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Identifying Quality Mentoring Based on New Teacher Perceptions of Professional Development

Abstract

Despite the fact that new teacher mentoring had its inception in the late 1960's and is currently mandated in schools and districts across the country, there are still questions as to whether effectiveness has been obtained (Keay, 2007). Stewart (2004) arrived at a definition of "quality mentoring" based on five areas of support (i.e., Personal Support, Classroom Support, Professional Support, Evaluative Support, and Reflective Support), and her research provides definition to the kind of support that mentees desire and need.

The purpose of this study was to examine an existing survey that was designed for a large urban district's evaluation of a grant-funded teacher-mentoring program (i.e., the New Teacher Support Program). The researcher coded the existing program evaluation survey according to Stewart's categories, and this process identified the presence of research-based categories within the existing evaluation of a mentoring program. The researcher then analyzed the results from the two groups of new teachers involved in this study, the New Teacher Support Program participants (NTSP) and the Non-New Teacher Support Program participants (Non-NTSP), to understand which components of mentoring were the most important to the mentees based on their perceptions.

The findings from this study were that all survey respondents perceived that they received support from their mentors. All survey respondents perceived more support in the Personal Support category, followed very closely by the categories of Professional Support, Classroom Support and Reflective Support. The existing survey contained items that corresponded to all of Stewart's categories except Evaluative Support. There were differences between the responses of the two groups (i.e., the NTSP and non-NTSP participants) especially in the category of Reflective support. There was also evidence that the mentees used the support received from their mentors to adjust their instructional practices.

The findings demonstrate that the new teachers in one urban school district did perceive support from having a mentor. More research should be conducted regarding how support from mentors translates into improved instruction and student outcomes.

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IDENTIFYING QUALITY MENTORING
BASED ON NEW TEACHER PERCEPTIONS
OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the Morgridge College of Education
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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Patti Secret Goldsmith Roberts

March 2011

Advisor: Dr. Susan Korach

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Chapter 1: An Overview

Introduction

Effective teachers are those teachers who, knowing their content and understanding how students learn, are able to develop and implement curriculum resulting in academic achievement. Few would disagree with this definition, but how do teachers fresh out of college master the skills necessary to make that happen (Levin, 2003)? There is a particular belief in something known as the “wash-out” effect, where new teachers enter a classroom and most of what they have been taught in their college education and training classes evaporates (Veenman, 1984). If this assertion is true, it reinforces the importance of practices such as induction and mentoring (Stewart, 2004). Mentoring programs for new teachers began to emerge about thirty years ago; however, they have never been more widespread than today (Darling-Hammond, 1996). Mentoring for teachers’ professional development has been touted as good for professional practice, especially in guiding beginning teachers in their first full-time employment (Long, 2009; Guarino, Santibanez, Daley, & Brewer, 2004).

Judging from the numbers of new teachers who drop out of the profession, many of them found it too difficult to go it alone (Huling-Austin, 1992). Mentoring new teachers is a way to help the mentees “learn the ropes.” In addition, mentoring assists new teachers during their early years, when they are learning to cope, adjust, and survive

the teaching conditions and culture of their new surroundings. Mentoring of new teachers also assists in making the paradigm shift from what Eddy (1996) suggested beginning teachers' lives usually revolve around – reality shock and loneliness – during a struggle to survive and a loss of idealism.

Both mentors and mentees point to learning from induction programs. Mentees, however, request additional support to meet their needs for more daily and individualized mentor support from trained mentors (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). It is time to turn-the-tables and find out from mentees what they determine are the requirements of a “quality” mentor.

Formalized mentoring, according to Long (2009), Hobson et al. (2009), and Mullen (2008), involves the identification of experienced teachers as mentors. These mentors have the role of assisting beginning teachers through their first year(s) of teaching, in what is hoped to be a well-planned system of support and training. In many cases, the principal calls for volunteers amongst staff or specifically targets individuals to take on the role of mentor. Often few resources accompany this role, such as mentor training, release from other duties (e.g., teaching, marking, playground supervision), or acknowledgement of the importance of the mentoring role for the maintenance of the profession. Sometimes mentors are not recognized or valued personally or professionally as leaders in the school organization with the important role of developing beginning teachers and colleagues. For these reasons, there is a real concern that suitable

experienced teachers with desirable attributes and professional development to act as mentors are in short supply.

The benefits of strong mentor programs have been documented in some non-empirical research. Howe (2006) argued that mentor programs contain elements for specifically trained mentors and comprehensive activities for teacher development that decrease teacher attrition rates for beginning teachers. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) also reported that beginning teachers who participated in collaborative induction programs with mentors were less likely to move to other schools and less likely to leave the teaching profession after their first year.

Mentoring programs are usually undertaken for the duration of one to three years, depending on the knowledge and skill development of the beginning teacher and the system in place (Owens, Kos & McKenzie, 2008; Long, 2990). Today, mentors see the need for an integrated approach to supporting the learning of new teachers in academic and social instruction, as well as guiding the same teachers through strategies to accelerate the growth of the whole student (Sweeny, 2008). In addition, there is documented benefit shown from having a mentor outside of the mentee's area of expertise, as learning is then focused on basic classroom issues rather than specific subject matter and content. This concept supports the *process* of teaching versus the *product* of teaching.

By serving as mentors, veteran teachers function as teacher educators, an activity that complements other aspects of professional development during the middle and later

years of their careers. Effective mentors use skills associated with good teaching, peer coaching or cognitive coaching, and cooperative teaching. Stewart (2004) first examined Ganser's (1996) study, where twenty-four teachers/mentors identified six significant items for their mentor roles list. They also shared six benefits of teacher mentors.

1. Provide the beginning teacher with support and encouragement.
2. Meet with the beginning teachers regularly
3. Inform the beginning teacher about school culture and climate.
4. Provide the beginning teacher with information about policies and procedures.
5. Help the beginning teacher with discipline and classroom management.
6. Help the beginning teacher with teaching skills (Stewart, 2004; Ganser, 1996).

Obstacles that mentors deemed representative of concerns that could undermine a mentoring program were the lack of physical proximity and the lack of incentives or rewards for their mentoring. These two obstacles were sub-divided into four categories:

1. Lack of time for meetings and classroom visits.
2. Other responsibilities interfering with mentoring responsibilities.
3. A mismatch between beginning teacher and mentor concerning the teaching assignment and teaching ideology.
4. Lack of administrative support (Stewart, 2004; Ganser, 1996).

Obstacles which were subtle problems and more difficult to detect and solve were: low commitment from mentees and/or mentors; negative attitudes toward

mentoring on the part of teachers and/or administrators; and mentoring being a new or uncomfortable role for the teacher due to a lack of interest or training.

In 2004, Stewart conducted an extensive literature review on mentoring practices. She found limited empirical studies that identified quality mentoring despite the fact that she also found widespread agreement for the need for quality mentoring as part of the professional development for new teachers. Her research further stated that the development of quality new teachers exists on a continuum and “the learning curve for new teachers can be accelerated through effective mentoring relationships” (Stewart, 2004, p. 32). The gap in existing research defining quality mentoring led her to develop five support categories: Personal Support, Classroom Support, Professional Support, Evaluative Support, and Reflective Support. Using these five categories, she determined the level of support that mentees felt they had received (and whether or not it surpassed the “sink or swim” level) during their first years of teaching.

New teachers say that while they typically exhibit an abundance of energy and vigorous commitment, they often have little knowledge of how to put their scattered ideas into practice. Therefore, the recommendation is to encourage ongoing professional exchange and support between veterans and new teachers (Brown, 2003). Brown’s (2003) article, *Working: Why Mentoring Programs May be the Key to Teacher Retention*, also pointed out that teachers benefit from having a mentor outside their areas of expertise. This way, the focus is on basic classroom issues (i.e., the process of teaching) rather than on subject matter and content.

Stewart (2004) described the fragmentation of mentoring programs by stating that, “Until we can recognize it when we see it, so that we can instruct mentors in how to mentor and provide school districts with a guide for mentoring and induction programs, we will continue to suffer from the results of inconsistency” (p. 91). Despite a plethora of mentoring and induction programs, the lack of quality control in these programs has left school districts struggling with teacher retention and critical teacher shortages across the country. Worse than that, however, is the resultant low quality teaching that often comes from the absence of quality mentoring. While it is true that generations of new teachers have survived on their own, is this a tradition that we can really afford to continue?

Research has shown that mentoring is an in-depth program of support for the professional development of new teachers (Owens et al., 2008; Long, 2009; Stewart, 2004), and existing programs have been found to have both strengths and shortcomings. Quality mentoring is desperately needed in today’s schools, where effective teachers, (both new and veteran) must know content, understand how students learn, and have the ability to develop curriculum which meets individual students’ learning needs. When examining quality mentoring for new teachers, it is important to note that although mentoring programs are seen as an effective way to provide professional development and support for each new teacher, there seems to be limited information as to how to define or assess “quality mentoring.”

Statement of the Problem

Based on data from a national survey conducted in 2006-2007, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) reported that low-performing schools rarely close the student achievement gap because they never close the teacher quality gap. As a result, these schools are constantly rebuilding their staff due to attrition and turnover.

The recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers are important challenges for public education in the United States. Researchers predict national demands of up to two million teachers in the next few years, due to a combination of increased student enrollment, anticipated retirements, and high rates of teacher attrition (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Kelley, 2004). Recent reports further suggest that staffing needs may not be due to the overall shortages of qualified teachers entering the profession, but rather to the large numbers of teachers migrating to other schools or leaving the profession altogether (Ingersoll, 2002). Ingersoll's (2001) analysis of the national Schools and Staffing survey and Teacher Follow-Up survey found that more than one third of beginning teachers leave the profession during the first three years and almost another half leave after five years.

Long (2009) stated that keeping high quality teachers in the profession must be the responsibility of the educational profession, as it has been found that attrition negatively impacts a range of issues and affects educational outcomes in many areas. Long continued by explaining that when mentoring is embedded within professional

learning activities and networked amongst experienced teachers, and when all participants are focused on learning together, schools will then have the opportunity to be dynamic and active agents of change. Long's (2009) study recommended that schools and systems act quickly and strategically to harness all teachers in their professional learning as a committed and cohesive community of learners. What the profession does not need are more static mentoring programs that uphold the accepted status quo but do little to motivate and engage beginning teachers as learners and leaders in education. Mentors must become more than the local school guide. Instead, they need to be agents for change, providing the catalyst for school renewal, not only for beginning teachers but also for the whole school community (Long, 2009).

After conducting an extensive literature review of mentoring best practices, Stewart (2004) conducted an empirical research study focused on arriving at a definition of "quality mentoring" based on five areas of support (i.e., Personal Support, Classroom Support, Professional Support, Evaluative Support, and Reflective Support). Her mixed-method study surveyed the beliefs about mentoring support held by educators in higher education and in secondary schools. Although her study concluded that there was little consensus about which types of support were most important, Classroom Support and Personal Support were often ranked high, while Evaluative Support was consistently ranked lowest (Stewart, 2004). Her findings demonstrated a clearer picture of the beliefs about mentoring support, held by educators in higher education and in secondary schools.

Stewart's work demonstrated the significant need for quality mentorship programs throughout the first through third years for new teachers. In addition, it showed that the importance of training mentors to assist these new teachers on a daily basis in the five areas of support appears to be based on economics and needs. Stewart's (2004) research study further found that it is possible to arrive at a definition of quality mentoring through these five support areas. Although there was a difference in the perceptions of the participants as to which of the five categories ranked most important, all mentees agreed that there was a definite need for professional development in each of the five areas of support.

While most of the current research on mentoring focuses on the outcomes of new teachers remaining in the profession, Stewart's (2004) research provided definition to the kind of support that mentees desire and need. Stewart (2004) called for further research in the areas of mentor disposition, mentor selection, mentors as reflective teachers, and mentor training, as well as a need for mentor programs that meet the perceived needs of new teachers. This raises an important question: Are mentoring programs being designed and evaluated to reflect the research on the identified areas of support for the development of new teachers?

Purpose

Teaching is a complex balance of relationships and various roles between students, parents, other teachers and school executives, and it requires professional educators that are flexible, adaptive and resilient. Beginning teachers who are mentored

to become confident and reflective educators cannot only embrace change in a positive manner, but help to build a positive, cohesive and happy staff, which is motivating for all members of the school community, especially students (Long, 2009). According to Hord (2007), schools of the future will support educators in continuous study, reflection, dialogue, and learning.

Johnson and Kardos (2002) found that new teachers longed for opportunities to learn from their experienced colleagues and wanted more than social support and instructions for using the copy machine. In addition, new teachers wanted to discuss curriculum implementation, get ideas about how to address specific students' needs, and gain insight from colleagues with experience in their subject areas.

The purpose of this study was to examine an existing survey that was constructed in a large urban district to evaluate a new grant funded new teacher mentoring program. The items from this survey were aligned to Stewart's (2004) five categories of mentoring support, and the results were analyzed to determine which components of mentoring were the most important to the mentees who participated in the survey.

XYZ Consulting, an independent consulting firm known for conducting research and evaluation, was contracted by a large urban district to evaluate a new teacher mentoring program, the New Teacher Support Program (NTSP). This program was a grant-funded, differentiated, job-embedded support program for new teachers, focused on a comprehensive induction process involving an intensive mentoring component. Although all 557 new teachers in the district received mentoring support, the grant-

funded program included only 50 of the district's new teachers. These new teachers selected to participate in the NTSP came from a pool of alternatively licensed teachers. The remaining 507 new teachers held either traditional or alternative licenses, and they participated in the regular district new teacher mentoring program (Non-NTSP). Thirty-two NTSP participants (64%) and 148 Non-NTSP participants (29%) responded to the survey.

This research explored the perceptions of mentees in each of the categories to determine what kinds of support the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants believed they were receiving. While the XYZ survey was not built using Stewart's five categories of support, using the XYZ survey gave insight into which categories mentees perceived they had support and into which categories they may have needed additional support.

Stewart (2004) developed the following definitions of the five categories of support from the literature review.

1. Personal Support: emotional support, listening, counseling, providing appropriate praise and encouragement, working to develop a relationship with a mentee.
2. Classroom Support: adapting content knowledge, delivery of materials, lesson and unit planning, classroom management, method of assessment, modifying instruction for gifted and special needs students.
3. Professional Support: modeling professional behavior with parents, school staff, administrators, socialization into school and community culture, encouraging professional development, assisting with portfolio preparation.

4. Evaluating Support: making formal and informal observations, providing sincere and timely feedback, completing necessary paperwork for district or university; willing to practice intervention if needed.

5. Reflective Support: modeling reflective practitioner behavior, encouraging candidate or mentee to analyze and question practices, supporting the mentee in working towards solutions to problems.

The intent of this study was to: (1) determine the presence of Stewart's categories within an existing evaluation of a mentoring program and (2) understand which components of mentoring were the most important to the mentees based on their perceptions. This research included mentees from all forms of teacher preparation (i.e., alternative and traditional). The data was disaggregated to determine if there were differences between mentees who participated in the district's mentoring programs (NTSP vs. non-NTSP). There is a high level of recognition for the needs of mentoring, but there are significant differences in its application and professional development for mentors (Stewart, 2004). This study sought to find those differences.

New teachers, no matter whether they hold alternative or standard licensure, are overwhelmed when they are required to take induction classes, learn the culture of their school and district, and learn the content to be taught without the support of a trained and consistent mentor's guidance. Because there is limited empirical research, the context of this study was to focus on improving the quality of mentoring and retention of new teachers. Therefore, the results of this dissertation have provided information about the

nature of mentoring programs and the support mentees received. This study explored and shared the perceptions of mentees within an urban school district located in the western United States, in regards to their beliefs surrounding the importance and impact of professional development in each of the five support categories (Stewart, 2004): Personal, Classroom, Professional, Evaluative, and Reflective. This study also sought to determine if there was a difference in the perceived importance of professional development in each of the five categories between the teacher licensure programs and the mentees' participation in the NTSP.

Research Questions

The research questions this study sought to answer were:

1. What are the perceptions of New Teacher Support Program (NTSP) and Non-New Teacher Support Program (Non-NTSP) mentees regarding the five different categories of support: Personal, Classroom, Professional, Evaluative, and Reflective?
2. What is the difference between the perceptions of mentees who received support from the NTSP and those who received support from the traditional urban mentoring program, the Non-NTSP, on the different levels of support as described above?
3. What are the differences between the perceptions of NTSP and Non-NTSP participants based on the demographics of race and educational background as identified by the XYZ survey?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

History of Mentoring and Induction Programs

Teachers are the most significant resource in schools, as teachers and teaching are the most important factors in student learning (Owens et al., 2008; Long, 2009). This historically noteworthy statement is seen time and again, as educators have struggled over the years to close the achievement gap in student learning by decreasing the attrition rate of teachers and increasing professional development to support teachers' instructional practices. Mentoring and induction programs trace their roots back to the early 1960s and have been used to: (1) support new teachers as they begin their careers in education and (2) attempt to combat the high attrition rates of these new teachers. Induction programs have been historically viewed as a short-term series of meetings introducing the district's culture, curriculum and educational programs. Mentoring, however, differs from induction in that it involves a mentor guiding a mentee through a long-term (i.e., one to three school years) coaching relationship involving professional development to meet the individual needs of each new teacher (Huling-Austin, 1987).

The evolution of induction programs began twenty years ago as schools began to explore schemes to help the beginning teacher enter the teaching profession. Literature at

the time cited studies of beginning teachers' problems in every area of teaching, from instructional techniques to classroom management.

Induction implies a planned, organized, orientation procedure. The highest goal obtainable by most induction programs is to provide the support and assistance necessary for the successful development of beginning teachers who enter the profession with the background, ability, and personal characteristics to become acceptable teachers (Huling-Austin, 1985). The teaching profession regards induction as the first step in staff development.

Beginning in 1992 with their research of a New Mexico induction program, Odell and Ferraro found that there were indications that some induction programs could positively influence retention of teachers. (The New Mexico program reported that 96% of its teachers were still teaching after four years.) However, while these findings were encouraging, there was still not adequate evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of various induction programs as they specifically related to the novice teacher's competence, efficacy, or desire to stay in the profession (Gold, 1996).

Providing meaningful assimilation into the profession of teaching is one way school districts can retain novice (mentee) teachers, but existing induction programs vary in their substance and quality. Although Darling-Hammond et al. (1999) reported that almost one half of new teachers engage in some kind of induction experience, many programs offer only superficial types of assistance such as district orientation, periodic workshops, or instruction in generic classroom management strategies (Gold, 1996).

Moreover, some state-sponsored programs offer induction as an evaluation process that applies formulaic criteria for narrowly defined teaching behaviors to assess new teacher performance (Darling-Hammond et al., 1999; Kelley, 2004).

Authors have debated different ways to smooth out the induction of new teachers into school systems: extending pre-service to five years, introducing internships, and establishing induction programs for the first one-to-three years of teaching are three ways most often mentioned. In addition, since 1980, many state legislatures have mandated induction programs.

According to ASCD's *Educational Leadership* (2003), it is important to recognize how powerful induction programs can be; however, keeping new teachers in teaching is not the same as helping them become good teachers. Education must treat the first years of teaching as a phase in learning to teach and surround new teachers with a professional culture that supports teacher learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). Feiman-Neiman, Carver, Schwille, and Yusko (1996) concluded that most induction mandates do not rest on robust ideas about teaching-learning, and they often lack the human resources and material to support effective programs. Even when formal induction programs exist, they may not help beginning teachers learn the kind of teaching that fosters complex learning on the part of students. Similarly, Gold (1996) stated that neglect in supporting new teachers would cause premature burnout as new recruits experience disillusionment and an inability to cope with the myriad of daily pressures teaching presents. When new teachers experience a lack of support and poor working conditions, their commitment to

stay in the profession weakens. New teachers need opportunities to collaborate with other teachers in professional communities, observe colleagues' classrooms, be observed by expert mentors, analyze their own practices, and network with other novice teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Elmore, 2002; Huling-Austin, 1992; Kelley, 2004).

As early as 1983, Donald Schön pointed out that new teachers and veterans are not always able to resolve the disparity between theories and actions. New teachers need master teachers to support their teaching, learning and development in the field of education. However, it is only when new teachers are able to perceive support that there will be the possibility for growth to occur. The difficulty of the transfer of learning from preparation to practice reinforces the need for quality mentor/mentee relationships and mentor training, to help new teachers respond to dilemmas as they arise. *A Nation at Risk* (1984) identified this need and reinforced the need for support, stating that master teachers should be involved in designing teacher preparation programs and in supervising teachers during their probationary years, as they have both the experience and the knowledge to make mentoring work.

Just a few years later, Lave and Wenger (1990) explained the need for successful mentoring by arguing that learning as it normally occurs is a function of the activity, context, and culture where it occurs. They further stated that social interaction is a critical component to learning theory as learners become more involved in a “community of practice.” According to their research in *Situated Learning*, Lave and Wenger (1990) found that the presence of a mentoring relationship in the larger “community of practice”

could be critical to new teacher development. In order to stop this lack of teacher retention and to improve the quality of instructional practices, there is an apparent need to move towards systemic and strategic mentor training to support new teachers (Slaybaugh, Evans & Byrd, 1996).

Ten years later, the seriousness of this issue was confirmed again by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future Report (1996). This report identified that over 50% of first year teachers were leaving the teaching profession without really giving their careers a chance, and that the most cited reason for this exodus was a lack of mentoring. As a result, the report examined recruiting, preparing, and retaining good teachers as the central strategy for improving schools in the United States, and it found many major flaws in teacher preparation, adequate induction for beginning teachers, and adequate professional development opportunities which rewarded individuals' knowledge and skill levels. The report stated that traditional 'sink-or-swim' induction and mentoring contributed to high attrition and lower levels of teacher effectiveness.

The Commission urged states, districts and schools to provide mentors for all beginning teachers. Their final recommendations focused on the need for professional development, including the creation and funding of mentoring programs for beginning teachers, the evaluation of teaching skills, and the creation of a stable, high-quality source of professional development for mentors and new teachers. The Commission's goal was to ensure that all teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to teach so that all children can learn and all school systems are organized to support teachers in this work.

The following steps were part of their recommendations: (1) to recognize that these ideas must be pursued together, as an entire tapestry that is tightly woven (i.e., pulling on a single thread will create a tangle rather than tangible progress) and (2) to build upon the substantial work that has been undertaken over the past decade.

All across the county, programs for recruiting, educating, and mentoring new teachers have sprung up. Professional networks and teacher academies have been launched; many school programs have been redesigned; higher standards for teacher licensure and school accreditation have been developed; and a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has been fully established and is beginning to define and reward accomplished teaching. In part, these are the reasons for the increasing implementation of mentoring programs nationwide (Slaybaugh, Evans & Byrd, 1996).

Mentoring Defined

Although there is a plethora of literature about mentoring, most is of the non-research variety, based on educational assumptions by expert educators. Research about mentoring, however, is growing and has helped define what quality mentoring looks like, what practices constitute effective mentoring, and what theories underline the act of mentoring (Scherer, 1999 and Stewart, 2004). Andrews and Quinn (2005) began their research using the stage set by Feiman-Nemser (1999), who affirmed the need to provide support to beginning teachers for two reasons: (1) to retain qualified beginning teachers and (2) to enable beginning teachers to become effective practitioners as soon as possible.

Mentoring shares much in common with teaching, especially in the areas of communication skills, however, mentoring is a different professional role for the teacher. An important part of effective new teacher mentor programs is the provision of adequate training to mentors. The need for high quality training is understood when it is accepted that being a good teacher is not enough training for being a good mentor. Moreover, expectations for mentors extend beyond providing emotional support, assistance with policies and procedures, and superficial instructional assistance to influencing the practice of new teachers in significant ways; therefore, the need for appropriate and thorough mentor training becomes all the more important (Ganser, 2002). Ganser (2002) was referring to the perceptions of the mentees and what they perceived to be adequate levels of support. There is clearly a need for deeper mentor training for new teachers, as perceived by most mentees.

Achinstein and Athanases (2005) contended that current mentoring programs focus only on survival skills perpetuating the status quo and replicating current practices, instead of taking the opportunity to promote reflective practitioners that challenge and reframe routines and establish pedagogy. Many educational systems have mandated mentoring programs for beginning teachers; however, mentoring must become an integrated program of professional support for individual teachers along with whole school collaborative efforts, where all teachers examine teacher practices that improve student learning (Long, 2009).

Literature suggests that mentoring is the result of mentors and mentees building a relationship upon the elements of collaborative teaching and learning. As Ganser (2002) stated, there is a need to extend mentoring beyond the basics of providing emotional support, assistance with policies and procedures, and superficial instructional assistance to influence the practice of new teachers in significant ways. For this reason, the need for appropriate and thorough mentor training becomes all the more important. It is important to note that not having extensive high-quality empirical research on mentoring leaves the information pertaining to the results of mentoring programs based on educational assumptions. Since mentoring is based upon the relationship between a mentor and a mentee, the information found in the literature review was based on the perceptions of a mentor and a mentee learning and working together to create a positive educational climate for the new teacher.

The Role of the Mentor

According to Ganser's more recent research (2002), the success of teachers generally depends on three different factors. The first factor is acknowledging that each new teacher comes to a teaching position with his/her own pre-existing knowledge, skills and dispositions. The task of the mentor is to build a relationship which will support the new teacher's current knowledge and skill, while at the same time build up areas of weakness. The second factor relates to the effectiveness and success each new teacher has over workplace conditions. The mentor has no influence over the beginning teacher's workplace conditions (e.g., the number of students in the classroom or the teaching

assignment); however, the task of the mentor is to assist the beginning teacher with problem-solving any issues related to these workplace conditions. Finally, the third factor impacting mentoring effectiveness and success is induction support, whether formal or informal.

Ganser (2002) also stated that, in terms of timing, basic mentor training on such topics as beginning teacher development and the needs of beginning teachers can be provided early, even to teachers who have been selected as prospective mentors prior to the need for their service. After prospective mentors have been selected for active mentoring, additional training could then be offered that more closely reflects the goals of the mentor. (In this way, 'front-loading' the training could be avoided and 'just-in-time' training could be employed.) Ganser also suggested that helping mentors to become more proficient in classroom observation techniques should be postponed from training during the summer to training in September or October shortly before mentors are likely to begin visiting their protégés' classrooms. Additionally, while staggering training over a semester or even an entire year is more challenging in terms of scheduling, it is generally more effective. As is the case with any professional role, adequate preparation cannot anticipate all situations; therefore, even the most well-intentioned mentors may find themselves frustrated and feeling left to fend for themselves, without continued support.

Recent research by Keay (2007) stated that, while mentoring programs may be mandated, the implementation of these within schools is sometimes questionable. The

structure of most school-based mentoring programs entails identifying suitable mentors from amongst experienced teaching staff; however, these mentors may or may not be formally trained in the process of mentoring. In addition, there is no guarantee that the mentoring role has been clearly delineated, with the necessary tasks and skills mapped against a formalized program of mentee development (Gagen and Bowie, 2005; Long, 2009). In his research, Ganser (2002) questioned how much the mentor can support the mentee, given these factors, without specific mentor program training.

Mentoring is a unique role, and it has been shown that mentors require special preparation (Ganser, 1996). While mentoring is similar to teaching, Ganser (2002) believed that it called for additional knowledge and skills in the following four areas:

1. Teacher career development and the predictable problems of beginning teachers;
2. Understanding the profession of teaching, including the induction of new teachers within their site-specific cultures;
3. Adult development and learning pedagogy; and
4. Mentoring of new teachers, including the accompanying roles and activities.

Additional mentoring skills are needed and include peer coaching and services associated with the cooperating teacher role. Ganser (2002) had categorized these skills into six categories:

1. Conferencing: Used to provide feedback on lessons and give guidance, support and encouragement. Mentors can use conferencing skills to establish rapport, apply or reinforce active listening, and mediate questions.

2. Problem-solving strategies: Used to assist new teachers in working through learning and teaching situations. In addition, mentors can use problem-solving strategies to modify their practices as well.

3. Setting short-term and long-term professional goals: Used to assist teachers with organization and planning. Additionally, mentors can use professional goal setting to revisit their own instructional practices.

4. Systematic observations of new teachers: Used by mentors to learn how to support new teachers, these systematic observations may be used as advanced organizers. (As an example, a new teacher may be observed setting up a classroom. This observation could include the use of seating charts, which in-turn could assist the new teacher and mentor in recording teacher/student movement.)

5. Clinical observation cycles: Critical to new teachers, these cycles build a level of trust, which reduces pre-observation anxiety and allows new teachers to select a particular aspect of teaching that they would like to focus on. In addition, clinical observation cycles give mentors the opportunity to support specific instruction or learning for themselves and their mentees.

6. Role-playing: Used to support new teachers by giving them the opportunity to perform “dry runs” of situations, thereby reducing anxiety.

Because mentoring involves integrating professional cultures with the many mandates put on new teachers, many programs are placing their focus on the collaboration between veteran teachers and new hires. In this learning environment, both share their experiences and respond to real-life classroom concerns as they arise. Within this venue, new teachers are viewed as learners who have a voice, rather than learners who are being “talked at.” Additionally, mentors and mentees meet more informally, which is less overwhelming for the mentees. Today, mentors are often trained in cognitive coaching and are able to give more ownership for learning to the mentees. There is also a move to have teachers (both mentors and mentees) share a common free period or planning time, as well as be placed in proximity to one another. Some schools and/or districts support new teacher orientation which is applicable to the new environment (e.g., scavenger hunts or tours to point out necessary areas or cultural aspects aligned to the school). There are also scheduled get-togethers throughout the school year, where teachers can share learning, ask questions, and discover that they are not alone as they travel their learning curve (Brown, 2003).

Research has shown that mentors are also supported through programs. Some districts have monthly meetings to discuss how to support new teachers and learn about evaluation forms, and often mentors keep in contact through email discussions. In other programs, mentors may choose levels of training ranging from brief workshops to graduate-level university courses. There is no research to support mandated training,

however, and some mentors may choose not to participate in any related professional development.

Clark County School District in Chicago developed the MATE (Mentoring Aspiring Technical Educators) mentoring program, which uses the following course goals:

1. To introduce mentors to the skills and knowledge necessary to become an effective mentor;
2. To understand the roles and responsibilities of mentors and mentees;
3. To conduct semester meetings with mentees;
4. To develop mentor/mentee action plans; and
5. To establish and maintain positive relationships with mentees.

Through this program, mentors have found that, when their mentees know they have a need but cannot seem to identify or articulate what it is, they (the mentors) are able to turn lists of suggested topics into specific and meaningful training (Brown, 2003). The belief system this program has established is that teachers who are comfortable in their classrooms and have support pass this level of comfort on to their students (Feiman-Nemser, 2003).

As early as 1996, Ganser recommended that staff developers look at supporting mentors by facilitating three key activities. The first activity required mentors and mentees to move out of their classrooms and visit each other's classrooms for observations, demonstrations and team teaching. Also included in this activity was the

procurement of classroom release-time for mentors and mentees to discuss classroom visits, establish goals for the next-steps in learning and teaching, and develop problem-solving strategies. The second activity, which required the support of staff developers, involved finding ways for mentors to meet regularly together to discuss their experiences, concerns, failures, and successes with their mentees. The third activity centered on clarification of the mentor's role and responsibilities, to the mentee, other educators and school administrators. Unfortunately, the role of the mentor is often incorrectly viewed as a "fix it" position, with responsibilities exceeding that of a teacher or coach. Mentoring is, after all, only one part of beginning teacher assistance, and it really takes an entire faculty to welcome a new teacher into the profession and the school, not just a caring mentor (Ganser, 1996).

There are many skills that mentors are attempting to transfer when working mentees; however, there is little empirical research to conclude how mentor training is being implemented or whether the support mentors are providing is perceived as helpful to the mentees.

Current Mentoring Programs

First-generation programs.

The inception of mentoring programs began with induction programs in the late 1960's as a means of supporting beginning teachers entering the teaching profession; however, it was not until the mid-1980's, shortly after the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (1984), that there arose a heightened interest and need for the actual mentoring of new

teachers through both induction and mentoring programs. A 1986 ERIC article entitled *Current Developments in Teacher Induction Programs* stated that, in 1980, many state legislatures mandated induction programs such as “Entry Year Assistant Program,” “Beginning Teacher Helping Program,” “Assistant/Assessment,” and “Teacher Mentor Program”; however, very few states mandated any specific program content or design of delivery. By 1986, most programs, although developed and established, had not been surveyed as to their effectiveness. Based on the results of the 1987 survey by the Association of American Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), there was dramatic growth in the development and implementation of mentoring programs. Seventeen states had begun pilot programs for mentors and new teachers, and fourteen states had begun development of a personalized combination of mentor and induction programs. The AACTE 1987 survey showed that, at that time, only three states in the U.S. did not have a program at least in its infancy stage of implementation for new teacher mentoring.

Since the late 1980’s, however, mentoring programs have begun to shift their focus from supporting new teacher learning and instructional practices to student testing and accountability for results. There has also been a notable shift towards assessment only models, and these models are based upon evaluation of new teachers rather than on supporting and facilitating the growth process of professional educators (Sweeny, 2008). During this same time period, individual programs have attempted to include both assessment (product) and assistance (process) in their models; however, when mentors were made responsible for incorporating both items equally, the stress on the mentors

became problematic and compromised the program's success. Other issues that may have had a dampening effect on the mentor/mentee relationship including linking the mentoring process to such high-stakes results as the granting or denial of a teaching certificate. A positive mentor/mentee relationship must be cultivated in an environment free of pressure, where honest sharing of problems, open reflection and discussion of concerns, and risks required for learning can occur (Brown, 2003).

The National Center for Educational Studies (NCE) began collecting data at the end of the 1980's, finding a turning point in the retention of beginning teachers. The study demonstrated that six percent of the nation's teachers were leaving the profession after one school year, and another seven percent changed schools. NCE also documented that twenty percent of teachers were leaving the profession within three years, and half of all teachers beginning in urban schools were leaving within the first five years of their careers. At the same time, the National Education Association (NEA) found that the teachers who gave credit to their participation in induction programs were twice as likely to stay in their profession if the programs helped build their confidence and competency in the classroom (i.e., were process-based). The results demonstrated that effective programs cut teacher dropout rates from fifteen to fifty percent for teachers in their first five years of teaching. In 1989 and again in 1999, the National Center for Educational Statistics stated that future mentor programs should be created as an integral part of staff development to support the number of teachers entering or re-entering the profession, due

to the retirement of teachers hired in the 1960's and 1970's, increased enrollments in many parts of the United States, and national initiatives to reduce class sizes.

Although induction programs were initiated in the 1960's, mentoring programs have only truly existed since the mid 1990's. According to Ganser (1996), these programs have varied in goals, structures, resources, and institutional affiliations; however, most well-developed mentoring programs are similar in that they have concentrated on how best to support new teachers. While mentoring programs now span a generation of teachers, there is unfortunately limited documentation to demonstrate the strength of specific designs or the implementation of programs aligned to meet the needs of mentors and beginning teachers.

Mentor programs were originally designed to support beginning teachers and avoid the "sink or swim" experience. Some programs encouraged experienced teachers to volunteer (or teachers were volunteered) to serve as "buddy teachers," with little or no reduction in their teaching responsibilities or training. Other programs freed teachers from their teaching assignments to become full-time mentors, though with limited or no training. Research by Ganser and Koskella (1997) showed that most mentor programs were sponsored by school districts, individual schools, or via an outreach from colleges and universities. In these programs, there was no standard curriculum or continuum for the mentors or new teachers. In contrast, large urban school districts began to design beginning teacher mentor programs using teachers who were reassigned as full-time mentors (although these programs also lacked continuity in their curriculum and

continuum for mentors and new teachers). Some of these urban school districts used their own teachers full-time, while others used instructors from mentoring programs affiliated with colleges or universities in their locations (Ganser, et al., 1999).

Effective mentor programs, which began to establish specific curriculum, were found to reduce the high attrition rate of beginning teachers (Fideler, 2000). According to Education Week (2000), some states began to provide financial support for mentor programs in order to reduce teacher attrition, especially in urban schools. However, when the emphasis moved to student achievement, it meant that funding allocations for the work of teachers would be in the area of assessment, and the use of staff development resources to teach mentor programs demanded evidence that their impacts would run deeper than anything measured by superficial ‘smile’ evaluations. Moving to the front of the queue for funding and resources necessitated mentoring programs demonstrate concrete evidence that the results of the training for both mentor and beginning teacher enhanced student achievement and improved effective instructional practices (Guskey, 2000).

One example of a district that developed a substantial mentoring program was Clark County School District in Chicago. This school district established a mentor program in 2000 in response to their need to hire 1,500 to 1,700 new teachers annually. With the help of a survey to ask for input from previous beginning teachers, Clark County School District made mentoring beginning teachers a priority. Questions were designed to learn about the mentor’s potential and awareness of self. Mentors were each

given a job description, summary and list of qualifications. Each area was then broken down into abilities and knowledge, demonstrated by skills and experience. To become a mentor, a teacher was required to have at least five years of successful teaching experience. (Most other programs at the time were seeking educators with only three years of experience.) In addition, potential mentor teachers were required to have content area experience, and each had to demonstrate an ability to collaborate, maintain confidentiality, manage time effectively, model effective teaching strategies, and demonstrate interpersonal skills such as caring, kindness and understanding. The program also looked for mentors who were good listeners as well experienced and positive about teaching; had time in their schedules; who were not overly critical; and who were instructional leaders, problem solvers and reflective practitioners.

Clark County's mentoring program screened each mentor using a fifteen-member committee (comprised of teachers and principals from all grade levels, the human resource director, the local association, college representatives, and the career and technical educational department administrator). Members of the committee were also required to attend monthly meetings with mentors and mentees to keep the focus of the work on training and ongoing support (Brown, 2003).

Second-generation programs.

As mentoring programs moved into their second generation sometime after the beginning of 2001, research of mentoring programs expanded to include:

1. Electronic forms of communication to supplement face-to-face communication;
2. ‘Just-in-time’ training for mentors, provided shortly before it was needed, when mentors were generally the most motivated to understand the information or to learn the skills;
3. ‘Co-mentoring’ or ‘team mentoring’ approaches which built on teachers mentoring each other, or on a combination of ‘lead’ mentors serving several beginning teachers with the assistance of secondary mentors; and
4. Multiple-year programs that extended into the second or third year of a teacher’s induction into the profession.

These second generation mentoring programs included the best features of their predecessor’s traditional programs, in addition to innovative and forward-thinking approaches to the organization and delivery of support (Ganser, 2001). Unfortunately, Bush’s *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2002 channeled funding toward growth demonstrated by test results, thereby setting up limitations for true mentoring programs, which the funding did not include, and creating more conflict between learning and assessment for new teachers and mentors (Sweeny, 2008).

Teachers as Mentors and Mentees

Traditional teacher licensure programs are applicable to those who have attended a four-year college or university and participated through their studies in student teaching experiences. As student teachers, they were not responsible for surviving instructional

failure or class boredom on their own, and they never discovered a wall of class learning resistance or felt the isolated entrapment of teaching. Additionally, they did not experience the nonteaching demands of meetings, paperwork, supervision of extracurricular activities and student/parent conferences. They were also never fully in charge of a class, in jeopardy of losing control of a class, or alone when assessing the abilities of or evaluating students (McDonald, 1983).

Alternative licensure programs, however, do not require traditional university teacher preparation work, and the 1980's marked the beginning of teacher shortages in math and science classrooms in high-needs, inner city schools serving minority and disadvantaged students (Holmes, 2001; Roth, 1986). A small candidate pool left districts with the greatest needs facing the most difficulty attracting and retaining quality teachers, and this was particularly detrimental to students in urban, poor, and isolated rural areas (Baker & Smith, 1997; Eubanks, 1996; Ingersoll, 1997; Roth & Phipps, 1990; Sykes, 1983).

Our nation's recurring interest in alternative teacher licensure is a reflection of these teacher shortages; however, there are concerns associated with alternative licensure, including adequate content preparation of these teachers and the commitment of these individuals entering the teaching profession (Holmes, 2001). As it stands, many young teachers do not see teaching as a long-term career, and there are estimates that the profession will have lost 40 to 50 percent of first-year teachers within in the next seven years (Wayman, et al, 2003).

In response to this shortage, the Colorado Department of Education enacted a new licensure option, Teacher in Residence (TiR), that allows non-licensed teachers to work in schools as fully invested first-year teachers while earning a license (Wayman, Foster, Mantle-Bromley & Wilson, 2009). An evaluation was initiated through Metro State College, as part of the Colorado Partnership for Educational Renewal, and the Research and Development Center for the Advancement of Student Learning at Colorado State University to study the short- and long-term experiences associated with this alternative licensure route. The study focused on the beginning teachers' concerns in the areas of:

1. Effective instruction, including lesson planning, instruction adaptation, assessing one's own teaching, and assessing student learning.
2. Classroom environment, including classroom management, student motivation and discipline.
3. Collegial relationships, including professional development, other teacher observations, learning from peers, and isolation from colleagues.
4. Other, including adequate content knowledge, working with parents, and adjusting to school culture.

It was concluded that, although most areas had similar results, teachers on various alternative licensures programs had a higher level of concern regarding preparation and their ability to have the needed skills in the area of instructional methodology (Wayman, et al., 2003).

Barry Sweeny (2008), author of a collection of surveys entitled *What's Happening in Mentoring and Induction in Each of the United States*, has stated that “the change in focus from learning to assessment, or from process to product, brought about the belief that when looking at the product (assessment results,) teachers were seen as ‘the problem,’ and when looking at the process (mentoring), new teachers were seen as ‘the solution’ to the problem. Sweeny himself is an advocate for mentoring programs which focus on the individualized support of new teachers, with the integration of students and adult learning. His research acknowledges that there should be a “phasing in” of assessment as part of the mentoring and induction for new teachers, which would still allow teachers to first become reflective practitioners and learners.

As research suggests, teachers are often focused on behavioral management issues; therefore, developing reflective practices through sustained dialogue about promoting caring values, such as respect for students, are often overlooked as mentoring programs are focused more on meeting the prescribed standards set down by teacher registration (O’Brien, et al., 2007; Owens et al., 2008; Long, 2009). Furthermore, Hobson et al. (2009) argued that mentoring programs that are limited to survival strategies with the restricted range of approaches employed by some mentors serve to restrict their mentees’ learning and development. Although mentoring programs are established with good intentions, many are narrow and non-negotiable in practice and remain a ‘fatal attraction’ for the teaching profession, both in their processes and

outcomes. As a result, many beginning teachers simply leave, never to return to the profession that desperately needs them (Long, 2009).

With all of this documentation, suitable experienced teachers with desirable attributes to act as mentors are in short supply (Long, 1997; Long 2009). Coupled with this is the expectation that mentors must have commitment, skill and a great deal of energy as they manage the mentoring program, facilitate activities that encourage growth and understanding in pedagogy, establish reflective practices and engage in relationships that are built on trust and respect. All of this does not happen automatically or simply because two people are joined together in a mentoring program, instead the relationship has the potential to be detrimental to both mentor and mentee (Long, 2009). As Martinez (2004) concluded, providing qualified mentors for new teachers is a major challenge, not just in terms of quantity. Long (2009) stated that when mentoring programs are functioning well and when colleagues are able to work together in a formally structured program, there will be levels of accountability that impact both the mentors' and mentees' professional standings.

Current and Past Research

Mentoring programs.

Most of the research on mentoring programs is based on the perceptions of the mentors in regards to their roles and responsibilities and the mentees in regards to the support they received; however, there is little empirical data demonstrating a strong link between mentoring and changed teaching behavior by the mentees. A recent study by

Mathematica (2010), one of the few empirical studies to be completed, supported this premise. Mathematica and its subcontractors, WestEd and the Center for Education Leadership at the University of Pennsylvania, conducted a five-year study evaluating the impact of teacher induction programs for the U.S. Department of Education. The report stated that comprehensive teacher induction, a popular but expensive approach to supporting new teachers, provides novice teachers with carefully selected and trained full-time mentors; a curriculum of intensive and structured support that includes orientation, professional development opportunities to observe experienced teachers; formative assessment tools that permit ongoing evaluation of practice and constructive feedback; and outreach to school-based administrators to enlist their support for the program.

Their findings from the first year demonstrated that, although the treatment group of teachers received significantly more mentoring and more guidance on instructional practices and spent more time in certain professional activities than did control group of teachers, there were no impacts on teacher practices, based on in-classroom observations of literacy lessons. In addition, the group with more intensive support had no positive impact on student test scores or teacher retention in the first year. Findings from the second year suggested that there was no additional effect on improving teacher retention or student achievement when compared to the services normally offered in the seventeen districts participating in the study, regardless of whether teachers received one or two years of comprehensive induction supports.

While Mathematica believed the program to be sound, the results were not observable. This could imply that the mentees did not perceive the program to be supportive in the areas needed to result in adjustments to their practices. Therefore, it appears that there needs to be a study of the perceptions of mentees on the supports they are receiving.

Snyder's (1998) research supported previous reports when it stated that 70% (of new teachers) were leaving within their first three years due to a lack of quality, consistent and needs-based mentoring, and the number of new teachers coming into the profession was barely keeping up with the increases in school enrollment since the early 1990's. More and more educators and educational researchers were becoming convinced that teacher mentoring relationships did have the capability to improve the changes needed for quality teaching; however, at the same time, many reports and articles still determined that mentors needed to first learn to be reflective about their own teaching in order to effectively mentor others (Schere, 1999). Levine (2000) stated that the importance of mentoring as part of teacher education pre-service experiences and as a part of programs for new teachers can longer be denied.

Kelly (2004) found that although other professions provide transitional assistance for new members (e.g., residents in medicine, interns in architectures, and associates in law), historically the education profession has ignored the support needs of its new recruits and has been described as "the profession that eats its young". Unlike teaching, other professions place importance on clinical preparation periods to guide novices in

their responsibilities and the growing complexities of their work. Darling-Hammond et al. (1999) noted that this kind of neglect can cause premature burnout, as new recruits experience disillusionment and an inability to cope with the myriad of daily pressures teaching presents (Gold, 1996). Other professions place importance on clinical preparation periods to guide novices in their responsibilities and the growing complexities of their work:

In... other professions, novices continue to hone their knowledge and skills under the watchful eyes of more knowledgeable and experienced practitioners. At the same time, the novices, fresh from their studies, bring the latest research and theoretical perspectives to bear on their practice, where it is shared and tested by novice and veteran practitioners alike (Kelley, 2004, p. 438-439, as cited in Renard, 1999, p. 227).

Unfortunately, the normative conditions of teaching are far from this utopian model. Traditionally, new teachers have been expected to sink or swim with little support and guidance (Darling-Hammond et al., 1999). This statement was found to be very significant, as the Alliance for Excellence in Education Report (2005) also stated that attrition in the field of education in the United States is a result of new teachers being given little professional support, feedback, or demonstration of what it takes to help students succeed.

Based on history, the advent of mentoring programs to help stem the flow of attrition and support all beginning teachers through the culture shock of teaching was

deemed necessary and was truly welcomed by the profession (Matters, 2002; Long, 2009). However, as recently as 2003, the National Center for Education Studies determined that approximately six percent of the nation's teachers were still leaving the profession in a typical year, while seven percent changed schools. And within three years, 20 percent of all new hires were still leaving teaching, and nearly half of newcomers in urban districts were leaving within the first five years (Brown, 2003). In 2004, this translated to even higher numbers, with nearly 540,000 teachers moving to other schools or leaving the teaching profession due to a feeling of isolation. As a result, the annual turnover rate for U.S. teachers is nearly four percent higher than the average for all other professions (Carroll & Fulton, 2004). Even in Australia, where mentoring programs have been in operation for nearly a decade (as of 2004), there have been reports of positive changes, but not to the levels expected (Long, 2009).

In 2009, the Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, criticized states and federal governments for still failing to support programs that provide mentoring for teachers. This is especially consequential for new entrants who, after accepting a teaching position in a school, are often left on their own to succeed or fail within the confines of their own classrooms, an experience likened by some to being "lost at sea" (Ingersoll, 2003; Johnson, 1990; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Sizer, 1992).

Achinstein's (2006) research found that mandated mentoring programs had the potential to either herald the death of the profession or be the source of pedagogical renewal. Mentors, therefore, must move beyond the isolation and narrow task of

assisting beginning teachers and schools toward meeting the requirements of induction and teaching standards to demonstrate professional competence. Mentors and beginning teachers must shift the focus beyond the classroom and socialization into the current system (Achinstein, 2006). By providing opportunities for collaborative investigation into pedagogy that make a difference for student learning and supporting the values of today's teachers, beginning teachers will then have the opportunity to be creative and innovative and to apply and develop their knowledge and skills (Long, 2009). True mentoring can only begin when educators stop considering new teachers to be "finished products" (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). To this end, schools are beginning to institute comprehensive mentoring programs that boast benefits for both mentors and mentees, including professional support, classroom and time management strategies, problem solving, grading procedures, and for many veteran teachers, a renewed interest in instruction (Brown, 2003).

The needs of new teachers.

New teachers have two tasks: to teach and to learn to teach (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). According to the National Education Association (NEA), new teachers who participated in induction programs like mentoring are nearly twice as likely to stay in their profession. Some even believe that mentoring programs can cut the dropout rate from roughly fifty to fifteen percent during the first five years of teaching (Brown, 2003). One study showed that mentoring programs can be effective and serve to ameliorate the sense of isolation and lack of support new teachers often feel; however, this study

indicated that mentor programs need to place more emphasis on the importance of mentors assisting first-year teachers with curriculum and instruction, specifically in the areas of lesson planning, teacher observation, and providing constructive feedback. The research also indicated that more emphasis should be placed on the importance of mentees observing their mentors and being observed by their mentors with follow-up conferencing in mentor teacher training. The study went so far as to recommend that planning and observations become a mandatory part of mentoring programs (Andrews and Quinn, 2005). Andrews and Quinn noted that the results of their study should serve as powerful evidence of the importance of formal mentoring programs.

In her article, *Assisting Beginning Teachers and School Communities to Grow through Extended and Collaborative Mentoring Experiences*, Long (2009) stated that all mentors and mentees need formal training to prepare them for the mentoring program. She recommends that this take place prior to the teaching year. The formal training for the mentoring program should include an overview of the tasks to be undertaken, the skills needed to complete the tasks and the teaching and learning areas that could be investigated. Structures to support the mentoring program need to be identified, such as meeting times, places of meeting, tracking of learning and systems of accountability. In addition, mentors and mentees should negotiate what they will learn and how. Negotiation of the focus and tasks of the mentoring program recognizes the changing profile and varying needs of beginning teachers, many of whom are already highly skilled and qualified in other areas (Martinez, 2004; Long, 2009). This is an important step, as

mentees must be encouraged to focus on areas they perceive are important to them; however, mentors must also prepare mentees for the ebb and flow of the school year, including parent/teacher interviews, assessments and reporting, and curriculum programming. Put simply, mentors must help beginning teachers to develop strategies that build competence and resilience, all while learning about the political culture and staff dynamics of the school (Long, 2009).

In addition to supporting beginning teachers in these tasks, the mentoring process should also be developed around activities that focus on pedagogy, as mentoring is underdeveloped in most school contexts (Stanulis & Floden, 2009; Long, 2009). Keay (2007) argued that merely aiming for demonstration of competence within a particular school may deny development opportunities as this ensures survival, rather than long-term development of beginning teachers and the teaching profession. With the engagement of mentors and mentees in challenging and relevant issues that directly impact student learning outcomes, authentic professional learning can occur through small communities of learners (Achinstein & Athanases, 2005; Long, 2009).

Long (2009) believed that mentoring programs need to become vehicles for change and renewal, integrated into the school's wider professional learning networks rather than delivered as stand-alone programs. This does not mean, however, that mentoring programs are not effective. As Dawley, Andrews and Buklew (2008) reported from their research, mentoring programs can be very effective in endearing mentees to the organization, but the mentees' perceptions of organizational support are more

important. Thus, when mentees believe that organizations value their contributions to the daily work practices, allow them to participate in decision making, and respect their autonomy to deliver within these practices, mentees are more likely to contribute to the organizational goals, feel enriched by their jobs and become committed to their roles. Moir (2007) took this idea one step further by recommending that schools need to build communities of practice that blur the lines between new and veteran teachers in order to foster collaboration between all staff members, as schools grow and improve when beginning and experienced teachers grow together. From these research findings (Long, 2009), it has been suggested that although mentoring is important for the development of the mentees, programs that are embedded within the whole school process and focused on pedagogy are far more effective.

Chapter 3: Methods

Purpose of Study

The overall purpose of this study was to better understand the perceptions of mentees regarding the importance of five different categories of support (Personal, Classroom, Professional, Evaluative, and Reflective) for their professional development. These five categories were identified and defined in a previous study by Stephanie Stewart (2004) entitled: *Identifying Quality Mentoring: Five Areas of Support Essential to Candidates in Field Experiences*.

This study utilized an existing survey that was completed by a large urban district to determine the effectiveness of a grant-funded, job-embedded support program for new teachers: the New Teacher Support Program (NTSP). At the time of this study, all new teachers in the district received support from a mentor, and the district contracted with a consulting company, XYZ Consulting, LLC, to survey new teachers about the support they received from their mentors. The survey respondents were grouped into two categories: (1) those participating in the grant program, which for this research will be referred to as the New Teacher Support Program (NTSP) and (2) those not participating in the grant program, which for this research will be referred to as the Non-New Teacher Support Program (Non-NTSP).

The XYZ survey questions were aligned to the support categories from Stewart's (2004) study to determine how an existing evaluation reflected best practice and the perceptions of both groups of participating mentees by individual category of support. This research study also demonstrated the differences between the NTSP and the Non-NTSP participants within each of the five categories of support. Finally, this study determined if there was a difference in the perceptions of all mentee participants based on the demographics of race and educational background.

This study was designed to answer three specific research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of New Teacher Support Program (NTSP) and Non-New Teacher Support Program (Non-NTSP) mentees regarding the five different categories of support: Personal, Classroom, Professional, Evaluative, and Reflective?

2. What is the difference between the perceptions of mentees who received support from the NTSP and those who received support from the traditional urban mentoring program, the Non-NTSP, on the different levels of support as described above?

3. What are the differences between the perceptions of NTSP and Non-NTSP participants based on the demographics of race and educational background as identified by the XYZ survey?

Rationale for Methodology

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of mentees regarding the definition of “quality mentoring.” Surveys are a method of researching a sample population (Busha and Harter, 1980) where “population” is defined as a group of people or objects that have at least one common characteristic. Survey data is usually collected through the use of questionnaires, and survey methodology can use both quantitative (i.e., use of forced-choice questions) and qualitative (i.e., use of open-ended questions) questions to attain data (Babbie, 1990). This study, however, used only quantitative data collected by the XYZ survey. The use of an existing survey provided the researcher with the opportunity to analyze an evaluative instrument through the lens of existing research about best practices in teacher induction and mentoring (Stewart, 2004). The existing survey also gathered perceptions of new teachers from differing mentoring programs, so an analysis of their responses contributed to an understanding of the differences between the types of programs.

Research Design

XYZ Consulting, LLC was commissioned by a large urban school district, located in a city in the western United States, to evaluate the district’s new grant-funded teacher induction program. The school district had seventy elementary schools, eighteen schools with grades kindergarten through eight, fifteen middle schools (grades six through eight), fifteen high schools, twenty-five charter schools, six schools that did not fall under any of the previous classifications, six alternative schools, and seven new schools that also did

not fall under any of the previous classifications. In addition, the district had a history of hiring approximately four hundred fifty to six hundred new teachers each year for the past several years, and the district was the recipient of multiple grants to improve quality of teaching. The result of one of these grants was the creation of the New Teacher Support Program (NTSP), a differentiated, job-embedded support program for new teachers.

The district created two groups of new teachers: those who participated in the New Teacher Support Program (NTSP) and those who did not participate in the program (Non-NTSP). The NTSP participants were selected from a pool of alternatively licensed teachers, but not all of the teachers with alternative licensure were participants in the NTSP. Those selected to participate in the job-embedded support program for new teachers focused on a comprehensive induction process involving an intensive mentoring component (XYZ Survey Report, 2009). The one-year-long goal for this program was to help create a new teacher induction program that was individualized based on teachers' needs according to the type of certification program completed. The NTSP required that the mentors and mentees meet for forty hours over the course of the school year. Other than that commitment, there was no other set structure included in the grant.

The school district designed the NTSP model to include four dedicated coaches/mentors, available to provide personalized and in-depth mentoring to new teachers coming from an alternative licensure program, in order to enhance job preparation, satisfaction, and ultimately, retention. The selected mentors attended

training through the district's New Teacher Center to develop their coaching skills in addition to participating in other professional development focused on cognitive coaching and district curriculum. The mentors were then assigned thirteen to fifteen mentees in "high-needs" schools throughout the district and were required to meet with their mentees at least once a week. A total of fifty teachers from Early Childhood Education (ECE) through 12th grade received a full-time mentor for the entire school year.

Additionally, at the beginning of the school year, all new teachers employed by the district, whether part of the NTSP grant or not, were assigned a mentor (as often as possible from within the same school) as part of the standard new teacher induction program. This meant that the NTSP participants were allocated two mentors.

Sample

XYZ invited, via email, all five hundred fifty-seven new teachers (i.e., mentees) teaching ECE through 12th grade to respond to the online survey. This sample was the entire population of new teachers for the district, with $n=50$ for the NTSP teachers and $n=507$ for the Non-NTSP teachers. XYZ administered the end-of-year survey through SurveyMonkey.com in mid-to late May 2009 to the new teachers to elicit feedback about their perceptions regarding mentoring support. Thirty-two NTSP participants (64%) and 148 Non-NTSP participants (29%) responded to the survey.

For this study, roles were defined by the following:

Mentee: A new teacher with fewer than three years of experience who has a mentor (i.e., a teacher with more than three years of experience) for support.

Traditional Mentee: A new teacher who has earned a teacher's license based on the completion of a college program for educators (including the student teaching requirement) and passed the state exams. No "traditional" mentees were part of the New Teacher Support Program (NTSP); however, they were part of the Non-New Teacher Support Program (Non-NTSP) group.

Alternative Mentee: A new teacher who is working towards a teacher license through an "on-the-job" training program. Some of these teachers pursuing "alternative" licensure were part of the NTSP group and some were part of the Non-NTSP group.

Mentors: On-site teachers who provided assistance and guidance to new teachers to help facilitate a smooth transition into the school district. Mentors worked with both NTSP and Non-NTSP groups. NTSP participants also had additional support.

Confidentiality

Approval was received from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before data was received from XYZ. The participants' confidentiality and anonymity was also maintained throughout the study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began with the coding of the XYZ survey items into the five categories based on Stewart's (2004) research. To address research question #1, descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, standard deviation, etc.) were used. The data collected by the XYZ survey was then used to measure the impact of the mentees' experiences against the five categories of support, for both the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants.

Each question was individually evaluated based on the mean, standard deviation, and frequency of response to determine which questions had stronger agreement among both groups of survey participants, when aligned with Stewart's (2004) categories of support.

To address research question #2, descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, standard deviation, etc.) were used. The data collected by the XYZ survey was then used to measure the impact of the mentees' experiences against the five categories of support, for both the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants. To address research question #3, descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, standard deviation, etc.) were used. The data collected by the XYZ survey was then used to measure the impact of the mentees' experiences against the five categories of support, for both the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants based on their race and education.

Description of Survey

The XYZ survey was comprised of a total of ninety-nine questions, divided into thirteen groups: Basic Demographics; Education Details; Teaching Background; Student Teaching Details; Mentor Information; Mentor Experience (three groups); Mentor Satisfaction; School Climate; Feeling toward School; District Alternative License; and Additional Questions.

The first group of questions, Basic Demographics, asked for the participant's age range; race/ethnic background; type of school assigned to; content area teaching; and whether or not the participant had a master's degree. The second group of questions, Education Details, asked whether the participant had a master's degree related to

education. The third group of questions, Teaching Background, asked about the type of teaching license currently held and also about the route taken to become a teacher in the surveyed district. The fourth group of questions, Student Teaching Details, asked what year and semester the participant's student teaching occurred; the participant's overall student teaching experience; and whether the participant was currently teaching children from the same socioeconomic level as during student teaching. The fifth group of questions, Mentor Information, asked when the mentee met with the mentor; how often they met; and if the length of time spent with the mentor was appropriate.

Groups six, seven and eight were all included under Mentor Experience. The first group of questions began with the question, "During the most recent month of teaching, did your mentor..." This question had ten sub-questions, all of which required a yes or no answer. The second group of questions had two questions. The first question asked to what extent the mentor had provided guidance in sixteen areas during the school year. There were four response choices: A Lot, A Moderate Amount, Very Little, and None. The second question asked to what extent the mentor had provided guidance regarding specific content areas or teaching specific populations. This question had four sub-questions, and there were five response choices: A Lot, A Moderate Amount, Very Little, None, Not Applicable.

The final group of questions from the section Mentor Experience also had two questions with multiple sub-questions attached. The first question related to the extent that the mentee had adjusted classroom practices in response to the support received from

the mentor in the fourteen areas. There were four response choices: A Lot, A Moderate Amount, Very Little, or None. The last question in this group asked to what extent the mentee agreed or disagreed with five statements about the mentor. There were six responses to this question: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Agree, and Strongly Agree. These three groups of questions on Mentor Experience were followed by five questions regarding Mentor Satisfaction. The six responses for Mentor Satisfaction were Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Agree, and Strongly Agree.

The next group of nine questions, School Climate, asked whether the mentee agreed or disagreed with statements about school climate. This group was followed by five more questions from the section Feeling toward School. Under the section District Alternative License, there was only one question asking whether the participant was part of the alternative licensure program.

The last section, Additional Questions, asked how the participant's year had gone; whether the participant was effective in raising student achievement during the first year; and whether the participant was on track for raising student achievement by at least one grade level during the first year. In addition, there were nine questions rating the participant's satisfaction with the teaching position; a two-part question rating overall satisfaction with the teaching position and school; and a four-part question asking how long the participant intended to stay in education.

Coding of Survey Items

The XYZ survey was used to determine the impact of the grant-funded NTSP. For the purpose of this research, the questions from the XYZ survey were individually reviewed and aligned while supported by the use of the descriptors in each of Stewart's (2004) five categories. The questions were then reviewed and aligned with the questions used by Stewart in her survey. This is termed an "inter-judge agreement" and is defined as "the proportion of the total pair-wise agreements to the total pair-wise decisions for classifying the research" (Patelli and Giaglis, 2004, p. 306). The two judges for this inter-judgment methodology were comprised of the researcher for this study and a university faculty member with expertise in research methods and statistics.

The two judges spent many hours aligning the definitions from Stewart's (2004) research to the XYZ Consulting survey instrument. On five separate occasions, the judges independently reviewed the questions and then aligned them within the categories. They met after each alignment, discussed their sorting, reviewed the criteria being used from Stewart's (2004) definitions, and looked for support from the literature review. At the end of each meeting, the judges left the sorting they discussed in a sealed folder and went back to redo the process from the original survey. The judges used the following criteria to make their decisions about the placement of survey items within Stewart's categories of support.

Personal Support was defined as emotional support, listening, counseling, providing appropriate praise and encouragement, and working to develop a relationship

with a mentee (Stewart, 2004). When aligning the questions from the XYZ survey for this category, the key descriptors sought were: emotional support, listening, counseling, providing praise and encouragement, and the development of a relationship between mentor and mentee.

Classroom Support was defined as adapting content knowledge, delivery of materials, lesson and unit planning, classroom management, method of assessment, and modifying instruction for gifted and special needs students (Stewart, 2004). When aligning the questions from the XYZ survey for this category, the key descriptors sought were: adapting content knowledge, delivery of materials, lesson and unit planning, classroom management, assessment, and modifications for gifted and special needs students.

Professional Support was defined as modeling professional behavior with parents, school staff, administrators, socialization into school and community culture, encouraging professional development, and assisting with portfolio preparation (Stewart, 2004). When aligning the questions from the XYZ survey for this category, the key descriptors sought were: professional behavior with parents, school staff, and/or administrators, socialization into school and community culture, professional development, and personal portfolio.

Evaluative Support was defined as making formal and informal observations, providing sincere and timely feedback, completing necessary paperwork for the district or university; and willingness to practice intervention if needed (Stewart, 2004). When

aligning the questions from the XYZ survey for this category, the key descriptors sought were: formal and informal observations, providing feedback, completing necessary paperwork, and practice of interventions.

Reflective Support was defined as modeling reflective practitioner behavior, encouraging the candidate or mentee to analyze and question practices, and supporting the mentee in working towards solutions to problems (Stewart, 2004). When aligning the questions from the XYZ survey for this category, the key descriptors sought were: reflective conversations regarding practitioner's behavior, analyzing and questioning practices, and supporting solutions to problems.

For the purpose of this research, the decisions used in classifying the XYZ survey questions into the five categories of Stewart's research (2004) were reached at a .8 among the two judges. This figure was derived using the Proportional Reliability Loss (PRL) originally developed by Cooil and Rust (1994), and it meant that the two judges had made more than three-fourths of the same assignments of the XYZ questions across the categories of support.

The first four sections of the XYZ survey entitled Basic Demographic, Education Details, Teaching Background, and Student Teaching Details, were used to support research question #3. The next three sections from Mentoring Experience and the section titled Mentoring Satisfaction were used to support research questions #1 and #2. The two judges reviewed the questions in these sections, and there was much deliberation and discussion to determine which category each individual question applied to. The most

difficult category to align questions to was Evaluative Support. Although many questions in this section implied that the mentor was observing the mentee, the terminology did not support a true evaluation, as the questions did not refer to formal or informal observations.

Finally, the five sections of the survey entitled Mentor Information, School Climate, Feeling toward School, District Alternative License, and Additional Questions were not used for this research, as they were not deemed pertinent.

The XYZ survey questions that aligned with the Personal Support category are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Personal Support Questions

Personal Support Category	Survey Questions
During the most recent month of teaching, did your mentor:	18b. Give you encouragement or moral support? 18c. Provide an opportunity for you to raise issues/discuss your individual concerns? 18j. Act on something you requested in the previous weeks?
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your mentor?	22a. My relationship with my mentor has made me a more effective teacher. 22b. My relationship with my mentor has made the last year of teaching better. 22c. My relationship with my mentor has made me happier over the last year of teaching. 22d. My relationship with my mentor has met my expectations. 22e. Overall, I am satisfied with my mentor.

The XYZ survey questions that aligned with the Classroom Support category are depicted in Table 2.

Table 2

Classroom Support

Classroom Support Category	Survey Questions
During the most recent month of teaching, did your mentor:	<p>18a. Give you suggestions to improve your practice?</p> <p>18e. Provide guidance on teaching to meet state or district standards?</p> <p>18h. Provide guidance on how to assess your students?</p> <p>18i. Share lesson plans, assessments or other instructional activities?</p> <p>19b. Accessing district and community resources?</p> <p>19c. Handling paperwork?</p> <p>19f. Teaching children with varying levels of English language acquisition?</p> <p>19g. Reviewing and assessing student work?</p> <p>19h. Implementing classroom management strategies?</p> <p>19i. Managing student discipline and behavior?</p> <p>19j. Using multiple instructional strategies/techniques</p> <p>19k. Selecting or adapting curriculum materials?</p> <p>19l. Understanding/teaching towards state or district standards?</p> <p>19m. Planning lessons?</p> <p>19n. Using student assessment to inform your teaching?</p> <p>19o. Motivating students?</p>
During the school year, to what extent has your mentor provided you with guidance teaching regarding a specific content area or teaching a specific population:	<p>20a. Teaching regarding your content area?</p> <p>20b. Teaching English language learners?</p> <p>20c. Teaching special needs students?</p> <p>20d. Teaching students of varying ethnic, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds?</p>
During the last school year, to what extent have you adjusted your classroom practice in response to support you've received from your mentor in the following areas:	<p>21a. Teaching regarding your content area?</p> <p>21b. Teaching children with varying levels of achievement?</p> <p>21c. Reviewing and assessing student work?</p> <p>21d. Implementing classroom management strategies?</p> <p>21e. Using multiple instructional strategies/techniques?</p> <p>21f. Selecting or adapting curriculum materials?</p> <p>21g. Understanding/teaching toward state or district standards?</p> <p>21h. Planning lessons?</p> <p>21i. Using student assessment to inform your teaching?</p> <p>21j. Motivating students?</p> <p>21l. Teaching English language learners?</p> <p>21m. Teaching special needs students?</p> <p>21n. Teaching students of varying ethnic, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds?</p>

The XYZ survey questions that aligned with the Professional Support category are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Professional Support

Professional Support Category	Survey Questions
During the most recent month of teaching, did your mentor:	18d. Provide guidance information on administrative/logistical issues?
During the school year, to what extent has your mentor provided you with guidance in the following areas:	19a. Understanding this school's culture? 19d. Working with other school staff such as principal, counselors, disability specialists, etc.? 19e. Working with parents?

The fourth category, Evaluative Support, was defined as making formal and informal observations, providing sincere and timely feedback, completing necessary paperwork for district or university, and a willingness to practice intervention if needed. When using the descriptive terms “evaluative” or “formal or informal observations” to align the XYZ questions to this category, the two judges determined that no questions met the specific criteria as defined by Stewart (2004).

The XYZ survey questions that align with the Reflective Support category are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Reflective Support

Reflective Support Category	Survey Questions
During the most recent month of teaching, did your mentor:	18f. Work with you to identify teaching challenges and possible solutions? 18g. Discuss with you instructional goals and ways to achieve them?
During the school year, to what extent has your mentor provide you with guidance in the following areas:	19p. Reflecting on your instructional practices?
During the last school year, to what extent have you adjusted your classroom practice in response to support you've received from your mentor in the following areas?	21k. Reflecting on your instructional practices?

The XYZ survey also collected demographic data on mentees, and the questions used to collect this data are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5

Demographic Questions

Survey Question	Response Scale
2. Which of the following best describes your race/ethnic background?	American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian, Asian American or Pacific, Other Hispanic or Latino; White (non-Hispanic); Multiracial; Other.
5. Do you have a master's degree?	Yes, one; Yes, more than one; No, but currently working towards one; No.
6. Do you have a master's degree related to education?	Yes; In progress; No.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics (i.e., mean and standard deviation) and frequencies were computed to explore the degree of response of the mentees, both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants, regarding the level of support they received in each of the five categories. Descriptive statistics were calculated for each item on the survey as well as an average for the overall category. This process allowed the researcher to understand the results for both research question #1 and research question #2. When using descriptive statistics for research question #1, the researcher was questioning the perceptions of the mentees, both NTSP and Non-NTSP as a whole, regarding their perceptions of support in each of the five categories. When using descriptive statistics for research question #2, the researcher was questioning the perceptions of the mentees to determine the differences in their views of support in each of the five categories. When using descriptive statistics in research question #3, the researcher was questioning if demographics, race and education, had any impact on the perceptions of the two different groups of participants.

Chapter 4: Findings

The findings from this study included the four categories of support – Personal, Classroom, Professional, and Reflective Support – which were present in the XYZ survey questions and used for program evaluation. For the purpose of this study, it was determined that the fifth category of support, Evaluative, did not lend itself to any of the XYZ survey questions, nor was it used for program evaluation. Therefore, the perceptions of the mentees as a whole, both NTSP and Non-NTSP, were reviewed to determine the support received in each of the four categories. The differences between the mentees (i.e., the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants) were reviewed to determine the perceptions by groups in each of the four categories. The differences between the NTSP and Non-NTSP demographics for both race and educational background were also examined. The following section reports the results through the research questions.

Research Question #1

What are the perceptions of New Teacher Support Program (NTSP) and Non-New Teacher Support Program (Non-NTSP) mentees regarding the five different categories of support: Personal, Classroom, Professional, Evaluative, and Reflective?

This question was answered first by calculating the mean and standard deviation for each of the survey items that corresponded to the four categories of support for the

NTSP and Non-NTSP participants' responses. The mean and standard deviation were then calculated, per domain, combining the NTSP and Non-NTSP results.

Personal support.

Research has shown that new teachers are often in the “sink or swim” mode when they begin their first positions. This category of support centers around the amount of personal/emotional support new teachers perceive they are receiving (i.e., having someone to listen to them, counsel them, and provide praise and encouragement, as well as having someone who is working to develop a relationship with them). Table 6 shows the total results of the yes/no questions for both the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants in the Personal Support category, while Table 7 shows the results of the remaining questions in the same category,

Table 6

Results for questions 18b, 18c and 18j in the Personal Support category

(Scored on a two-point dichotomous scale: yes; no)

Category : Personal Support	Yes	No	Blank
Total for NTSP and Non-NTSP	84.39%	10.76%	3.82%

Table 7

Results for questions 22a, 22b, 22c, 22d and 22e in the Personal Support category

(Scored on a six-point Likert scale: 1-Strongly Disagree; 2-Disagree; 3-Somewhat Disagree; 4-Somewhat Agree; 5-Agree; and 6-Strongly Agree)

Category: Personal Support	Total Per Category
Mean	4.60
SD	1.56

The results of Table 6 were based on three questions that asked the mentees if their mentors, during the most recent month of teaching, had given them encouragement or moral support; provided an opportunity to raise issues/discuss individual concerns; and acted on a request of theirs in the previous week. Over three-fourths of both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived that they had received support in this category. Also noted was the fact that a very small number of participants perceived a lack of Personal Support.

The results of Table 7, which were based on a six-point Likert scale, again demonstrated that both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived that they had received support in this category. There were five questions that asked about the mentees relationships with their mentors. These questions asked if the relationships between the mentors and mentees had made the last year of teaching better; had made the mentees happier over the last year of teaching; had met the mentees' expectations; and had resulted in the mentees being satisfied with their mentors.

Classroom support.

Continuing in the “sink or swim” mode, teachers often find that classroom support is critical to their professional development and ability to become effective teachers. Classroom support is an area where the mentors support the teachers in their: adaptation of content knowledge; effectiveness in the delivery of instructional materials; unit and lesson planning, including preparation; methods and use of assessment; modification of instruction to include all student abilities; and (the key ingredient for this category) classroom management.

Table 8 shows the results of the two-point dichotomous questions for both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants in the Classroom Support category.

Table 8

Results for questions 18a, 18e, 18h and 18i in the Classroom Support category

(Scored on a two-point dichotomous scale: yes; no)

Category: Classroom Support	Yes	No	Blank
Total for NTSP and Non-NTSP	76.79%	19.29%	3.93%

The results were based on questions that asked if the mentors had: given suggestions to improve the mentees’ practice; provided guidance on teaching to meet state or district standards; provided guidance on how to assess students; and shared lesson plans, assessments or other instructional activities with the mentees. Over three-fourths of both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived that they had received support in

this category. The noticeable difference was that the percentage of participants who answered negatively was also higher than the number in the Personal Support category.

Tables 9, 10 and 11 show the results for both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants in the Classroom Support category. Table 9 is focused on questions regarding general Classroom Support, while Table 10 is focused on questions measuring how much support the mentors provided in content areas with English Language Learners, special needs students, and students of varying racial, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Table 11 is focused on how the mentees perceived they had adjusted their classroom practices, based on the questions addressed in Table 10.

Table 9

Results for questions 19b, 19c, 19f, 19g, 19h, 19i, 19j, 19k, 19l, 19m, 19n and 19o in the Classroom Support category

(Scored on a four-point Likert scale: 3-A Lot; 2-A Moderate Amount; 1-Very Little; and 0-None)

Category: Classroom Support	
	Total Per Category
Mean	1.82
SD	1.02

In Table 9, the results were based on questions regarding: accessing district and community resources; paperwork; second language learners; reviewing student work; classroom management and behavior; instructional strategies; curriculum materials; teaching towards standards; lesson planning; using assessment information to inform instruction; and motivating students. This section of questions in the Classroom Support

category demonstrated that both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived that they had received Classroom Support.

Table 10

Results for questions 20a, 20b and 20c in the Classroom Support category

(Scored on a four-point Likert scale: 3-A Lot; 2-A Moderate Amount; 1-Very Little; and 0-None)

Category: Classroom Support	
	Total Per Category
Mean	1.71
SD	1.00

In Table 10, the totals for this four-point Likert scale demonstrated that both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants agreed to receiving support, and there were few outliers, as the standard deviation was =1. The questions grouped in this section of Classroom Support asked the mentees to respond to the extent of guidance that their mentors had provided regarding specific populations: content areas; English Language Learners; special needs students; and students of varying ethnic, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Table 11

Results for questions 21a, 21b, 21c, 21d, 21e, 21f, 21g, 21h, 21i, 21j, 21l, 21m and 21n in the Classroom Support category

(Scored on a four-point Likert scale: 3-A Lot; 2-A Moderate Amount; 1-Very Little; and 0-None)

Category: Classroom Support	
	Total Per Category
Mean	1.86
SD	0.95

The results of Table 11 demonstrated that both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived that they had received support in this group of questions regarding Classroom Support. The agreement was again close, as the standard deviation was <1. This group of questions asked the mentees to what extent teaching practices had been adjusted based on the support received (see the results in Table 10) in regards to: content area teaching; teaching children with varying levels of achievement; reviewing and assessing student work; implementation of classroom management strategies; use of multiple instructional strategies or techniques; selecting or adapting curriculum materials; understanding and teaching towards state standards; planning lessons; using student assessment to inform instructional practice; motivating students; teaching English Language Learners; teaching special needs students; and teaching students of varying ethnic, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. The results also demonstrated that both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived that they had received Classroom Support.

Professional support.

One of the key components of improving academic achievement is the teachers’ ability to model professional behavior with parents, school staff, and administrators and to have the ability to socialize and gain support with those in the school and community, all while demonstrating an understanding of the culture. Mentoring can also support the mentees’ immediate need to attain professional development, in order to ensure the aspects of being a continuous learner and educator in this category.

Table 12 shows the results of both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants, combined for the two-point dichotomous questions. Table 13 shows the results of the questions for both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants.

Table 12

Results for question 18d in the Professional Support category

(Scored on a two-point dichotomous scale: yes; no)

Category : Professional Support	Yes	No	Blank
Total for NTSP and Non-NTSP	78.34%	17.74%	3.93%

The results of Table 12 demonstrated that both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived support, when responding to yes/ no questions asking the mentees if their mentors provided guidance information on administrative/logistical issues. Over three-fourths of the participants agreed, and less than one-fourth disagreed.

Table 13

Results for questions 19a, 19d and 19e in the Professional Support category

(Scored on a four-point Likert scale: 3-A Lot; 2-A Moderate Amount; 1-Very Little; and 0-None)

Category: Professional Support	Total Per Category
Mean	1.89
SD	0.94

The results of Table 13 demonstrate that both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived that their mentors had provided them guidance in: understanding the school’s culture; working with other school staff such as the principal, counselors, disabilities specialists, etc; and working with parents.

Evaluative Support.

In today’s educational community, the most important ability for new teachers to be aware of and apply is that of evaluation (i.e., how the educators are perceived by the administration and how student work and abilities are measured). When aligning the questions from the XYZ survey for this category, the key descriptors sought were to determine if the mentors’ formal and informal observations assisted the mentees by: providing feedback, completing necessary paperwork, and/or practicing interventions. Although several questions from the XYZ survey seemed to allude to this category, the specific wording of the questions did not use the term “observation,” instead, words such

as assist, guide, encourage, suggest, and support or assist were applied. Therefore, this researcher did not find a definite match with the XYZ survey questions and this category.

Reflective support.

Reflective support is the category where mentors model how to be reflective practitioners to their mentees. The mentees are encouraged to learn, to analyze and to question past, present, and future practices while working to attain solutions to problems occurring in their educational environments. This category is one where the mentors and mentees work together to be active learners. Table 14 shows the results of the two dichotomous questions, and Tables 15 and 16 depict the results of the questions which look for cause and effect.

Table 14

Results for questions 18f and 18g in the Reflective Support category

(Scored on a two-point dichotomous scale; yes; no)

Category : Reflective Support	Yes	No	Blank
Total for NTSP and Non-NTSP	73.06%	23.19%	3.76%

The results for Table 14 demonstrated that, once again, both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived support in this category. The amount of positive response was a little less than three-fourths; and, the number of mentees who stated a lack of support was close to one-fourth. The results for this table were based on two questions asking the mentees if the mentors had worked to identify teaching challenges and

possible solutions and if the mentors had discussed instructional goals and ways to achieve them.

Table 15

Results for question 19p in the Reflective Support category

(Scored on a four-point Likert scale: 3-A Lot; 2-A Moderate Amount; 1-Very Little; and 0-None)

Category: Reflective Support	
	Total Per Category
Mean	2.01
SD	0.98

Table 15 shows the positive responses from both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants. The standard deviation is <1, indicating few outliers. The question asked of the mentees in this section of the Reflective Category was used to determine if the mentors had provided guidance regarding reflecting on the new teachers' instructional practices.

Table 16

Results for question 21k in the Reflective Support category

(Scored on a four-point Likert scale: 3-A Lot; 2-A Moderate Amount; 1-Very Little; and 0-None)

Category: Reflective Support	
	Total Per Category
Mean	2.01
SD	0.85

The question asked in this section measured whether the mentees had adjusted their classroom practices in response to support they had received reflecting on their instructional practices. The results from Table 16 show that both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants responded positively about the impact of their mentors' work. Their responses showed that they had adjusted their classroom practices, from very little to a moderate amount.

Summary.

Tables 17, 18 and 19 show the results based on the total perceptions of both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants.

Table 17

Summary of all four support types - 2 point dichotomous scale (yes, no)

Category : Personal Support	Yes	No	Blank
Total for NTSP and Non-NTSP	84.39%	10.76%	3.82%
Category : Classroom Support	Yes	No	Blank
Total for NTSP and Non-NTSP	76.79%	19.29%	3.93%
Category : Professional Support	Yes	No	Blank
Total for NTSP and Non-NTSP	78.34%	17.74%	3.93%
Category : Reflective Support	Yes	No	Blank
Total for NTSP and Non-NTSP	73.06%	23.19%	3.76%

Table 17 shows an overview of the dichotomous questions in each of the categories. It is clear that the Personal Support category has the highest perceived support followed very closely by Professional Support, Classroom Support and Reflective Support. Also apparent is the fact that the combined group of mentees perceived less support in the Reflective Support category than in the others.

Table 18

Summary of all four support types

(Scored on a four-point Likert scale: 3-A Lot; 2-A Moderate Amount; 1-Very Little; and 0-None)

Category: Classroom Support	Total Per Category
Mean	1.82
SD	1.02
Category: Classroom Support	Total Per Category
Mean	1.71
SD	1.00
Category: Professional Support	Total Per Category
Mean	1.89
SD	0.94
Category: Reflective Support	Total Per Category
Mean	2.01
SD	0.98
Category: Reflective Support	Total Per Category
Mean	2.01
SD	0.85

The overall results demonstrated that both the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived support in each of the four categories as shown in Table 18. None of the

categories seemed to be perceived by the mentees as one where they received more support.

Table 19

Results for questions 22a, 22b, 22c, 22d and 22e in the Personal Support category

(Scored on a six-point Likert scale: 6-Strongly Agree; 5-Agree; 4-Somewhat Agree; 3-Somewhat Disagree; 2-Disagree; 1-Strongly Disagree)

Category: Personal Support	Total Per Category
Mean	4.60
SD	1.56

The results of both the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants for the questions scored on the six-point Likert scale were again positive. The mentees showed a perceived support between Somewhat Agree and Agree.

Overall, when looking at the combined results of the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants' responses to the XYZ survey, the results showed that all mentees perceived that they received support, and in some cases, made changes to their practices based on the support.

Research Question #2

What is the difference between the perceptions of mentees who received support from the New Teacher Support Program (NTSP) and those who received support from the traditional urban mentoring program, the Non-NTSP, on the different levels of support as described above?

This second research question was developed to determine if there were any differences between the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants in each of the five categories of support and also to determine which, if any, of the five categories was perceived to have stronger support. Each of the categories used the same descriptors as in research question #1.

Personal support.

Table 20 shows the results of the three dichotomous questions in the Personal Support category, for both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants.

Table 20

Results for questions 18b, 18c and 18j in the Personal Support category,

NTSP vs. Non-NTSP

(Scored on a two-point dichotomous scale: yes; no)

Category: Personal Support	NTSP			Non-NTSP		
Question	Yes	No	Blank	Yes	No	Blank
During the most recent month of teaching, did your mentor						
18b. Give you encouragement or moral support?	93.75%	3.13%	3.13%	83.11%	12.84%	4.05%
18c. Provide an opportunity for you to raise issues/discuss your individual concerns?	96.88%	0.00%	3.13%	79.05%	16.22%	4.73%
18j. Act on something you requested in the previous weeks?	87.50%	9.38%	3.13%	72.30%	22.97%	4.73%
Category: Personal Support	Total NTSP			Total Non-NTSP		
	90.63%	4.17%	3.13%	78.15%	17.34%	4.50%

The results of this table demonstrated that, on average, 94% of the NTSP participants perceived that they had received encouragement or moral support from their mentors, while only 83% of the Non-NTSP participants perceived the same support from their mentors. The subsequent questions regarding the opportunity to have someone listen to them as they shared issues or individual concerns received a slightly higher perception of support by the NTSP participants, with an average of 97%, and a lower perception of support by the Non-NTSP participants, with an average of 79%. Mentees were also asked if their mentors acted upon a request in the previous week, which resulted in a lower perception of support by both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants. NTSP participants, however, still perceived that they received more support based on their 88% average, while the Non-NTSP participants perceived support based on their 72% average.

Overall, for the dichotomous questions in the category of Personal Support, the NTSP participants perceived a higher level of support, particularly regarding the two questions which involved more interaction between mentees and mentors. Additionally, on average over 17% of the Non-NTSP participants demonstrated no Personal Support, which is substantially higher than their counterparts, the NTSP participants, at 3.1%.

Table 21 reports the results of the questions regarding the degree to which the mentees in each of the groups perceived they received support, in addition to their perceptions as a whole group for statements in the Personal Support category.

Table 21

Results for questions 22a, 22b, 22c, 22d and 22e in the Personal Support category,

NTSP vs. Non-NTSP

(Scored on a six-point Likert scale: 6-Strongly Agree; 5-Agree; 4-Somewhat Agree; 3-Somewhat Disagree; 2-Disagree; and 1-Strongly Disagree)

Category: Personal Support	NTSP		Non-NTSP	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your mentor?				
22a. My relationship with my mentor has made me a more effective teacher.	5.17	1.18	4.37	1.58
22b. My relationship with my mentor has made the last year of teaching better.	5.17	1.23	4.56	1.54
22c. My relationship with my mentor has made me happier over the last year of teaching.	5.10	1.32	4.50	1.60
22d. My relationship with my mentor has met my expectations.	5.20	1.32	4.34	1.68
22e. Overall, I am satisfied with my mentor.	5.27	1.31	4.61	1.58
Category: Personal Support	Total - NTSP		Total - Non-NTSP	
Mean	5.18		4.48	
SD	1.26		1.60	

As demonstrated by the data from Table 21, the NTSP participants seemed to have a higher overall level of endorsement with the support they received in the category of Personal Support, in regards to how their relationships with their mentors had supported them as individuals and as educators, as compared to the Non-NTSP participants. With every question asked, the NTSP participants' mean was in the lower end (i.e., around Agree or 5 points on the scale) while the Non-NTSP participants' mean was in the middle (i.e., around Somewhat Agree or 4 points on the scale). Although there seemed to be a difference between the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants, the NTSP participants seemed to perceive more support when compared by the range using the standard deviation. Based on the standard deviation for the Non-NTSP group, there was more variation ($SD=1.6$) in the degree of responses versus the NTSP group ($SD=1.26$). This suggested less of a gap among the means of this group of items for the NTSP group than the Non-NTSP group. Since the standard deviation was >1 , the responses had more outliers in the Strongly Disagree (1) and Strongly Agree (6) sections of the scale (i.e., on either end of the scale spectrum). In this category, other variables could be considered, including personality differences between mentors and mentees or the fact that mentees might have discovered that teaching was not the correct career choice for them.

By breaking the results down to assess each statement, the results showed the following. The first statement refers to how the relationships between mentors and mentees were perceived in order to make the mentees more effective teachers. The NTSP participants perceived that they had stronger relationships with their mentors, who

helped them be better teachers. than did the Non-NTSP participants. The second statement, referring to how the relationships made the teaching year better, was the same for the NTSP participants; however, the Non-NTSP participants did show a slightly higher perception of support, even though they were still in the Somewhat Agree or 4 point range. The next statement, referring to how the mentee/mentor relationships had made the new teachers happier, was once again similar with a slight drop in the perceptions of the NTSP participants, though it stayed at the same level of Agree or 5 points. The Non-NTSP did demonstrate a higher perception, although they too, stayed at the Somewhat Agree level or 4 points. In the last two statements, both groups changed only $<.6$, which might show how the two statements are very much alike in what they are asking. The biggest discrepancy in Table 21 was referring to the statement asking whether the mentor/mentee relationship met the mentees' expectations. The results from this statement showed that the NTSP participants perceived more support than the Non-NTSP participants. However, the results from the last statement, regarding the overall satisfaction of the mentees with their mentors, indicated that the Non-NTSP participants showed an increase in their perception of support.

When reviewing the responses based on the terms in the six-point Likert scale, the findings showed that both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived that they received support from their mentors by selecting between Somewhat Agree and Agree. This demonstrated that both groups of participants believed that they had a relationship with

their mentors. This also showed satisfaction with the personal support received based on the XYZ survey questions.

Classroom support.

Table 22 shows the results of the four dichotomous questions in the Classroom Support category, for both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants.

Table 22

Results for questions 18a, 18e, 18h and 18i in the Personal Support category,

NTSP vs. Non-NTSP

(Scored on a two-point dichotomous scale: yes; no)

Category: Classroom Support	NTSP			Non-NTSP		
	Yes	No	Blank	Yes	No	Blank
During the most recent month of teaching, did your mentor:						
18a. Give you suggestions to improve your practice?	87.50%	9.38%	3.13%	72.30%	22.97%	4.73%
18e. Provide guidance on teaching to meet state or district standards?	96.88%	0.00%	3.13%	79.05%	16.22%	4.73%
18h. Provide guidance on how to assess your students?	78.13%	18.75%	3.13%	60.81%	34.46%	4.73%
18i. Share lesson plans, assessments or other instructional activities?	78.13%	18.75%	3.13%	61.49%	33.78%	4.73%
Category: Classroom Support	Total NTSP			Total Non-NTSP		
	85.16%	11.72%	3.13%	68.41%	26.86%	4.73%

The “make-it or break-it” for teachers is their teaching practice, yet when asked if they were given suggestions on how to improve their practices, Table 22 shows that the NTSP participants perceived the support at only 88%, and Non-NTSP participants perceived their support at 72%. The negative response to this question from the Non-NTSP participants also seemed high at 23%, which is almost one-fourth of the respondents, versus 9% of the NTSP participants. Question 18e, the second question aligned in this category and on this scale, referred to the support mentees perceived they received from their mentors regarding guidance on teaching to meet state or district standards. The NTSP participants perceived a relatively high level of support at 97%, contrasted with 79% for the Non-NTSP participants, almost a 20% difference. This question also demonstrated that all NTSP felt supported in this area, while 16% of the Non-NTSP participants related a lack of support. Although the Non-NTSP participants perceived a lower amount of support than the NTSP participants, both groups demonstrated a higher level of agreement with this question. Since this question is the outlier, it leads to another question: Did the mentors of either group receive training on how to support their mentees with guidance on teaching to meet the state or district standards, or was this part of the training for the NTSP mentors only?

Overall, it appeared that once again, the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived themselves to be supported by their mentors. However, the NTSP participants perceived that they received more support within their program than did the Non-NTSP participants. What is also evident, however, is that both the NTSP and Non-NTSP

participants perceived very low support (NTSP at 78% and Non-NTSP at 61%) when asked to what extent their mentors provided guidance regarding the assessment of students, an ability seen as the cornerstone of education today.

Table 23 reports the results of the questions regarding the degree to which the mentees in each of the groups perceived that they received support and their perceptions as a whole group for Classroom Support. The results from Table 23 agreed with those found in the yes/no results, showing that although the NTSP participants perceived they had more support than the Non-NTSP participants, both groups appeared to perceive similar amounts of support in this category. The question which had the lowest perceived support from both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants in this category was the one asking how much guidance the mentor had given the mentee regarding the teaching of children with varying levels of English language acquisition. The information received from this question was significant as this school district serviced a large population of English Language Learners.

Both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants agreed that they received between very little to a moderate amount of support in the category of Classroom Support. The standard deviation was >1 , demonstrating that the question referring to support in the area of lesson planning had the most significant number of outliers (variability) or respondents answering between 0 (None) and 3 (A Lot) versus the majority responding at 2 (A Moderate Amount). There were more outliers with the Non-NTSP participants, as a

majority of the questions in this section had a standard deviation of >1, demonstrating more variability.

Table 23

Results for questions 19b, 19c, 19f, 19g, 19h, 19i, 19j, 19k, 19l, 19m, 19n and 19o in the Classroom Support category, NTSP vs. Non-NTSP

(Scored on a four-point Likert scale: 3-A Lot; 2-A Moderate Amount; 1-Very Little; and 0-None)

Category: Classroom Support	NTSP		Non-NTSP	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
During the school year, to what extent has your mentor provided you with guidance in the following areas:				
19b. Accessing district and community resources?	2.23	0.62	1.78	0.92
19c. Handling paperwork?	2.10	0.92	1.96	0.95
19f. Teaching children with varying levels of English language acquisition?	1.87	0.97	1.49	1.05
19g. Reviewing and assessing student work?	2.00	0.95	1.65	1.11
19h. Implementing classroom management strategies?	2.37	0.85	1.93	0.98
19i. Managing student discipline and behavior?	2.17	0.95	1.87	1.06
19j. Using multiple instructional strategies techniques?	2.40	0.77	1.81	1.02
19k. Selecting or adapting curriculum materials?	2.07	0.94	1.75	1.08
19l. Understanding/ teaching towards state or district standards?	2.34	0.77	1.74	1.06
19m. Planning lessons?	2.07	1.01	1.65	1.03
19n. Using student assessment to inform your teaching?	2.10	0.96	1.73	1.08
19o. Motivating students?	2.14	0.95	1.74	1.03
Category: Classroom Support	Total - NTSP		Total Non-NTSP	
Mean	2.11		1.75	
SD	0.91		1.03	

The overall results for Table 23 in the Classroom Support category showed that the NTSP participants and the Non-NTSP participants perceived that they received support from their mentors regarding Classroom Support. The questions in this section of Classroom Support also showed a lower standard deviation than in the previous category of Personal Support; however, these questions were based on a four-point Likert scale and the ones in the previous category were based on a six-point Likert scale.

Table 24 reports the results of the questions regarding the degree to which the mentees in each of the groups perceived they received other forms of classroom support and their perceptions as a whole group. Table 25 reports the results of the extent to which the mentees perceived they had adjusted their classroom practices in response to the support they received (see Table 24). The survey used a different scale for these measures of classroom support.

Table 24

Results for questions 20a, 20b and 20c in the Classroom Support category,

NTSP vs. Non-NTSP

(Scored on a four-point Likert scale: 3-A Lot; 2-A Moderate Amount; 1-Very Little; and 0-None)

Category: Classroom Support	NTSP		Non-NTSP	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
During the school year, to what extent has your mentor provided you with guidance teaching regarding a specific content area or teaching specific populations?				
20a. Teaching regarding your content area	1.97	0.87	2.04	0.90
20b. Teaching English language learners	1.81	0.80	1.44	1.02
20c. Teaching special needs students	1.97	0.85	1.51	1.08
20d. Teaching students of varying ethnic, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds	1.89	0.92	1.65	1.01
Category: Classroom Support	Total - NTSP		Total - N-NTSP	
Mean	1.91		1.66	
SD	0.85		1.03	

The results of Table 24 demonstrate that both the NTSP and the Non-NTSP participants perceived they that had received support from their mentors in specific content areas or teaching populations. One interesting finding is that the Non-NTSP participants perceived that they received more support when responding to the question regarding teaching in the content area.

Table 25

Results for questions 21a, 21b, 21c, 21d, 21e, 21f, 21g, 21h, 21i, 21j, 21l, 21m and 21n

in the Classroom Support category, NTSP vs. Non-NTSP

(Scored on a four-point Likert scale: 3-A Lot; 2-A Moderate Amount; 1-Very Little; and 0-None)

	NTSP		Non-NTSP	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
During the last school year, to what extent have you adjusted your classroom practice in response to support you've received from your mentor in the following areas?				
21a. Teaching regarding your content area	1.96	0.88	1.86	0.86
21b. Teaching children with varying levels of achievement	2.28	0.88	1.88	0.90
21c. Reviewing and assessing student work	2.29	0.85	1.80	0.97
21d. Implementing classroom management strategies	2.21	0.98	1.93	0.92
21e. Using multiple instructional strategies/ techniques	2.34	0.67	1.88	0.90
21f. Selecting or adapting curriculum materials	2.11	0.88	1.73	0.94
21g. Understanding/teaching toward state or district standards	2.18	0.82	1.74	0.96
21h. Planning lessons	2.07	0.94	1.72	0.95
21i. Using student assessment to inform your instruction	2.21	0.83	1.79	0.98
21j. Motivating students	2.31	0.85	1.81	0.97
21l. Teaching English language learners	1.88	0.93	1.55	1.04
21m. Teaching special needs students	2.07	0.78	1.68	1.03
21n. Teaching students of varying ethnic, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds	1.65	1.10	1.67	0.99
	Total - NTSP		Total - Non-NTSP	
Category: Classroom Support				
Mean	2.15		1.79	
SD	0.88		0.95	

The most significant findings within the Classroom Support category were the results of Table 25, which followed up on Table 24 by asking the participants to what extent they (i.e., the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants) had adjusted their classroom practices in response to the support received from their mentors. The results demonstrated that both the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants did make adjustments to their classroom practices. This was confirmed by the standard deviations of <1.

Professional support.

Table 26 shows the results for the only dichotomous question from the XYZ survey that aligned with the descriptors for Professional Support. Once again, the NTSP participants perceived that they received more support when working with administration than the Non-NTSP participants by 12%.

Table 26

Results for question 18d in the Professional Support category, NTSP vs. Non-NTSP

(Scored on a two-point dichotomous scale: yes; no)

Category: Professional Support	NTSP			Non-NTSP		
	Yes	No	Blank	Yes	No	Blank
During the most recent month of teaching, did your mentor:						
18d. Provide guidance information on administrative/logistical issues?	84.38%	12.50%	3.13%	72.30%	22.97%	4.73%

Table 27 reports the results of the questions regarding the perceived degree of support received by the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants and their perceptions as a whole group.

Table 27

Results for questions 19a, 19d and 19e in the Professional Support category,

NTSP vs. Non-NTSP

(Scored on a four-point Likert scale: 3-A Lot; 2-A Moderate Amount; 1-Very Little; and 0-None)

Category: Professional Support	NTSP		Non-NTSP	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
During the school year, to what extent has your mentor provided you with guidance in the following areas?				
19a. Understanding this school's culture?	2.07	0.91	2.13	0.9
19d. Working with other school staff such as principal, counselors, disabilities specialists, etc.?	2.00	0.91	1.85	0.96
19e. Working with parents?	1.77	0.97	1.59	0.97
Category: Professional Support	Total - NTSP		Total - Non-NTSP	
Mean	2.03		1.86	
SD	0.88		0.96	

The results from Table 27 demonstrate that both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived to be receiving support and rated the level of support to be between

very little and a moderate amount. The standard deviation was also <1 and showed minimal outliers; therefore, it showed agreement among the participants.

Although there were only four questions in the category of Professional Support, both the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived some support in this area.

Reflective support.

Table 28 shows the responses to the two-point dichotomous questions, while Tables 29 and 30 show the results of the questions scored on a four-point Likert scale.

Table 28

Results for questions 18f and 18g in the Reflective Support category,

NTSP vs. Non-NTSP

(Scored on a two-point dichotomous scale: yes; no)

Category: Reflective Support	NTSP			Non-NTSP		
	Yes	No	Blank	Yes	No	Blank
During the most recent month of teaching, did your mentor:						
18f. Work with you to identify teaching challenges and possible solutions?	84.38%	12.50%	3.13%	70.27%	25.68%	4.05%
18g. Discuss with you instructional goals and ways to achieve them?	78.13%	18.75%	3.13%	59.46%	35.81%	4.73%
Category: Reflective Support	NTSP			Non-NTSP		
	Yes	No	Blank	Yes	No	Blank
	81.26%	15.63%	3.13%	64.87%	30.75%	4.39%

Table 28 demonstrates that the NTSP participants perceived their level of Reflective Support to be at 84% when working with their mentors to identify teaching challenges and possible solutions, while the Non-NTSP participants perceived their support with the same question to be at 70%. This shows that one-fourth of Non-NTSP participants perceived that they received no support within this same question.

The results seemed to be less satisfactory when the mentees responded to their perceived levels of support when discussing instructional goals and ways to achieve them with their mentors. The NTSP participants reported their perception of support to be at 78%, while the Non-NTSP reported a significantly lower perception of support, with 59% believing they had enough support. This left 35% of the Non-NTSP participants believing they lacked this support, which might have changed their practices and student achievement outcomes.

The results of the two-point dichotomous questions demonstrated that although the NTSP participants were more satisfied with their mentoring support in the Reflective Support category, they did not surpass the Non-NTSP participants by a great deal. Neither group showed their perception of support to be at extremely high levels.

Table 29 reports the results of the question that measured the degree to which the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived they had received support in the category of Reflective Support, as well as their perceptions as a whole group.

Table 29

Results for question 19p in the Reflective Support category, NTSP vs. Non-NTSP

(Scored on a four-point Likert scale: 3-A Lot; 2-A Moderate Amount; 1-Very Little; and 0-None)

Category: Reflective Support	NTSP		Non-NTSP	
Questions	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
During the school year, to what extent has your mentor provide you with guidance in the following areas?				
19p. Reflecting on your instructional practice?	2.62	0.62	1.88	1.00
Category: Reflective Support	Total - NTSP		Total - Non-NTSP	
Mean	2.62		1.88	
SD	0.62		1.88	

This table demonstrates that the NTSP participants perceived their level of support to be a moderate amount from their mentors when working to reflect on their instructional practices. Once again, the Non-NTSP participants did not perceive the same level of support, as their scores equated to very little when working to reflect on their instructional practices.

Overall, both the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants seemed to perceive a low-level (i.e., a moderate amount) of support in the area of reflection on instructional

practices. Reflection is important to teachers, as they can learn from what went well and make modifications to other areas to improve their teaching effectiveness.

Table 30 reports the results of the questions which measured the degree to which the mentees in each of the groups perceived they had received support and their perceptions as a whole group in the Reflective Support category.

Table 30

Results for question 21k in the Reflective Support category, NTSP vs. Non-NTSP

(Scored on a four-point Likert scale: 3-A Lot; 2-A Moderate Amount; 1-Very Little; and 0-None)

Category: Reflective Support Questions	NTSP		Non-NTSP	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
During the last school year, to what extent have you adjusted your classroom practice in response to support you've received from your mentor in the following areas?				
21k. Reflecting on your instructional practices?	2.14	0.73	1.92	0.85
Category: Reflective Support	Total - NTSP		Total - Non-NTSP	
Mean	2.14		1.92	
SD	0.73		0.85	

Table 30 results showed that both the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived that they received between very little to a moderate amount of support for this

one question which asked about reflecting on and adjusting instructional practices. However, this was seen as a significant finding, as both groups of participants did see that the support given by their mentors enabled them to reflect upon and adjust their instructional practices. This result was supported by the fact that the standard deviation was <1 for both groups of participants.

Summary.

Table 31 shows a summary of each category based on the dichotomous and Likert scale questions.

Table 31

Summary of all four support types of support, NTSP vs. Non-NTSP –

(Scored on a two-point dichotomous scale: yes; no)

Category : Personal Support	Total NTSP			Total Non-NTSP		
	Yes	No	Blank	Yes	No	Blank
	90.63%	4.17%	3.13%	78.15%	17.34%	4.50%
Category: Classroom Support	Total NTSP			Total Non-NTSP		
	Yes	No	Blank	Yes	No	Blank
	85.16%	11.72%	3.13%	68.41%	26.86%	4.73%
Category: Professional Support	Total NTSP			Total Non-NTSP		
	Yes	No	Blank	Yes	No	Blank
	84.38%	12.50%	3.13%	72.30%	22.97%	4.73%
Category: Reflective Support	Total NTSP			Total Non-NTSP		
	Yes	No	Blank	Yes	No	Blank
	81.26%	15.63%	3.13%	64.87%	30.75%	4.39%

When reviewing the collective data from the dichotomous questions within each category, it is evident that the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants agreed that they received more support in the Personal Support Category than in the other categories. The Reflective Support category seemed to show the least amount of support, as well as the highest percentage of Non-NTSP participants stating that they did not receive support in this category. Although the averages are not all as high as those in the Personal Support category, it is still apparent that both groups did perceive support in all categories.

When reviewing the summative data based on the four point Likert scale, it appeared that both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived between very little and a moderate amount of support. This demonstrates that although the NTSP participants perceived a little more support than their Non-NTSP peers, they all agree to having received some support. The only summative data that stands out is the results for the Reflective Support Category, which shows a significant standard deviation of >1 , meaning that there are more outliers for that group of questions.

Although, there was only one group of question which used a six-point Likert scale, the summative data showed that both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived that they somewhat agreed as to the amount of support given to building relationships with their mentors. The significant standard deviation of >1 showed that there were significant outliers.

Table 32

Summary of all four support types of support, NTSP vs. Non-NTSP

(Scored on a four-point Likert scale: 3-A Lot; 2-A Moderate Amount; 1-Very Little; and 0-None)

Category: Classroom Support	Total - NTSP	Total - Non-NTSP
Mean	2.11	1.75
SD	0.91	1.03
Category: Classroom	Total - NTSP	Total - Non-NTSP
Mean	1.91	1.66
SD	0.85	1.03
Category: Classroom Support	Total - NTSP	Total - Non-NTSP
Mean	2.15	1.79
SD	0.88	0.95
Category: Professional Support	Total - NTSP	Total - Non-NTSP
Mean	2.03	1.86
SD	0.88	0.96
Category: Reflective Support	Total - NTSP	Total - Non-NTSP
Mean	2.62	1.88
SD	0.62	1.88
Category: Reflective Support	Total - NTSP	Total - Non-NTSP
Mean	2.14	1.92
SD	0.73	0.85

Table 33

Summary of all four types of support, NTSP vs. Non-NTSP

(Scored on a six-point Likert scale: 6-Strongly Agree; 5-Agree; 4-Somewhat Agree; 3-Somewhat Disagree; 2-Disagree; 1-Strongly Disagree)

Category: Personal Support	Total - NTSP	Total - Non-NTSP
Mean	5.18	4.48
SD	1.26	1.60

Overall, the results showed that both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived support in the four categories as stated by Stewart (2004). While the NTSP participants had a higher perception of support in the Personal Support category than their counterparts, both groups perceived a higher level of support in the Personal Support than in subsequent categories. This was an important finding, supported by the literature review, which states that building relationships is the basis or groundwork for supporting mentors in all other categories (Slaybaugh, Evans & Byrd, 1996; Ganser, 2002; Sweeny, 2008).

Research Question #3

What are the differences between the perceptions of NTSP and Non-NTSP participants based of the demographics of race and educational background as identified by the XYZ survey?

The purpose of this third question was to determine if there were any differences in the demographics of race and educational background which might have been a factor in the perceptions of the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants.

Table 34 shows the results of the XYZ survey.

Table 34

Racial demographics of NTSP and Non-NTSP participants

Ethnicity	NTSP and Non-NTSP	
	Total %	
White (non-Hispanic)	73.00%	
Hispanic or Latino	11.00%	
Mexican or Mexican American	5.00%	
Multiracial	5.00%	
Black or African American	4.50%	
Asian American or Pacific Islander	1.00%	
Other	1.00%	

Table 34 shows that a majority of the mentees was self-identified as white (Caucasian) and not working towards a master’s degree. These results demonstrate that the homogeneity of the respondents does not allow an analysis based on their race.

Table 35

Educational background of NTSP and Non-NTSP participants

Master's Degree	Yes	Yes,	No, Currently	No
		More Than One	Working Towards One	
NTSP	15.63%	3.13%	25.00%	56.25%
Non-NTSP	30.41%	3.38%	26.35%	39.86%
Total	27.78%	3.33%	26.11%	42.78%

Table 35 shows that approximately one-fourth of both NTSP and Non-NTSP participants were working toward a Master's degree, while the majority of participants in both groups were not seeking another degree. It did show that the Non-NTSP participants had double the number of mentees with a Master's Degree. This might be due to the fact that the number of Non-NTSP respondents was more than double that of the NTSP respondents.

Summary.

In conclusion, the statistical analysis determined that there was not a difference between the NTSP and Non-NTSP groups of participants based on their racial and background combined data; however, when both groups were viewed specifically by their educational backgrounds, as shown in Table 35, it was apparent that the NTSP participants had a lower number of master's degrees confirmed versus the Non-NTSP participants. This might mean that it is necessary to look at the data in two ways to determine significance.

This was an interesting finding, as one would expect racial and educational backgrounds to be invariant when determining which participants would be part of the NTSP and Non-NTSP groups. This showed that the NTSP participants could have been randomly selected versus being systematically selected based on race or educational background.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to understand which components of mentoring (as stated in Stewart's 2004 research) were perceived as the most important to mentees. Results from all three research questions were reviewed regarding the perceptions of the NTSP and Non-NTSP mentees as one group of new teachers, as two separate groups, and then by demographics using the five different categories of support: Personal, Classroom, Professional, Evaluative, and Reflective. This research demonstrated that the mentees perceived the category where they received the most support to be the Personal Support category. Perceiving the receipt of support is crucial for new teachers, as Darling-Hammond (1996), Elmore (2002), Huling-Austin (1992) and Kelley (2004) stated that new teachers need the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers in professional communities, observe colleagues' classrooms, be observed by expert mentors, analyze their own practices, and network with other teachers.

The fact that the Personal Support category rated the most important also seems to make sense, as this category involves the foundation of mentoring or the building of relationships. To build a working and collaborative relationship, there needs to be a high level of trust and understanding between the people working together. In the category of Personal Support, mentees were asked about the encouragement or moral support they received, if their mentors acted upon requests, and if their relationships with their

mentors made them happier over their first year of teaching. These are relationship building questions, what some may call *fluff*. What this study cannot answer, but would be worth considering, is if another year of teaching would have made mentees perceive a stronger bond between themselves and their mentors or would cause another category of support to surface as more important. Did the mentees perceive they had received more support in the Personal Support category because this was where relationships were built or because it was easier to focus on relationships than the other categories of support? Perhaps Personal Support was perceived as a strong area of support for the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants due to their background knowledge in the other category areas, which caused the participants to perceive that they did not require support in those other areas.

It is important, however, that new teachers be supported in the other areas, in order for them to move away from the “sink or swim” dilemma, which often leads to high teacher turnover rates. Ganser (2002) said that mentoring extends beyond providing emotional support, which is part of the Personal Support category, to assistance with policy and procedures, and superficial instructional assistance to influence the practices of new teachers in significant ways. The Classroom Support category was the second of Stewart’s categories to be perceived high by the mentees in terms of support. When reviewing the number of questions in the Classroom Support category, it is noteworthy to mention that there were more questions which aligned to this category than to any other category, based on the XYZ survey. It is an open question, waiting for a future study to

determine if the heavy emphasis on the Classroom Support questions in the XYZ survey influenced the results. Within the category of Classroom Support, the mentees did perceive that the support they received from their mentors had a positive impact on their teaching practices. This finding was contrary to the *Mathematica* (2010) study, completed for the U. S. Department of Education, which suggested that mentee teachers in their “treatment” groups who received significantly more mentoring, guidance on instructional practices, and more time in certain professional activities than their counterparts (the non-control group) showed no impact in their teaching practices, based on in-classroom observations. It would be helpful to understand the perceptions of the mentees in the “treatment” group from the *Mathematica* study with regard to the types or impacts of support they received from their mentors. This type of data would allow for a better comparison between the *Mathematica* study and the findings from this study on mentee perceptions of support.

Although the Reflective Support category was perceived by all the mentees as a category where they received support, there were only three questions in this area. It would be helpful to understand why there were only three questions in this category when this area should be considered a focal point for educators. Achinstein and Athanases (2005) contended that current mentoring programs only focus on survival skills perpetuating the status quo and replicating current practices, thereby losing the opportunity to promote reflective practitioners that challenge and reframe routines and establish pedagogy. As Reflective Support seems to be a necessity to assist new

teachers in challenging and reframing routines and learning and establishing pedagogical understanding, there remains a question as to how to gain focus for this area of mentoring.

What was learned is that the mentors seemed to be perceived as building the foundations for their work over the course of the mentees' first year and into the next year. Although there is a need for the mentors to "go slow to go fast", there is also a need for the mentees to have significant support in all of the categories in order to learn about and feel a higher level of comfort with their new profession. Even though there appears to be a need to create a balance among the categories previously discussed, there is also a need for the development of more support within the Evaluative Support category. Evaluations, as well as formal and informal feedback to teachers, appear to be as crucial to new teacher development as each of the categories which have been discussed.

Although some state-sponsored programs offer parts of their induction programs as an evaluation process that applies formulaic criteria for narrowly defined teaching behaviors to assess new teacher performance (Darling-Hammond et al., 1999; Kelley, 2004), there was no research describing formal or informal observations by mentors. Observations, both formal and informal, seem to have a connotation of evaluation, and therefore, they are an area where mentors are reluctant to tread, as they are commonly seen as an administrative responsibility. Perhaps the Evaluative Category would be better supported if it was viewed as providing formative feedback based on informal, non-evaluative observations. The reason no questions from the XYZ survey were aligned

with the Evaluative Category might have been based on the possible conflict between observations (formal or informal) and evaluations and who has that responsibility.

Another insight gained from this research question was the fact that although the NTSP participants received support from two mentors as part of the grant-funded program, they did not perceive their support in any of four categories to be significantly higher than their counterparts in the Non-NTSP group. However, based on the survey questions and results, there is no way to know if the NTSP participants perceived more support from their grant mentors or their school mentors.

The third research question was developed to determine if there was a difference between the perceptions of the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants in each of the categories based on the demographics of race and educational background. The results indicated that, although this was an urban school district whose hiring included both traditionally and alternatively licensed educators, the demographics were very much the same, and there was no difference between the two groups of mentees. It seemed significant that there was no difference in demographic information between the two groups, as the district in question sought out educators with different licensures. One might assume, therefore, that there would be differences in the educational backgrounds of the participants.

Other specific and significant findings included a review of the survey used, the alignment to the categories developed by Stewart (2004) to support quality mentoring, the number of categories, the number of questions within each category, the type of

questions asked, and the levels of responses offered to the participants. As stated in the methods section, the survey had a total of ninety-nine questions and thirteen categories; however, there were only four categories and a total of forty-nine question which related to this research. It was also interesting to note the number of questions that pertained to each of Stewart's (2004) categories. In the category of Personal Support, there were eight questions; in Classroom Support, there were thirty-three questions; in Professional Support, there were four questions; in Evaluative Support, there were no questions; and in Reflective Support, there were four questions. This distribution of questions brought up a question about the equity of the categories.

Another important finding came when reviewing the questions in the categories of Classroom Support and Reflective Support. The participants were asked to determine how much the support given and received had influenced them to make adjustments in their instructional practices. The results showed that not only did the mentees perceive that they had received support from their mentors, but they also responded that their classroom practices changed as a result of the mentoring. These finding were significant as they were counter to Long's (2009) report, which stated that education struggles to close the achievement gap in student learning by increasing professional development, in order to support teachers' instructional practices. It also supported Stewart's (2004) finding that the development of quality new teachers can be accelerated through effective mentoring.

The biggest gap seen by this researcher was the lack of questions that aligned with the Evaluative Support category. As previously stated, this category is really the most valued category by new teachers, as formal and informal observations give mentees a focus for precisely what areas need to be strengthened and what areas of practice are seen as effective. The second area of question was the way the participants responded to the survey. If the respondents answered with any choice but none, then they were sharing a perception of having received some amount of support; however, it is difficult to determine the true amount of support the mentees received.

Another point for discussion was the fact that although attrition was not a focus in any of the research questions, it also was not part of the XYZ survey results. Long (2009) noted that it is important to increase professional development by supporting new teachers with the hope of decreasing the attrition rate; however, the survey participants were not questioned as to their future intent. This might be due to the fact that the new teachers were still under contract and could have been reluctant to respond to questions regarding their intentions to stay in education, either within the district or at the same school location. If there is a need for teacher reduction, however, due to budget limitations, new teachers are not usually given a choice. If information is not gathered on the reasons for teacher attrition, it is difficult to stem the rise in teacher turnover. In addition, if research is not evident, does that point to the effectiveness of the mentoring program?

In the end, there was little consensus regarding which types of support were most important or which categories of support required more of the mentors' attention; however, as was the case with Stewart's (2004) research, this research also demonstrated that both Personal and Classroom Support ranked high, while Professional and Reflective Support ranked lower. Unlike Stewart's work, however, Evaluative Support was not evident in the survey used in this research. Based on the individual groups and numbers of questions used in this research, this researcher found great similarities in the two research studies. When looking at the two studies, it seems necessary to review and reevaluate the way mentees are questioned and respond to questions in order to ascertain the answer to this pressing question: What is quality mentoring? At the present, time this research did not find a definitive answer to that question.

Significance

Although this study suggested that mentees who responded to the XYZ survey perceived that they were receiving support from their mentors, it might also be perceived that there should be more support in the categories where there were a limited number of questions (i.e., Personal, Professional and Reflective). The mentees also were unable to respond to questions specific to Reflective Support, and this might be another category for mentors to explore with their mentees. Additionally, the results of the study also left the researcher wanting to know how many of the mentees who responded chose to stay in education, the district, their schools, or their positions.

The results from this research demonstrated that although both the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived that they received support from their mentors, it did appear that the NTSP participants had a slightly higher perception of the support they received than their counterparts. Although this research showed that the NTSP participants received support from specifically trained mentors at specific times during the year, there was no way to determine whether the grant-developed support was successful on its own, as there were two support mentors for the NTSP participants. The questions in the XYZ survey asked about support received versus supportive programs. Therefore, it seems there is still a need to look at the specific results of how the professional development occurred. The results of this research have demonstrated that the mentees in both the NTSP and Non-NTSP groups received support at some level from their mentors, and the mentees in both groups also reported adjusting their instructional practice based on the support received from their mentors.

Limitations

This researcher found four limitations that were significant in determining meaningful results. The first limitation determined by this researcher was a threat to measurement validity vis-à-vis construct under representation. In survey research, validity is defined as measuring what is meant to be measured (Gliner and Morgan, 2005). Since the purpose of this study was not to validate the survey instrument originally created by XYZ, but rather to understand the perceptions of the mentees, there

were concerns surrounding the validity of the instrument. Additionally, the instrument's reliability would be an area to address if the same instrument is used in future research.

The second limitation to this research was the fact that the XYZ survey was not developed to ask questions which were aligned to Stewart's (2004) specific categories. Education today is based on building relationships, developing educational expertise, understanding professional responsibilities, implementing data and assessment information, and learning how to reflect and improve one's practices, all of which will drive instructional best practice.

The third limitation to this research is a threat to external validity. External validity as defined by Gliner & Morgan (2005) is the ability to generalize to a larger population. The sampling frame and size of this study was large enough and based on a western urban school district, which identified a homogenous group of participants. In order to establish external validity, a heterogeneous group of respondents would be required to reduce error variance. Since the findings were limited to generalize to a larger population, this was a threat to external validity.

The fourth limitation was due to the fact that data was collected at the end of the 2008-2009 school year, which was two years prior to this research. Collecting more current data might have given insight into any new developments which could have occurred after the first year of the NTSP program or which could have arisen based on how the district had used the information from its grant-funded program to improve its mentoring program.

The fifth limitation was the alignment of the questions from the XYZ survey to the category descriptors of Stewart's (2004) study. Since the XYZ survey did not use Stewart's (2004) research, categories or descriptors, there was room for researcher bias.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made as a result of this study. The first recommendation was to gather data from a larger, heterogeneous sample so that the results could be generalized to a larger population. Future surveys should still question the following:

- 1) Does the number of participants change the findings?
- 2) Does the amount of support (e.g., NTSP or Non-NTSP) change the findings?
- 3) Would there be a difference in the findings in urban versus suburban districts?
- 4) Does the construct of the survey change the findings?

The second recommendation of this study would be to use a consistent scale that would allow comparisons between the five categories (based on Stewart's 2004 research). The research and literature review has shown that there are five specific categories necessary to the support of new teachers (i.e., mentees). Those five categories are:

- 1) Personal Support, defined as: emotional support, listening, counseling, providing appropriate praise and encouragement, working to develop a relationship with a mentee.

2) Classroom Support, defined as: adapting content knowledge, delivery of materials, lesson and unit planning, classroom management, method of assessment, modifying instruction for gifted and special needs students.

3) Professional Support, defined as: modeling professional behavior with parents, school staff, administrators, socialization into school and community culture, encouraging professional development, assisting with portfolio preparation.

4) Evaluating Support, defined as: making formal and informal observations, providing sincere and timely feedback, completing necessary paperwork for district of university, willingness to practice intervention if needed.

5) Reflective Support, defined as: modeling reflective practitioner behavior, encouraging candidate or mentee to analyze and question practices, supporting the mentee in work towards his/her own solutions to problems.

Food For Thought

Mentors try to support and thereby retain new teachers; however, it is unclear why teachers leave the profession or their first assignments. Some research suggests that new teachers leave due to a lack of quality, consistent, and needs-based mentoring (Snyder, 1998). This study showed that the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants perceived that their practices had changed as a result of mentoring; however, the results of the Mathematica (2010) study revealed that mentoring had no impact on classroom practice. This discrepancy between the perceptions of mentees and observable practice has given rise to the following questions: What is causing mentoring programs to not have visible and

statistical changes in the outcomes of retention and perceptual support from new teachers? Are the problems due to leadership or the numerous assessments and need to focus on data versus the whole student learner, or are schools becoming so underfunded that the drain is causing them not to have effective mentoring support for new teachers? Is it time to move forward and decide how to advance from the concept of theory to practice and develop quality mentoring?

If all of these questions could be answered, then perhaps the development of quality mentoring would indeed move support from the *ivory tower* of study to the implementation of the categories of support. This would mean developing a means to assess new teachers as individuals and determine how best to support each one through professional development. There are several considerations which may provide some answers. The first consideration, which might lead to a revitalized path to retain educators, would be to ask: What training and support should be provided to mentees/new teachers which would benefit their learning needs? In addition, how can this training be differentiated? Also, what training and support should be provided and mandated for mentors to assist them with their work supporting new teachers? What research could be done to learn how to look at the gap between mentee perceptions of practice and actual observed practice as a result of developing a mentoring program based on the five categories of support?

Finally it is important to consider the development of mentoring programs as they relate to the five categories of support – Personal, Classroom, Professional, Evaluative,

and Reflective – based on research specific to each of the categories of support. This brings about another question. What is the best methodology for describing quality and learning outcomes in a mentor/mentee relationship based on the five categories of support? If a survey has not been totally effective, is it time to look at observations and interviews, and would the results of such data help to define quality mentoring?

As Stewart (2004) so aptly stated, “There is a crisis that gnaws at the heart of American education today, an endless enigma, perpetuating itself” (p. 87). The question is how to change the quality of mentoring and therefore the quality of educational instruction, assessment, and results.

Conclusion

The way mentoring is implemented, how mentors are chosen, and the levels of training (if any) of mentors varies from state to state (Brown, 2003). This study found that, although the survey used was not built upon Stewart’s five categories of support, four of the categories emerged in a survey to measure the impact of one mentoring program. Professional support, defined as modeling professional behavior with parents, school staff, and administrators, socialization into school and community culture, encouraging professional development, and assisting with portfolio preparation (Stewart, 2004), is an integral part of educational practice and an area that the mentees of both programs perceived that they received the most support in. How teachers understand and apply these professional behaviors can determine their satisfaction with their schools and

positions, and this satisfaction may translate into increased teacher retention. However, such effects were not captured in this research and may be an area for further analysis.

Additionally, significant group differences were found between the perceptions of teachers in the NTSP and the Non-NTSP groups in the areas of Classroom and Reflective Support. When reviewing the data on Professional and Personal Support, the NTSP and Non-NTSP participants' perceptions were invariant.

Professional Support was defined as modeling professional behavior with parents, school staff, administrators, socialization into school and community culture, encouraging professional development, assisting with portfolio preparation (Steward, 2004).

Personal Support was defined as emotional support, listening, counseling, providing appropriate praise and encouragement, working to develop a relationship with a mentee (Stewart, 2004).

Both categories have elements that are not as easily taught or coached by mentors (i.e., they are considered abstract concepts), and qualitative research in these areas might help us understand how mentees perceive these categories of support.

This study, similar to the few studies before, has shown the need for more consistency and more support for new teachers by their mentors, administrators, schools, and districts. Although more school districts are seeing a need to move away from the “sink-or-swim” view, due to budget constrictions there is a concern that that is where education may be headed again. When planning for new teachers, especially with the

multitudes of alternative licensure programs, it is important to focus on the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) report, which showed that without precise support and guidance, schools will continue to face high attrition and lower levels of teacher effectiveness. Unfortunately, that is what we are currently faced with in this country. Teachers today must make a paradigm shift to become learners first and teachers second, and education must step up to provide support for both to increase academic achievement and student success.

Despite the fact that mentoring is now mandated in schools and districts across the country, no one really knows yet what comprises quality mentoring, much less the components of an induction program. Not only is there a lack of definition as to what quality mentoring should look like, there is also a lack of empirical research that tell us what does and does not work in mentoring, mentor training, or induction programs. Schools that have implemented mentoring without clear plans for mentor training, mentor selection and most of all the mentor/new teacher relationship would do well to follow Schoenfeld's (1999) suggestion, that it is necessary to study the program after it is built (Stewart, 2004).

This research has added to the results of previous studies as well as produced a new array of questions about how to meet the needs of mentees and decrease the "flight" of good teachers from the teaching field. Further research is now called for to seek more answers as to how to support new teachers/mentees and thereby support academic excellence. There are currently many teacher licensure programs available, and these

may or may not be impacting the perceptions of support felt by today's mentees. In addition, there are also traditionally licensed teachers who perceive that they need more support in specific areas.

As in the medical field, there is a need for an internship program for teachers, to mentor them into becoming the best possible professionals. If education is to be viewed as a professional field, then every teacher deserves the same level of support that resident doctors receive in their professional development.

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