the mentors. I don't think it should just be department heads because I believe that actually is right now; the department heads who are the mentors. I don't think that is necessarily the right thing to do. I think you should be experienced teachers who have the ability to mentor. And exactly how do you go about that?

Adam continued by discussing administrators' responsibilities in the overall mentoring process:

> Well, I think you would need, being an administrator, I think you would have pretty good ideas who in that department would be a good mentoring teacher. Then, I would make

sure I sat down, if I were the administrator, listen to what they had to say and assign them a teacher and let them know what I wanted them to do. Let them know that you need to meet with this person at least once a week the 1st couple of months of school. Then after that once or twice a month and just set down talk and make sure everything is going OK; about questions or problems or anything like that. I think the biggest thing is communication. I don't think that is very good here.

It was mentioned by some of the veteran teachers that there was a need for specified,

arranged times for mentoring relationships to be fostered. Bob elaborated:

I guess the step-by-step bringing-you-along process. Where you have somebody, one on one, you can go to for everything instead of having to get a little advice from this one and a little advice from that one. You've got one source. You would have a dedicated time each day, maybe 10 minutes between classes, or 5, maybe 15 even. Then they would have lunch at the same time. Same planning period. I would not do team teaching; I don't think that helps. As a matter of fact, I think that would slow the growth of the new teacher. But they would have the same type of classes, the same make up of students, so that anything that comes up they could say, "You know what, I'm going through that too, and this is how I would fix it."

Kitty contributed some good suggestions:

I think the mentor and the person they are mentoring should get together and meet and--I don't know if you would say friends, but definitely become close colleagues where they feel they can come to each other for any kind of help. Be able to give them constructive criticism and that's hard to do a lot of times, but when you realize they are trying help you and make you have a better teaching experience and how the kids do better, because that's what it's all . . . you know, all about is how do they do, how much are they learning. Communication is one of the biggest things I could see would help.

Ella and Roberta both pointed out the need for a common planning time. Roberta and

Jeanie both expressed the need for formal mentor training. Jeanie said:

I think what I would do is . . . if I was going to improve things, again we'd go with the general definite assignments, and if I had all the money I would make sure that the teacher had all the materials that he or she needed for their classroom and go over those materials with them. Make sure that they had technology or technological sources in their classroom, at least the ones that other teachers had in that area. Perhaps, even, go with or send that teacher to some sort of training whether it be in classroom management or at least just set them up with several different types of seminars or workshops they could go to that might help them that 1st year. And if it's a perfect world, they would know that they were going to be hired in May and so they would have that whole summer to go to workshops and have the opportunity and that money wouldn't be an issue.

Roberta expounded by making several useful suggestions:

There should be more training. The teachers would be thoroughly trained on how to mentor and they would have a set time with them every day to go over any problems that they have and they would give the new teacher everything they needed to have a great school year.

In order to foster quality planning, Ella suggested that teachers should be given adequate supplies and paused to shared an experience from her 1st day in the classroom:

The new teacher's classroom would be stocked with everything they need—paper, pencils, highlighters, paper clips, and masking tape--all those things that nobody thinks of. My 1st day, I had nothing in my desk but two paper clips. I had to start from scratch from everything.

She continued with concerns about getting an earlier start in the school year:

And they would have the time before school started to plan together, during the inservice week. Some teachers would need that and some teachers don't. And that they would have time throughout the year to stop and check with each other and make sure things were still on track. It would be wonderful if the new teacher could be hired at the beginning of the summer so they had all summer to work on their plans instead of 3 days before school started.

Building a mentoring relationship was important to Quincy. He said:

I think it would be good if each teacher could have maybe two . . . it might have to be somebody whether older teacher and or a newer teacher but you'd have to have somebody to ask him questions. You'd have to have somebody you could relate to and somebody who has been doing it a while so you could get help.

All participants agreed that having time to observe other teachers, as well as to be observed by a mentor, should be included in a formal mentoring program. Francis shared that compatible relationships and geographical proximity should be considered. She shared:

I guess in a perfect world, all the mentors would want to be mentors and would be located close, you know, geographically close to the people they are mentoring and would observe classes and let themselves be observed and be really friendly, open, and welcoming to the new teachers.

After Gerald admitted he did not know "how they do it here, having not participated," he went on to share some ideas he would implement if he were in charge of a mentoring program:

I'd try to place people within their own department. I would make sure that the mentor could get their classes covered so they could do two or three observations on the 1st-year mentees; especially one or two before the first formal observation from an administrator. And, I would set aside possibly an after-school meeting—I'm not sure how frequently for

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all mentors and mentees—so they could get together and compare notes, and discuss issues that they've had so they could learn from each other.

Although informal mentoring was successful for Nancy, she suggested that mentors should be assigned. She acknowledged:

I think it might be helpful to actually assign mentors . . . I've experienced fantastic, informal mentoring, but I think it would, in fact, be an improvement to make the mentoring standards through assignments for at least the 1st year. Because in situations where perhaps teachers didn't get along quite as well, or whatever, I would not have expected the same experiences that I've had informally in every subgroup of teachers. An assignment of a mentor might change that. It might be very useful in situations where mentoring is not practiced informally. If it's informal, it's not required, and may or may not get done. If it's assigned it should get done. So I guess that would be the mentoring process.

Tina focused on the need for assistance with procedural duties and paperwork especially when establishing priorities for teaching. Tina recalled:

The 1st day of the training new teachers get . . . the paperwork seems overwhelming. Now it's possibly . . . maybe let their mentors show them the packet instead for them being handed a big giant packet to each new teacher . . . I know you have to get a lot of paperwork. Have the mentor go through the packet and say, "OK, this is really important," and "This is something we'll deal with only four times a year." And [the need of] more classroom management ideas for new teachers.

Summary

Analysis of the data collected from beginning teachers reveals that their mentoring experiences ranged from having very little or no effect to helping them remain in the teaching profession. The mentoring experiences that helped them understand procedures, policies, and routines were reported to be most helpful.

Data from the veteran teachers who had received mentoring revealed that mentoring experiences also helped them deal with the daily procedures, routines, and cultural differences in the school setting. Teamwork and understanding how to work with colleagues were also noted as positive elements of the mentoring relationship.

Data from three veteran teachers who had not received mentoring experiences ranged from the attitude that it was a "sink or swim" approach to having no effect at all. The lack of time and the lack of one-on-one interaction contributed to the negative experiences reported by these three teachers.

While six of the veteran educators had no formal mentoring experiences, several of those teachers developed informal mentoring relationships on their own. Those veteran teachers said they tended to develop mentoring relationships with teachers who worked in close proximity to their classrooms.

In evaluating the data regarding satisfying and dissatisfying mentoring experiences, four of the eight beginning teachers said they were dissatisfied with the mentoring experience. A caring attitude, support, reducing the feeling of isolation, and help in developing classroom management techniques were among the positive elements of the mentoring relationships as stated by these participants. Of the four beginning teachers who had negative mentoring experiences, having sufficient time to work together, receiving timely feedback to correct difficult situations, and the lack of designated meeting dates and times were noted.

Three of the seven veteran teachers said they had dissatisfying mentoring experiences. Feelings of "being thrown to the bull," having mentors with teachers who taught dissimilar subject matter, and the lack of caring attitudes were among the dissatisfactions revealed.

Veteran teachers who had positive experiences were concerned with confidentiality, practical ideas, timely suggestions, and help with understanding procedural duties and routines.

An effective mentoring program should contain elements to bring about positive results. Beginning teachers revealed that communication, dedicated mentoring time, assistance with procedural duties, and scheduling informal observation times were important to them. Mentors should also be chosen carefully to match personalities and similar subject matter being taught in secondary teaching situations. Established mentoring guidelines and professional development should also be a part of the mentoring experience.

Data revealed that veteran teachers contributed helpful suggestions for an effective mentoring program. Among those suggestions were: (a) setting clear guidelines of mentoring, (b) having dedicated meeting dates and times, (c) establishing training for mentors, (d) allotting time for informal as well as formal observations, (e) locating the mentor and the mentee in close proximity in order to have time to collaborate, and (f) choosing teachers with compatible personalities for a mentoring relationship.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of results from the study and recommendations for further research and implications for future practice.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

AND PRACTICE

The teaching profession has a particularly high attrition rate among 1st-, 2nd-, 3rd-, 4th-, and 5th-year teachers costing school systems millions of dollars annually and depriving the most needy students of the quality that experience brings. This problem has loomed large in the profession for several decades despite varied efforts to address the issue. Mentoring emerged in the early 1990s as a promising strategy and has been used with mixed results. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of beginning teachers in their 1st or 2nd year and those of veteran 3- to 5-year teachers regarding the effectiveness of mentoring and other guidance they received as beginning teachers in a secondary school and to understand their vision of how mentoring should be structured for beginning teachers. Through the use of an emerging interview facilitating phenomenological responses, 8 beginning teachers and 13 veteran teachers were queried as to their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their 1st-year mentoring experiences and their suggestions regarding the structuring of an effective mentoring program.

Findings

Guided by six research questions, participants in this study identified positive and negative aspects of mentoring practices that are essentially congruent with the literature and suggested ways to enhance mentoring's effectiveness that are also congruent with the literature. Findings based on data analysis are summarized here as they related to each research question.

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of beginning teachers regarding the effectiveness of the mentoring they received as 1st-year teachers?

Beginning participants were asked what their perceptions were regarding the effectiveness of the mentoring they received as 1st-year teachers. Kagan (1992) reviewed 40 studies of beginning teachers' development and found a teacher could only become concerned with meeting all the needs of the learner if that teacher had received adequate support to move past his or her own self-involvement and fears. The results showed that beginning teachers were so overwhelmed with their transition from student to teacher that their focus was limited to surviving the classroom experiences. Without assistance, within a few weeks, the beginning teacher had lost sight of the learners. In summarizing the perceptions of the participants in this study, the investigator found they agreed with Kagan. Three out of eight beginning teachers said student motivation and how to deal with it was important. Four out of eight listed being helped with filling out school forms was important. Seven out of eight said they needed someone to talk to. Two out of eight said college didn't prepare them for all the other intangibles of teaching outside of teaching the content of the subject matter. Four out of eight said if a beginning teacher obtained enough help that 1st year, it would keep him or her from leaving the teaching field. Two out of eight said they were overloaded and had a lot of paperwork thrown at them. One beginning teacher said he needed more emphasis placed on mentoring. Seven out of eight said they believed mentoring helped. Specifically, research question 1 was answered in a narrow sense as follows:

1. four of seven respondents said they perceived their 1st-year mentoring as effective,

2. one respondent said she perceived her own experience as ineffective but maintained that mentoring could be effective,

3. one respondent reported effective mentoring for his 1st year of teaching but ineffective mentoring in his 1st year in his current school, and

4. one respondent reported effective mentoring in his teaching but no effect personally.

Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of veteran teachers regarding the effectiveness of the mentoring they received as 1st-year teachers? Results of veteran teachers'

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responses to research question 2 were congruent with the beginning teachers' responses to research question 1 and, like question 1 results, were congruent with the literature. Specifically, in a narrow sense, research question 2 elicited the following results:

1. three of the seven veteran teachers who received mentoring said they perceived their mentoring experiences to be effective,

2. two of the seven veteran teachers who received mentoring said they perceived their mentoring experiences to be of no consequence, and

3. two of the seven veteran teachers who received mentoring said they perceived their mentoring experiences to be negative experiences.

Truly effective mentoring programs aid the beginning teacher through more than just the 1st year of teaching (Darling-Hammond & Scalan, 1996). The mentor must also be knowledgeable of the needs of a beginning teacher and be able to meet those needs as the beginning teacher progresses through the school year and subsequent years. The veteran teachers in this study were asked to share their perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the mentoring they received as 1st-year teachers and provided input describing their concept of effective mentoring in a broader sense. Telling initial findings involved the number of teachers who had and had not received mentoring of any kind. Other findings, consistent with responses by beginning teachers, related to needs as they were or were not met. Including all 13 veteran teacher respondents, those who had and had not received mentoring, (a) 7 of the 13 received mentoring in their 1st year of teaching; (b) 6 of 13 received no mentoring in their 1st year of teaching; (c) 5 of 13 said they needed more help with classroom management; (d) 3 of 13 said they believed that they needed more help with discipline; (e) 4 of 13 observed they needed a relationship with someone so they did not feel isolated; (f) 6 of 13 said they received help and was glad to get the ideas and support from their mentors; (g) 4 of 13 said they were scared, overwhelmed, stressed, and that things were chaotic; (h) 4 of 13 related that they had help from their mentors that 1st year; and (i) 1 of the 4 that reported help from their mentors the 1st year

said if it had not been for her mentor she would not be teaching today. In addition, 1 of the 13 said she needed more time with her mentor and 5 of the 13 added that they received help from teachers next door or from teachers down the hallway.

Research Question 3: What are the perceptions of beginning teachers concerning their satisfying and dissatisfying mentoring experiences as 1st-year teachers?

According to Black (2004), the assumption that beginning teachers progress along a straight line from novice to expert is fundamentally flawed. They are more likely to learn through a process more in keeping with constructivist theories of learning. Thus, the mentor must be adept at determining when the mentee needs directive leadership and when the mentee needs supportive leadership. Whereas in some professions the learning curve might be linear and easier to follow, in teaching, the learning curve could be a convoluted knot requiring a greater degree of emotional and intellectual agility in the mentor (Black). Both beginning teachers' responses and veteran teachers' responses were congruent with the literature both in a narrow and broad sense. The question was answered narrowly as follows:

1. four of eight beginning teacher respondents indicated satisfaction with their 1st-year mentoring experiences, and

2. four of eight beginning teacher respondents indicated dissatisfaction with their 1st-year mentoring experiences.

As respondents described elements of mentoring that led to satisfaction and elements that resulted in dissatisfaction, they focused on relationships with mentors that were competent to help them understand the day-to-day components of teaching and had the leadership qualities to develop encouraging and facilitating relationships.

When the beginning teachers were asked to indicate perceptions about their satisfying experiences, three of the eight said that having someone to talk to was satisfying. Three out of eight also said that the mentoring they received was very helpful. Two out of the eight expounded that they were glad to have someone who cared, and one out of eight said he was glad

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to have someone to listen to him. Whereas the satisfaction perceptions of these mentees' seemed to fit the emotional side of the beginning teachers, their dissatisfaction dealt with the physical side or materialistic side. Four out of the eight beginning teachers said they wished they had more time scheduled with their mentors. Two of the eight said they were dissatisfied with the administration and all the clerical work involved. One of the eight related that he had no mentor. Two explained that their mentoring experience did not provide them with any help. One out of the eight replied that he had been led "blindly down a pathway and got his neck chopped off."

Research Question 4: What are the perceptions of veteran teachers concerning their satisfying and dissatisfying mentoring experiences as 1st-year teachers?

The notion that followers go through developmental stages requiring a leader to be cognizant of the followers' developmental stages and adjust leadership behaviors accordingly (Hersey et al., 2000) was congruent with mentoring needs indicated by novice teachers for evolving relationships that begin with basic how to, where to, and when to information and evolve as they progress through survival stages to collegial, mutually encouraging, and supportive relationships. The veteran teachers were not as satisfied with their mentoring experience as were the beginning teachers with the following results in answer to research question 4:

1. three of seven veteran teacher respondents indicated satisfaction with their 1st-year mentoring experiences, and

2. four of seven veteran teacher respondents indicated dissatisfaction with their 1st-year mentoring experiences.

Unlike the extended remarks by beginning teacher's that tended to soften, in a broader sense, any dissatisfactions reported, veteran teachers' extended remarks tended to solidify and heighten their sense of dissatisfaction. Similar to beginning teachers, veteran teachers placed value on mentoring relationships that were supportive and practically helpful.

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Only 1 out of 13 veteran teachers said he was satisfied with the practical advice he received. One of 13 explained he liked the confidentiality he received from his mentor. Two of 13 said they were glad to have someone to talk to. Two of the 13 said it was great to have help when they needed it. One of the 13 exclaimed she was satisfied with her mentor being proactive. Two of the 13 said they used teachers in their hallway as their mentors and that was satisfying to them. Six of 13 veterans' who discussed dissatisfying experiences said they did not feel they were mentored. Three of 13 said their mentor never offered any help. Five of the 13 said they did not have the same planning time as their mentor or other time with their mentor to have their questions answered. Three of the 13 said that the mentor they were assigned did not match their personalities. One of the 13 related that the school needed a more organized mentor program. Four of the 13 said there needed to be more training for the mentor and the mentee.

Research Question 5: What are the perceptions of beginning teachers regarding the elements of an effective mentoring program for 1st-year teachers?

Beginning teachers' and veteran teachers' recommendations for an effective mentoring program were similar and were congruent with the literature. In answer to research question 5, beginning teachers recommended the following:

1. Use only those as mentors who want to be mentors,

2. Allocate sufficient time for quality mentoring including classroom observations and follow-up conferences,

3. Match mentor/mentee personalities to facilitate relationships,

4. Provide mentors from the same grade level or content area, and

5. Arrange for mentor and mentee to have work spaces in close physical proximity.

Kershaw et al. (2006) credited mentoring with having enormous impact on teacher attrition, "With few exceptions, the percentages of 'leavers' in schools that have participated in the program are far lower than the state average (14% vs. 42%) and the percentage of novices as 'leavers' is even smaller" (p. 14). Mentoring has been linked to teacher retention with mixed

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results. Those programs that reported success seemed to be those that were sufficiently supported including funding and were carefully designed and implemented. The history of mentoring in general reflects the powerful impact mentoring can have when, either by design or by circumstance, there is a symbiotic mentor/mentee relationship.

When beginning teachers were asked to give their perceptions of elements of an effective mentoring program, two of six explained that the mentor should provide answers to their questions. One of the six said an effective mentor is one you can trust. Two of six related that a mentor should familiarize mentees with the way things are done at their school with discipline and other school related activities. One of six referred to the fact that there needs to be a provision provided for a safety net or some source of security. One of six pointed out that the mentor and the mentee needed to attend conferences together. One out of six said the mentor and mentee needed to attend system-wide conferences together. One of six related that administrators needed to spend more time with the mentor mentee building their relationships. One of the six beginning teachers said administrators needed to make sure every new teacher has an assigned mentor. Two of the six shared that the mentees should be able to watch their mentors teach. One of six said the mentor should be someone who wants to be a mentor. Two of the six explained that an effective mentoring program should be a formal program.

Research Question 6: What are the perceptions of veteran teachers regarding the elements of an effective mentoring program for 1st-year teachers?

Like beginning teachers, veteran teachers participating in the study agreed that, concerning elements of an effective mentoring program:

1. only those teachers who wanted to be mentors should be used in that capacity,

2. mentor/mentee personalities should be matched for compatibility,

3. mentors and mentees should work in close proximity, and

4. adequate time for classroom observations and follow-up conferences should be provided.

Veteran teachers further suggested that:

1. clear guidelines for mentoring including the responsibilities of the mentor should be developed and communicated,

2. dedicated meeting times should be established and adhered to, and

3. mentor training should be provided.

Of the veteran teachers, 10 out of 13 said that communication as well as setting a time to talk was needed. Four out of 13 related that mentees needed to receive information ahead of time. Three of 13 said the mentor needs to be a good listener, have the same planning time, have the same lunch schedule, and teach the same subject. Other suggestions were that both mentor and mentee needs formal training and that classrooms should be stocked with everything a teacher needs. Two of 13 veteran teachers stated that only handpicked teachers should be mentors. Two of 13 said it would be helpful to have more help with paperwork and clerical issues as well as to be able to watch each other teach. Two of 13 stressed the importance of having mentors who want to be mentors.

Conclusions

Based on responses to the six research questions in this study, mentoring appeared to be perceived as a potentially positive and helpful experience if it is applied effectively. Overall, the results were not overwhelming; rather, they were split with mixed feelings of satisfaction reported by the participants. School administrators must take a serious look at what is working and what is not working. Participating in mentoring programs can also help veteran teachers to rejuvenate their teaching careers. With continued research, professionals can determine the best possible training programs for new teachers and continue to offer support to the veteran teachers. Truly effective mentoring programs aid the beginning teacher through more than just the 1st year of teaching (Darling-Hammond & Scalan, 1996). The mentor must also be knowledgeable of the needs of a beginning teacher and be able to meet those needs as he or she progresses through the

school year and subsequent years. From this research, it is evident that veteran teachers as well as beginning teachers have confidence in a formal program, but it must be a formal mentoring program for it to be effective. It must be a program where stipends are paid to the mentors and time is allotted for sharing with each other. It must be a designed program that is supported from the director of schools to the beginning teacher.

Recommendations for Further Research and Practice

Results of this study corroborate general themes in the literature regarding effective mentoring practices and give rise to the same implications that dominate the literature. The study provided insights into the thoughts and perceptions of both beginning and veteran teachers about their experiences with mentoring/mentee program of a secondary school in East Tennessee. This study can be strengthened with some additional research. Following are some recommendations for further research.

1. Previously established mentoring programs such as the Memphis model by Blank and Kershaw (2002) should be reviewed to determine its effectiveness.

2. The Flowing Wells Schools District of Tucson, Arizona, should be studied. In this program, everyone is a leader from the superintendent to the principals, from teachers to students, and to the food service workers. They have a formal mentoring program. Their induction is aligned with Arizona teaching standards and they have a comprehensive, ongoing staff development program that meets the needs of beginning- to expert-level teachers.

3. Louisiana has a school system in Lafourche Parish Public schools where after the 1st year of their induction program for new teachers, the attrition rate of beginning teachers dropped from 51% to 15%. Today it hovers around 7%. This and other programs claiming success, especially those with dramatic statistical evidence of success, should be investigated to determine cause-effect or at least co-relational

relationships between mentoring practices and beginning teacher competence, satisfaction, and retention.

In addition, it is recommended that:

1. Proven effective mentoring programs should be investigated through meta-analysis and through direct investigation to determine common elements of effective mentoring.

2. Studies should be developed to determine ways of matching mentor/mentee personalities to facilitate motivational relationships.

3. Studies should be developed to determine the mentor skill sets essential to effective mentoring.

4. Studies should be developed to compare and contrast noted differences between elementary and secondary mentoring practices.

Simultaneous with research, school officials should institute practices, where practical, that abound in the literature and that are reinforced in this study as being effective in the induction process. It is specifically recommended that:

1. funds be allocated to support stipends for mentors;

2. time be allotted for mentor/mentee collaboration and communication;

3. mentor/mentee self-selection be included in the mentor assignment process to facilitate compatibility; and

4. the program aspect of mentoring be emphasized to ensure consistency and enhance quality through appropriate administration including such practices as:

   a. administrative leadership in facilitating the mentoring process,

   b. professional development training for both mentors and mentees,

   c. inclusion of all appropriate stakeholders (top to bottom, bottom to top) in planning, communicating and implementing and assessing the mentoring program,

d. routine assessment of the mentoring process with resulting planning of program improvement strategies, and

e. Provision for observation and study by mentors and mentees of known successful programs.

It is further recommended that state and federal legislatures as well as state and federal departments of education financially support as well as mandate mentoring of beginning teachers. It was noted in the introduction of this research, that districts as well as the nation loses money by beginning teachers leaving the field of teaching. Boards of education and state departments of education could save dollars by spending money on these young teachers through mentoring programs. While some of the recommended actions require state, federal, and local central office support, some can be instituted through the will and leadership of the building level administrator and the will and commitment of the teachers. Individual principals could possibly have a significant impact on the quality of mentoring in their schools by implementing a leadership model, specifically one that focuses on motivational relationships, that is compatible with the personalities, traits and needs of the faculty to collaboratively plan, implement, monitor, assess and continually improve a mentoring program.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Emerging Interview Design

I appreciate your time in answering some questions related to your experiences with the mentoring process that your school provides. Let me assure you that any information you share with me will be totally confidential. It will be presented as part of my research only in summarized form - only after it has been compiled with responses from all other participants so that no one person's responses can be identified.

1. As you reflect on your experiences as a first year teacher, what are the first thoughts that come to your mind?

2. Tell me about the experiences you were provided to observe experienced teachers in the classroom during your first year of teaching.

3. How many times did you actually observe?

4. Tell me about your experiences with <u>peer</u> first-year teachers in the classroom during your first year of teaching?

5. Approximately how many times did you actually observe another teacher during your first year as a teacher?

6. What types of in-service or training opportunities did you have during your first year of teaching that were specifically designed for first year teachers?

7. Approximately how many times did you participate in in-service seminars specifically for <u>first-year</u> teachers during that first year of teaching?

8. Tell me about other in-service experiences you had during that first year that were for teachers in general in your system.

9. Approximately how many times did you participate in this type of in-service experience?

10. Considering your experiences observing peer and experienced teachers and participating in in-service seminars, what did you find most helpful to you as a first-year teacher?

11. What kind of guidance did you have to help with problems that first-year teachers encounter?

12. Tell me about the people who provided guidance to you.

13. What were their positions?

14. Were they assigned to you or did they volunteer?

15. What written materials and/or guidelines were provided to you?

16. Did you have an identified mentor teacher?

17. What is the approximate amount of time you spent with your mentor teacher each week?

18. Approximately how many times total during your first year did you meet with your mentor teacher?

19. How much time did you normally spend, on average, with your mentor teacher each time you met with him/her?

20. What was most satisfying to you as a first-year teacher about your mentoring experience?

21. What was least satisfying to you as a first-year teacher about your mentoring experience?

22. What do you believe to be the overall goals of the mentoring experiences you had?

23. Overall, how would you characterize the quality of the mentoring experiences you had?

24. As you consider the mentoring program, what would be your overall assessment regarding the value of the mentoring to your overall transition into the field of teaching?

25. What do you believe to be the overall goals of the teacher mentoring program that you experienced?

26. How do you believe the mentoring program affected your views regarding teaching?

27. Now that you have been teaching, what program would you design or what would you do differently if you were the mentor?

28. In your perfect world, how would you improve the current mentoring process?

Again, let me thank you for answering these questions and, again, let me assure you that your responses will be summarized along with other teacher responses and only compiled data will be presented so that no individual responses can be identified.

APPENDIX B

Letter From Debriefer

I, Dr. Joy Yates, served as the debriefer for this study, An Evaluation of Perceptions of a Mentoring Program of Beginning Teachers in a Rural East Tennessee Secondary School. I met with Mike Frazier throughout the research process to discuss the impressions and observations that emerged during the research study. We discussed his concerns about the interviews as well as any potential biases he noted.

Dr. Joy Yates, Supervisor of Elementary Instruction
(October 11, 2006)

APPENDIX C

Letter From Auditor

I, Dr. Julie Mitchell, have served as the auditor for Mike Frazier's meetings with beginning and veteran teachers from a rural East Tennessee secondary school. I have read and reviewed chapter 4 and have found everything to be accurately represented and the process for determining how to present the results to be in compliance with the data collected.

Dr. Julie Mitchell, Teacher
(October 11, 2006)

Informed Consent Form

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Mikel G. Frazier

TITLE OF PROJECT: *An Evaluation of Perceptions of a Mentoring Program of Beginning Teachers in a Rural East Tennessee Secondary School*

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY INFORMED CONSENT

The purpose of this note of INFORMED CONSENT is to explain a research project in which I am requesting your participation. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer. By no means is there any pressure for you to participate in this research.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study will be to examine the perceptions of beginning and veteran teachers regarding the effectiveness of mentoring and other guidance they received as beginning teachers and to understand their vision of how mentoring should be structured for beginning teachers. Specifically, the study will address satisfaction with 1st-year experiences specially designed to support the personal and professional well-being of beginning teachers.

DURATION

Participants are asked to be part of an emerging interview where phenomenological data will be collected. There will be no time limits, so the investigator can gain insight of personal experiences of the phenomenon of their mentoring experiences.

The results of the study may be used by mentoring teachers to evaluate the types of support needed by all beginning teachers and to open a dialogue with their mentees to facilitate understanding of specific and unique needs.

Version: August 4, 2006   Subject's Initial_____

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Mikel G. Frazier

TITLE OF PROJECT: *An Evaluation of Perceptions of a Mentoring Program of Beginning Teachers in a Rural East Tennessee Secondary School*

PROCEDURES:

Qualitative research lends itself to the interview as a primary source of data collection (Creswell, 1998). Thus, individual interviews deliberately using the emerging interview design will be used to collect all phenomenological data. Interviews will be conducted with provisions for all respondents to discuss their experiences in response to guiding questions with no time limits or other restrictions. Interview respondents will be determined through purposeful sampling to ensure that all participants have actually experienced the phenomenon (beginning teacher mentoring) and therefore have sufficient understanding of the phenomenon.

The director of schools in a southeast Tennessee county school system will be approached for approval to conduct specific research in the system contingent on approval also by the principal of a secondary school in the county. Assuming permission is granted, the principal will be asked to identify those teachers on his faculty that are in their 1st or 2nd year and those in their 3rd, 4th, or 5th year who have experienced the mentoring process for new teachers advocated by the Tennessee State Board of Education and the Tennessee School Board Association. The researcher is aware that there are 21 teachers that meet the criteria for participation in this study. With the principal's approval, all eligible teachers will be invited to participate in the study.

All interviews will be scheduled at the convenience of participants and will be conducted by the researcher using audio-taping and researcher transcription. An independent auditor will listen to and transcribe the tapes for comparison with the researcher transcription to ensure accuracy. Dr. Julie Mitchell who has been IRB trained by ETSU and holds a current valid certificate will serve as this auditor.

Alternative Procedures:
There are no other alternative procedures except for you not to participate.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

No known or expected risks or discomforts should be associated with this research.

Version: August 4, 2006   Subject's Initial_____

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Mikel G. Frazier

TITLE OF PROJECT: *An Evaluation of Perceptions of a Mentoring Program of Beginning Teachers in a Rural East Tennessee Secondary School*

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

By participating in this research project, it is believed that participants will be able to address satisfaction with 1st year experiences especially designed to support the personal and professional well-being of beginning teachers as well as other educators concerning effective mentoring programs.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, problems, or research related medical problems at any time you may call Mike Frazier at 423-745-8598 or 423-462-2488, or Dr. Nancy Dishner at 423-439-6162. You may also call the chairman of the Institutional Review Board 423-439-6134 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research participant. If you have any questions or concerns about the research team or you can't reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423/439/6055 or 423/439/6002.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every attempt will be made to see that my study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be stored at the Principal Investigators home. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming me as a subject. Although my rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board, and research related personnel from the ETSU Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis have access to the study records. My records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

Version: August 4, 2006   Subject's Initial_____

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Mikel G. Frazier

TITLE OF PROJECT: *An Evaluation of Perceptions of a Mentoring Program of Beginning Teachers in a Rural East Tennessee Secondary School*

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

The nature demands, risks, and benefits of the project have been explained to me as well as are known and available. I understand what my participation involves. Furthermore, I

understand that I can refuse to participate or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. I have read, or have had read to me, and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A signed copy has been given to me.

My study records will be maintained in strictest confidence according to current legal requirements and will not be revealed unless required by law or as noted above.

_____

SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER   DATE

_____

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR   DATE

Version: August 4, 2006   Subject's Initial_____

APPENDIX E

Permission Letter From Director of Schools

McMinn County Board of Education
216 North Jackson Street
Athens, Tennessee 37303
Ph. (423) 745-1612 • Fax (423) 744-1641

Mr. Mike Frazier
Riceville Elementary School
Riceville, TN

Dear Mr. Mike Frazier,

You have my permission to interview teachers at _____ School as research for your Doctoral program.

Sincerely,

Dr. John W. Forgety
Director of Schools

Letter To Principal

Riceville Elementary School

Principal - Mike Frazier   *Asst Principal - Lee Parkison*

Dear Mr. John A. Grubb

I would like to request permission to interview 21 teachers at
School. I am in the process of writing my dissertation for East Tennessee State University
as part of the requirement in obtaining my doctorate degree. I will be doing a qualitative
study using emerging interview questions. My dissertation is dealing with the perception
of beginning and veteran teachers pertaining to the mentoring process.

Your consideration is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Mike Frazier
Principal Investigator

VITA

MIKE FRAZIER

Personal Data: Date of Birth: May 26, 1951
                  Place of Birth: Cleveland, Tennessee
                  Marital Status: Married

Education: Public Schools, Cleveland City Schools, Cleveland, TN;

                  University of Tennessee; Knoxville;
                      Education, B.S.,
                      1975

                  Tennessee Tech University, Cookeville, TN;
                      Administration, M.A.,
                      1981

                  Lincoln Memorial University; Harrogate, TN;
                      Curriculum and Instruction, EdS,
                      1998

                  East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN;
                      Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, Ed.D.;
                      2006

Professional
Experience: Teacher;
                      Chattanooga Central High School, Harrison, TN;
                      1976-1977

                  Teacher;
                      McMinn County High School, Athens, TN;
                      1977-1983

                  Teacher;
                      Niota Elementary School, Niota, TN;
                      1983-1986

                  Assistant Principal;
                      McMinn County High School, Athens, TN
                      1986-1990

                    Principal;
                      Riceville Elementary School, Riceville, TN;
                      1990-present

Honors, Awards,
and Professional
Organizations State Chair for Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Accreditation and School Improvement
Member of ASCD
Tennessee Association of Elementary School Principals
Supervisors Study Council
Who's Who Among American Teachers
Who's Who Among American School Administrators
National Association of Elementary School Principals
Deacon, Eastanallee Baptist Church