Perceptions of Beginning Teachers and Mentor Teachers: Case Study of a Campus Mentor Program

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Attrition of teachers is a concern for leaders in education; teacher turnover is higher in education compared to many other occupations and professions, especially in the first years on the job (Ingersoll 2003; Ingersoll & Perda, 2010). Nearly half a million teachers leave the education field every year (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014) while the recruitment and training of teachers is costing the United States about $2 billion each year (Rizga, 2015). The high turnover places a financial burden on districts resulting in decreased resources for books, materials, and staff development of teachers; additionally, replacing teachers can disrupt the instructional process and place restraints on the education system as a whole (Portner, 2008).

Beginning teachers who leave teaching in their early years place blame on a lack of support and no guidance, two things that are needed for the growth and development of new teachers (Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, & Burn, 2012). First-year teachers are expected to possess the skills needed to teach in any school but in reality, are only provided general training from educational programs. Teacher education programs strive to provide classroom experiences to simulate being in the classroom, however it is not the same as actually being in the classroom (Brock & Grady, 2007). Because schools vary in setting, culture, and expectations induction into education should be a deliberate process providing new teachers the opportunity to grow and learn (Brock & Grady, 2007).

The demands and expectations for student achievement contribute to the stress placed on new teachers. Expectations of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB; 2001) held teachers accountable and expected them to teach at a higher level placing pressure on school districts to hire and retain only highly qualified teachers. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) replaced NCLB and continued to focus on testing with test scores remaining a factor in performance evaluation, continuing the pressure to hire qualified teachers (Kumashiro, 2015).

Support for beginning teachers is a critical factor in retention and federal education agencies, state agencies, and school districts must provide resources to show a commitment to support them (Schwalbe, 2001). Most districts have developed an induction program to address

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this problem and provide necessary resources to new teachers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004). Goldrick (2016) found that, as of the 2015-16 school year, 20 states had implemented a formalized induction program and identified program standards; 12 states provide guidelines or toolkits to be used for informal induction programs.

An established and well-developed mentoring program is an important addition to any induction program (Pelletier, 2006). Brock and Grady (2007, p. 77) found that "a mentor program can make the difference between a beginning teacher who leaves the profession after one year and a beginning teacher whose first year, is the first stage of a satisfying career." The state of Texas established Education Code Chapter 21, Sec. 21.258 to guide school districts in the assignment of mentors to new teachers. Expectations include: assigning a mentor to a new teacher who has less than 2 years of teaching experience, choosing mentors who teach in the same school and subject or grade level, and mentors who meet qualifications prescribed by the commissioner (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2015).

Teacher mentoring programs have become an important component to the induction program over the last several years (Hellsten, Prytulla, Ebanks, & Hollis, 2009). Induction programs and mentoring in general last about 3 years and provide continuous support for teachers so they may have time to build both their confidence and teaching abilities (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Currently, 29 states require support in the form of mentoring for beginning teachers. Eleven of those states require it only during the first year in the classroom (Goldrick, 2016). Induction and mentoring programs tend to vary across states; school districts; and schools. Lack of consistency is a concern and could lead to programs that are ineffective (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Mediocre approaches to induction and mentoring can frustrate new teachers, as well as impact the individual needs of new educators (Goldrick, 2016).

The quality of the mentor is an important factor when considering pairing mentors with new teachers. Criteria should be set for the selection of mentors, and leaders need to provide both initial and continued training to mentors (Goldrick, 2016). Some teacher mentors move beyond their level of proficiency and need additional training. Mentor teachers are faced with the responsibility to train new teachers to a high level of teaching within the first few years (Auton, Berry, Mullen, & Cochran, 2002) adding pressure for mentors as they move beyond their own classroom to mentor others. Teachers who have received training to be a mentor and are adequately prepared are better able to assist new teachers with classroom management, planning lessons, and solving problems (Evertson & Smithey, 2000).

Administrators likewise play an important role in the success of new teachers. Supportive and knowledgeable leaders who promote the professional growth of beginning teachers and help improve classroom instruction contribute to the retention of teachers (Goldrick, 2016). The principal as leader, and as such is responsible for establishing the climate, culture, and vision of the school, plays an important role in helping new teachers feel a sense of belonging. Novice teachers look to leaders for guidance and affirmation (Brock & Grady, 2007). Principals who understand the issues affecting new teachers, provide support, and are committed to the teacher's professional growth make a significant difference in the retention of new teachers (Watkins, 2016). Lack of support from school administrators is reported as one reason new teachers leave the education field (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). The support by the principal is

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essential to the success of a mentor and induction program and is responsible for the planning and implementation of programs on the campus (Brock & Grady, 2007).

This study was designed to explore beginning and mentor teachers' perceptions towards a campus mentoring program as well as the match of the mentor with new teachers. The TEA (2015) stated that the "purpose of a Beginning Teacher Induction and Mentoring (BTIM) program is designed to increase the retention of beginning teachers" (p. 1). Walker (2016) reported that high stress levels are affecting the health of teachers, and causing burnout, lack of engagement, job dissatisfaction, and poor performance, as well as contributing to high turnover rates. Providing new teachers with the support from induction and mentoring programs can be an effective plan to increase the retention rate of teachers (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

Expectations in education became increasingly demanding on the school system to raise standards and improve students' academic performance around 1985. The focus shifted from school leadership to the connection of leadership to the success of the school (Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins, 1994). Dufour (2002) suggested that principals should become learning leaders with a focus on student achievement. The expectations for student learning are established by the principal, and reinforced by what they say and do. Hallinger (2003) noted a shift in leadership in education around 1990; leaders were giving more power to teachers, sharing leadership roles, and the type of learning in the organization. Bass (1999) introduced the concept of transformational leadership and described it as the sharing of power, collaboration, and teamwork. The idea of moral and ethical standards for leaders making them accountable to their followers was also introduced (Dambe & Moorad, 2008).

Transformational leaders show confidence in staff members' ability to achieve the goals of the organization and motivate others to work towards making the goals a reality (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). They generally employ staff members who are committed to a shared vision and are more satisfied in their positions (Horwath, 2016). Burns (1978) felt that "transformational leaders align follower self-interest in development with the larger interest of the group, organization, or society" (p. 4). The mentoring relationship becomes a mutual investment for both parties, who share values, knowledge, and experiences (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Transformational leaders emphasize the amount of attention given to individual followers and their needs for career development, personal growth, and recognition. Bass (1999) observed that transformational leaders enjoy positive interpersonal relationships with both supervisors and subordinates. One motivation for transformational leaders is the need to help others.

Various leadership factors are often examined to determine the role in school effectiveness (Bruggencate, Luyten, Scheerens, & Sleegers, 2012). Teacher leadership takes many forms: the potential for leadership to significantly contribute to school change and school effectiveness has long been acknowledged (Barth, 1990). Leaders in education are not limited to those in formal leadership positions. Mentors are seen as leaders of the organization and are expected to support, believe in, and help promote the vision of the school. Mentors are teacher

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leaders whose support to new teachers can affect the entire school culture (Portner, 2005). According to Lieberman, Hanson & Gless (2012),

> Although mentors may not think of themselves as leaders, they need to realize that their position requires brokering resources, advocating for social justice, supporting mentees when they are being wronged by the system or the culture, negotiating a position that helps the mentees learn despite difficult environments, and learning to balance what they can and cannot influence (p. 5).

The nature of transformational leadership supports the behaviors needed for an effective mentor (Scandura & Schreisheim, 1994). Transformational leaders have the ability to engage others and build motivation (Burns, 1978). When leaders put others first they generate trust, esteem, and confidence. Individuals who observe transformational leaders are more likely to emulate similar behaviors (Godshalk & Sosik, 2000).

Leithwood et al. (1994) connected the works of Burns (1978) and Bass (1999), and brought that combination into educational leadership. Seven dimensions were applied to transformational leadership:
1. develop a school vision and establish goals
2. provide learning opportunities
3. offer support
4. model best practices and values of the organization
5. demonstrate expectations for high performance
6. create a thriving school culture, and
7. develop a school framework that includes participation in school decisions (Leithwood et al., 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000)

Summary

The number of teachers that leave teaching within their first 5 years is an established and continued concern. It causes a financial burden on states and school districts (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007). The growing concern coupled with the demand for highly qualified teachers has prompted many states and school districts to create an induction program that includes the provision of a mentor for novice teachers. The NCLB Act increased the pressure for quality performance by new teachers, and in response many schools linked new-teacher assessment to their induction programs (Brock & Grady, 2007). The pressure for quality performance continued with ESSA; which still focused on the testing of students (Kumashiro, 2015). Hessinger (1998) suggested that structured induction and mentoring programs increase the retention of beginning teachers. Support programs improve attitudes, feelings of efficacy, and instructional skills.

The mentor is the most critical element of an effective mentoring program. The mentor-mentee relationship could impact the new teacher's perception of the education field. Mentors must play many roles while acting as an advocate for themselves as well as the new teacher they are mentoring (Gibb & Welch, 1998). Mentors provide the structure and support new teachers

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need to make the transition into the classroom and school environment. They are knowledgeable about the expectations of the school and its policies and procedures (Gibb & Welch, 1998).

Mentors have been described as instructional leaders and change agents (Gless, 2006; Hanson, 2010; Lieberman et al., 2012). They are seen as teacher leaders, and as such are expected to support, believe in, and help promote the vision of the school (Portner, 2005). Identifying and selecting quality mentors to work with new teachers should be a priority of any induction program. Another priority is to train mentors so they can be efficient and effective (Moir, Barlin, Gless, & Miles, 2009).

Mentors need opportunities to learn and develop ways of working with adults, as well as how to provide support to new teachers (Moir & Gless, 2001; Wood & Stanulis, 2009). The new teacher is not the only person who benefits from the mentor-mentee relationship: Mentoring programs provide ongoing learning and leadership opportunities for veteran teachers as well (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

The theoretical framework for this study was transformational leadership. Transformational leaders enjoy positive relationships with supervisors and subordinates. One motivation for transformational leaders is the need to help others (Bass, 1999). Mentor teachers are expected to build a relationship with the new teacher and except guidance from the principal. Mentors are seen as leaders of the organization and are expected to support, believe and help promote the vision of the school. Mentors are teacher leaders whose support to new teachers can affect the entire school culture (Portner, 2005).

Research Questions

The researcher was guided by the following research questions in this study:

1. What elements make an effective campus mentor program from the perception of a mentor teacher and a beginning teacher?
2. What are the roles and responsibilities of a mentor teacher from the perception of a mentor teacher and a beginning teacher?
3. What are the factors to consider when matching a mentor to a beginning teacher from the perception of a mentor teacher and a beginning teacher?

Method

Design and Procedures

A qualitative approach was used to explore the beginning teachers' and mentor teachers' perceptions of the campus mentor program and the match between them. A single-case study design was used to explore the perceptions of beginning and mentor teachers assigned to 7 intermediate schools within one school district located in Southeast Texas. The focus of the researcher was to gather insight from beginning and mentor teachers to improve the practice of an intermediate campus mentoring program.

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Semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions were used to probe the perceptions of beginning and mentor teachers on an intermediate campus located in a school district in Southeast Texas. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with participants using an audiotape device to record the information. Interviews lasted from 45-60 minutes and were conducted in a setting that was agreeable with each participant.

Two sets of interview questions were developed by the researcher to support the research questions and garner responses from participants that provided their perspective on a mentor program and their mentor match. One version was developed for beginning teachers and one for mentor teachers. The same questions were used in each version with slightly different words based on the participant's role.

Prior to the interviews, two mock interviews were conducted by the researcher to help ensure the questions were valid, reliable, and addressed the research questions (Creswell, 2014). The participants for the mock interviews consisted of one individual who had served as a campus mentor to a beginning teacher, but was not a participant for this study, and one teacher who was in their fourth year of teaching and not a participant of this study. Information from the mock interviews was not included in the study.

Participants

The researcher selected one public school district in Southeast Texas for this case study. As of 2017, the school district housed over 50 campuses: 29 elementary schools, 3 k-6 schools, 9 intermediate schools, 7 junior high schools, 6 high schools, and 3 alternative education placement centers. The intermediate school had 1317 students, consisting of 661 fifth graders and 656 sixth graders. The demographics of the students on this campus consisted of 18.2% socially economically disadvantaged, 54.5% White, 25.5% Hispanic 10.7%, African American, 4.9% Asian, .2% American Indian, .2% Pacific Islander, and 3.9% multiple races. The school had a staff of 105 faculty members: 77 teachers, 28 support staff, 2 school counselors, 3 assistant principals, and a principal. The community surrounding the intermediate school showed growth over the previous 10 years, gaining an average of 60-80 students per year.

The researcher used purposeful sampling to select participants, which "involves selecting a sample based on the researcher's experience or knowledge of the group to be sampled" (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 175). It also included selecting participants who had experiences that were applicable when answering the questions (Creswell, 2009).

Beginning teachers and mentor teachers who were licensed teachers in the state of Texas, employed by the same school district, and were teachers in one of the 7 intermediate schools within the school district were invited to participate in the study. The six teachers invited to participate included: three mentor teachers and three beginning teachers. Of the six participants, five were female and one was male; five participants were Caucasian, and one was Hispanic; participant's ages ranged from 24 to 57 years old; and five of the participants were married and one was single. All participants held teaching certifications in the state of Texas.

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Table 1
Participant Demographics

Participant	Gender	Ethnicity	Years of Experience	Teacher Status
Alpha	Female	Caucasian	23	Mentor
Bravo	Female	Caucasian	20	Mentor
Charlie	Female	Hispanic	30	Mentor
Delta	Female	Caucasian	2	Beginning
Echo	Female	Caucasian	1	Beginning
Foxtrot	Male	Caucasian	1	Beginning

The school district selected for this study had an established induction program that included the assigning of a mentor; however, it was left up to each campus principal to establish a mentoring program that was a fit for the school. This included the selection and matching of and training for mentors. The match between the mentor and new teacher, as well as the consideration of personalities is important for a good working relationship (Brock & Grady, 2007). Without training and support for mentors, an induction program may seem like a random effort at pairing a new teacher with a veteran teacher with the blind hope it is a good match (Black, 2001). Many times, mentors are selected based on years of service. New teachers suggest administrators look at many factors when selecting mentors. Teachers involved in their first year of a mentoring program have reported mismatches between the mentor and the mentee (Brock & Grady, 2007).

Data Gathering

The focus of data analysis was to identify themes that emerged relating to the effectiveness of a campus mentor program and the process of matching a mentor to a beginning teacher.

Semi-structured, open-ended questions were used to gain insight into the experiences of the beginning and mentor teachers. Two separate questionnaires were used to gather data from participants. One questionnaire was used with participants who were mentors, and the other was used with participants who were beginning teachers.

Mentor Interview Questionnaire
1. How many years have you served as a teacher?
2. Have you served as a mentor before? If so explain the relationship.
3. How were you selected to be a mentor for a beginning teacher on the campus?
    a. What do you feel is the best process for selecting mentors for beginning teachers?
4. Tell me about your campus' mentor program?
5. From your perspective, what should be considered when developing a mentoring program?
6. What characteristics are important for an effective mentor and why?

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7. From your perspective, what are the factors that need to be considered when matching a mentor to a beginning teacher?
8. What do you perceive to be your role and responsibilities of a teacher mentor?
   a. Do you think the beginning teacher would share the same perception?
9. As the mentor, what are your expectations of a beginning year teacher in their first year of teacher?
   a. What about the second year?
10. What have been the most difficult aspects of being a mentor teacher?
11. In what ways, do you feel that being a mentor teacher has affected your growth as a teacher?
12. Is there anything else you would like to tell me in regards to the campus mentor program, your role as a mentor or your mentee?

Follow up Questions:
1. What do you mean by…?
2. Can you tell me more…?

Probing Questions:
1. Can you give me an example?

Beginning Teacher Interview Questionnaire
1. How many years have you served as a teacher?
2. How were you assigned a mentor?
   a. What do you feel is the best process for selecting mentors for beginning teachers?
3. Tell me what you know about the campus' mentor program?
4. From your perspective, what should be considered when developing a mentoring program?
5. What characteristics are important for an effective mentor and why?
6. From your perspective, what are the factors that need to be considered when matching a mentor to a beginning teacher?
7. What do you perceive to be the role and responsibilities of a teacher mentor?
   a. Do you think the mentor should share the same perception?
8. What are your expectations of a mentor?
9. What have been the most difficult aspects of being a new teacher?
10. In what ways, do you feel that having a mentor has affected your growth as a teacher?
11. Is there anything else you would like to add in regards to the campus mentor program or your mentor?

Follow up Questions:
1. What do you mean by…?
2. Can you tell me more…?

Probing Questions:
2. Can you give me an example?

Data from transcripts were hand coded by the researcher and analyzed line by line to identify themes and patterns of beginning and mentor teacher's perceptions of the campus mentor

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program and the match of new teachers to mentors. The in vivo codes were organized by the researcher into coding categories as patterns and themes emerged from words and phrases from participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The categories were then grouped into 9 themes supporting the research questions: (a) relationships, (b) meeting /planning time, (c) similar personality styles, (d) teaching practices, (e) program structure, (f) support system, (g) roles and responsibilities, (h) types of support, (i) learning opportunities. Three main themes were identified that addressed the research questions: (a) elements that make an effective mentor program, (b) roles and responsibilities, (c) matching of mentor to beginning teacher.

Findings

Participating beginning teachers and mentor teachers shared their perceptions of a campus mentor program and the match between the mentor and a new teacher, in a school district located in Southeast Texas. Participants reported their understanding of the campus mentor program and discussed their individual experiences and relationship with their mentor or mentee depending on their role. Three research questions guided this study, and nine major themes emerged from the data analysis.

Research Question 1

"What elements make an effective campus mentor program from the perception of a mentor teacher and a beginning teacher?" The TEA (2015) established guidelines for the selection of mentors as part of the induction program. Mentors should teach in the same school as the new teacher and meet the qualifications of the state. They must have completed three full years of teaching and teach the same subject or grade level as the new teacher. A history of student improvement is considered, and mentors must complete a training program provided by the school district. Although guidelines have been developed for school districts to follow, it does not necessarily mean they are adhered to or effective. Themes that emerged from this research question included selection process of mentor, structure of a campus mentor program, and the role of a principal.

Selection process of mentor

All six participants in this study cited that mentors should be selected from a pool of individuals who volunteered as opposed to being simply assigned to a mentor by the campus principal. New teachers were unsure of how the mentor was selected but agreed volunteering was probably better than being told to do be a mentor. One new teacher said, "I think the mentor should definitely have their heart in it".

The mentor teachers used phrases like "asked if I would be willing to do it", "willing to", or "would you mind mentoring" to describe how they were asked to be a mentor. All three mentors shared they felt mentors should volunteer. One mentor suggested, "If it's not going to be a paid position and you're not willing to put in the time then the person that has you for the mentor is going to suffer."

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Role of the principal

Principals play an important role by setting expectations for the success of the beginning teacher and mentor relationship (Scherer, 1999). New teachers cited support of the principal as an important component to the mentor program. Principals should provide support by assigning a mentor as soon as possible and allowing time for them to meet the new teacher they will be mentoring. One new teacher appreciated the mentor being located "right down the hall" so they were available at any time.

Mentors also mentioned time to meet as a factor and included clear guidelines and goals for mentors. Words were used such as, "specified meeting times", "set day to meet", and "guidance, structure and time is very important". Two of the mentor teachers mentioned the principal possibly offering a stipend to mentors to compensate them for their time.

Research Question 2

"What are the roles and responsibilities of a mentor teacher from the perception of a mentor teacher and a beginning teacher?" The mentor role goes beyond the support for new teachers. Mentors use their expertise to help support beginning teachers (Portner, 2005).

Relationship between mentor and beginning teacher

Interview responses to this question brought out several important themes related to the relationship between the mentor and the mentee. All participants cited the importance of having a mentor and building a positive relationship. Being an effective mentor requires interaction. The mentee-mentor relationship must be built on trust, honesty, respect for one another and a willingness to work together (Portner, 2008).

It was suggested by all participants that the mentor make the initial contact with the new teacher during the summer prior to the start of school. Two of the new teachers met one-on-one with their mentor during the summer. The other new teacher met with her mentor at a luncheon scheduled by the principal prior to the start of school. The luncheon was to give all new teachers the opportunity to meet their mentor and review school procedures. The participants who were mentors for this study initiated the contact with their mentee. They described the first meeting in terms like "get to know you", "show you around", "and help her feel at ease".

Expectations of mentor and beginning teacher

Beginning teachers for this study admitted it was difficult adjusting in their first year of teaching. Two of the beginning teachers stated they were under the impression they would be assigned a mentor for only the first year of teaching. The other beginning teacher had the impression she would have a mentor for the first two years. All three admitted it would benefit new teachers to have the support of a mentor for at least the first two years. All three perceived the first year was spent learning policies and procedures and developing their classroom management skills. Delta had completed two years of teaching and focused more on curriculum her second year. Echo, who had completed her first year of teaching plans to focus more on

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strategy and perfecting curriculum. Foxtrot saw himself concentrating on developing knowledge of content the second year.

All three mentor teachers were told, by the principal, they would serve as a mentor for only one year. However, all three agreed that it could benefit a new teacher to continue for at least a second year. Alpha used the term "they're treading water" to describe the new teachers first year of teaching. Charlie used the term, "extended program" to describe support beyond the first year. She described the first year for the new teacher as "learning the logistics" and the second year they could concentrate on content.

The mentor teachers also expressed their ideas of expectations for beginning teachers. Alpha used words like, "positive attitude" and "willing to work" to describe expectations. Delta described a situation where the new teacher struggled because she thought teaching was like what she learned in college, and reality can be different. Therefore, a willingness to learn was important.

Research Question 3

"What are the factors to consider when matching a mentor to a beginning teacher from the perception of a mentor and a beginning teacher." This question focused on the matching of the mentor to a new teacher. Being an effective mentor requires interaction. The mentee-mentor relationship must be built on trust, honesty, respect for one another and a willingness to work together (Portner, 2008). Teaching the same content area was seen as the most important factor to a match between the mentor and new teacher and was brought up by five out of six participants. Delta, one of the beginning teachers, did not feel it was necessary to have a mentor who taught the same subject or grade, but someone who knew her weaknesses and could provide the support. Other characteristics identified by the new teachers were trust, patience, "loves the profession", "calming voice", and "positive attitude". Mentor teachers used words like "approachable", "not judgmental", and "understanding".

Conflicts in mentoring

When mentors met the new teacher, they discovered the difference between building relationships with students and establishing working relationships with an adult (Portner, 2005). Conflicts can occur between the mentor and beginning teacher that could interfere with the relationship. All three beginning teachers experienced little to no conflicts with their mentor. One new teacher mentioned miscommunication as a conflict but resolved the issue quickly. The mentor teachers had a positive experience overall in their role as a mentor. Alpha used the phrase "not willing to take your advice" as an example of conflict, and Bravo had a similar experience and used the phrase, "she felt she knew more than others". Charlie mentioned finding time to meet with the new teacher was the only conflict that effected the relationship.

Benefits of mentoring

All three mentor teachers attributed learning of new technology and classroom instruction and management as benefits to mentoring. The mentor teachers for this study had been teaching over 15 years, and mentoring new teachers helped in their own growth as a teacher. All

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beginning teachers agreed they would have struggled without a mentor and benefited from having someone who was an experienced teacher.

Conclusion

The purpose of the researcher was to examine beginning and mentor teachers' perceptions of a campus mentor program and the match of the mentor teacher to a beginning teacher. The focus was to identify specific factors that would contribute to supporting a campus mentor program. The personal experiences and responses shared by mentors and new teachers, led to specific conclusions. The need to develop effective and well thought out mentoring programs is essential to the school campus and the school district.

The data collected and analyzed in this study support the following conclusions:

1. Mentoring is a contributing factor to the success of a first-year teacher and helps a new teacher transition into their role as a teacher.
2. A mentor should be assigned to the new teacher for at least two years.
3. Individuals should volunteer to be a mentor. It should not be mandatory or a 'hey you' by the principal.
4. Considerations for matching of mentor to beginning teachers should include: teach same content and grade, needs of the beginning teacher, personality traits of mentor and beginning teacher.
5. A campus mentoring program should include established guidelines and expectations for the mentor, a checklist for the mentor to follow, and built in times for the mentor and beginning teacher to meet prior to the start of school and throughout the school year.
6. Support from the principal for both the mentor and new teacher should include holding separate meetings with the mentor and beginning teacher periodically to discuss progress, concerns, or answer questions, and provides resources and training.

Implications and Recommendations

The results of this study help to provide insight into beginning and mentor teachers perceptions of a campus mentoring program and the match between the mentor and new teacher. An established well-developed mentoring program is an important addition to any induction program (Pelletier, 2006). An effective mentor program can make the difference for a beginning teacher and the choice to leave teaching after their first year or continue and have a successful career (Brock & Grady, 2007). Participating beginning teachers shared this belief, as all three felt their first year would not have been as successful without a mentor. Beginning teachers and mentor teachers shared their experiences with and attitudes surrounding the current mentor program on their campuses and provided ideas of how to make the practice more effective.

The findings of this study indicate that it is imperative that beginning teachers be assigned a mentor in their first year of teaching and receive support from the mentor for at least the first two years. According to the TEA (2015), mentors should teach in the same school, have

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completed 3 full years of teaching, and teach the same subject or grade level as the new teacher. A history of student improvement needs to also be considered, and training should be provided by the school district. Beginning teachers and mentors were unclear how mentors were selected, and the criteria for selection.

The six participants for this study represented four different campuses within the same school district. The information obtained from interviews indicated an inconsistency among the campuses in regard to the selections and matching of mentors, length of mentoring, and elements of a campus mentor program. Induction and mentoring programs tend to vary across states, school districts, and schools. Lack of consistency is a concern and could lead to programs that are ineffective (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). A hit or miss approach to an induction and mentoring can be a disservice to new teachers and impact the individual needs of new educators (Goldrick, 2016). It is important for school district personnel provide standards and guidelines for campus principals on how to establish a campus mentor program that supports the beginning teacher and ensures success.

New teachers perceive the involvement of the principal to be an important factor to their success. Principals are responsible for evaluating new teachers and providing resources that support their development (Brock & Grady, 2007). It is important that the principal support the beginning teacher by assigning a mentor as early as possible, preferably before the beginning of school. Content emerged as the major consideration when matching a mentor to a new teacher. Administrators should pay attention to the teaching assignment of the new teacher and take into consideration content and grade level when assigning a mentor as well as personality and teaching styles. Clear guidelines and expectations of mentors need to be established. Developing a checklist for mentors to use as a guide would be helpful and would provide talking points and what to check for when meeting with new teachers. Another central theme that emerged from this study was the importance of time for the mentor and beginning teacher to meet. Access to the mentor was also important.

New teachers benefit from a school culture that allows teachers time to collaborate and encourages teamwork. In this type of school culture, teachers are usually more satisfied with their job, involved in the school, and support school goals (Killion, 2002). Beginning teachers can contribute to their success by working with their mentor on their own learning. Once a new teacher is assigned to a new school, they have to learn about the school, the population, and expectations. They need to understand the importance of the relationship with the mentor and the connection to the school. The new teacher can benefit by being an active learner. Areas of weakness can be improved through staff development, observing other teachers, and working with the mentor.

Recommendations for mentor teachers include understanding the importance of building a relationship with the new teacher and growing the expertise of the new teacher. Being an effective mentor requires interaction. The mentee-mentor relationship must be built on trust, honesty, respect for one another and a willingness to work together (Portner, 2008). The mentor should contact and meet with the new teacher before the start of the school year. Data from the study revealed new teachers used words like approachable, trusting, and open when speaking

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about mentors. They reported the importance of open and honest communication, frequent meetings to discuss areas of concern, and the ability to recognize the talents of new teachers.

Mentors shared how they benefited from the beginning teachers' knowledge of technology. They recommended mentors take advantage of skills of new teachers to build their own capacity and use the new teacher's skills to help them feel a valuable part of the team. They also indicated that school districts could support beginning teachers, mentor teachers, and campus principals by committing to a program. The provision of appropriate support and training for mentors and new teachers was also reported as important. School districts should also consider paying a stipend to mentors and evaluating district and campus mentoring programs to make improvements as needed.

The results of this study provided insight into beginning and mentor teachers' perception of a campus mentor program; however, limitations to this study existed. The findings were the result of data collected from three beginning teachers who represented three different campuses, this gave a good indication of the inconsistency among schools within the district. However, the three mentor teachers who were participants for this study represented only one campus within the same school district. The researcher recommends expanding the study to include additional mentors from other campuses within the school district to identify inconsistencies. The researcher also suggests collecting data from interviews of campus principals to gain their perspective on a campus mentoring program and the principal's role and responsibilities.

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