MENTOR-MENTEE TRANSACTIONS: INSIGHTS INTO THE MENTORING OF TWO BEGINNING ENGLISH TEACHERS

by

Sharon E. Rigler

Under the direction of Dr. Margaret A. Graham

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe and analyze the mentoring needs of two beginning English teachers during their induction years as manifested in mentor-mentee transactions and to explore the complex sets of experiences, assumptions, and local school contexts that shaped these beginning teachers' and mentors' conceptualizations of induction support.

The study took place in two Southeastern high schools and included two beginning teachers (one first-year and one second-year) and their designated mentors. Data collected over a five month period included: in-depth interviews with the beginning teachers and mentors (separately), emails, observations of mentor-mentee conferences, classroom observations, and documents related to the local schools and their mentoring programs.

Data were analyzed using the phenomenological method and are represented as two cases in a collective case study (Creswell, 1998). This study was conducted using a phenomenological approach in order to investigate the meaning that participants attached to particular experiences (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). Combining the case study design with the phenomenological approach allowed me to describe the two cases and discuss emerging themes.

Findings indicate that these beginning English teachers' perceived mentoring needs were shaped by their teacher preparation programs, the numerous and varied responsibilities of teaching English, their assumptions regarding the mentoring role, and the local school contexts in which they began their careers. Their mentor-mentee transactions were shaped by their schools' mentoring programs, their expectations regarding the mentor role, and the context of their schools and English departments. Findings also suggest that these two beginning English teachers benefited from being placed in an environment that offered multiple sources of support including a designated mentor who was a fellow English teacher in an overall supportive department.

Suggestions for future practice include 1) extending induction programs to include the second year, 2) investigating the particular needs of English teachers, 3) implementing more extensive and focused mentor training programs that provide support for mentor teachers as well as beginning teachers, and 4) establishing ongoing collaborations between public schools and universities.

Future research is needed in the areas of teacher education, the mentoring process, induction support within specific disciplines, and teacher retention.

INDEX WORDS: Mentoring, Beginning teachers, Induction support, Teacher Education, Language Arts

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Background of the Problem

Beginning teachers are faced with new challenges during their first two years of in-service teaching regardless of the quality of their teacher preparation programs (Moir & Gless, 2001). The new difficulties and "realities" that beginning teachers encounter have been well documented (e.g., Lortie, 1975; Veenman, 1984; Gilles & Cramer, 2001). Some of the frequently cited problems and concerns are survival, discipline, isolation, time management, awareness of student needs, motivating students, evaluation of student work, use of appropriate materials, and personal life adjustments. In addition to these difficulties, too often beginning teachers are placed in the worst teaching assignments--the classes that those with seniority don't want to teach--yet are expected to perform as effectively as experienced professionals (Johnson, 2001; Moir & Gless, 2001).

Beginning teachers have also expressed that developing and maintaining relationships with co-workers often present an unexpected stumbling block. According to Zepeda and Ponticell (1997), beginning teachers have difficulties understanding the complexities of working with a variety of people--fellow teachers, staff, administrators, department chairs, parents, students, and central office personnel (p. 15). Beginning teachers who participated in their study

reported having difficulties developing and maintaining meaningful relationships with co-workers because of conflicts within their departments. They also reported having difficulty decoding "mixed" messages they received from colleagues, administrators, and support staff (p. 13).

The difficulties novices face during their first years often drive them out of the profession. According to Weiss (1999), new teachers in the United States leave the profession at high rates with some districts reporting up to 40% of new teachers resigning during their first two years (p. 861). Novices encountering the difficulties of beginning teaching need guidance, feedback, and support from mentors. Mentoring currently plays an important role in the induction of newly qualified teachers (Abell, Dillon, Hopkins, McInerney, & O'Brien, 1995). This induction support is incredibly important in light of research indicating that many "traditional programs of teacher education have little effect upon the firmly held beliefs of the beginning teachers" (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998, p. 130). However, research indicates that effective mentoring programs during induction can affect beginning teachers' attitudes toward teaching (Varah, Theune, & Parker, 1986; Hegler & Dudley, 1987; Johnson, 2001). Beginning teachers must be encouraged and nurtured during their induction period (when they are the most vulnerable) so that they do not revert to or adopt ineffective instructional methods or unsuccessful classroom management techniques (Evertson & Smithey, 2000) and so that they do not become so discouraged and frustrated that they choose to leave the profession (Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Weiss, 1999; Moir & Gless, 2001).

Mentoring sometimes, but not always, occurs within the larger framework of induction programs. According to Hegler and Dudley (1987), induction programs in education are designed to ease the transition from the college classroom to the public school classroom. They contend that two of the primary purposes common to most induction programs are to improve teacher performance and to increase the retention of promising beginning teachers. In addition, induction programs can serve to promote the personal and professional well-being of beginning teachers, satisfy mandated requirements related to induction and certification, and provide strategies for the beginning teacher to acquire additional knowledge and skills. Furthermore, a comprehensive induction program can assist beginning teachers with developing attitudes that foster effective teaching performance, recognizing the effects of isolation, and becoming familiar with a school district's materials and resources along with community integration (p. 53).

DeBolt (1991) also conceptualizes induction as part of the process of making the transition from being a student of teaching to being a teacher of students (p. 2). He notes that historically new teachers have faced this transition alone and that many beginning teachers fail to request help for fear of appearing incompetent. DeBolt also notes that the first year of teaching is critical to the probability of a successful career as a teacher and contends that the experiences of new teachers can be enhanced by thoughtful, effective induction programs. Induction support during the first few years of teaching can serve as an extension to teacher preparation and certification programs, thus helping beginning

teachers make the transition from preparing to teach to becoming a practicing teacher.

Research indicates that effective induction programs include university-local school collaborations designed to support beginning teachers and their mentors (Varah, Theune, & Parker, 1986; Hegler & Dudley, 1987; DeBolt, 1991; Resta, Huling, White, & Matschek, 1997; Perez, Swain, & Hartsough,1997; Brennan, Thames, & Roberts, 1999; Yopp & Young, 1999; Chartrand, Moore, & Lourie-Markowitz, 2000). Although the role of university faculty varies from program to program, universities tend to fulfill a dual role in induction: 1) A university professor usually becomes one member in a support team for beginning teachers, and 2) University faculty design and implement ongoing mentor training workshops and seminars, sometimes in the form of graduate courses. Support teams often consist of an assistant principal, a mentor teacher, a university faculty member, and sometimes the principal. The university faculty member's contribution to the induction support team may include providing professional expertise in the teaching methodology and learning theories for the inductee, providing assistance to the mentor and inductee through frequent on-site observations and conferences, and providing support for the inductee in self-evaluation and personal planning. The mentor teacher, however, spends the most time with the beginning teacher. To assist the mentor teacher in assuming his or her responsibilities, university faculty sometimes teach graduate courses (provided by the University, sometimes tuition-free) exploring the role of the mentor teacher. Some of the purposes of these courses are to identify the

characteristics of an effective teacher, to develop conference techniques with the inductee in self-evaluation procedures, and to study in-depth effective supervision (Olebe, Jackson, & Danielson, 1999).

Once mentors have prepared for their role and begun to take on the challenge of inducting a novice into the profession, they sometimes look to universities for support. Research investigating the role of university support in induction indicates that in order to best support novices and mentors, universities must commit to induction programs, and they must demonstrate that commitment in several ways (DeBolt, 1991; Reiman, Head, and Thies-Sprinthall, 1992; Resta, et al, 1997; Brennan, et al, 1999; Yopp & Young, 1999; Chartrand, et al, 2000). First, universities must establish and maintain ongoing collaborations with school districts. Second, universities must designate faculty positions specifically for induction. These positions are necessary so that university faculty can effectively design and implement appropriate, comprehensive mentor training and support programs in addition to fulfilling their role as a member of induction support teams. Last, universities must support research in the area of induction.

Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study

In light of the research on induction support as a key element in the success of a beginning teacher and in light of the new perception of induction as a collaborative effort often involving universities, many government agencies are providing funding (sometimes large sums of money) to universities in order to assist them in designing and implementing induction programs. For example, the University of Georgia's College of Education was recently awarded a 6.3 million

dollar grant for the purposes of designing an induction program that will involve providing support for its graduates during their first two years of teaching. Induction has become the new buzzword in education, and the process of inducting a novice teacher into the profession is often oversimplified and viewed as a panacea for addressing beginning teaching difficulties.

Historically, induction programs have relied heavily on practicing teachers in the local schools to serve as mentors to beginning teachers. The problem is that although using experienced teachers as mentors to support beginning teachers in induction programs is widely accepted as a successful practice, what mentoring really looks like in the local school setting is seldom explored. Furthermore, those who benefit from induction programs, the beginning teachers, and those who directly implement induction support in the schools, the mentors themselves, are seldom given the opportunity to voice their thoughts and opinions on the topic or discuss their personal experiences with mentoring relationships.

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze the mentoring needs of beginning English teachers during induction years and to investigate how beginning teachers and mentors transact as they go about addressing those needs. In addition, this study explores participants' experiences and beliefs that shape their perspectives about mentoring and induction support and affect their actions as either beginning teachers or mentors.

Research Questions

Main question

What are the mentoring needs of two beginning high school English teachers, and how are those needs manifested in beginning teacher-mentor transactions in a mentoring relationship?

Related question

What do we come to understand about induction support and the complex sets of experiences, assumptions, and local school contexts that shape these two beginning teachers' and their mentors' conceptualization of it?

Definition of Terms

In order to provide a clear framework for this dissertation, the following terms will be defined: Preservice Teaching, Inservice Teaching, Induction, Induction Years, Beginning Teacher, Mentee, Mentor, UGA-NETS, Mentor Teacher (MT), Teacher Candidate.

Preservice Teaching –

Teaching, such as student teaching, that takes place as part of a teacher preparation and certification program.

Inservice Teaching –

Teaching that takes place once an individual has been hired by a school system and has officially entered the teaching profession.

Induction –

Induction refers to the process of socializing a novice teacher into the teaching profession and generally assisting him or her with the transition from preservice teaching to inservice teaching.

Induction Years –

Induction years are a beginning teacher's first two years of inservice teaching. It should be noted, however, that in general induction programs vary in their conceptualizations of the induction process; many programs serve beginning teachers only during their first year while others envision the process as including years one through three.

Beginning Teacher –

A beginning teacher is a practicing teacher who is in his or her first or second year of inservice teaching. A beginning teacher is sometimes referred to as a **novice**, a new teacher, an inductee, or an intern.

Mentee –

A mentee is a beginning teacher who has been assigned to a particular mentor. Many mentors refer to the beginning teacher they are working with as their mentee. The term mentee is often interchangeable with the term **protégé**.

Mentor –

A mentor is a practicing teacher in a public school (or in some cases a public teacher who has been temporarily released from teaching assignments in order to mentor full time) who is assigned to one or more beginning teachers in order to offer support to him or her during all or part of his or her induction years.

UGA-NETS (University of Georgia Network of English Teachers and Students) –

UGA-NETS is a teacher education program in secondary English that spans the entire school year. This program is co-designed by a collaboration of high school and middle school English teachers and teacher education faculty. The UGA-NETS collaboration involves teachers from eight counties, twelve high schools, and one middle school in the Northeast Georgia region. Students in UGA-NETS are either seniors in the final year of their Secondary English Education program or are enrolled in a Modified Masters program that includes a year of teacher candidacy and certification (Graham, Hudson-Ross, Adkins, McWhorter, & Stewart, 1999; Hudson-Ross & Graham, 2000).

Mentor Teacher (MT) –

The term mentor teacher or MT is used in the UGA-NETS teacher preparation and certification program to refer to a practicing teacher in a local school who is assigned a preservice teacher candidate. A mentor teacher works with the teacher candidate for a full year, including preplanning in the fall and nine to ten weeks of full-time student teaching in the spring. In other institutions, the role of mentor teacher is often referred to as the cooperating teacher or supervising teacher.

Teacher Candidate –

In the UGA-NETS program, student teachers are called teacher candidates since their preparation is a year-long process and involves much more than just the nine or ten weeks of full-time student teaching.

Significance of the Study

A recent article in *The Council Chronicle* distributed by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) reported on some of the findings noted in *Quality Counts 2000*, the annual report by *Education Week*. The report reiterates, "Once new teachers are hired, there often isn't enough support to keep them in the field." (May 2000). "The result," the report states, "is a teacher pipeline that more closely resembles a leaky faucet" (p. 8). In order to address this issue of teacher retention, there is a strong call for reform in teacher education and for the implementation of effective induction programs. Although the induction process has been described as a transition from student to teacher (DeBolt 1991; Hegler and Dudley, 1987), what that transition involves is not as clearly defined and seldom resembles what McKenna (1998) refers to as "…a seamless continuum of professional growth" (p. 48). In addition, too often those who design and implement induction programs define and assume support roles without the input from those who benefit from the programs--the beginning teachers and practicing teachers who mentor them. As a result, whatever is offered in the way of support may not necessarily coincide with what the beginning teachers and mentors feel is most useful.

In this study I investigate whether or not beginning English teachers and their mentors perceive a need for support during induction, and, if so, what that support should entail and why. I explore the topic of induction from the perspectives of two beginning secondary English teachers and their mentors in hopes of determining if they envision induction support differently from teacher

educators and other university faculty as expressed in the research on induction. The perspectives of beginning teachers and their mentors may lend insight into what the mutual interests of teacher education programs and local school districts are and how induction programs can best serve those mutual interests.

To situate the study within a content specific mentoring context, I have limited participants to two beginning high school English teachers (one first-year and one second-year) and their mentors. By limiting the participants to high school English teachers (all of the beginning teachers' mentors are English teachers as well), I hope to explore mentoring needs within the particular discipline of secondary language arts. I am interested in determining if beginning English teachers have specific needs as English teachers. Do they face particular challenges? Since mentoring presently plays such an integral role in induction, I will also investigate participants' perspectives about mentoring in order to better understand and contextualize their views on support during induction.

By exploring the transactions between beginning teachers and their mentors in this study, we gain a deeper understanding of beginning English teachers' mentoring needs and the experiences that shape their perceptions of induction support. In addition, this study will address what English (1999) refers to as a "little-explored dimension of mentorship," and that is "its considerable potential for improving the overall learning climate by fostering the development of a caring, supportive environment for educators and learners" (p. 40). English adds that "a mentorship program is a way of infusing a spirit of life-long learning

in an educational staff" (p. 42). Moir and Gless (2001) contend that induction program leaders should aspire to even more than teacher retention but must build a comprehensive model of teacher development that begins in preservice and continues throughout a teacher's entire career. This study has the potential to define more clearly ways in which induction programs can be conceptualized as an extension to teacher preparation and certification and as a long-term commitment to nurturing teachers as life-long learners.

Overview of the Dissertation

The chapters of the dissertation which follow are arranged in the following fashion: Chapter Two presents a review of the literature relevant to this study; Chapter Three presents the design and methodology of the study, including a description of the design, the context of the study, participants in the study, procedures used to collect data, and the methods of data analysis; Chapters Four and Five each present one case study of a beginning English teacher-mentor teacher relationship; and Chapter Six presents implications this study may have for future research and practice regarding mentoring programs.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of the literature relevant to problems and issues introduced within the first chapter. I have organized the review of literature around the aims of this research, which include situating this research study within the existing literature on mentoring and the induction process. The literature review is divided into three sections. The first section describes the theoretical framework, including literature on social constructivism and the mentoring process. Second, literature about induction programs is presented. Third, a review of the literature on mentoring in education is provided.

Theoretical Framework

The teacher preparation program I have had the privilege of working in for the past four years approaches teaching and learning from a constructivist orientation as do many teacher preparation programs today (Hudson-Ross & Graham, 2000). However, despite university preparation which is grounded in the theoretical framework of social constructivism, beginning teachers are not typically supported by university professors after graduation. They are typically assigned practicing teachers (mentors) who often have limited exposure to the social constructivist view of teaching and learning. In this section, I will first discuss the constructivist perspective and then explore ways in which this

theoretical framework might be applied to the mentor-beginning teacher relationship.

Social constructivists posit that people understand and act upon the world through transactions with the environment and with others. Dewey (1934) insists, "…life goes on in an environment; not merely *in* it but because of it, through interaction with it." (p. 13, emphasis in original). He defines experience as the reward of the transaction between a person and his or her environment which, when it is carried out in full, becomes participation and communication (p. 22). Rosenblatt (1978) defines transaction as "an ongoing process in which the elements or factors are...each conditioned by and conditioning the other" (p. 17). Although Rosenblatt, as a theorist, primarily applies this definition of transaction to the reciprocal relationship between a reader and a written text, she would agree with Wilhelm (1997) and Scholes (1989) that learners "read" more than books and print. Rosenblatt writes: "the text becomes the element of the environment to which the individual responds...each forms an environment for the other during the reading event" (p. 18).

Dewey and Rosenblatt place respect for individuals and their experiences at the center of their learning theories. Making meaning involves responding to already acquired habits, assumptions and expectations. It is not a linear processing of information; rather it is a reciprocal or recursive process to which "both perceiver and the environment contribute" (p. 18). As the word suggests, constructivism refers to the idea that knowledge is *actively* constructed rather than passively received. Learners draw on a number of sources for the

knowledge they construct including the personal experiences the learner brings to the situation, the influences of the environment that suggest appropriate ways to respond, and the cultural history that provides the values for both the immediate environment and the individual's experiences. Knowledge construction, therefore, becomes part of a transaction among a variety of factors.

Vygotsky's social construction theory (1978) suggests that attaching meaning to experience involves encountering the history and context of the experience and participants involved. "All knowledge is historically conditioned," Gadamer would add (1975, p. 483). According to Bakhtin (1981), even the utterances used to communicate experience can be understood only if we understand their relationship to other utterances (p. 293). Bakhtin's theories of dialogism indicates that "everything means, is understood as part of a greater whole--there is constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others" (p. 426). He writes: "The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention." (p. 293). Bakhtin emphasizes the primacy of context in which utterances are made: "At any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions--social, historical, meteorological, physiological--that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions. . ." (p. 428). He refers to this "set of conditions" as heteroglossia and describes it as "that locus where centripetal and centrifugal forces collide" (p. 428).

Social constructivist theory and mentoring

A key concept in Vygotsky's social construction theory is the zone of proximal development (1978). He defines the zone of proximal development as the distance between the developmental level of problem solving one can achieve independently and the potential developmental level of problem solving one can achieve with adult guidance or the help of a more capable peer. Vygotsky (1962) writes: "What a learner can do in cooperation today he can do alone tomorrow. Therefore the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it" (p. 104). Vygotsky (1978) further explains the zone of proximal development as "those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation" (p. 86). According to Vygotsky's theory, giving students the opportunity to collaborate in the process of learning enhances the possibilities of maturing--of deepening understanding and reaching developmental potential.

Social constructivist theories and, specifically, Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (1978) inspire a vision of mentoring that provides beginning teachers with the opportunity to collaborate with a more capable peer (a mentor) as they construct knowledge, thus providing the possibility of reaching their full development. This vision of mentoring can be understood first by revisiting the origin of the term *mentor* itself. Mentoring originated in classical Greek mythology with the relationship between Mentor and Telemachus in Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey*. Mentor was a wise, trustworthy friend of Odysseus to whom he gave the responsibility of counseling and nurturing his son Telemachus.

While Odysseus was off experiencing his many adventures, Mentor served as a guide to Telemachus as he searched for his father. Mentor accompanied Telemachus on the first part of his quest and then departed only to return after Odysseus's return. During this time, Mentor was providing an education for Telemachus that included every facet of his life. Mentor made Telemachus aware of his mistakes without Telemachus becoming rebellious with the goal in mind that Telemachus would eventually be able to learn from his own errors of judgment.

The original classical relationship between Mentor and Telemachus exemplifies a Vygotskian approach to teaching and learning. Today, however, the word mentor refers to any expert, advisor, helper, or sponsor in any particular field who offers insight and guidance to his or her protégé (Odell, 1990). Many researchers have investigated literature on the concept of mentoring, returning to the original classical relationship of Mentor and Telemachus. From that literature, these researchers have drawn conclusions about what the mentoring process should look like (Gehrke, 1988; Odell, 1990; Daloz, 1999). Although in their respective studies Gehrke, Odell, and Daloz do not refer specifically to Vygotsky's theories, I believe each describes mentoring in a way that exemplifies the Vygotskian concept of the zone of proximal development as portrayed in the classical relationship between Mentor and Telemachus.

The mentoring process

Gehrke (1988) discusses the importance of understanding mentoring relationships in the "classical" sense. She conceptualizes mentoring using Martin

Buber's notions of I-Thou (a powerful, authentic relationship) and I-It (a more pragmatic, objectifying relationship). She states that her purpose is "to advocate the interpersonal and caring relationship that has characterized classical mentoring and not to confuse this profoundly important and relatively rare role with more nominal role relationships among teachers" (p. 43). She contends that the mentor-protégé relationship is a powerful one that offers unique opportunities for personal development. She asserts: "If we wish to encourage mentoring relationships, we need to be clear first on which of the two kinds--the powerful I-Thou or the pragmatic I-It--we are seeking" (p. 44). The elements she perceives as conducive to promoting mentoring among teachers are: choice, time, negotiation, dialogue, acknowledging uniqueness, reciprocity, whole life vision, and growing independence. She maintains that "Too frequently we appear to be substituting the I-It relationship for the more difficult but ultimately more beneficial I-Thou human relationship" (p. 45), but concludes that "We can bring back the classical meaning of mentoring by encouraging the classical experience" (p. 45).

While Gehrke identifies a need to encourage the classical experience, Odell (1990) goes one step further and describes a process for beginning to achieve that experience. She describes mentoring in a way that I think captures the classical concept of providing guidance and support for novices until they reach their full development. She states that the mentoring process "can be conceptualized as consisting of sequential phases, which culminate when the beginning teacher becomes self-reliant" (p. 23). The first and most important phase is one she labels "Developing the Relationship." According to Odell, "…it

is important at the outset that mentor teachers get to know their protégés as individuals and to develop trusting professional relationships." (p. 23). The second phase "Determining the Mentoring Content" emphasizes the need for mentors to tailor the support they offer a beginning teacher to his or her individual needs. Thirdly, a mentor should apply effective mentoring styles and strategies which, according to Odell, include taking initiative and adopting an interactive approach where "mentors raise questions about teaching and thus guide beginning teachers to analyze and reflect on the questions raised" (pp. 26-27). The final phase requires the mentor to "disengage" from his or her protégé. Odell claims that "mentor teacher-beginning teacher relationships are finite and terminate when the protégé becomes self-reliant as an instructional leader in the classroom" (p. 27). This conclusion is supported by Kay's definition of mentoring as "a comprehensive effort directed toward helping a protégé develop the attitudes and behaviors (skills) of self-reliance and accountability within a defined environment" (1990, p. 27).

Although Odell outlines several important steps toward achieving an effective mentor-mentee relationship, Laurent Daloz (1999) provides a more thorough and elaborate description of the mentoring process in *Mentor: Guiding the Journey of Adult Learners*. Like Gehkre and Odell, Daloz conceptualizes mentoring as guiding adults through difficult transitions (p. 203). In order to illustrate the mentoring concept, he, however, uses the character Yoda from the *Star Wars* film trilogy. Similar to the story of Mentor and Telemachus in *The Odyssey,* Yoda guides Luke Skywalker through his transition into adulthood,

"confirming his value, challenging his ability, and reminding him of his destiny: to meet and resolve his conflict with his father, avatar of darkness" (p. 204). Using Yoda as his example, Daloz writes that effective mentors of adult learners do three fairly distinct things: "they *support*, they *challenge*, and they *provide vision*" (p. 206, emphasis in original).

Daloz defines support as the activity of "holding," providing a "*safe space* where the student can contact her need for fundamental trust, the basis of growth" (p. 209, emphasis in original). According to Daloz, support involves listening, providing structure, expressing positive expectations, serving as advocate, sharing oneself, and making the mentoring relationship special. On the other hand, mentors also provide challenge. Daloz defines challenge as "opening a distance in the relationship, drawing the student outward to fill the gap, straining him to move, to accommodate his inner structures to the new environment created by his mentor's distancing" (p. 216). He relates challenge to the concept of cognitive dissonance--a gap between one's perceptions and expectations--and maintains that challenge involves setting tasks, engaging in discussion, heating up dichotomies, constructing hypotheses, and setting high standards.

Daloz theorizes how different amounts of support and challenge can combine to affect learning within a mentoring relationship by describing four different scenarios. If support and challenge are both low, Daloz maintains that little is likely to happen. If support is high but challenge is low, the learner may respond with feelings of confirmation but may not experience growth. If support

is low, however, and challenge is high, the learner may retreat and embrace conformity. Finally, if both support and challenge are high, development can occur. What is meant by development, he concludes, depends on the particular needs of the protégé and the style of the mentor (pp. 208-209). Vision, according to Daloz, is defined as the context that hosts both support and challenge in the service of transformation (p. 223). Mentors provide vision by modeling, keeping tradition, offering a map, suggesting new language, and providing a mirror for their learners. Together, the trilogy of support, challenge, and vision create what Daloz calls the "Yoda Factor" in mentoring--guiding adults through difficult transitions, confirming their values, challenging their abilities, and reminding them of their destinies (pp. 203-204).

Questions raised

Social constructivists view learning as a process of constructing meaning through transactions with their environment and others in it. In light of the social constructivist view of knowledge construction, it is important to take a closer look at how beginning teachers and mentors construct notions of mentoring and induction support. It is also important to explore what sources mentors and mentees draw upon in order to construct their ideas of beginning English teachers' mentoring needs. Investigating these sources of knowledge will help create a deeper understanding of the complex sets of experiences that shape beginning teachers' and their mentors' conceptualizations of induction support.

Vygotsky's social construction theory and concept of the zone of proximal development emphasize the importance of providing learners with the

opportunity to collaborate with others as they construct knowledge, thus providing the possibility of reaching their full developmental potential. The classical relationship between Mentor and Telemachus in Homer's *The Odyssey* exemplifies Vygotsky's idea of the process of a learner receiving guidance from a "more capable peer" in order to gain deeper understanding and ultimately achieve self-reliance. Gehrke (1988), Odell (1990), and Daloz (1999) are examples of researchers who have begun to explore the classical relationship in order to better conceptualize the mentoring process. Their research raises a number of questions regarding mentor-mentee transactions. How do mentors and mentees transact with one another? Do mentor-mentee relationships facilitate mentees' full developmental potential? If so, how? If not, why not? How closely do actual mentor-mentee transactions resemble the classical concept of mentoring? Should mentor-mentee transactions resemble the mentoring in the classical sense in order to effectively meet beginning teachers' induction needs?

Traditionally, mentoring in education occurs as transactions between a beginning teacher and an assigned practicing teacher in a local school setting. These mentoring relationships are considered to play a crucial role in induction programs as novices face the difficult challenges of their first years in the teaching profession. The next section of the literature review will discuss the importance of effective induction programs and their influences on beginning teachers' attitudes toward the teaching profession.

Induction Programs

The literature on induction indicates that induction support is a critical part of teacher development primarily for two reasons: 1) Induction support affects teachers' perceptions of and performance during their first year of teaching, and 2) Induction support seems to have a direct correlation with teacher retention. Early studies on induction provide evidence of these two positive effects of induction programs. For example, Varah, Theune, and Parker (1986) conducted a study to compare twelve inductees in the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Teacher Induction Program with twelve randomly selected first-year teachers who were not in an induction program. Results indicated that more of the inductees completed their first year, planned to be in teaching the next five years, had more success with students (although success in not clearly defined), and overall described their first year of teaching in more positive terms. In addition, administrators reported that they had fewer problems (although they don't identify what they mean by problems) with inductees and that the reason they had fewer problems was due to the close working relationship between first-year teachers and their mentors.

Hegler and Dudley (1987) also reported that the implementation of an induction program as one component in teacher education reform can significantly affect beginning teacher success and teacher retention. They described the Doane induction program, a collaboration between a local education agency and Doane College. Administrator feedback indicated that 96% of the beginning teachers in the program received acceptable ratings in all

subdivisions of all teacher competencies. In addition, Hegler and Dudley reported that 24 of 25 teachers participating in the induction program remained in teaching, some in their fourth year at the time of publication.

The connection between induction and teacher retention is also supported in a study conducted by Odell and Ferraro (1992). They surveyed 160 beginning elementary teachers four years after their initial, mentored teaching year in order to determine whether they had remained in teaching and their retrospective attitudes about mentoring. Odell and Ferraro cited research indicating that the attrition rate for beginning teachers is nearly twice that of experienced teachers. While acknowledging that attrition rates are affected by a number of variables, they found that "long-term teacher retention can be improved by mentoring teachers during their first year of teaching" (p. 200).

In hopes of supporting and retaining beginning teachers in the profession, many states have instituted induction programs that involve collaborations between public school systems and universities. Descriptions of these programs support the notion that university-public school collaboration is a key component in successful induction programs. For example, Brennan, Thames, and Roberts (1999) describe the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program first legislated in 1985. The state of Kentucky established this initiative to support first-year teachers with the goal of helping new teachers develop a strong, lifelong career foundation. The program guides each new teacher through a structured process of assistance and assessment with the active involvement of a committee of

educators including a mentor teacher, a university representative, and the school principal.

According to Brennan and her colleagues, the primary goal of Kentucky's internship program is "to nurture and retain good teachers by providing all beginning teachers with meaningful mentoring to help them develop the necessary skills to become more effective" (p. 49). The phrase "more effective" is referring to better facilitating student learning since student learning is the "ultimate goal of all good teaching" (p. 49). Committee members use observations and portfolio reviews to measure the intern's satisfactory progress in the eight teacher standards adopted by the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board. A summative evaluation in the form of a completed portfolio presented to the committee at the end of the year determines full certification eligibility (p. 50).

Kentucky has not formally tracked retention trends, but policymakers have distributed surveys to more than 1,000 teachers with three or fewer years of experience. Survey results indicated that new teachers found the program, the mentor teachers in particular, to be helpful. Respondents reported that committee members provided helpful suggestions to improve practice and helped them grow professionally. Participants in the program also reported an increased level of confidence regarding their classroom presence and their lesson plans. Brennan, et al (1999), concluded that although the summative evaluation is included in the process for certification purposes, the "heart of this program is an

innovative mentoring partnership among the school, higher education, and the state's chief policymaking group" (p. 52).

The state of California has also established induction programs called Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Programs (BTSA), funded through the California New Teacher Support Project (CNTP). Perez, Swain, and Hartsough (1997) report on one BTSA project involving a collaboration among St. Mary's College of California, eleven school districts, and two county offices of education. The goal of the team effort is to "provide an integrated, systematic approach in order to prepare confident teachers who will remain in the profession" (p. 41). Like the Kentucky induction program, this project uses portfolio assessment based on state standards. Unlike Kentucky, however, the portfolio is not used to determine full certification but is used as a tool to explore the new teachers' strengths and areas of growth and provides both teachers and mentors (called coaches) with an action plan for their work together. Perez and her colleagues concluded that "preparing teachers requires a long-term, integrated, systemic approach which extends from undergraduate preparation through the novice years of teaching" (p. 50).

Yopp and Young (1999) describe another California BTSA program involving California State University at Fullerton, Fullerton School District, and La Habra School District. Some of the purposes of this program are to improve the educational performance of students through improved training, information, and assistance for beginning teachers; provide an effective transition into the teacher career for first- and second-year teachers in California; and to ensure the

professional success and retention of beginning teachers who show promise of becoming highly effective professionals (p. 24). In this BTSA program, beginning teachers are assessed through self-assessment surveys, a teacher concern survey, portfolios, and observations of classroom practice. Ongoing assessment of each beginning teacher guides the development of an Individualized Induction Plan (IIP) that is constructed by the new teacher and his or her mentor teacher (called a support provider). Yopp and Young (1999) conclude that "preservice education, life-long renewal, and continued learning need to be linked not only conceptually, but formally, through collaborative and well-articulated programs involving teachers, universities, districts, county offices, state agencies, and professional organizations" (p. 36).

Another California induction model is the Triple "L" Collaborative (lifelong learning and leadership)—a training program that starts with teachers at the preservice level and continues through teacher leadership development. Chartrand, Moore, and Lourie-Markowitz (2000) describe it as a three-way partnership of Campbell Union School District, Oak Grove School District, and San Jose State University. The goal of Triple "L" is to provide a "seamless" training program that would extend from teacher education at the university to new teacher support at the school district. From data collected via questionnaires and focus group sessions from student teachers, cooperating teachers, university faculty, and district personnel, Chartrand, et al, report that Triple "L" has benefited Campbell Union School District's teacher retention and recruitment and claim their retention rate is about 90 percent (p. 24). Data also

showed greater satisfaction with field placements and greater communication between university and school personnel. Chartrand and his colleagues conclude that “university/school collaborations must happen in order to nurture and sustain school reform” (p. 22).

A number of other university-public school collaborations and their influence on teacher retention and effectiveness have been studied. DeBolt (1991) examined the following five programs: (1) a collaborative program by the Albuquerque Public Schools and the University of New Mexico, (2) the North Country Mentor/Intern Regional Consortium, (3) The Arizona Teacher Residency Program, (4) the partnership among Hunter College of the City University of New York and the 24 public schools that constitute Community School District Number 4 in East Harlem, and (5) the University of Northern Colorado’s partnership program with regional public schools. The major findings of his study were that these programs shared particular components that contributed to their success in achieving higher beginning teacher retention rates. The components the programs shared were collaboration between public schools and institutions of higher education, support for new teachers, support of minority group teachers, and context specific training and ongoing support for mentors. In a study with similar findings, Resta, Huling, White, and Matschek (1997) described the Southwest Texas State University Teacher Fellows Program, a collaborative arrangement between the university and several school districts, as a “win-win-win” situation for the university, school districts, and teachers (p. 42). Reiman, Head, and Thies-Sprinthall (1992) also found that induction programs serve the

mutual interests of teacher education programs and local school districts and consider their collaboration as an integral part of a revitalizing process for the teaching profession.

Need for further research

Induction programs are crucial in assisting and supporting teachers as they make the transition from college students to practicing classroom teachers. Research indicates that successful induction programs can have positive effects on beginning teachers' perceptions of their first years in the profession and on teacher retention. Successful induction programs involve a university working in collaboration with teachers in public school districts. Among the many professionals participating in university-public school collaborations, those with the most influence are the mentor teachers (in some cases referred to as coaches, support providers, or buddies). Induction programs in educational settings rely heavily on practicing classroom teachers at the local school setting to serve as mentors to beginning teachers. For this reason, it is important to further examine the role of mentor teachers and mentor-mentee relationships as they relate to induction support.

Furthermore, in spite of the research supporting the notion of local school-university collaborations, many mentoring programs are much more localized to specific counties, or even individual schools and may not involve university support at all, thus placing even more responsibility on mentors to successfully induct novice teachers into the profession. The question is whether or not mentors alone, without their schools' collaboration with a university, can have the

same positive effects on beginning teachers' perceptions of their induction years and on teacher retention. Therefore, it is important to examine the many ways researchers have investigated the notion of mentoring in educational settings in order to identify needs for further investigation. The next section of the literature review will present research on the development of the mentoring concept in education.

Mentoring in Education

Although using classroom teachers as mentors to beginning teachers has become the most widely accepted practice in educational induction programs today, mentoring in education is a relatively new concept that has developed over the past two decades. In 1983 when Sharan Merriam conducted a review of the literature on mentors and protégés, mentoring was just emerging as a popular topic in several fields. Included in her review were the categories of the mentoring phenomenon in adult growth and development, mentoring in the business world, and mentoring in academic settings. According to her review, at that time mentoring in academic settings mostly involved professors as mentors to graduate students. Mentor programs supporting beginning teachers in public schools were not reflected in the literature at that time. She writes: "In summary, no distinct line of research can be traced with respect to mentoring in academic settings" and "little can be said with regard to either the prevalence or importance of mentoring for students, teachers, or administrators in educational settings" (p. 169).

During the seven years that elapsed between 1983 and 1990, mentoring in education evolved into what Little (1990) refers to as the “Mentor Phenomenon” (p. 297). She writes: “Policymakers and educational leaders have thrust *mentoring* into the vocabulary of school reform as part of a mission to reward and retain capable teachers while obligating those teachers, implicitly or explicitly, to contribute to the improvement of schools and the quality of the teacher workforce” (p. 297, emphasis in original). She asserts that the literature on mentoring in education at that time indicated that mentors fulfill three basic functions: They are guides to beginning teachers during a period of induction; they form a local cadre of staff developers or teacher consultants; and they lead or support program and curriculum development ventures (p. 340). She concludes that “the twin aims of formal mentor programs--to reward and inspire experienced teachers, while tapping into their accumulated wisdom in the service of teachers and schools--contain the elements necessary to satisfy the criterion of mutual benefit that sustain practices of mentoring elsewhere” (p. 345).

Since the emergence of the “mentoring phenomenon” in education, mentoring has become the focus of an extensive body of research literature. The following sections of the literature review will discuss what has been written about who should mentor, what barriers and constraints render mentoring programs ineffectual, what support novice teachers consider most useful to them as professionals, and how mentoring relates to the overall teacher socialization process.

A review of these areas of the literature on mentoring will demonstrate that studies examining mentor programs tend to reflect the perspectives of researchers or of practicing mentors. Research studies on mentoring either do not include perspectives of the beginning teachers at all or include only their general reactions to their induction years (not mentoring specifically), and they elicit those reactions only through data collected via questionnaires. My study examines two beginning teachers' perceptions of mentoring as well as those of their mentors. Just as good teachers elicit students' perspectives to define their teaching, mentors need to gain a deeper understanding of beginning teachers' perspectives in order to define their mentoring.

In addition, a review of the literature will show that most research explores mentors' views without delving deeper into how mentors went about constructing their notions of the mentoring concept. The literature review will also show that research on mentoring has investigated separately either mentors or beginning teachers, but not mentor-mentee relationships. My study will examine how two mentors' experiences, assumptions, and local school contexts shaped their views of the mentoring concept and how those views were manifested in the mentoring relationships they established with two novice English teachers. Finally, a review of the literature indicates that mentoring as part of the teacher socialization process has often been studied using groups of participants representing a number of disciplines. Since teacher socialization at the secondary level involves being inducted to a specific department, more research is needed that examines teacher socialization within specific disciplines. My study investigates the

mentoring needs of secondary English teachers specifically in hopes of determining if beginning high school English teachers face challenges particular to their specific discipline.

Mentor qualities

According to some early research literature, in order to construct their roles, those who serve as mentors to beginning teachers should be versed in particular bodies of literature and possess particular qualities, skills, and competencies. First, many researchers indicate that mentors should be versed in particular bodies of professional literature. Newcombe (1988) suggests that educators who are designing or implementing mentoring programs should be familiar with three general areas of professional literature: the concept of mentoring, mentoring in adult development and business, and mentoring in schools. Newcombe asserts that by being familiar with the professional literature on mentoring, educators can tap a large knowledge base on mentoring relationships and programs, thereby establishing programs with a stronger conceptual foundation. Bey (1990) suggests a similar knowledge base for mentor teachers, including the mentoring process, clinical supervision, coaching and modeling, adult development, and interpersonal skills. Galvez-Hjornevik (1986) recommends that mentors and teacher educators should make use of knowledge derived from mentoring in other disciplines and fields as they continue to research the "mentor-protégé phenomena" among educators and design induction programs for new teachers.

Although research suggests that mentors familiarize themselves with literature on mentoring, the question remains whether or not mentors actually have the opportunity to read that literature, and, if so, if such knowledge is important to mentors as they construct their perceptions of the mentoring process. Someniuk and Worrall (2000) even question the application of mentoring concepts in other fields to the educational setting; they ask: “Is drawing on fields outside education appropriate? Are adult phychological development and business models of mentoring transferable to education?” (p. 411).

Although some early research focused on the importance of establishing a strong knowledge base about mentoring, most research on mentoring in education has been dedicated to determining what types of competencies or behaviors teachers who function as mentors should possess in order to assist beginning teachers. Denmark and Podsen (2000) outline seven competencies they believe mentors should possess. They contend that prospective mentors should understand the mentoring role, initiate the relationship, establish a climate of peer support, model reflective teaching practices, apply and share effective classroom management strategies, encourage and nurture an appreciation of diversity, and embrace mentoring as an investment in professional development. These competencies seem reasonable enough, but Denmark and Podsen do not explain how they arrived at this list.

Ireton and Wilson (1995/96) asked mentors to rank competencies according to which ones most significantly cultivated desirable teacher habits in

the beginning teacher. Ireton and Wilson found that in order for mentors to provide an excellent environment for and better serve the beginning teacher, mentors must develop commonly recognized essential competencies (identified by practicing mentor teachers themselves): managing the classroom, assessing student needs, motivating students, organizing learning activities, responding to individual differences, evaluating (grading student performance), recognizing and modeling ethical practices, relating to parents, communicating with pertinent individuals, assisting students with personal problems, and conducting appropriate in-services. Their conclusion was that by possessing and practicing the competencies identified in this research, mentor teachers would be in an excellent position to provide the ideal modeling, guidance, and assistance needed by the beginning teacher. Those who design staff development training programs for mentors could possibly benefit from this information, however, the research Ireton and Wilson present omits a number of essential elements. Ireton and Wilson fail to explicitly define the terms on their list of eleven competencies ranked by mentors as the most important, and they offer no theory as to why practicing mentor teachers believe those competencies to be important or why those competencies were ranked in that order.

Like Ireton and Wilson, Vonk (1996) conducted a case study that also focused entirely on mentors' perceptions about mentoring. Vonk explores specifically the qualities mentors perceive as important for adequate mentoring and how mentors perceive their own mentoring style. He asked thirty-six practicing mentors participating in mentor training courses he conducted to rank

competencies in three sections: technical qualities, professional knowledge, and interpersonal qualities. His research data indicated that practicing mentors emphasized their personal dispositions over their technical skill, with particular importance placed on the ability to establish a good relationship with one's protégé.

Although Denmark and Podsen (2000), Ireton and Wilson (1995/96), and Vonk (1996) outline some important qualities and skills for mentors to possess, I feel that these studies are limited in several ways. First, these studies don't investigate the views of the beginning teachers who are inevitably affected by the perceptions and practices of mentor teachers. Secondly, these studies don't elaborate on *how* the competencies they outline can be cultivated or *why* those particular skills are or should be valued over others. Most importantly, they fail to discuss factors that possibly hinder practicing mentors from developing the competencies they deem as highly valuable.

Feiman-Nemser (2001) conducted a more in-depth study of one mentor teacher and how he defined and enacted his role with beginning teachers. This mentor was released from classroom teaching for two years and worked full-time as a support teacher to fourteen beginning elementary teachers in an induction program jointly sponsored by a university and a local school district. Feiman-Nemser explains that she chose to write about this mentor because he offered a vivid example of what she calls "educative" mentoring, which she defines as providing learning experiences that "promote rather than retard future growth and lead to richer subsequent experiences" (p. 17). She distinguishes mentoring as

an educational practice from mentoring that only offers emotional support that makes novices feel comfortable, and she contends that “the promise of mentoring lies not in easing novices’ entry into teaching but in helping them confront difficult problems of practice and use their teaching as a site for learning” (p. 18).

The mentor Feiman-Nemser studied learned the role of support teacher in the context of a professional learning community. He began learning about his role in a weeklong orientation before the start of the school year and continued studying his work throughout the year in weekly, three-hour staff seminars conducted by the induction program director, a national expert on teacher induction. Feimen-Nemser reports that presenting individual cases was a regular activity in staff seminars. In addition, support teachers also read and discussed various articles (selected by the program director) about teaching and learning to teach. Through these seminars, the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues, and from firsthand experience, the mentor learned how to be more direct with beginning teachers (called “clients”) and also felt he broadened his own ideas about teaching children, particularly in the area of writing.

From his training and experiences, the mentor came to define his role of support teacher as enacting a repertoire of “moves” or strategies including the following: 1) finding openings, or fruitful topics that are salient to the novice and that lead to a consideration of basic issues that all teacher need to think about, and not just anything the novice brings up, but something that would open up a productive line of thinking, 2) pinpointing problems, that is helping beginning

teachers talk about teaching in precise, analytic ways so that they can be specific in talking about their difficulties rather than making general statements that something is not going well, 3) probing novice's thinking, or helping them articulate good rationales for their instructional decisions, 4) noticing signs of growth, or offering specific feedback about individual accomplishments rather than general praise for doing a good job, 5) focusing on the kids, or reminding beginning teachers to look beyond their own teaching performance and focus their attention on student learning, 6) reinforcing an understanding of theory, or reinforcing theoretical ideas in context, thus helping novices develop usable knowledge and principled understanding, 7) giving living examples of one person's way of teaching, or providing demonstrations in order to help novices visualize new practices and see how teachers enact particular values and principles, and 8) modeling wondering about teaching, that is helping beginning teachers use their own practice as a site for learning about students.

Feimen-Nemser (2001) found that "educative mentoring promotes beginning teacher development by cultivating a disposition of inquiry, focusing attention on student thinking and understanding, and fostering disciplined talk about problems of practice" (p. 28). The concept of "educative" mentoring discussed in her research study provides a more elaborated and promising vision of what is possible in induction programs. It also resembles the notion of mentoring described by Daloz (1999) as providing both "support and challenge." I think this model of mentoring is a wonderful contribution to the literature on mentoring; however, I do have a couple areas of concern. First, this study fails to

elicit perspectives of the beginning teachers with whom the support teacher worked; therefore, again, the perspectives of those whom the induction program was designed to serve are missing. We don't know their reactions to the support teacher's "moves" or strategies, or whether or not those moves resulted in novices' growth and development as educators. Secondly, since the support teacher had been released from classroom duties and was working with fourteen different beginning teachers (presumably from more than one school), the mentor-mentee relationship he established with the novices is not likely to resemble the kind of mentor-mentee relationship that results when one mentor is paired with one mentee who both work in one school context. In addition, since he was working in elementary schools, he supported teachers who taught multiple subjects.

Although Feiman-Nemser's study provides us with a rare portrait of how one mentor constructed his role as support teacher and how his notion of mentoring shaped how he enacted his role, I think more research is needed to gain a deeper understanding of mentor-mentee relationships at the secondary level and the possible constraints involved when the mentor, who is a classroom teacher (*not* released from classroom duties), and the beginning teacher work within the same local school context.

Problems and constraints

Using experienced teachers as mentors in induction programs seems to be widely accepted as a successful practice (Semeniuk & Worrall, 2000). However, mentor programs can be rendered ineffectual for a number of reasons

including inadequate mentor training programs, unrealistic expectations, and other factors that hinder a productive mentor-protégé relationship such as time, availability, and money.

One element of mentor programs in education that render them ineffectual is inadequate mentor training. Although research describes what mentors should know and do, most programs do not require teachers to meet specific criteria in order to become a mentor. Those who design and implement mentor training programs seem to be operating under one or more erroneous assumptions. The first erroneous assumption is that those who volunteer or are chosen to be mentor teachers already possess desired qualities or have mastered outlined competencies, and, therefore, are effective mentors (Moir & Gless, 2001). Although literature on mentoring (e.g. Newcombe, 1988) often makes recommendations regarding mentor selection, it doesn't often discuss how mentors actually are chosen. Odell (1990) indicates that the responsibility of choosing mentor teachers often lies with local school district administrators. She found this system to be problematic in that "the subjective judgments of some administrators, including principals, may be unreliable in identifying effective mentor teachers (p. 29). In some cases, teachers serving as mentors are never actually screened, selected, or "chosen" in any particular way or according to any specific criteria. Like many other classroom teachers, I simply volunteered. In fact, practicing teachers volunteer to mentor beginning teachers for any number or combination of reasons. Some have a genuine desire to contribute to the teaching profession by assisting beginning teachers. Others volunteer because

they need to acquire more staff development units (SDUs) for recertification purposes. Mentor training, in the form of Teacher Specialist Support (TSS) training in Georgia, many times involves receiving a stipend (mine was $750.00 for 8 days of training plus 50 contact hours of staff development work). Clearly, mentor training programs operating under the assumption that the classroom teachers in their program already possess a particular set of qualities and skills could be mistaken in that assumption.

A second erroneous assumption is that the qualities and skills identified by practicing mentors (and, therefore, the ones training programs are designed to foster) are, in fact, the important ones for mentors to possess. Those who design and implement mentor training programs that do NOT assume that teachers come ready-made with a particular set of qualities generally spend time discussing the importance of cultivating a certain set of skills and competencies such as those outlined by Denmark and Podsen (2000), Ireton and Wilson (1995/96), Vonk (1996). The problem is that often the qualities mentor training programs are designed to foster are outlined almost exclusively by mentor teachers and fail to include input from other stake-holders, in particular, the beginning teachers directly affected by mentor-protégé relationships.

A third erroneous assumption made by mentor teacher trainers is that a direct correlation exists between what a teacher can do in the classroom and what a mentor can teach a novice to do. Even when classroom teachers are selected to participate in a mentor training program, they are often selected based upon their skills or reputation as a master teacher. The assumption is that

an experienced, competent educator can somehow teach a novice how to become a competent educator. This assumption fails to consider the complexities of entering into a mentor-protégé relationship. Simply stated, “Not every outstanding classroom teacher is necessarily a talented mentor” (Moir & Gless, 2001, p. 111). Orland (2000) agrees with this statement; her study investigating how one mentor learned about her mentoring role revealed that learning to become a mentor is “a conscious process of induction into a different teaching context and does not ‘emerge’ naturally from being a good teacher of children” (p. 75).

Operating under any one of the three erroneous assumptions outlined above causes mentor training programs to oversimplify the role of the mentor and, therefore, to address mentoring issues only superficially. As a result, mentor training programs have two problems: 1) They are too brief, and 2) The focus is often misplaced. First, mentor training experiences are often too brief and are, therefore, insufficient to prepare mentors for the important and complex role they assume in a mentor-mentee relationship. Million (1988) states that training is necessary because, as in other professions, not all experienced teachers are equally suited to serve as mentors; however, the training he describes is an orientation program conducted in its entirety in only one day. Hersh, Snyder, and Stroot (1995/96) also described a mentor training program--this one consisting of fifty-hours of staff development; the topics of discussion for training sessions were the role of the mentor teacher, conferencing, and classroom management. The training opportunities described above indicate that

even when some staff developers recognize the necessity for training mentor teachers, the training programs are limited to “one-shot” inservices or seminars that are designed to foster those qualities and competencies that practicing mentors perceive themselves as having already (Ireton & Wilson, 1995/96; Vonk, 1996). Findings by Huling-Austin (1990) also reflected a certain circular process in mentor training--that is, that teachers spent valuable time in training programs only to conclude in the end that the information presented had failed to represent anything they didn’t already know. Huling-Austin asserted that one common reaction to mentor training is “I think we do that already” (p. 39).

Another common reaction to mentor training, according to Huling-Austin (1990), is: “Tell me exactly what is required of me in this role” (p. 39). However, this reaction reflects an oversimplified perception of the complexity of the mentoring process. Huling-Austin astutely pointed out that “it is important for [mentors] to realize that much of their role, perhaps even the most important part of their role, cannot be defined for them in advance” and that mentors must develop their own roles by considering the needs of beginning teachers to whom they are assigned (p. 49).

Some mentor programs have even reduced their attempts to address mentor training issues to providing their mentors with a handbook that they may consult at their convenience such as the one created by members of the Evergreen Collegial Teacher Training Consortium (Brzoska, et al, 1987) that is designed specifically for training and assisting practicing mentors. The handbook presents a detailed description of the mentor role and provides in appendices

calendars, mentor-protégé actions plans, checklists, and research articles. This is a rather nice handbook, but it is not enough to assist mentors in their support and guidance of beginning teachers. A handbook of this sort reminds me of the type of assistance a driver's manual might offer teenagers learning how to drive; it might help them pass a test on rules and regulations regarding driving, but it does little to help them actually learn how to drive. Similarly, a handbook for mentors, while helpful, cannot begin to describe the actual experience of participating in a mentor-mentee relationship, much less address any related questions or issues.

In addition to inadequate mentor training, another problem with mentoring in education is that induction programs are often burdened with unrealistic expectations of educational reform. Huling-Austin (1986) reminds us of what can and cannot be accomplished through teacher induction programs alone. According to Huling-Austin, there are four goals that are realistic for induction programs: 1) to improve teaching performance, 2) to increase the retention of promising beginning teachers during the induction years, 3) to promote the personal and professional well-being of beginning teachers, and 4) to satisfy mandated requirements related to induction and certification. She concludes that all of these goals can be accomplished under particular conditions; however, she also concludes that induction programs cannot reasonably be expected to: 1) overcome major problems in the school context; 2) develop into successful teachers those beginning teachers who enter the profession without the background, ability, and personal characteristics necessary to constitute the

potential to be acceptable teachers; and 3) substantially influence the long-range retention of teachers in the profession if additional changes are not made in the educational system at large.

Furthermore, she states that problems arise when induction programs allow the primary function to be making teachers "feel" better, without having an equal emphasis on the development and improvement of performance, or allow mandated minimum requirements to become the total program. Moir and Gless (2001) echo Huling-Austin's sentiments: "Occasional mentoring and 'feel good' support overlook the enormous instructional impact induction programs can have when they are focused on a teacher's classroom practice" (p. 112). Although Huling-Austin supports the idea of induction programs as "a means to help beginning teachers have a smoother transition into teaching" (p. 5), she also warns that these programs cannot be expected to "significantly reform the education enterprise as a whole" (p. 5). Semeniuk and Worrall (2000) caution: "In attempts to use mentoring programs as means to school change, researchers seem to be forgetting that school reform is a complex...social process" (p. 411). They add that school reformers who "conclude that mentoring programs *will* remedy [problems in education] disregard the unpredictability of human behavior" (p. 411, emphasis in original).

In addition to inadequate mentor training and unrealistic expectations, mentoring programs also suffer in countless ways from lack of time. Since mentors, for the most part, are practitioners, they have almost no time to meet with or observe their protégés, much less enroll in training programs. This

constraint presents a catch-22. Research on mentoring as professional development (e.g., Freiberg, Zbikowski, & Ganser, 1997; Tauer, 1998) indicates that when induction programs arrange for mentors to be released from classroom duties in order to have more time with mentees or for training, often the mentors fail to return to the classroom. On the other hand, if no procedure is in place that allows for extra time, the mentor and protégé have little opportunity to develop a relationship.

Weaver and Stanulis (1996) explain in a case study that "helping induct a novice into the teaching profession" is a highly involved and time-consuming process. Part of that process is planning the learning experiences in mentoring such as outlining clear goals for the mentoring relationship, being explicit about expectations, and being realistic about the constraints that naturally exist because of other teaching responsibilities throughout the teaching day. Equally important in the process is letting the mentoring relationship evolve over time as the beginning teacher's immediate concerns change. Finally, the mentoring process involves "putting yourself out there" as a teacher and learner, or becoming comfortable with your own vulnerabilities in order to assist your novice teacher (p. 3). This type of effective mentoring, as described by Weaver and Stanulis, takes time, and lots of it.

Another component of the time constraint difficulty is that mentors are needed so much they are overtaxed by the sheer number of people they serve. In addition to the already multitudinous duties of teaching, one teacher might serve as mentor to a student teacher, one or more beginning teachers, and

several teachers who are simply new to the particular school (a group often lumped in with beginning teachers under the assumption that the needs of the two groups are similar). There simply aren't enough mentors to go around. As a result of the inaccessibility of their mentors, new teachers often begin to seek help from other sources (Tellez, 1992). Although helping a mentee identify a variety of helpful resources at his or her disposal is often one goal of mentoring, mentees should not feel compelled to seek out others, especially others who have no mentor training or have no stake in a mentor-mentee relationship, simply because they feel their mentor is inaccessible.

Lastly, I must address the mammoth of all constraints--money. Mentor programs require funding. Mentor teachers are traditionally paid stipends for participating in training programs, and they usually also receive honorariums for mentoring beginning teachers. In addition, those who design and conduct training programs must be paid. Some programs are designed in such a way that classroom teachers are released from their teaching duties, therefore, requiring funds to offset the cost of their substitutes or replacement teachers. Finally, additional funding must be made available if public schools and universities are to form meaningful collaborations that include university personnel as trainers and support team members. For induction programs to be successful, teacher preparation programs must hire full-time faculty to follow up on their graduates and to maintain relationships with the mentors in the public schools in order to continue to meet the needs of beginning teachers.

Beginning teacher needs

Although beginning teachers' needs have been investigated in a number of different ways, a thorough reviewing of the literature on mentoring in education clearly indicates that there are few studies that have explored beginning teachers' perspectives on what support they consider most useful to them as professionals, and most of these studies were limited to survey questionnaires (e.g. Huffman & Leak, 1986; Reiman & Edelfelt, 1991; Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Murphy, 1992; Wilkinson, 1997). Some studies (e.g. Odell, 1986; Wildman, et al, 1992) have attempted to investigate beginning teacher needs by having mentor teachers keep records of the actual help they provided their novice teachers. These researchers assumed that the needs of new teachers could be inferred functionally from the support actually offered as recorded by the mentors in journals or logs. There are two problems with this method of data collection: 1) what the mentors recorded may not accurately reflect what the mentors offered or how the beginning teachers interpreted what the mentors offered, and 2) what the mentor teachers offered may not correlate with what the beginning teachers really needed.

Even when beginning teachers' needs have been explored, they are investigated in broad, general terms. For example, Odell (1996) contends that beginning teachers have been asked indirectly in interviews or in questionnaires to specify what problems they experience during their first year teaching, but she does not indicate that these beginning teachers have been asked directly about what they perceive as the role of *mentors*. She writes, "There is simply no

guarantee that the problems retrospectively perceived by new teachers are the same problems for which they would seek aid in an ongoing induction program" (p. 26). This statement reinforces my argument that beginning teachers need to be asked specifically about their mentoring needs and not just about their needs in general.

Odell's study also includes mentors of teachers new to the school, but not necessarily beginners. The results of her study indicate that the two primary needs of both groups of teachers included obtaining information about the school district and obtaining resources and materials pertinent to the curriculum to be taught. These findings, however, are counter to the findings of other studies that list emotional support, respect, encouragement, and informal conversation as most valued by beginning teachers (e.g., Rigler, 1998; Abell, et al, 1995; Huffman & Leak, 1986; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). One possible reason for the discrepancy may be that mentors may not have recorded many informal conversations during which they simply listened or provided words of encouragement. Odell concludes from her data that experienced teachers who are new to a school system do not have remarkably different needs from those of first year teachers. I find this conclusion suspect in that mentors of both groups would likely record (as the result of having offered) the same type of help to these two groups of people. Simply providing the same help to both groups does not necessarily indicate it's a reflection of what they needed. Including both groups in data collection, in my opinion, is not appropriate to her purpose of

"identifying precisely the nature of the assistance that would be most helpful to the new teacher" (p. 26).

Like the study by Odell (1986), Wildman et al's study (1992) is based on mentors' reports of the help they have provided to beginning teachers. One of the stated purposes of their article is "to report the results of a qualitative analysis of the responses that 150 mentor teachers gave when asked to describe their activities as mentors and the conditions that promote or hinder their success" (p. 205). The study includes a table indicating how mentors addressed five areas of concern for beginning teachers both through direct and indirect personal/professional assistance as recorded on audio tape or in mentor teacher logs or field notes. It also lists personality characteristics of mentors as reported by both mentors and beginners (but there is no mention of how the beginners did any reporting). There are also no quotes from research participants to support this list (p. 211). Wildman et al (1992) theorize that "Mentoring, like good teaching, should be defined by those who will carry it out" (p. 212). This theory, however, fails to consider that, to define their teaching, good teachers elicit the students' perspectives about their specific needs; teaching, then, is also defined by the students. I would argue that mentoring, therefore, should also be defined, at least in part, by the beginning teachers, and not by mentors exclusively.

As I noted previously, the few studies that investigate beginning teachers' perspectives on mentoring are almost completely limited to survey questionnaires (e.g. Huffman & Leak, 1986; Reiman & Edelfelt, 1991; Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Murphy, 1992; Wilkinson, 1997; Weiss, 1999). For example,

Huffman and Leak (1986) surveyed 108 new teachers to describe and assess the role that mentor teachers play in a program for beginning teachers in Missouri. In a research report, Reiman and Edelfelt (1991) analyzed the results of a questionnaire study of mentors' and beginning teachers' opinions about induction. Odell and Ferraro (1992) conducted a survey of 160 beginning elementary teachers four years after their initial, mentored teaching year in order to determine whether they had remained in teaching and their retrospective attitudes about mentoring. Murphy (1992) presented a quantitative survey study with the purpose of evaluating the implementation of Georgia's Teacher Support Specialist Mentoring Program as perceived by mentors and protégés in the North Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) geographical area. Finally, Wilkinson (1997) surveyed Missouri's beginning teachers in order to gain their perspective regarding their needs during their induction years.

The results of these surveys collectively indicate that beginning teachers consider the following aspects of mentoring and induction programs as the most beneficial to them: encouragement; collegiality; specific helpful suggestions for the improvement of teaching; informal conversation; assistance when making difficult decisions regarding angry parents or unusual circumstances; assistance with finding supplies and teaching materials; involvement in policies that affect their classrooms; opportunities to observe other teachers; individual professional development plans; information about facilities, policies, and procedures; emotional support; genuine friendship; and confidentiality about the protégé's performance.

Although surveys can be useful for gathering information from a large data sample, they restrict the amount of response that can be offered and they fail to capture the richness and authenticity of participants' individual experiences. To better capture beginning teachers' "lived experiences" (Van Manen, 1990), some researchers have conducted interview studies investigating beginning teachers' perspectives on the role of mentors and mentor/intern relationships (Rigler, 1998; Abell, et al, 1995).

In 1998 I conducted a pilot study in which I interviewed four beginning high school English teachers regarding the mentor role (Rigler, 1998). In approximately one-hour interviews, these beginning secondary English teachers indicated that they had definite perceptions of "good" mentors and of positive mentor-mentee interactions. They conceptualized a "good" mentor as someone who is emotionally available-- understanding, empathetic, caring, nurturing, involved, supportive, and interested. They also felt a good mentor should be an experienced practitioner—someone who is knowledgeable, confident, well-versed in theory, well-grounded, helpful, direct, and professional. They also indicated that the best mentors seem to truly enjoy being a mentor; they are comfortable, energetic, and original. A good mentor is also a friend and confidante--truthful, trustworthy, and non-judgmental.

In addition to descriptions of a "good" mentor, the beginning teachers I interviewed indicated that helpful, positive mentor-mentee transactions occur under particular circumstances. A transaction is positive when the mentor really listens—when s/he identifies with the mentee's feelings and hears his or her

frustrations and sadness. They also feel a mentor-mentee transaction is successful when the mentor helps the beginning teacher orient his or her thinking. This might include suggesting thought-out ways of dealing with issues or providing alternative perspectives. Beginning teachers often indicated that they expected the mentor to help maintain the mentor-mentee relationship by taking them under their wing, so to speak, or by following up on them and keeping track of them in general. They also expected mentors to promote their personal and professional development, provide helpful suggestions (but not advise too quickly), and keep their conversations constructive.

These findings lend insight into the unique and valuable perspectives of beginning teachers that are seldom investigated in the research on mentoring in education. This study also represents the only study on mentoring that I know of that includes participants who all teach English. However, as a pilot study, this research is limited in scope to few participants. It also explores the topic of mentoring from the beginning teachers' perspectives exclusively, omitting the perspectives of their mentors.

In another study that includes the perspectives of beginning teachers, Abell, et al (1995) conducted interviews to investigate mentor and intern (beginning teacher) relationships in the state-mandated Beginning Teacher Internship Program (BTIP) in Indiana. They conducted one interview each with 29 mentors and interns in order to explore the meanings that beginning teachers and mentors constructed about the mentor/intern process. Abell and her colleagues found that mentors believe it is important, even their responsibility, to

work with interns and that they assume “helping” roles as opposed to an evaluator role when working with interns. They also found that respect and trust, developed during interactions between mentors and interns, were crucial to successful relationships.

This study presents important perspectives of the individuals involved directly with this particular internship program and their beliefs about how the program was enacted and what it meant to them. However, Abell et al (1995) felt that their limited contact with participants and the participants’ perceptions of the researchers’ evaluative role presented particular limitations. They also acknowledged that what they gained in breadth of data across many participants, they lost in depth of understanding of particular mentor/intern cases. As a result, they suggested that further research in this area be conducted on site and over time, focusing more closely on mentor/intern relationships from their inception in order to better understand the development and evolution of the relationship, what is learned by each participant, and what meaning the learning has for each individual.

Teacher socialization, subcultures, and mentoring

According to constructivist theory, the construction of knowledge is rooted within a socio-historical context. Making meaning is a continual process in which learners re-define knowledge as they are influenced by past experiences, their context, and interaction with other individuals. The social context, then, influences what meaning an individual attaches to his or her particular learning experiences. One of the challenges of learning to become an educator is

negotiating entree into a community of teachers within a specific school culture. Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002) contend that one of the main contributors to beginning teachers' difficulties their first year has to do with socialization in the school "as an organisation" (p. 105) and that "this organisational socialisation constitutes an essential task for teachers as much as their classroom teaching" (p. 106). Kelchtermans and Ballet define teacher socialization "not simply as passively sliding into an existing context, but rather as an interpretative and interactive process between the new teacher and the context" (p. 106).

At the secondary level, part of being socialized into an overall school culture involves induction into a community of teachers in a particular field or discipline, specifically. Grossman and Stodolsky (1995) refer to these communities as "subcultures" (p. 5). They argue that there is a growing body of research suggesting that high school teachers belong to distinctive content area subcultures that are characterized by differing beliefs, norms, and practices (p. 5). They further posit that the nature of a particular discipline and teachers' beliefs regarding the subject help create a conceptual context within which teachers work (p. 5). Grossman and Stodolsky review a number of studies of secondary teaching that have taken a comparative subject-matter approach. Collectively, these studies support the notion that high school teachers, even employed by the same school, still work in somewhat separate arenas defined by the subject matter they teach.

Although Grossman and Stodolsky for the most part discuss implications for further research in the area of school reform, they also suggest that

researchers investigate how beginning high school teachers are socialized into subject subcultures. Such a study might investigate the origin of beliefs beginning teachers have about the subject matter they will be teaching. This suggestion brings up the larger issue of teacher socialization in general. Grossman and Stodolsky contend that research on secondary teaching has for too long treated teacher induction as a generic activity, ignoring the role subcultures play in introducing novices into the teaching profession. As stated previously, induction programs serve as primary agents in the teacher socialization process. Among the many professionals who participate in induction programs (e.g. teachers, administrators, and sometimes university faculty), those with the most influence are the practicing teachers who mentor novices just beginning their professional careers as educators.

One of the assumptions of education reformers is that mentors can effectively assist novice teachers as they transact with the local school context, that is, that they are effective "socializers." However, researchers are now exploring the ways that mentoring and teacher socialization intersect as well as the ways local school contexts shape that intersection. Wang (2001) argues that those who design and implement mentoring programs "should pay attention to the influences of instructional contexts on mentoring and the kinds of learning opportunities that mentoring creates for novice teachers in different contexts" (p. 51). He indicates that mentoring programs often approach the mentoring process with different goals and purposes in mind and therefore open different opportunities for novices' learning. Wang studied 23 mentors working in different

programs and schools in the United States, the United Kingdom, and China. He found that even when mentors were practicing reform-minded teaching, their mentoring practices did not necessarily create the necessary opportunities for novices to learn to teach in the reform-minded ways. According to Wang, their mentoring practices were influenced by their instructional contexts such as the structures of school curriculum, teaching and mentoring work, and the student population. He concludes: "Without substantial support for learning to be an effective mentor, these mentors thought and acted more like local guides who helped novices adapt to the *existing* context and culture of teaching, rather than like professional teacher educators who did everything possible to support novices in developing ambitious teaching practice " (p. 70, emphasis added).

Developing "ambitious" teaching practices is not always possible, according to Hargreaves and Fullan (2000), because mentoring programs are still operating under an "old model" that no longer meets the needs of beginning teachers in this new millennium. They call for a "deeper conceptualization" of mentoring as part of "a transforming [of] teaching into a true learning profession" (p. 55). They argue that because of developments in learning theories (e.g. constructivism, alternative assessment), the old model of mentoring, where experts who are certain about their "craft" can pass on its principles to eager novices, no longer applies (p. 52). They contend that if schools maintain the assumption that mentor teachers know best, innovative new teachers might experience the mentoring relationship as an oppressive rather than supportive one: "Mentors may seem more like tormentors, and the process of induction into

the profession may amount to seduction of the new teacher *away* from the purposes and practices they recently acquired in their teacher preparation experiences" (p. 53, emphasis added). The socialization process is further complicated by the many challenges novices face during their first years. Goodson (1998) indicates that beginning teachers become so overwhelmed coping with other difficulties—discipline problems, official policies and procedures, parental communications, to name a few—that for the sake of survival "these new teachers routinely weld themselves to the existing teacher culture. While this does help them survive, any visions for systemic change they might have harbored are typically lost in the process" (p. 50). For mentors to assist novices as they transact with local school contexts, it is important to identify how mentors conceptualize mentoring and how existing school cultures affect mentor-beginning teacher relationships.

Summary

Although mentoring and induction programs are generally viewed to be successful, there is still much to be learned. More research on induction and teacher socialization is needed to determine how best to support novices as they construct knowledge of the teaching profession and develop as educators in specific disciplines, to explore ways to eliminate barriers and constraints that render some programs ineffectual, and to investigate further beginning teachers' and mentors' perspectives. Although beginning teacher-mentor relationships have been explored through surveys and interviews, it is likely that a deeper understanding could be gained through a more intensive study of fewer cases

within a specific discipline. Although the education community seems to accept that mentors can have a positive effect on teacher retention, the question remains about what is actually involved in beginning teacher-mentor transactions and what experiences shape beginning teachers' and mentors' notions of induction support.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS AND DESIGN

This qualitative study was designed to investigate the mentoring needs of beginning high school English teachers from their perspectives and those of their mentors. This chapter provides a rationale and description of the research design and the methods used to conduct the study and will also provide the following information: 1) inception of the study, 2) personal assumptions and biases, 3) the context of the study, 4) the research sites, 5) the participants in the study, 6) data and data collection procedures, 7) data analysis procedures, and 8) limitations of the study.

Design and Rationale

The questions that guide this research study focus on investigating the mentoring needs of beginning English teachers and exploring participants' ideas about mentoring and induction. To review, the research questions are as follows:

What are the mentoring needs of two beginning high school English teachers, and how are those needs manifested in beginning teacher-mentor transactions in a mentoring relationship?

What do we come to understand about induction support and the complex sets of experiences, assumptions, and local school contexts that shape these two beginning teachers' and mentors' conceptualization of it?

In order to address my research questions, I chose to conduct a qualitative study. I was interested in exploring the nature of beginning teachers' experiences with mentoring rather than determining how many beginning teachers experienced mentoring in particular ways; therefore, a qualitative study is appropriate since its focus is on quality rather than quantity. Qualitative studies are concerned with gaining understanding of the meaning people have constructed (Creswell, 1998).

Qualitative studies also approach inquiry from a constructivist paradigm. As discussed in Chapter 2, from a constructivist perspective, reality is contextual and socially constructed (Dewey, 1934; Rosenblatt, 1978; Vygotsky, 1978; Gadamer, 1978; Bakhtin, 1981). Merriam (1998) refers to this orientation as "interpretive" research in which "understanding the meaning of the process or lived experience constitutes the knowledge to be gained from an inductive... mode of inquiry. Multiple realities are constructed socially by individuals" (p. 4). Conducting this research from a constructivist perspective shaped this study as an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of participants' experiences with mentoring and induction support and the meanings they attach to those experiences. Constructivist theories also influenced my emphasis on contextualizing participants' experiences within particular mentor-mentee relationships in the local school environment in order to gain their perspectives on beginning teachers' mentoring needs and induction support.

Finally, qualitative studies have their roots in phenomenology. Phenomenology is rooted in the philosophy of Husserl and includes descriptions

of the meaning of experiences of a phenomenon, topic, or concept for several individuals. Initially, Kant used the term to distinguish the study of objects and events as they appear in our experience (phenomena) from objects and events as they are themselves (noumenon) (Magliola, 1989). Later Hegel formulated phenomenology as the science in which we come to know the mind as it is through the study of the ways in which it appears to us (Van Manen, 1990). With Husserl, however, phenomenology became a descriptive method as well as a human science movement based on modes of reflection. This study was conducted using a phenomenological approach in order to investigate the meaning that participants' attach to particular experiences.

In order to remain consistent with the constructivist paradigm and the phenomenological approach, I chose to present this research as a case study. A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of a situation and the meaning for those involved (Merriam, 1998). Case study is concerned with process, context, and discovery. I have chosen the qualitative case study design in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. A case study, in qualitative research, is the study of a "bounded system" focusing on either a case or an issue illustrated by a case or cases. A qualitative case study provides an in-depth study of this "bounded system" based on a number of data collection methods, and the researcher situates this system or case within its larger "context" or setting (Merriam, 1992).

Both case study and phenomenology are concerned with the emic or "insider" perspective and stress the perceiver's central role in determining

meaning. Combining the case study design with the phenomenological approach allowed me to describe each case, discuss emerging themes, and then based on those findings, provide an interpretation of the "lessons learned" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Guba & Lincoln, 1994) and make recommendations regarding mentoring programs. The case study design also allowed me to address the complexity of the issue and contextualize the experiences of the beginning teachers and their mentors. This study is a multi-site instrumental case study; it involves sites at different locations (two different schools) and focuses on specific issues (the issues of mentoring and induction), using the cases as vehicles to better understand those issues (Creswell, 1998).

Inception of the Study

My experience with mentoring and induction support began at a metro-Atlanta high school where I taught English for thirteen years. Over the years I witnessed beginning teachers encounter a number of schooling "realities" including the experiences of isolation, school politics, excessive workloads, loss of idealism, and classroom management problems. When the county established a mentoring program, I volunteered and participated in a two-week staff development training session--the first of its kind in the county--and became a Teacher Support Specialist (TSS). Over the course of the next several years I became a mentor to six first-year teachers; on one occasion I mentored two at one time. Five of the mentees were in the English department, and one was in the foreign language department.

Of the six first-year teachers I worked with, two left the profession after one year, two left after one year to teach in another school, one taught for a few years and then became a school counselor, one is still a teacher there. The retention rate from just this small sample is extremely poor. One of the first-year teachers who left the profession had been a student teacher with me the previous year and had had an incredibly rewarding experience, so much so that she accepted a position at my school the following year. However, she quit teaching after just one year. Even though I was her mentor, I felt that I was powerless to do anything about many of the challenges she faced as a new teacher. I was simply relying on what I had learned in my TSS training program. It wasn't enough. I felt that had the mentoring program met her needs and those of other beginning teachers more effectively, perhaps they might not have made the decision to leave the profession. The literature discussed in Chapter 2 regarding the influences of effective induction programs on teacher retention confirms the suspicions I had at that time.

Reflecting upon my work with mentees, I wanted to know what happened to these teachers during that first year. For me, the cumulative effect of working closely with first-year teachers was a profound sense of helplessness. I found that although I had been "trained" as a mentor and was considered a master teacher, I often felt ill-equipped to provide the beginning teachers the important assistance they needed during their induction years. I still felt that mentoring was extremely important, but I had a lot of questions. What is it that beginning teachers really need, both in general and from a mentor specifically? What can

be done to meet the needs of English teachers, in particular? How can the mentoring program be improved? What, if anything, can I do differently? What can I do, as one mentor, about larger school issues contributing to beginning teachers' difficulties?

When I entered the Language Education doctoral program, I was already interested in the topic of mentoring beginning English teachers because of my experiences of working with novices, both student teachers and first-year teachers. While in the doctoral program, I have also served as a university instructor and supervisor to teacher candidates in the UGA-NETS teacher preparation and certification program. For the past four years, as teacher candidates have graduated and accepted positions in a variety of schools, I have felt a pronounced ambivalence: I have been simultaneously thrilled for them and apprehensive for them--happy that they are embarking on an exciting journey, but fearful that they would not receive consistent support during their induction years. My experiences as a mentor and as a university instructor and supervisor have led to my interest in the research conducted for this study.

Assumptions and Biases

Because my research is so intimately connected to my own personal experiences as a teacher, mentor, and university supervisor, it important for me to state my assumptions about the topic under investigation. Although I served as a mentor and university supervisor and, of course, was at one time a beginning high school English teacher, I assume that: 1) no two perspectives are exactly alike; 2) the perspective of a beginning teacher may differ from that of a

mentor teacher; 3) the perspectives of beginning teachers and mentors may differ from perspectives presented in research on mentoring and induction; and 4) the perspective of a beginning high school English teacher or mentor today may differ from that of a beginning high school English teacher or mentor many years ago. I further assume that several insights can be extracted from the beginning teachers' and their mentors' perceptions of the mentoring needs of beginning high school English teachers and of induction support.

I approach this research study with a number of biases about the topic under investigation. Because of my experiences working with beginning teachers, I believe that the support mentors can provide new teachers is important but severely limited. I see mentors, as they are defined today (i.e., NOT in the classical sense), as providing much needed emotional support during new teachers' first years, but not having the kind of long-term effects that policymakers hope for such as teacher retention. The mentor programs that I have come to be familiar with, that is the one I participated in and the two represented in this study (along with anecdotes provided by some of the UGA-NETS graduates I frequently come in contact with), don't seem to do much more than assign a new teacher to an experienced teacher without a whole lot of thought put into the process. The experienced teacher may or may not have received mentor training, may or may not be in the same department, and may or may not be located in close proximity to the beginning teacher. If mentors receive a stipend, then they may be asked to submit paperwork at the end of the year, often in the form of a log of hours spent with the mentee. In addition, the

mentor may be required to complete one or two brief classroom observations, sometimes as short as 20 minutes, although what the mentor is supposed to do regarding the observations is not necessarily explained.

Personally, I'd like to see mentoring programs operate within induction programs involving the kinds of school-university collaborations described in Chapter 2. These programs operate under a broader vision of induction as an extension to teacher preparation and as a commitment to teaching as life-long learning. They pay more attention to the total induction process beginning with mentor teacher selection, training, and support. They also demonstrate commitment to the growth and development of new teachers as professionals over time. Because they offer sustained support to both beginning teachers and mentors alike, they are likely to provide more opportunity for mentor-mentee relationships in the "classical" sense to develop. What I like most of all about more comprehensive induction programs is their expressed goal of ultimately improving the learning experiences of students from kindergarten through twelfth grade. These are the kinds of mentoring programs I'd like to be a part of.

Context of the Study: The Preservice Program

For the past four years, I have been working with Dr. Peg Graham and Dr. Sally Hudson-Ross as a teaching assistant in the Language Education Department in the College of Education with the University of Georgia Network of English Teachers and Students (UGA-NETS) program. UGA-NETS is a teacher education program in secondary English that spans the entire school year. It prepares half of the teacher candidates from the Language Education

Department each year. This program is co-designed by a collaboration of high school and middle school English teachers and teacher education faculty. The UGA-NETS collaboration involves teachers from eight counties and twelve high schools and one middle school in the Northeast Georgia region. Students in UGA-NETS are either seniors in the final year of their Secondary English Education program or are enrolled in a Modified Masters program that includes a year of teacher candidacy and certification as part of their Masters work (Graham, et al, 1999).

Teacher candidates working with UGA-NETS move back and forth between campus and school classrooms for a full year. Two University faculty and at least one Teaching Assistant team-teach 15 hours of the program in the Fall semester, facilitate planning for teacher candidates' 3-week teaching experience in November, and supervise their full-time student teaching experience Spring semester. Teacher candidates spend the entire first two weeks of school with their mentor teachers helping to set up the classroom, grade papers, check out books, and observe initial procedures the first week of school.

During the Fall semester, they work in the school at least 12 hours per week, earning credit for two school-based courses, Supervised Field Experience and Guided Field Research. They also work on campus earning credit for courses integrating curriculum and methods for teaching literature, composition, and language--Teaching as Planning in Context; Teaching as Collaborative Inquiry; and Adolescent Literature (www.coe.uga.edu/language/). For the first

three weeks of the Spring semester, candidates take an intensive reading methods course and plan a teacher research project specific to their inquiries about teaching. During that time, they are also in their schools several days each week in order to complete their planning for Spring semester's 10 weeks of full-time student teaching. Throughout student teaching, candidates also participate in a student teaching seminar designed to support their reflections on the emerging theory and practice growing from their teaching experiences.

Each year the UGA-NETS program works with 15-25 teacher candidates. Over the past four years working in the program I have supervised 4-9 of those teacher candidates in 2-4 different schools each year. In addition, because the UGA-NETS program requires teacher candidates to spend extensive time in their assigned schools, I have established and maintained co-teaching relationships with mentor teachers. Over the past four years, I have worked in cooperation with a total of 26 different local high school teachers in order to supervise 27 different teacher candidates. Each year the UGA-NETS cohort group establishes a listserv so that the teacher candidates may communicate with and support each other during their full-time student teaching experiences. Teacher candidates maintain these listservs into their first year of teaching and beyond. As the result, I have been able to maintain relationships with all teacher candidates who remain active on their respective listserv, particularly those I supervised personally.

Context: Site of Research and Entree

The sites of research were two different local schools in the area surrounding the university. I obtained principals' signatures on access letters, and all participants signed consent forms. Access did not present a problem since I was not working with K-12 students. In addition, I had a prior relationship with the two novice teachers participating in the study as one of their campus instructors and supervisors during teacher preparation in the UGA-NETS program, and I knew one of the mentor teachers from his participation as a mentor teacher in UGA-NETS.

Participant Selection

I began the participant selection process the year before I began this study. I invited three teacher candidates and one first-year teacher to participate in the study. All four indicated that they would be glad to participate. At that point, I knew that the first-year teacher would be one of my participants because I already knew where she was employed. I also knew that her assigned mentor had agreed to participate as well. Which of the three teacher candidates would participate depended on where they took teaching positions the following year (the year of the study) as well as whether or not they would have an assigned mentor who would agree to participate. Two teacher candidates took positions in locations that were not readily accessible, so I chose the remaining teacher candidate who accepted a position closer to me in proximity. I felt that close proximity would afford me the opportunity to spend more time with participants in

order to conduct a more in-depth investigation. His mentor teacher also agreed to participate.

Therefore, this study includes a total of four participants, two of whom were graduates of the UGA-NETS teacher preparation program, and two of whom were their assigned mentors. Among the four participants, I included one 1998-1999 graduate (a second year teacher) and one 1999-2000 graduate (a first year teacher). I included two mentor-mentee pairs so that I could gain information about beginning teachers' mentoring needs at various stages of their career across their induction years. By including one graduate from the 1999-2000 cohort group, I gained information about one beginning teacher's mentoring needs during the first half of his first year. By including one graduate from the 1998-1999 cohort group, I gained information about one beginning teacher's mentoring needs during her first year of teaching and the first half of her second year. Also by including both a first-year teacher and a second-year teacher, I was able to learn about mentoring needs from two perspectives—the perspective of a beginning teacher in the midst of his first year and the perspective of a beginning teacher who had completed her first year and could look back on the entire first year in retrospect. In addition, including a second-year teacher provided insight into the continuing mentoring needs of beginning teachers.

I decided to work with only four participants because I felt that two cases would be a manageable number. I asked UGA-NETS graduates to participate because I had been teaching in this program for the past four years and was familiar with the preparation they had received before beginning inservice

teaching and because they were local and accessible. The two UGA-NETS participants I chose were graduates that I would consider strong teaching candidates. I chose them in order to investigate the topic under a "best-case" scenario. Implicit in this selection process is the assumption that if the strongest candidates in a year-long preparation program provide evidence of a need for support during their induction years, then so would other beginning teachers.

Both mentors participating were already considered to be veteran teachers and were assigned to the beginning teacher at his or her local school. Of the two mentors, one was a participant in the UGA-NETS program; the other had received her Ph.D. from the Language Education department and had done some research for UGA-NETS. She had also hosted other Language Education teacher candidates in the past. Since the two mentors had different backgrounds and experiences with mentoring, I have included as part of the research study an investigation of their prior experiences with mentoring, how those experiences shaped the way they constructed their roles as mentors, and how their perceptions of mentoring influenced their transactions with the novice teachers with whom they were paired.

One mentee and her assigned mentor are females. The teacher from the 1998-1999 cohort group had to be female since there were no males teaching from that group. The other two participants are male—the teacher from the 1999-2000 group and his mentor. Both graduates are White since the graduating cohort groups for 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 consisted of all White students with the exception of one Asian-American. Both graduates happened to be assigned

to White mentors, by far the most predominant race of both teachers and students in their schools.

The participants in the study are Luke, Corky, Beth, and Michelle (pseudonyms). Luke Braswell graduated from the UGA-NETS program in 2000 with a Bachelor's degree in secondary English education. At the time of the study, he was 22, single, and in his first year of teaching at Spring Mountain High School, the same school where he had completed his year of teacher candidacy.

Corky Holmes, a participant in the UGA-NETS teacher preparation program, was Luke's assigned mentor. He holds a B.A. in English from Presbyterian College and a M.Ed. in Language Education from UGA. At the time of the study, Corky was 46 and in his fourteenth year at Spring Mountain where he has spent his entire high school teaching career. He had served as mentor to three beginning teachers in previous years in addition to working with several student teachers. During the same year Corky was serving Luke as mentor, Corky was teaching the first semester on extended day (i.e. had no planning period), was teaching a course three evenings a week at a nearby community college, and was to host a student teacher the following semester. On top of all that, Corky was a single father who has four children ages fifteen and up, including one set of twins.

Beth Darcy graduated from the UGA-NETS program in 1999 with a Bachelor's degree in secondary English education. At the time of the study, she was 23, single, and in her second year of teaching at West Kennedy High School in Wilson County, a large suburban county just outside a booming metropolis.

Michelle Doty was her assigned mentor. Michelle holds a B.A. in English and a M.Ed. and a Ph.D. in Language Education, all from the University of Georgia. At the time of the study, Michelle was 34, single, and in her fourth year at West Kennedy. Prior to that she had taught seven years at another school in Wilson County. Beth was the first mentee Michelle had worked with, but she had hosted four student teachers previously and was in the process of mentoring a second beginning teacher.

Data and Data Collection

Data included classroom observations, observations of mentor-mentee conferences, email correspondence, interview transcriptions, documents related to the schools and their communities, and artifacts relating to teacher preparation and mentoring programs. Data were collected over a five month period from August 2000 through December 2000 (See Table 1). I allowed data sets to emerge as I attempted to follow the natural flow of each mentor-mentee relationship. By studying closely the mentor-beginning teacher transactions and their reflections on those transactions, I hoped to gain a deeper understanding of beginning teachers' mentoring needs and the ways in which mentors and beginning teachers go about addressing those needs.

Table 1 – Data Collection

	August	September	October	November	December
Luke- 1st year teacher	1 interview 3 emails	1 interview 5 emails 1 pre-observation conference 1 classroom observation 1 post-observation conference	1 interview 7 emails	1 interview 2 emails	1 interview 2 emails 1 pre-observation conference 1 classroom observation 1 post-observation conference (audio-tape only)
Corky- Luke's mentor	1 interview	1 interview 1 email 1 pre-observation conference 1 classroom observation 1 post-observation conference	1 interview	1 interview	1 interview 1 pre-observation conference 1 classroom observation 1 post-observation conference (audio-tape only)
Beth- 2nd year teacher	1 interview	1 interview	1 interview 1 email	2 interviews	
Michelle- Beth's mentor	1 interview	1 interview	1 interview	2 interviews	

Interviews. During the five-month data collection period, I conducted a total of nineteen interviews, five with each participant (one interview included two participants together). All interviews lasted between thirty and ninety minutes. I began with a general interview guide that focused on the areas of mentoring needs of beginning English teachers, mentor programs, mentor-mentee transactions, and perceptions of induction support (see Appendix A). Subsequently, I conducted interviews specific to mentor-mentee pairs after

receiving feedback from the previous interviews, emails, and observations, if applicable. However, in each interview I maintained the four areas listed above as the foundational foci.

Some interviews were conducted using stimulated recall. Stimulated recall interviews ask each participant to read transcripts of previous interviews, both their own and their mentor's or mentee's with his or her permission (DiPardo, 1993; Rose, 1984). The purpose of the stimulated recall interviews was to prompt deeper reflection regarding mentor-mentee transactions. Weinsheimer (1985) writes, "…it is always possible for me to call something to your attention that you hadn't noticed even though it lay within your field of vision. Because you hadn't noticed it, it will seem that you now see if for the first time: and yet because it lay within your field of vision, it will also seem familiar" (p. 157).

I conducted a total of eight interviews (out of the total of 19 interviews) that utilized stimulated recall for at least a portion of the interview: three with Michelle, two with Beth, two with Luke, and one with Corky. The first time stimulated recall was used with each participant, s/he read a transcript of our first interview together. During that interview, I also obtained permission to show that transcript or any subsequent interview transcripts to his or her mentor or mentee. During subsequent interviews using stimulated recall, participants read a transcript of an interview with their mentor or mentee. I used stimulated recall less frequently with Luke and Corky. Since Luke was a first-year teacher, he and Corky had a lot more to say about what they were experiencing at that time as a beginning teacher and mentor respectively. They were also operating under considerable

time constraints, and, therefore, had far less time to read lengthy interview transcripts. Since Beth was in her second year of teaching, the majority of mentor-mentee transactions had taken place during the previous school year. Beth and Michelle still talked often, but since West Kennedy's mentor program focused only on new teachers' first year, Michelle was no longer Beth's "official" mentor. Therefore, I used stimulated recall more often with Beth and Michelle in order to provide additional opportunities for reflection on their experiences the previous year and the meaning they attached to those experiences.

Observations. In addition to interviews, I conducted three observations of mentor-mentee conferences and two classroom observations. Corky was required to observe Luke teaching at least twice throughout the school year. He conducted observations in September and December of 2000 and did not observe Luke at any other time during the semester. Each classroom observation was to be preceded by a pre-observation conference and followed by a post-observation conference. I was able to accompany Corky to the two classroom observations he conducted and was able to observe both pre-observation conferences and one post-observation conference. The other post-observation conference was audiotaped and transcribed. I accompanied Corky to his two classroom observations of Luke's teaching for two reasons. I wanted to observe Corky's actions during his observation to see if they were consistent with his philosophy about observations and to see if they were consistent with what he had told Luke during pre-observation conferences. Also, by

accompanying Corky on classroom observations, I was better able to make sense of their conversations during post-observation conferences.

After the first pre-observation conference/classroom observation/post-observation conference experience, I interviewed first Luke and then Corky to explore their thoughts about the observation process. After the second pre-observation conference, but before the classroom observation and post-observation conference (which took place the following day), I interviewed Luke and Corky together. Since this was to be my final interview with them, I wanted to investigate their perceptions of their mentor-mentee relationship as it unfolded over the course of the semester.

I was unable to observe any mentor-mentee conferences between Beth and Michelle. Although Michelle did recall observing Beth in the classroom the previous year, neither recalled participating in any pre- or post-observation conferences. In addition, since West Kennedy's mentor program did not include second-year teachers, Michelle was no longer obligated to observe Beth's teaching. In fact, Michelle had already been assigned to a new mentee. Also, since Beth and Michelle only talked with one another informally and had no set meeting time, I was unable to observe any of their conversations.

Emails. In addition to interviews and observations, I also collected email correspondence. I provided participants with some general parameters for the content of their emails but did not ask them to respond to specific questions. For example, I asked participants to keep me updated regarding their mentoring transactions and to write about what they were experiencing as beginning

teachers and mentors. Participants also used emails to discuss some of the informal conversations that so frequently occur between mentor and mentee. I collected nineteen emails from Luke, one from Corky, one from Beth, and none from Michelle. As a data source, Luke's emails provided a record of his experiences as a beginning English teacher and helped keep me up-to-date regarding mentoring transactions between him and Corky. Beth and Michelle reflected on their mentor-mentee transactions and their experiences as a beginning teacher and mentor respectively almost exclusively during interviews; therefore, I have only one email from Beth.

Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis were simultaneous processes. Raw data in the form of audiotaped interviews and audiotaped pre- and post-observation conferences were transcribed verbatim for each participant. I then analyzed the interview transcripts, conference transcripts, and emails following procedures for phenomenological data analysis (Moustakas, 1994). The procedural steps used were as follows:

I. I read participants' interview transcripts, pre- and post-observation conference transcripts, and emails several times to become familiar with them. Most of the early interviews were transcribed and read soon after the interview because I knew I needed to make the transcripts available to participants in order to facilitate the stimulated recall portion of the interviews. Some later interviews were not transcribed until after I had collected all

data; however, I always took notes during interviews and looked over those before conducting the next interview. Emails were read upon receipt. After all data was collected and all interviews were transcribed, I read over everything again many times.

II. Using an open-coding system, I began extracting phrases and sentences that directly pertained to my research questions (See Appendix B for an example). At first, I focused on extracting phrases and sentences that pertained to the four areas of focus that I had included in my general interview guide: the mentoring needs of beginning English teacher, mentor programs, mentor-mentee transactions, and perceptions of induction support.

III. Each significant statement was listed and treated as having equal worth. This process is called horizonalization (Creswell, 1998). The term horizonalization refers to the unlimited nature of horizons: “We can never exhaust completely our experience of things no matter how many times we reconsider them or view them. A new horizon arises each time that one recedes” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 95). By treating each statement as having equal worth, the possibility for discovery becomes unlimited “as we seek to understand an experience” (p. 95).

IV. During the horizonalization process, I was looking for any patterns that emerged in the data. I placed phrases and statements into categories and then clustered them into

common themes (again, see example in Appendix B). As I began this process, I found that some statements fit into more than one common theme or category. For example, Luke stated: “I love what I am teaching, but having no background in mythology is requiring extensive research on my part....” I placed this statement in the common theme of “Content knowledge/research/materials” under the overall category of “Time challenges” in the section on Beginning English Teacher Challenges, but I also placed it under the common themes of “Feelings of inadequacy” and “Love of kids/teaching/coaching (feeling conflicted)” both under the overall category of “Mental/emotional challenges” also in the section on Beginning English Teacher Challenges. When I felt a statement fit in more than one common theme or category, I just went ahead and listed it multiple places. I also found that some statements did not fit into any common theme that I had identified at first. For example, the common theme I mentioned above “Love of kids/teaching/coaching (feeling conflicted)” was a common theme I added because Luke, in particular, made several comments that were followed by a “but” such as “I love what I’m teaching, but...” and “...it’s the most fun class to teach, but...” or similar statements that seemed to exemplify a love/hate relationship of sorts with the teaching profession. These

comments kept nagging at me as illustrating an important theme unto themselves, so I added the common theme and placed it under the category I felt was most appropriate. Finally, as always, some statements were omitted as not pertaining to the study. Nearly everything participants said was placed in a common theme somewhere, but others statements were omitted. For example, I omitted quotes that were really questions to me clarifying what I was asking them, and I omitted quotes that were personal questions to me about how things were going.

After all data were collected and all interviews, conferences, and emails were analyzed, I conducted within-case analyses exploring in depth two mentor-mentee relationships and presented them as two separate cases. The within-case analysis involved providing a detailed description of each case and themes within the case (Creswell, 1998). After each case was written as a chapter, I asked each participant involved in that case to read the chapter. I specifically asked that participants check for any factual inaccuracies. Most importantly, I asked that they let me know if they felt I had accurately represented their perspectives and experiences as they had represented them to me and as I had observed them. I indicated that I would be willing to omit or change any material that they felt uncomfortable with for any reason or felt I had taken too much liberty with or misinterpreted. One participant asked that I reword slightly one of her quotes because she felt its meaning could be misinterpreted. Other than that

one request and pointing out a couple of factual inaccuracies, all participants indicated that the chapters accurately reflected their views and experiences.

In addition to within-case analyses and participant review, I conducted cross-case analyses investigating similarities and differences between the two beginning English teachers, the two mentors, and the two mentor-mentee relationships presented in each case. The cross-case analysis involved examining themes across the two cases to discern themes that are common to the two cases (Creswell, 1998). Overall, data analysis involved thematic analyses within and across cases as well as interpretations of meaning, such as identifying and problematizing issues the cases raised related to the topic under investigation (Creswell, 1998).

Limitations

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis rather than surveys or test instruments. There is no "control group" or laboratory setting. As data collector, the researcher affects the data being collected. For this reason, it is extremely important for me to acknowledge my role in this study as participant/observer. All of my participants understood that the focus of my study was transactions between mentors and beginning teachers--beginning teachers with whom I have worked closely and about whom I care a great deal. I communicated openly and explicitly with the mentors of these beginning teachers my prior relationship with these participants as their university instructor and supervisor. I also made clear that although my role was one of researcher, I needed the mentors' permission to adopt a

participant/observer role in order to address any concerns I might have about either beginning teacher. I made clear that as a caring educator, I would be willing to, or even feel ethically obligated to, exchange my researcher role for a mentoring role should I feel that doing so were in the best interest of the beginning teacher.

Both mentors readily granted me permission to shift researcher and mentor roles at any time, and I became a participant/observer in my research. As a participant/observer I became a part of the context in which mentor-mentee transactions took place, and therefore, took part in the construction of their experiences. On two separate occasions, Luke and Beth asked me questions that shifted my role somewhat from researcher to mentor, but their questions were a part of the natural flow of conversation. I think they asked me questions because I happened to be there talking with them, not because the question was something they wouldn't ask their mentors had they been there instead of me. Luke asked me a question over email about time management to which I responded with some general advice. This question didn't seem out of the ordinary since I had been his supervisor the previous year. Beth asked me the question "Does it ever get better?" referring to her extensive workload to which I responded that the workload seldom decreased but that her ability to create strategies to cope with it would improve. Other than on these two occasions, I did not take on a mentoring role.

On another occasion, however, I would have taken on a mentor role but did not have the opportunity. I accompanied Corky on his second and final

observation of Luke's teaching. During that observation I witnessed some instructional strategies that I would consider ineffectual. As Luke's supervisor or mentor, I would have felt compelled to conference with him about the observation and address the instructional issues I had observed. Had I been present during the post-observation conference, I would have been prepared to broach some topics if Corky did not. However, unfortunately, that was the one meeting I was unable to attend and so only had the audiotape of the conference available to me as data.

All participants involved were very conscious that I was exploring the topic of mentoring beginning English teachers for this study. As indicated before, Luke and Beth had been teacher candidates that I had supervised, and Corky knew me very well through his participation with UGA-NETS. In addition, while I had never met Michelle, I knew her name as someone who had just received her Ph.D. in Language Education, the same department in which I was working. All of these connections created a wonderful sense of familiarity that, I feel, had both positive and negative effects. Two positive effects of a sense of familiarity were a sense of trust and a shared vocabulary. Having prior relationships with many of the participants created a sense of trust; participants clearly seemed comfortable speaking with me and felt they could speak openly and honestly. Because we all had so much in common, including the fact that we all were connected to teaching secondary English and had worked or studied with English Education faculty at UGA, we possessed a shared vocabulary or language, if you will, with which to discuss the issues. I think because we all had so much in common,

conversations seemed to flow naturally, without degenerating into stilted question and answer sessions.

One negative side effect of our familiarity with one another was that some participants seemed to make special efforts on my behalf to stick to the topic when they began straying off into other issues. I felt that some participants were at times so cognizant of why we were talking that they would even refer to my "paper" within the course of an interview. Perhaps participants were simply self-conscious about participating in the study, but I also received the distinct impression that they cared about me as a person and were demonstrating a desire to help me be successful in my endeavor. Furthermore, I think because some participants anticipated having to provide updates for me regarding their mentoring transactions, they made more effort to have something to tell me. More specifically, participating in my research may have motivated them to meet together more often than they might have otherwise. This is probably not a bad thing, but it may have altered the data nonetheless.

Validity and Reliability

Qualitative studies do not adhere to the canons of validity and reliability in the traditional sense. However, qualitative research is concerned with establishing a sense of "trustworthiness" or "credibility." In order to ensure rigor in a qualitative study, qualitative researchers have proposed a variety of procedures for establishing validity and reliability. Suggested methods for establishing internal validity include providing statements of personal experience, triangulating several points of view, and returning to participants for member

validation (Merriam 1998; Creswell 1998). This study includes statements of my prior experiences with mentoring beginning English teachers and carefully addresses my theoretical framework, personal assumptions and biases, and limitations of the study. I have included as participants not just the beginning teachers, but their mentors as well in order to examine the topic from multiple perspectives. In addition, as I indicated in the Data Analysis section, I have had participants read their cases and my findings in order to confirm that the final descriptions and findings I formulated accurately reflected their original perspectives. Participants indicated a few factual inaccuracies, which I corrected, but otherwise indicated that my representations of their perspectives, for better or for worse, were true to their experiences.

Suggested methods for establishing external validity include providing modal comparison, describing with thick, rich detail all parts of the research study, and choosing a multisite design (Merriam 1998; Creswell 1998). In order to compare these mentor-mentee relationships with other mentoring situations, I included in ChapterTwo a thorough review of literature relevant to mentoring and induction support. This study also includes detailed descriptions of its design, research process, procedures, and findings. The sets of participants involved are from two different schools situated within two different communities.

In order to establish reliability, qualitative researchers suggest providing an audit trail and collecting data from multiple data sources (Merriam 1998; Creswell 1998). Each of the steps in the research process is outlined, providing both an audit trail and a means by which the study could be replicated or

continued should another researcher find that process useful. The variety of data sources provides triangulation, and the analysis of the data is interpretive and detailed, supported with specific quotes.

Summary

In this chapter I described the research design, the context of the study, the participants in the study, and the methods used for collecting and analyzing data. Chapters Four and Five respectively present two cases of mentor-mentee relationships. Each chapter includes participants' perceptions of beginning teachers' mentoring needs; discusses participants' experiences, assumptions, and local school contexts that shape their perspectives on induction support; and describes mentor-mentee transactions that took place during the mentee's first (and, in Beth's case, first and second) year of teaching.

CHAPTER FOUR

CASE STUDY: LUKE BRASWELL AND CORKY HOLMES

The purpose of this case study is to explore the mentoring needs of one first-year secondary English teacher and how those needs were manifested in his relationship with his mentor teacher. In order to gain a deeper understanding of induction support, this chapter represents how each participant constructed his notion of the mentoring needs of beginning secondary English teachers and how that constructed knowledge influenced mentor-mentee transactions. The chapter is designed in such a way as to create a portrait of two people with individual notions of new English teachers' mentoring needs and then demonstrate how those two people transact in a mentor-mentee relationship. The chapter is organized so that the school setting in which the mentor-mentee relationship evolves is first introduced, followed by an introduction to the mentor teacher and first-year teacher, respectively, and their notions of the mentoring needs of beginning English teachers. Following their individual descriptions is a discussion of their transactions and the factors that affected them. Finally, I discuss issues raised in this case related to mentoring and induction support.

The School Setting

Luke Braswell and Corky Holmes are secondary English teachers at Spring Mountain High School, the only high school in a rapidly growing county just outside a University town. Spring Mountain's student body is predominantly

White middle class and represents limited rural/urban/suburban diversity. Spring Mountain is on 4x4 block scheduling with two 18-week semesters. The school offers courses on four levels: remedial, advanced, honors, and Advanced Placement (AP). Approximately 70% of the student body go on to study in postsecondary schools. Spring Mountain consists of nearly 1800 students (approximately 1700 at the time of the study), and the numbers are expected to continue to increase. To serve the growing number of students, the school has obtained fourteen trailers. In addition, some teachers are required to float among classrooms throughout the day. Because of the rapid growth the county is experiencing, an additional high school is scheduled to open in the Fall of 2004.

The Mentor Teacher: Corky Holmes

Corky Holmes, Luke's mentor teacher during his first year, had been teaching for fourteen years at the time of the study, all at Spring Mountain. He holds a BA in English from Presbyterian college and an MED in Language Education from the University of Georgia. Corky had served as a mentor to two beginning teachers in the past before working with Luke. He had also served as Mentor Teacher to several teacher candidates in the UGA-NETS program.

The mentoring concept

According to Corky, mentoring is an important part of a support system crucial to the success of beginning teachers. He perceives their situation to be nothing less than precarious at best:

> …what often happens to the first-year teachers, I was thinking about the turtles, baby turtles. You know, the momma goes up on the beach, lays

> the eggs, and says, “I’ve done everything I can for you, Bu-bye.” And then the turtles have to find their way, and if they’re not protected, they get eaten up. And what happens, you were talking about after 3 years teachers are gone, well, out of 10,000 turtle eggs, you only have about 400 remaining because everybody else gets swallowed up. And that’s sort of what seems to happen in teaching. If you don’t have a careful support system, you’re going to get swallowed up.

Corky’s “turtle” analogy indicates that he views beginning teachers as desperately in need of an extensive system of careful support. He recognizes the complexity of factors that contribute to the quality of a beginning teacher’s first year in the profession, of which mentoring is only one part:

> I don’t think [mentoring] is one of these unbelievably vital things to save all the teachers, but I think it’s one cog, one little leg of the support going on here. Again, like we said, the school atmosphere, contact, the departmental environment, the background and training the student teacher had. And just there are a lot of things. Community support, um what sort of schedule did you give this person? Did you make them float the first year and let them be the whipping boy for the department ‘cause they’re brand new? I mean, what did you do with him? All those things are going to add up. I think the mentor program is one of the legs of support that could make a healthy start.

Corky feels that mentoring works best within an overall context of support that includes the entire school and the specific department, in particular.

Background and training

In an effort to become part of that careful support system he describes, Corky had been trained several years previously as a Teacher Support Specialist (TSS), one of the county's requirements for mentoring beginning teachers. As the result, he is one of seven members of his department who has met the county requirement to serve beginning teachers in this capacity. His responsibilities as a mentor to a beginning teacher, as he understood them, were to meet with his mentee once a week and observe him teaching on two occasions during the school year. He was to keep track of their meetings and observations and submit paperwork documenting these activities to the county's curriculum director at the end of the year.

Corky had informed the assistant principal, who was their school contact person for the county's mentoring program, that he would be willing to mentor a beginning teacher the year of the study. He was then paired with Luke but was unsure how that decision was made or even who made it. He assumed that people in the county's Board of Education office made those decisions since they handled all the program's paperwork. He doubted that much thought went into the process: "I think what happens is they're not really thinking when they do this…They're just throwing people [together]." In spite of the perceived lack of purposeful decision-making on the part of the curriculum director, Corky was happy to serve Luke as his mentor.

Mentors and mentees were introduced to each other at a meeting for new teachers that took place the day before all other teachers were to report to work

to begin planning for the semester (the day before “preplanning” days began). Corky was unable to attend this meeting but felt he didn’t need to anyway since he knew Luke from the year before when Luke had completed his student teaching at Spring Mountain. Other than the introductory meeting, there had been no other required meetings for mentors or their beginning teachers.

Conceptualizing the mentor role

Corky developed his notion of mentoring from a variety of sources including his own experiences as a new teacher, his Teacher Support Specialist (TSS) training seminars, his participation in the UGA-NETS teacher preparation program, and his experiences with mentoring beginning teachers. First of all, Corky’s philosophy toward mentoring was shaped by recollections of his own experiences as a first-year teacher:

> I wanted to be left alone. I wanted to find my own way. I didn’t really want to feel (and I think it’s partially someone’s personality), I wanted to feel like I could pull my own self up by my own bootstraps. I would have felt weak, feeling like I had to lean on somebody, and I’m not very good at that. That’s not a strength; that’s probably a weakness of mine to not have the ability to recognize when you need help. But I’d rather sit there and slug it out and do a poorer job sluggin' it out on my own than go to somebody for help, and again, I don’t think that’s the most wise way to be, but that’s just the way I am.

Corky’s recollections of his feelings as a beginning teacher echo what seem to be typical sentiments expressed by many starting out in the profession.

Beginning teachers frequently avoid asking for help because of a fear of appearing incompetent or because of a false notion that they should be able to handle everything independently (Veenman, 1984; Gilles & Cramer, 2001).

In forming his ideas about the mentoring role, Corky also relied on what little he remembered from his TSS training seminars:

> I had always before just thought that an observation [was] sit there and just sort of observe what goes on and maybe even thought of it as being evaluative, and when we went through the training, the thing that sticks with me was the information on observations…. "If they're concerned about students being off-task," they said, "you could use this observation method: just sweep the room. Every 4 minutes, you're making a room sweep and you're jotting down…what each student is doing, and…you can come up with about 8 or 10 in your observation period." And so what I…learned most is that the observation is a method of the first year teacher saying, "…I feel like I'm not calling on…a wide array of students, I'm centering on these one kids. I don't know how to break out of that." Well, there's a particular observation method, which would track exactly what's going on, what is the dialogue that's happening between students during discussion? Who's talking to whom when? And you can track that down in a graphic in a visual way. So I guess I was interested in the way an observation would help someone be a better teacher…. So, that's what I remember mostly.

The TSS training Corky underwent helped him view classroom observations as an opportunity to collect data in ways that assist beginning teachers to see things in their classrooms that they might not otherwise be able to see. Corky found this approach to observation to be consistent with a non-evaluative stance toward mentoring: "…the actual observation should be little more than just an observation, not an evaluation, basically." Although his TSS training did provide Corky with an approach to observation he found useful, he regretted that he remembered little else from those seminars and simply did not have enough time to review them: "…and again this has been a long time, and I don't remember that much. I wish I could remember more. I think it would be better for me if I remembered more. And it would be good for me to go back and look at that material, but I haven't."

In addition to TSS training, Corky's notion of mentoring was also shaped by the participation of several members of the English department, himself included, in the UGA-NETS teacher preparation program. Corky had participated in UGA-NETS by attending summer seminars for professional development, by conducting workshops for new mentors to teacher candidates (MTs), and by serving as MT to teacher candidates himself:

> I recall hearing MTs talk about their student teachers and what they're doing with their student teachers because I think an awful lot of what we're doing [for new teachers and teacher candidates] are some very similar things. The bottom line is we're trying to make [new teachers and teacher candidates] more effective, we're trying to make sure they have all the

> tools in hand to do the best job they can…. We have the basic goal, same goal in mind for each, and so the methodology you use as a good MT is often the same methodology you use as a mentor. Well, MT, mentor, same thing, just the different groups.

Corky's idea, then, that mentoring involves helping new teachers be effective and equipping them to be the best they can be has, at least in part, evolved from his and his colleagues' participation in the UGA-NETS teacher preparation program.

Corky's ideas about mentoring were also shaped by his previous experiences as a mentor to novice teachers. Having worked with two beginning teachers previously, Corky developed some very specific ideas about the mentoring role and about how mentoring does and doesn't work best. Corky views mentoring of first-year teachers to be very practical in nature:

> …an awful lot of what's going on with mentoring is to some degree at least at the beginning very practical stuff. Who do you go to for this or that problem? Things that you probably would get from your department, also, but it's nice to know that somebody is legally tied to you, you have a reason to go to them, and it's not like you are imposing on anybody by asking them stupid questions time and again. A mentor teacher, that's their job to deal with these stupid questions, and in the beginning that's what you're dealing with.

This idea of mentoring as being available to answer questions that mentees may perceive as "stupid" for one reason or another is consistent with Corky's recollections of his own experiences and feelings as a beginning teacher. He

remembers wanting to “slug it out” on his own but might have felt less reluctant to ask for help had there been someone specifically identified as available and willing to provide him with assistance and support.

In addition to being available to answer questions for beginning teachers, Corky also envisions part of his role as a mentor as anticipating trouble spots that the novice teacher may not be expecting: “I think more important is envisioning problems or opportunities that he may not be…aware of….” For example, Corky feels that a mentor should anticipate questions or even initiate conversations early in the semester regarding midterm and final exams, documentation of students’ progress (particularly regarding special education students), parent contact, and end-of-semester curriculum issues.

Corky feels that mentoring works best when the novice teacher and mentor are in the same department:

> I would, even though I understand that there is some justification for considering having people out of field be mentors out of field of their mentee because you’re forcing someone to become familiar with another department, which is always good, and it keeps you from circling the wagons around your own department. I understand the logic there, but I think it breaks down in practicality. I think I would consider probably almost always having somebody in the field be the mentor just because I think it works better that way. You can be of more benefit that way.

One of the benefits of being in the same department is simply proximity. “I said on the evaluations [of the school’s mentoring program] for a couple of years,

please do something to make it so that you can have better proximity with the people [you are mentoring], probably in the department because that's the people who are probably going to mentor you anyway…. Please don't mentor people outside of their area, outside of their field." Corky related his experience with working with a beginning teacher in another department:

> They kept for the past two years giving me people that were completely on the other side of the building. And I had last year, the girl was a coach, a cheerleading coach and she had tons of responsibility, and because I was nowhere near her, and our planning periods did not match…I had a difficult time trying to meet, and we wound up one day a week for lunch. She [last year's mentee] was in the science wing and P.E. and so a lot of times she didn't show up, and we would have to use the copy room conversation for 5 seconds as our meeting, and I might have elaborated a bit more than we actually did, but sometimes the regulation becomes something that's superfluous—the meeting each week.

Corky feels that mentors and mentees should be in the same department since, at least in a practical sense, the mentor and mentee will be in closer proximity or have more occasion to see each other. Teachers already operate under such tremendous time constraints, new teachers particularly, that making a special trip to the other side of the building to meet with someone who is not even in your department becomes more burdensome than helpful.

In addition to simple proximity, Corky's notion of mentoring and his mentoring practices are affected by the dynamics of the English department of

which he is a part. The teachers in the English department at Spring Mountain taught in rooms located in one wing of the school building with the exception of a couple of teachers who taught outside the main building in trailers. Located in the English wing was a workroom large enough to house a small kitchen area, a restroom, a private office for the department chair, a desk for each member of the department, three computers, a small round table and chairs, and walls of filing cabinets. English teachers generally worked in the workroom before and after school and during their planning periods. They also ate lunch there. For Corky, the English department is an important source of support for beginning teachers:

> The primary mentor for these first-year teachers is their department; it's not this individual who is called their mentor. …I don't think there's any doubt that the primary mentoring happens in a group setting with the department members. It certainly should. If it's not, the department's got a problem. And our department, we have a strong one, and I think people turn and ask the closest person next to them, and in our department the people are very open to offer whatever they have, open their files up, do whatever to find an answer, and that should be, if you hadn't got a family established within your department, you've got a problem. And in that case an individual assigned to be the mentor probably becomes pretty vital if you have a dysfunctional department, which I know a lot of schools probably do. We don't have that situation, so we don't really need a mentoring program so much here because we have fourteen mentors in

> the department. So I think that's another one of these things [about the mentoring context] that's pretty vital. What's the atmosphere? What's the relationship in the department? The environment? And if it's not very good, the mentor system would seem to be pretty vital.

Corky's description of the atmosphere in the English department supports his notion that his role as mentor is one part of an overall context of support for beginning teachers. He does not view himself as having the sole responsibility of support and development of his mentee, rather he is one person in an active network of support that includes the entire department.

Corky's mentoring practices while working with Luke were also influenced by the fact that Luke had been at Spring Mountain the entire previous year during his teacher candidacy:

> The fact that he was here had a lot of effect on what he's done. I hope he's felt free…and will be free the rest of term to come to me about any of the stuff, but a lot of it he just doesn't need because he's sort of been in the routine with us….

Since Corky perceived much of the mentoring role to be answering procedural questions and helping with "practical stuff," the fact that Luke had been at Spring Mountain the previous year only added to Corky's perception that Luke really wouldn't need much in the way of mentoring: "Of course since he was here last year, it makes a lot of this superfluous. It doesn't mean much at all. He knew everything, and he's a bright guy."

Finally, Corky's mentoring practices were also influenced by the fact that Luke graduated from the UGA-NETS teacher preparation program:

> …and the program, the UGA-NETS program is so different in the fact that it really sets them up to be, I think, walking in with a lot of confidence and so that has affected [our mentor-mentee transactions].

Having participated in the UGA-NETS program in several capacities, Corky had intimate knowledge of the program from which Luke graduated. His confidence in the overall preparation this program provides its teacher candidates coupled with Luke's student teaching experience at Spring Mountain the year before left Corky feeling that Luke probably was not going to be needing him very much as a mentor.

Assumptions regarding the mentor role

As Corky began to construct and enact his role of mentor teacher, his notions of mentoring were shaped by multiple factors including his own experiences as a new teacher, his TSS mentor training, his prior experiences with teacher candidates and beginning teachers, and his knowledge of Luke's teacher preparation. The total of these experiences and sources of knowledge led Corky to draw some conclusions about mentoring and induction support. He came to believe that a designated mentor is one part of a support system crucial to the success of beginning teachers and that mentoring works best when the novice teacher is paired with a mentor who is in his or her own department (and, therefore, hopefully close in proximity) and when that department as a whole is supportive: "The department has to step in and say, 'This person's part of our

team. Everybody is going to support everyone else.' And ideally your mentor is your department." He also came to envision his role of mentor as being available to answer questions and address practical concerns, as well as to anticipate possible problem areas new teachers might face. The combination of viewing the department as a collective mentor and envisioning his mentor role as addressing practical matters contributed to Corky's assumption that Luke would not be needing him very much as a mentor since Luke, having completed his teacher candidacy at Spring Mountain, already knew the department members and already knew the answers to "practical" questions. Basically, the only thing "new" Corky envisioned doing for Luke as a beginning teacher was fulfilling the mentor program's requirements of meeting weekly and conducting the two required classroom observations.

The Beginning English Teacher: Luke Braswell

At the time of this study, Luke Braswell was beginning the first year of his teaching career at Spring Mountain. He had a BSED in Secondary English Education at the University of Georgia as a graduate of the year-long UGA-NETS program, during which he completed his student teaching at Spring Mountain. Luke decided to enter the teaching profession because of his profound love for and commitment to kids of all ages. His father was a long-time high school teacher and football coach; as a result, Luke had grown up observing the positive influence a committed teacher and coach could have on students' lives. Luke had also worked with preschoolers in a local daycare center.

During his teacher candidacy, Luke had developed a close relationship with Gary, his mentor teacher. Gary was also a former graduate of the UGA-NETS program and was mentoring for only the second year when he was paired with Luke. Gary was also an assistant football coach and head track coach. The UGA-NETS teaching team often commented on what a great match Luke and Gary were since both expressed their commitment to quality teaching as well as quality coaching and both clearly demonstrated their love for kids.

Gary's teaching schedule, during the Spring semester of Luke's teacher candidacy, included a challenging freshman remedial class, a senior college preparatory British literature class, and a senior sociology class. During Spring semester, Luke had the opportunity to serve as full-time teacher to the senior and freshman English classes. As a result, he was solely responsible for planning and executing comprehensive units on *The Canterbury Tales*, Renaissance literature, *Macbeth, Othello, Romeo and Juliet, The Miracle Worker*, and poetry as well as integrated lessons on grammar and vocabulary. One of the highlights for Luke took place as he and Gary taught a unit on Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Othello*. Students were divided into two groups, and each group studied one of the plays in depth, selected key episodes from the play, wrote a script representing the play in modern times, assigned roles, rehearsed, and presented the plays to the entire class. Students indicated that they had never been more engaged with or learned more about any other work of literature they had ever studied. For Luke, working with Gary had been a truly rewarding experience.

At the end of that year, Luke was sad to learn that Gary would be leaving and accepting teaching and coaching positions elsewhere even though Gary's leaving would open the door for Luke to step in. Gary encouraged Luke to apply for the open position, feeling that no one could be more perfect for it. Luke was hired for the position and began teaching at Spring Mountain in the Fall of 2000. Luke felt that the close relationship between him and Gary set him up nicely for his first year of teaching:

> Like last year with Gary when I wasn't so time constrained, of course, ya'll set that up so he and I were together a lot, but even when we weren't we'd email like about this and this and that. And I think having a mentor all of last year had a big effect too because I haven't felt like really that I needed Corky that much.

Luke's experiences at Spring Mountain, specifically his work with Gary during his teacher candidacy, contributed to an overall sense of comfort and confidence as he began his first year of inservice teaching.

Expectations regarding the mentor role

Even though Luke felt that he hadn't really needed Corky's assistance as much as he would have had he not done his student teaching at Spring Mountain, he felt that having a mentor assigned to him was still very important. Luke felt he could count on a mentor to be available to answer questions:

> I like knowing that if I have a question I can go to him. I don't ever have to feel bad about going to Corky and asking him something because he's, you know, agreed to [be available to assist me when I need it].

He indicated that even though he knew everyone in the English department fairly well, he still felt that having an individual mentor was a very good idea; knowing that a designated mentor was available added a sense of assurance that someone was always available to provide assistance and support.

In addition, Luke believed that a mentor to an English teacher should also be an English teacher. Among the reasons for this opinion, Luke mentions that the mentor would understand the struggles of teaching English:

> He probably understands the struggles of a 90 minutes class in English, you know, where you have to do things like reading and writing and, you know, how do you break that up and not have 90 minutes of kids reading out loud? That sort of thing.

He also felt that it would be important for the mentor and mentee to have a similar knowledge base:

> You can have a professional talk about literature. You know, if I'm struggling with doing something with *Lord of the Flies*, chances are Corky's taught it before. It seems like the knowledge base is so much wider. He'd be able to help me with so many more things…. I think their [teachers in other fields] area of help would be very limited having never taught any of the literature, or taught writing or grammar or, you know, any of that.

Luke stated that he didn't see any benefit at all of having a mentor outside one's field since a teacher from another department would not be able to be of assistance regarding content area or curricular issues. In fact, he was sure that

he would be extremely reluctant to meet with a teacher from another discipline and was relieved to be assigned to Corky.

Influences on Mentor-Mentee Transactions: Luke's Perspective

Although Luke was happy to have Corky as a mentor, how Luke transacted with Corky was influenced by Luke's experiences prior to and during his first year. Among the factors affecting their mentor-mentee transactions were Luke's teacher preparation at the university, his perceived first year challenges, and his help-seeking decisions regarding addressing those challenges.

Teacher preparation

First of all, mentor-mentee transactions between Luke and Corky were affected by Luke's confidence level as the result of his teacher education and training. As stated previously, Luke had graduated from the UGA-NETS teacher preparation and certification program. Luke expressed that his experiences as part of the UGA-NETS program contributed to a strong sense of confidence:

> Peg, Sally, and Sharon are amazing…. I have accomplished so much more than I ever thought possible because of them. I'm not sure I would feel so confident if not for the instruction last year.

Luke contributed part of his confidence level to the notion that his training program continued to serve him as part of a larger support network. Since nearly all the English department members at Spring Mountain participated in the UGA-NETS program, Luke felt that he was in a place that offered him multiple sources of support:

> I don't think I could work anywhere in the state where I would feel like I have this much support. UGA-NETS combined with the department at Spring Mountain (which I guess you would say is a big part of UGA-NETS) have made this start as smooth as possible.

Luke still felt connected to the UGA-NETS program because university supervisors (including me) continued to be present at Spring Mountain during his first year of teaching since two teachers in the English department were hosting two more UGA-NETS teacher candidates. In addition, Luke represented his department in UGA-NETS seminars exploring the topic of assessment. Luke also felt that the listserv established and maintained by UGA-NETS continued to provide him with opportunities to discuss teaching successes and struggles with his teaching cohort group and UGA-NETS professors.

First Year Challenges

Although Luke felt more than adequately prepared to begin his teaching career, he was well aware that he would still have to face a multitude of new challenges during his first year.

Extensive workload and lack of time

The first thing Luke pointed out as a major challenge was a lack of time to meet the responsibilities of an enormous workload. This problem was compounded by the fact that that workload encompassed multiple and varied responsibilities. For his first teaching assignments at Spring Mountain, Luke taught one 9th grade section of literature and composition, one 10th grade section of literature and composition, and one section of Mythology. These teaching

assignments resulted in Luke's having to prepare for three separate courses during his first year as an inservice teacher. In addition to teaching three classes, Luke was also an assistant coach for the junior varsity football team and would be head track coach in the Spring. He found the workload to be overwhelming, particularly the extended day that resulted from coaching. He expressed this sentiment on numerous occasions in email correspondence and during our interviews, "Three preps (four if you count football which adds an extra five hours to my day) is wearing me out."

This overwhelming workload had brought Luke to a new level of physical exhaustion:

> The 12 and 13 hour days combined with my new compulsion that won't let me sleep until I feel like I have accomplished everything that I had set out to for the day have left me exhausted.

Luke expressed to me many times how little sleep he was receiving and how tired he was. His overall sentiment of the physical challenge involved in teaching is epitomized in his statement to fellow beginning teachers on the group's listserv: "I have to echo everyone's sentiments about feeling run over by a truck. Or maybe it was a train. I don't know, but it was damn big."

In addition to the physical exhaustion that accompanies having to do so much work, according to Luke, another challenge related to the extensive workload is trying to balance so many areas that require attention: "You got myths over here and 200 football players over here, trying to figure out *Huck Finn*, *Lord of the Flies*, quizzes for tomorrow, you know." Luke expressed that a

related problem was the feeling of being pulled in a hundred different directions. If and when he had time, he had difficulty making decisions about what to do next:

> I think I'll go sit outside and knock out a few rough drafts, or should I do lesson plans, or read some mythology, or enter some grades, or watch a football film, or get some sleep?

He felt that he was under constant pressure to be doing something--grading, reading, or planning. His stress level kept increasing as his list of things to do grew longer. Compounding that stress was the frustration that the minute he felt caught up, he discovered something new to "worry about."

Adding to that sense of frustration was the feeling that too often his time, of which there was precious little, was being unnecessarily wasted. At the beginning of the school year, he was particularly frustrated when the time he needed to plan for the semester was constantly interrupted with meetings he felt were unnecessary:

> I can't wait for the kids to start so that I can focus on them instead of emergency evacuation plans, phone trees, what I can and can't hang where in my trailer, and why it takes three memos and a meeting to remind me to turn the air conditioning and lights off every day. Too many meetings that could be handled with a DAMN memo, and too many things to do.

Since Luke needed to prepare for three different courses, he felt his time would be better spent getting organized, researching course materials, and working on lesson plans.

Dual responsibilities of teaching and coaching

In addition, Luke felt as though he had so much to do that he didn't have enough time to devote adequate attention to any one thing and was especially torn between his dual responsibilities as teacher and coach:

> My biggest struggle is still time. Coaching and teaching (and being good at both) is a huge struggle…. I have to say right now, I'd be a better teacher if I wasn't coaching, but on the other hand, I think my teaching would suffer a little bit too because I think that part of my role here [as coach] has a big impact on the classroom. And I'd definitely be a better coach if I wasn't teaching. My coaching has suffered severely because…I don't have any time to prepare what I need to before practice every day.

In Luke's opinion, part of meeting the responsibilities of teaching and coaching meant maintaining good relationships with both his colleagues in the English department and his fellow coaches. He understood that there are political implications to maintaining both relationships and found doing so to be difficult. Luke had been surrounded by athletics all his life since his father was a long-time football coach, and he himself had been an athlete. He firmly believed in the important role that athletics and coaches especially played in students' lives. At the same time, Luke was determined not to be characterized according to any negative stereotypes often attached to coaches (i.e., that coaches care only

about coaching and not about teaching). In an attempt to maintain relationships with both groups of colleagues, during his planning period (which happened to be the period during which students and teachers went to lunch) he had been spending one lunch period with other coaches and an additional lunch period in the English workroom. As a result, he found that he wasn't able to use his planning time productively, would get bogged down, and ultimately had to abandon the practice of taking two lunches. He also tried to attend English departmental meetings but could not because of football practice. Occasionally he would have to stand upon principle at the risk of becoming alienated from his fellow coaches:

> …one of the 9th grade coaches came in right at the beginning of class and wanted to show me something about practice that day and wanted to draw it on the board, and the bell had just rung. He starts drawing football stuff, and I said, "Coach, I'm sorry, but I got a class to teach."

Luke anticipated that the challenge of being both teacher and coach would be an ongoing struggle and would become even more mentally and physically draining in the spring when he assumed his responsibilities as head track coach.

Researching course content and materials

Another challenge Luke identified was feeling that he needed to spend time researching material in order to effectively teach his classes. His mythology class presented him with a particular challenge since he had no background in this content area at all:

> I love what I am teaching, but having no background in mythology is requiring extensive research on my part so that I feel adequate to teach it. I'm learning right along with the kids.

Luke enjoyed the mythology class and actually felt that it was the most fun to teach; however, it was the most difficult class to prepare for since he didn't know anything about it. He related that he tried very hard to keep reading as much about mythology as possible but that there simply wasn't enough time to read as much as he would like--he would inevitably have to set his research aside in order to focus on grading papers or preparing lesson plans for his other two classes.

Luke's lack of content knowledge brought with it feelings of inadequacy and very real fears of being perceived by students as "not knowing what you're talking about." His preparation for the mythology class became a constant struggle to stay one step ahead of the students. He felt that he was simply pretending to know something that he didn't and was just biding time until his students recognized his lack of content knowledge. One of his greatest fears was that one day a student would ask a "huge" question that he would be unable to answer. Another fear was that he would become a "bad" teacher in that his lack of preparation would lead him to reduce the class to meaningless busywork. He shared with me an account of when this particular fear was realized during a conversation with one of his mythology students:

> One of my kids asked what we were doing for the 1st half tomorrow before we go to the Media center. I said we would probably finish working on the

> crossword. (They are having to look up the answers because most of it is new material). The student's reply was, "Oh so you don't have to teach again." I was shocked. I felt terrible, but it was the truth. I don't feel like I am doing any real teaching in there because I just don't know enough material.

It's difficult enough for a first year teacher to create lesson plans for three different courses, but not having a strong foundation in a specific subject only exacerbates already challenging planning issues. He found that he could barely stay ahead of the students (sometimes even reading material only the night before discussing it in class), and therefore, planning entire units at a time seemed next to impossible.

Planning issues

Luke indicated that he faced a number of other planning challenges as well. Among them were finding workable organizational systems for lesson plans, thinking about one unit while planning the next, needing a better vision of where he wanted students to be at the end of the semester, formulating policies for late work and make-up work, and assessing student work. He also found he needed incredible flexibility in order to accommodate circumstances that were beyond his control such as working around instructional interruptions such as "picture" day and having to tailor activities to work within the space of his trailer. Luke was also having trouble making time to reflect upon his own planning and teaching. As if those issues aren't enough, Luke faced yet another planning challenge--trying to teach within the department's accepted curriculum and still

serve his students to the best of his ability. He felt strongly that certain curricular requirements did not serve his students well but felt obligated to "cover" the material because of what he knew particular teachers would either expect them to know or require them to do the following year. This tension is evident in Luke's comments regarding having to adhere to a particular approach to the research process:

> It's just these damn research papers for 10th. I don't like the process we teach. However I feel that it is necessary because THAT'S THE WAY WE DO IT IN THE 11TH GRADE…. I would never go about writing a paper the way we teach it. …the entire department made an attempt to solidify specific requirements for the research this summer. They all want to do the same thing so that parents and kids can't complain about the way one teacher does it. I can't do this "you have to do 40 note cards this way, and you gotta put them in order." I looked at that and I thought, "I never did a note card in my life to write a paper." Somebody said, "Well, that helps you put your paragraphs in order." I said, "No, putting my paragraphs in order helps me put my paragraphs in order, not doing note cards." I'm doing it that way for [the students] so when they do it next year, it counts. Either they pass the research paper, or they don't pass the 11th grade.

Luke also discussed having used the novel *Huck Finn* in his tenth grade class in order to meet curricular requirements even though, according to him, both he and the kids "absolutely hated it." As his university supervisor, I found that Luke successfully created a student-centered classroom and that he valued students'

voices, listening carefully to their feedback in order to adjust plans for future lessons. Having covered a particular work of literature in spite of negative feedback from students left Luke with the feeling that he somehow had betrayed his students and compromised his own philosophy of teaching.

Serving the needs of a wide variety of students on a daily basis presented Luke with a number of challenging instructional decisions that ranged anywhere from where to stand during a whole-group discussion to what to do about students who failed to submit research projects on time, from how to keep all students engaged in a class project to how to accommodate such a wide range of abilities within one group of students. The infinite number of decisions a teacher faces in one day can be mind-boggling, particularly to a beginning teacher, and especially when those decisions affect the lives and learning of so many young people to whom one is dedicated.

Coping with new emotions

It's not surprising that beginning teachers experience so many conflicting emotions about teaching and about kids. This emotional conflict is evident in an interesting love-hate pattern that emerged in many of Luke's general comments about his first year. His statements: "I have to say even though it's hard, I am loving every second" and "I love what I'm teaching, but…" typify the ambivalence associated with the teaching profession. Maintaining a devotion to kids in the midst of so many other challenges seems to be a constant struggle. Luke mentioned that there are days when he just doesn't want to be a teacher, but he

reminds himself of why he “wanted to get into this business in the first place…Kids.”

However, even with a strong love for kids, beginning teachers have difficulty maintaining focus in the face of so many first year challenges. Clearly, during his first year of teaching Luke faced a multitude of challenges, any one of which could be overwhelming to a novice, but taken as a package, may very well seem insurmountable. Also, Luke would add to his list of challenges accountability issues such as calling parents, documenting student progress, and performing well on evaluations by administrators and department chairs, and most challenging-- incredibly low pay! And these are just the challenges related to teaching directly. Beginning teachers aren’t just teachers; they are people with lives and outside interests that present challenges as well. During Luke’s first year he experienced a horrible sinus infection for over a week and had his truck broken into and burglarized! Also many beginning teachers are young and single and are adjusting to their new lifestyles as professionals. Luke discussed with his former teacher cohort group some of those feelings of transition:

> What happened to skipping class, sleeping late, going out, getting drunk, and just not having a care in the world? Oh yeah, we had to pay for that. Now we get paid and it’s just the opposite. Instead I skip sleep, stay in, and just plain get tired. What the hell is the matter? I’m 22 for crying out loud, and I haven’t been fishing in over three months!

The combination of all these challenges and factors results in a beginning teacher in need of support. The next section explores when, how, and from whom Luke sought support during his first year.

Help-seeking Decisions

How did Luke go about addressing the difficulties he encountered as a beginning teacher? In general, Luke's philosophy toward help seeking echoed the feelings Corky expressed about being a first year teacher. Like Corky, Luke mentioned wanting to figure things out for himself and preferring that everybody think that he was doing fine: "I like to try to figure things out on my own before I go and ask for help." Some of the challenges Luke reported addressing independently include his lack of content knowledge about mythology, planning issues, and time management pressures. In order to address his inexperience with mythology, he approached the elective as a research course:

> I've turned [the mythology class] into a research class. It takes the pressure off me having to know everything there is to know about it at this point.... I'm trying to get them to do things where they're teaching themselves...and that way it makes them be the expert on a certain myth, and they ask questions of each other, so they're not pointed at me because I can't keep it all straight in my head.

Another challenge Luke addressed independently concerned keeping track of lesson plans. He was able to create a system that involved keeping all lesson plans in one place, thereby eliminating confusion regarding such things as which days he was signed up for media center and the like. Finally, Luke began to

address time management issues by taking a careful look at his lesson plans and making important decisions about how assignments could be restructured to create less work to grade: “I have eliminated as much busy work as possible. I took out the freewrites...and have gone to the journal approach....” When I asked if he had approached Corky with any time management issues, he replied jokingly, “[Corky] said he couldn’t make the day last for 27 hours. What are mentors for anyway?”

Luke seemed to feel confident in addressing a number of first year challenges “on his own,” as he stated. However, he also found there were times when he needed to ask questions or to consult others for assistance. One factor that helped Luke move beyond his initial hesitancy to seek help was his familiarity with his colleagues in the English department.

The English department at Spring Mountain

Having been at the school the previous year, Luke had learned a great deal about the department of which he would become a part. The English department at Spring Mountain consisted (at the time of the study) of fourteen teachers, eleven of whom (including the department chair) were or had been actively involved with the UGA-NETS teacher preparation program, some of them from its inception. Seven members of the department, including Corky, had TSS certification. Several teachers in the department had served as mentor teachers to teacher candidates in the past, and two mentors had UGA-NETS student teachers during Luke’s first year of teaching there.

Luke felt that the department's participation in UGA-NETS contributed to a sense of community within the department that reflected a unique blend of caring and professionalism. Luke commented that everyone in the department seemed "interested in what everyone else is doing. I think UGA-NETS has a lot to do with it because they're all so devoted…." He described the department members as being very close friends and caring about "what's going on." Luke's overall sense was that the English department at Spring Mountain was "different from any other department in the school" in that it seemed to maintain somewhat of a family atmosphere. Luke's knowledge of the nature of the English department contributed to his desire to maintain his reputation as an English teacher and not just a coach. He told me: "I feel like I need to go in [the English workroom] because [another coach] doesn't and nobody really says it, but he's not really seen as part of that whole department."

Luke felt that he had been fully accepted as a member in the department since he was aware that several department members had spoken to the principal about hiring him to fill the English position made available by Gary's leaving. Because of his familiarity with and acceptance within the department, Luke felt comfortable approaching any department member with questions. He mentioned that if a question popped into his head, he'd just throw it out "in the middle of the workroom." One member of the department that Luke felt particularly comfortable talking with was Annette. Annette had graduated from the UGA-NETS program two years before him; they were both young and seemed to be experiencing similar circumstances. Annette was busy with

yearbook in somewhat the same way Luke was busy with coaching. Since Annette had participated in the same teacher preparation program and was now facing some of the same challenges as he, Luke felt that she held a unique understanding of the struggles he was encountering during his first year. He felt supported by "just the fact that someone else knows that you're struggling with something."

His familiarity with other department members also contributed to their willingness to approach him. He related the following incident:

> That's where the whole rest of the department comes in because they're all so, you know, you don't have a choice but to talk about it with them. Donna cornered me in the lab this morning and forced me to talk about being stressed out….

Overall, Luke looked to the Spring Mountain English department for support during his first year there as a full-time teacher. He felt that they supported him by taking an interest in him and by being available and willing to answer any questions he might have. He knew that being there the year before contributed to his feelings of security within the department and admitted that he would have been much more reluctant to ask people questions if he hadn't known them as well as he did.

Transactions Between Luke and Corky

Among the department members who supported Luke was, of course, Corky, his assigned mentor teacher. Corky knew that Luke often looked to other department members for assistance and supported the notion that Luke was

being “mentored” by the entire department. However, like Luke, he believed that a one-on-one mentor-mentee relationship was an important part of a beginning teacher’s overall support network. As Corky and Luke began working with each other, they found that some of the factors that affected their transactions were their school’s mentoring program requirements and the logistics involved with fulfilling those requirements.

Program requirements

As stated previously, the program requirements were that Corky would meet with Luke once a week, observe him teaching twice during the year, and submit a written record of those meetings and observations to the county’s curriculum director at the end of the year. Although Luke was unaware of these requirements, he completely trusted that Corky was aware and would adhere to them:

> It’s Corky; I know he does what he’s supposed to do. I guess if I had somebody who never did anything, if I didn’t feel like they were doing what they were supposed to, I’d probably wonder what they were supposed to do. I know Corky’s not going to look at the list and say, “Well, I don’t feel like doing that.” He’s not that way.

Since Luke had had the opportunity to get to know Corky the previous year, he clearly had gained insight into Corky’s reputation as a responsible person and conscientious teacher. Luke admitted that if he had been a new teacher just entering the school without prior experiences working with Corky, he would have needed more time to establish a trusting relationship.

Logistics

During the first semester, while acting as Luke's mentor, Corky was teaching on an extended day. Corky's teaching assignments for the first semester were two 10th advanced level English classes, one keyboarding class, and one writer's workshop. Teaching four classes on extended day left him with no planning period. In addition, he also taught writing at a nearby junior college three evenings a week. As stated previously, Luke's teaching assignments for Fall semester included a section of 9th grade literature and composition, a 10th grade section of literature and composition, and one section of Mythology. In addition, Luke was an assistant coach for the junior varsity football team. Clearly, these two men were both dealing with rigorous schedules—schedules that allowed little room for them to meet. Corky had no time to meet during the school day since he had no planning period, and Luke couldn't meet with Corky after school because of his coaching responsibilities. Coordinating a time to meet became quite a challenge. Meeting with each other was even more difficult considering that their classrooms were a great distance apart. Corky's room was located in the English wing of the building, but Luke had been assigned to teach in a PEA (Portable Educational Arena, i.e., a trailer) way on the other side of the building.

Transactions

As a compromise, Luke and Corky agreed to meet over lunch once a week; however, this plan never materialized as a regular pattern. Instead, Corky indicated that they adopted a more informal approach:

> Sometimes [we meet] at lunch, but more than anything when we get a chance to talk in the workroom and I'll ask what's going on and we'll talk a little bit. If we do that, if we have a chance to do that at least once a week, I've not been setting up any other meeting.

Luke indicated that he simply asked Corky for help when he needed it, and Corky expressed that he trusted Luke to do just that. Luke typically sought Corky's assistance with questions concerning what both would characterize as "practical matters." These involved administrative questions such as where to put what forms or how to fill out deficiency or midterm reports. Mostly, however, Luke sought Corky's assistance with computer problems. Having been with the department the previous year, Luke knew that knowledge of computers was one of Corky's particular strengths, and it is likely that Luke would have turned to Corky with computer questions even if Corky had not been his assigned mentor since computers are one of his acknowledged areas of expertise. In any case, Luke sought out Corky specifically when he needed help with his email, with the school's computer grading system, or with any computer problem in general.

In addition to "practical matters," Luke and Corky discussed a number of other issues throughout the semester. Sometimes Luke approached Corky with behaviors occurring in his classroom in order to solicit advice on how best to handle the situations. Two of these scenarios involved a student who appeared to have cheated on a project and a group of students whose disruptive behavior dominated Luke's time and energy. Corky reported that they talked about these situations and that he suggested to Luke some strategies he could try

implementing. Another issue Luke and Corky discussed concerned curriculum. Corky had asked Luke to make a list of units he had left to teach before the end of the semester anticipating that Luke would have to make some decisions about what could be omitted should he run out of time. Corky and Luke discussed Luke's remaining units, and Corky made some recommendations about which omissions would be most logical in light of expectations for students in future years.

Aside from their brief lunchtime conversations, Corky and Luke had little other interaction except for the two times Corky observed Luke's teaching. In order to make the observations purposeful, Corky met with Luke beforehand to explain his approach to observations, that is using the techniques he had learned during the TSS training seminars he had attended several years ago. Luke understood what Corky would be doing during observations and felt that Corky's feedback would be beneficial to him. Both understood the observations to be part of the mentor program's requirements, and both confirmed that the observations would not be evaluative and would best serve Luke if Luke helped Corky to focus his attention by identifying specific concerns.

Before the first observation, which took place in September, Luke and Corky met for a pre-observation conference that took place over lunch the day prior to the observation. During this conference Corky requested a list of things Luke would like him to look for so that he could focus on addressing Luke's concerns as opposed to taking random, potentially meaningless, notes. Luke's list included the following questions regarding his first period class:

Are the students on task?

If not, do I address it?

Is there a better way to arrange 31 desks in a trailer?

Does my movement affect the students' attention? Is this effective?

Corky read over the note and discussed with Luke the relationship among the questions:

> It seems to me the first two things you say...and the thing down at the bottom all seem related—all [are related to the questions]: "Are they doing what they need to be doing and how am I affecting what they're doing?" The [second question] might affect your movement through the trailer, which might, in turn, affect their discipline.

Corky discussed how the location of the teacher's desk could affect Luke's movement, and both explored ways to arrange desks within the confines of the trailer. In order to make time to observe Luke's teaching, Corky had arranged for another teacher to sit with, or "cover," his own class. The observation lasted approximately twenty minutes and, per Luke's request, focused mainly on Luke's movement throughout the trailer and its effect on student behavior.

During the post-observation conference that took place over lunch later the same day, Corky indicated that he had made 145 markings during his sweeps throughout the room and had only 8 markings indicating a student off task, with most of those 8 markings attributed to 2 specific students in the corner of the room out of a total of 30 students. Luke explained that he felt his students were on task because of a new discipline method he had instituted since his

class had begun reading the novel *Lord of the Flies*. He had written the word "conch" on a tennis ball and made a rule that no student could speak without holding it, just as characters in the novel could not speak without holding the conch. Anyone who spoke who was not holding the tennis ball, or "conch," would have a point deducted from 25 points that could be earned as extra credit. Upon hearing that the class was involved with reading a novel, Corky inquired as to how much reading Luke was requiring outside of class. Corky felt that Luke could require more of his students, and, based on personal experience with pacing on block schedule, offered some advice regarding how much outside of class reading students may be reasonably expected to complete. Corky then showed Luke his notations regarding Luke's movement in the room which indicated that Luke spent most of his time in the center or on the left side of the room (away from his desk). Luke then considered ways he could rearrange the room.

In my interview with Luke later in the day, Luke indicated that he found Corky's observation feedback to be helpful:

> He asked me for a list of things that I wanted him to look for and that way it was things he was looking for that he knew I was interested in. It wasn't just him taking random notes on what he saw. Because if he did that it may not help me at all anyway. The reason I asked him those things—they were things I thought I had a pretty good handle on anyway, but I just wanted to make sure that more than one person saw what I thought I was seeing, too. So I just wanted a confirmation, really.

Luke said that he foresaw inviting Corky back to observe a class that was less well-behaved. Later in the semester, Luke indicated that he had moved his desk to the other end of the trailer, away from the TV and away from the white board, so that more students could see the TV.

The second observation took place in mid-December (toward the end of the first semester) during Luke's last period Mythology class. Similar to the conference before the first observation, Luke began the second pre-observation conference by discussing what he wanted Corky to focus on during his observation time. This time Luke wanted Corky to focus on how Luke opened class, specifically whether or not it was an effective opening and how students responded to it. Luke felt that since it was late in the term, both he and his students were tired of class and that he was tired of trying to find new things to do to keep students' interest. He felt that they didn't have time to begin another sustained project since students were already working on their final project presentations outside of class. He simply wanted to try to cover some more mythology before the end of the semester but was having to find additional material because of the limitations of the mythology texts. Luke felt that he had exhausted the materials available in the media center and planned to speak to the department head about ordering some additional supplemental materials. Luke had also addressed the books' limitations by having students do extensive research throughout the semester, so he didn't want to assign any more research for them. Corky asked Luke to think about ways he could make adjustments for next semester, and Luke indicated that now that he'd taught the course once, he

was better able to “pay attention to the pacing” and also recognized areas where he could go into more depth.

To address the problem of the remainder of the semester, Luke eventually decided to have each student check out a book on mythology or on a country related to the mythology they had already studied. Luke’s goal on the day of the observation was to open class by bringing the students to order and getting them to read their books for the first 15 minutes of class. Luke specifically requested Corky to observe students at the far end of the trailer (away from his desk) to see if they were on task. He told Corky, “See if you see things they’re doing that I don’t notice or that I’ve ignored so long that I [just don’t see them anymore].” After 15 minutes of reading, Luke intended to review with them some material they had recently discussed and then move on to an Indian myth in the textbook, which the students would read and then break down on chart paper.

Again, Corky asked another teacher to cover his class and observed Luke’s teaching for approximately 20 minutes, focusing on the issues Luke had mentioned during the pre-observation conference. During the post-observation conference the following afternoon, Corky discussed his overall observation that after the sustained silent reading (SSR) the students became highly energetic. He also noted that during the activity of having students volunteer to draw the Ying-Yang symbol on the board, many students were talking among themselves. They spent the rest of the conference exploring Luke’s reactions to the class:

Corky: What was your reaction to this particular class?

Luke: The sustained silent reading was quieter than usual....

Corky: What would they normally be doing?

Luke: Conversations everywhere.

Upon reflection Luke concluded that he should have put the students in the mythology class in a seating chart early in the semester. He felt that he had set up the class to be too "laid back" and that he needed to be more firm at the beginning of next semester. Corky remarked: "It sounds like all we're talking about as far as this class goes is not so much what you're doing as far as teaching goes; it's just pure discipline." He suggested to Luke that he move kids and call parents.

Corky then asked Luke what he would do differently next time. Luke responded that in addition to implementing a seating chart he would teach the mythology course more like a regular literature course and less like an elective, which students can perceive as too relaxed. Finally, Luke admitted that he needed more structure to the activities he listed in his lesson plans. Corky commented on Luke's "laid back" personality, and Luke realized that he was probably sending mixed messages since his students had difficulty differentiating between when he was joking around and when he was serious. Overall, Luke and Corky felt that they had recognized the same problems and concluded that Luke would take a less "relaxed" approach to mythology the next semester.

Mentoring Issues

What is encouraging about this case?

In spite of the scheduling conflicts resulting from Corky's extended teaching day and Luke's coaching responsibilities after school, Corky and Luke

managed to establish a working mentoring relationship that met the program's outlined requirements. Luke and Corky's mentor-mentee relationship met many of their expectations for a positive mentoring experience. First, they were in the same department, a condition that both had emphasized as being important. Even though being in the same department did not result in close proximity to one another, it benefited them in other ways. They were able to eat lunch together in the English workroom, thus meeting the program's requirement of weekly meetings. They also benefited from a common knowledge base and a shared understanding of the challenges associated with teaching secondary language arts on block scheduling.

Secondly, Corky felt that he could function within the context of a supportive department overall. He was aware that Luke approached other department members with questions and supported the notion of the entire English department serving as part of a larger support network for beginning teachers. In addition, both Luke and Corky shared a common personality trait in that both tended to try to solve their own problems independently before approaching others for help. As a result, Luke and Corky established a general pattern of meeting on an "as needed" basis. Corky assured Luke that he was available whenever Luke had a question or concern, and in turn Luke felt comforted knowing that Corky was there for him should a question or problem arise. Both agreed that a designated one-on-one mentoring relationship was an important part of a larger support network designed for meeting the needs of beginning teachers.

What is troubling about this case?

Although Corky and Luke did an admirable job of making the best of a nearly impossible situation, their transactions never moved beyond what I would consider "low-level" mentoring, that is, mentoring that never moves beyond "practical" matters, and, therefore, does not promote the growth and professional development of the beginning teacher. This "low-level" mentoring is the result of two influential factors: 1) the participants' assumptions about the mentoring relationship, and 2) the context in which participants were operating.

First of all, this case provides one example of how participants' assumptions about mentoring influenced their mentor-mentee transactions. The first two related assumptions, held by both Luke and Corky, were that "mentoring" involved assistance with what they considered to be "practical" matters, and that that assistance could be provided by a supportive English department as well as by a mentor teacher. Luke felt prepared as he entered into his first year of teaching and was comfortable and confident since he was already familiar with the school and his department, having completed his teacher candidacy at Spring Mountain the previous year. As a result, he began the year with the assumption that he would not need the services of a mentor teacher to the degree he might have had he begun his teaching career in an unfamiliar school setting.

As stated previously, Corky had come to envision one-on-one mentoring as only one part of an overall support network that involved the entire English department. He perceived his role as mentor primarily as assisting his mentee

with practical matters. Since Luke had been at Spring Mountain the previous year, and presumably already knew department members and knew where to submit forms and such, Corky assumed that Luke would not need him very much as a mentor. Because of the participants' expectations of the mentor role as addressing "practical" matters, the end result is a mentor-mentee relationship based on the assumption by both participants that the mentor is not really needed.

Corky's assumptions about his role as mentor influenced his mentoring practices. Since his perception of induction support involved the entire English department, he could rely on others to provide Luke with assistance. In addition, because of his own experiences as a new teacher, he related to and respected Luke's desire to "figure things out" on his own and trusted Luke to approach him on an "as needed" basis. This conceptualization of mentoring is problematic because it places all the responsibility on the beginning teacher to seek assistance and places little responsibility on the mentor teacher to maintain the mentor-mentee relationship. Corky later stated, after reading this chapter, that he wished he had taken more initiative in the relationship. He expressed feeling guilty because he realized he had taken for granted that all was well with Luke unless or until Luke indicated otherwise. Interestingly, although in the midst of the mentoring relationship he fully understood the time constraints in which he was operating, he was only able to recognize some of his assumptions about his mentoring in retrospect after reading this chapter.

Luke's help-seeking styles followed a pattern that also supported the notion of mentoring as pertaining to practical matters. In spite of entering the profession feeling comfortable and confident, Luke found he still faced numerous challenges as a beginning teacher. These challenges included facing the many ramifications of an enormous workload, balancing multiple responsibilities (including coaching), and feeling constantly pressured for time. In addition, he faced researching new course material, addressing a long list of issues relating to planning, and serving the needs of a wide variety of students. The most troubling aspect of this case is that out of all the issues Luke identified as challenges during his first year, he addressed nearly *all* of them independently, in keeping with his preference to "try to figure things out" on his own. He sought help from other members of the English department, including Corky, when he had questions pertaining to practical matters. The only exception to this pattern was his collegial relationship with Annette, who Luke felt related to his challenges since she was a relatively new teacher herself and had also graduated from the UGA-NETS teacher preparation program. More importantly, Annette also happened to be available to talk during Luke's planning period since she taught yearbook that period, and her students were often off-campus selling advertisements.

This assumption of mentoring as addressing practical issues also affected the way Luke and Corky approached classroom observations. The two 20-minute classroom observations Corky conducted resulted in post-observation conversations surrounding such things as arranging desks in the trailer, counting

the number of students off-task, creating reasonable homework assignments, and managing the classroom. Although I agree with Luke and Corky that observations should be non-evaluative data collection, I think they missed opportunities to enhance Luke's professional growth and development. I think sometimes the word non-evaluation is treated as synonymous with non-critique or non-inquiry, resulting in very little reflection on the relationship between one's teaching practices and student learning.

I also think it's a good idea to approach observations as a three-step process of pre-observation conference/classroom observation/post-observation conference. Utilizing his TSS training, Corky discussed planned procedures with Luke prior to observations, and debriefed with him afterwards. Both felt that observations were useful since Luke was able to provide Corky with specific concerns so that Corky could focus his attention and tailor his feedback based on Luke's perceived needs. The problem here is that Luke indicated that during the first observation he really was looking for "confirmation" from Corky. The observation was useful to him because he received that "confirmation." Therefore, neither approached this classroom observation process as a way to use Luke's teaching as a site for learning. The second observation during Luke's Mythology class afforded a better opportunity to address a broader issue of curricular constraints. While Luke and Corky did seem to get beyond just practical matters, Luke's entire dilemma was eventually reduced to a problem with "just pure discipline," thus, ignoring the larger questions Luke had broached regarding curricular materials, instructional methods, and student engagement.

This case provides an example of how participants' assumptions regarding the mentor role influence mentor-mentee transactions and, in this case, result in "low-level" mentoring. In addition, this case illustrates how the overall context in which a mentoring relationship operates also has a profound effect on mentor-mentee transactions, and can also contribute to mentoring on the "practical" level. In this case, "context" includes the participants' daily schedules, the mentoring program requirements, and the dynamics of the English department.

The biggest hindrance to Luke and Corky's mentor-mentee relationship was their scheduling conflict. Since Corky was teaching on an extended day and Luke had coaching responsibilities after school, they had great difficulty finding time to talk to one another. Although Luke had originally anticipated that as a fellow English teacher Corky would be able to help him with issues related to teaching English (such as how to balance reading and writing within a 90-minute period), Luke simply never got around to broaching any of those issues. Luke indicated that lack of time was the main reason he hadn't "put a lot into [the mentoring relationship]," but that given more time, he would want to meet with Corky more often. However, time constraints forced daily responsibilities such as "figuring out what the next 3 or 4 days are going to be" to take priority. Luke felt he didn't even have enough time to contemplate what would be the most useful way for Corky to serve him: "I don't even have time to think about what I would want to ask him to do or to help me with right now, so I can't even figure out what to go to him with, so I definitely don't have time to go do it."

A closer look at this case begs the question: What more could Corky and Luke accomplish under such limitations with their schedules? In all honesty, as I indicated in Chapter Three, they probably met together more often because of participating in this study than they might have otherwise, and who would blame them if they didn't meet together? Their situation provides at least one explanation for why many induction programs incorporate release time for novices and their mentor teachers. On the other hand, considering the assumptions Luke and Corky held regarding the mentoring role, would having more time to meet with each other really change the nature of their mentor-mentee relationship?

In addition to the logistics associated with hectic schedules, the nature of the mentor program requirements can lead to "low-level" mentoring. The requirements for the entire year are meeting weekly and conducting only two classroom observations. The two classroom observations I observed were the only two required for the entire year; Corky just happened to have conducted both of his observations during the semester I collected data for this study. It seems to me that the potential for rich conversation was more evident as the result of classroom observations than for weekly meetings that Luke perceived as almost an imposition. Without Corky's having any particular knowledge of Luke's classes, meetings were likely to be less purposeful, leaving little room for rich dialogue about teaching issues. Even the nature of the paperwork (usually in the form of a log) that mentor teachers fill out and submit emphasizes quantity (the amount of time spent with the beginning teacher) over quality (what issues

were discussed and what progress was made). Therefore, the mentor program requirements contribute to an overall context that lends itself to "low-level" mentoring.

Finally, this case illustrates that the context of the English department in some ways contributed to mentoring that did not promote the beginning teacher's growth and professional development. Although members of the English department at Spring Mountain displayed a commendable willingness to answer questions and provide assistance—support that Luke greatly appreciated—they also failed to support him in other ways. First, for Luke's very first duties as an inservice teacher, he was assigned three separate courses for which to prepare, including one for which he had absolutely no background content knowledge. In addition to that, he was assigned to a trailer on the opposite side of the building from the English wing. Granted, the department opted for the trailer rather than requiring Luke to "float" among rooms throughout the day, and, granted, Luke swore he didn't mind teaching in a trailer since he had experience with it the previous year. However, given the number of challenges beginning teachers face (as evidenced by Luke's long list discussed in this chapter), requiring three preparations and placing them about as far away from the "hub" of departmental activity (the English wing and workroom) as they can be doesn't, in my opinion, demonstrate the kind of induction support beginning teachers need if they are to flourish in their new careers.

This case also illustrates that the English department's willingness to "assist" beginning teachers in some instances actually acted *against* the growth

and development of a beginning teacher. In particular, Luke articulated that one of his challenges was trying to teach within the department's accepted curriculum and still serve his students to the best of his ability. He related specific planning dilemmas because of departmental expectations regarding certain curricular issues. He felt pressured to cover certain novels and to approach the research process in a specific way. Although he would have chosen to cover different content and approach the research process differently, he felt uncomfortable (if not intimidated) questioning or challenging widely accepted departmental policies even when they conflicted with his own teaching philosophies.

Luke had graduated from the UGA-NETS program that approached learning and research through a constructivist theoretical framework. He valued student engagement and assessed student progress in order to create lessons tailored to student interest and learning needs. In this case, Luke was never afforded the opportunity to think about or discuss ways he might meet departmental requirements without having to compromise his personal knowledge. Instead, he felt compelled to adhere to the accepted norms of the department. This case, I think, provides an example of why many induction programs, in addition to incorporating release time for novices and mentor teachers, have begun to include university faculty as an additional member of a novice's support team. Including at least two members on a support team—one who is part of the local school context and one who is not—provides the beginning teacher (among other things) with different "sets of eyes" through

which to view his own teaching and learning, and, therefore, create the opportunity for more “educative” mentoring (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

Summary

The case of Luke Braswell and Corky Holmes provides one example of how one mentor teacher and one first-year teacher in a mentor-mentee relationship go about constructing their notions of mentoring and how their personal assumptions and their school context influence their mentor-mentee transactions. The next chapter investigates the mentoring needs of beginning secondary English teachers through the case of a second-year teacher (Beth) and her mentor (Michelle) as they reflect on their mentor-mentee relationship during the previous year, Beth’s first year of teaching, and discuss additional challenges Beth faced during the second year of teaching.

CHAPTER FIVE

CASE STUDY: BETH DARCY AND MICHELLE DOTY

In order to gain a deeper understanding of induction support, this case explores mentoring from the perspectives of one second-year high school English teacher and her mentor as they reflect back on their first year together in a mentor-mentee relationship. In addition, this case investigates her mentoring needs as she began her second year. Like Chapter Four, this chapter represents how each participant constructed her notion of the mentoring needs of beginning secondary English teachers and how that constructed knowledge influenced mentor-mentee transactions. The chapter is also organized in similar fashion by first introducing the school setting in which Beth and Michelle worked, followed by a discussion of Michelle, the mentor teacher, and what shaped her notions of mentoring, and then a discussion of Beth, the second-year teacher, and what shaped her notions of mentoring. Following those discussions is a description of their reflections on first-year transactions, second-year transactions, and the factors that affected them. Finally, I present issues this case raises regarding mentoring and induction support.

The School Setting

Beth Darcy and Michelle Doty are secondary English teachers at West Kennedy High School. West Kennedy is located in a large suburban area just outside a major metropolitan city in the Southeast. West Kennedy's student body

is predominantly White middle to upper class and represents very little racial or socioeconomic diversity. West Kennedy has approximately 2,400 students. The facility is far too small to contain the number of students attending and utilizes 41 trailers to accommodate for the lack of space. West Kennedy's schedule includes six 55-minute periods each day and consists of two 18-week semesters.

West Kennedy is an established school within the county and has maintained a reputation for high academic standards and performance. In 1999 West Kennedy was named by *U.S. News and World Report* as one of 96 outstanding American high schools. According to the magazine's survey, high-performing schools like West Kennedy share several characteristics in common including a core curriculum, highly qualified teachers, and strong parental involvement and support. The school offers 19 advanced placement courses and 71 sections of courses designated for gifted students. Sixty percent of West Kennedy's certified staff hold a master's degree or higher. Parents are actively involved in West Kennedy, and the school boasts an award-winning Parent, Teacher, Student Association (PTSA) and 12 academic and athletic booster clubs. West Kennedy also maintains several close partnerships with local businesses including Kroger, Publix, and a local law firm.

The Mentor Teacher: Michelle Doty

Michelle Doty had taught for eleven years at the time of the study, the last five at West Kennedy. She holds a B.A. in English and a M.Ed. and a Ph.D. in Language Education, all from the University of Georgia. Although Michelle had hosted four student teachers before, Beth was the first beginning teacher

Michelle had mentored. Michelle had become a mentor because she had been "volunteered" by her department chair for the 1999-2000 school year. She had received no training but felt that mentoring was a good idea. Since she enjoyed getting to know people and considered herself to be very caring and nurturing, she agreed to make herself available to a new teacher.

The mentoring concept

Since Michelle had not worked with a beginning teacher before Beth, she developed her concept of mentoring primarily from her own experiences as a new teacher. She remembered being part of a mentoring program but didn't feel as though it met her needs very well:

> When I started teaching, we had a mentor program but they had paired me up with a lady from social studies, so I'm on the other side of the building from her; we never saw each other. If she passed me on the hall, she would check in with me, and other than that, I think I was just a big burden. I don't really blame her for that; she had plenty of things to do, and if I had blamed anybody, I would have blamed my own department for not coming up with somebody else who would take on a new teacher from English.

Michelle felt that someone in her own department would have better served her needs since he or she would be closer in proximity and have a better understanding of her struggles as a new English teacher. She felt that a fellow English teacher would have a better idea of what materials need to be covered and the challenge of balancing the variety of responsibilities English teachers

have in the classroom. She ultimately developed a relationship with a member in her department and sought out her guidance instead of that of the mentor she had been assigned:

> But anyway what I did was there was a lady there who had been the department head there previously who had taught at that school forever; she was very well respected, very kind. The lady who had been my supervising teacher during student teaching told me to go to her if I had any questions because she knew her reputation as a good teacher. And so I just sought her out and felt comfortable enough with her to seek her out again and again, and then we developed what is still a very strong friendship. She's probably one of the main reasons I'm still here.

Michelle credits the woman who became her unofficial mentor with encouraging her during her those difficult first years as a teacher. That encouragement was particularly powerful to her since she recalls receiving very little encouragement from other members of the department:

> I didn't have a lot of encouragement in that particular department those first few years. It was an older department. There weren't a lot of advanced classes, and they went to all the experienced teachers. The department head was very, very, very difficult, and I don't think I was taken seriously. I think that's one of the reasons why I decided to pursue that Ph.D. because I was like just because I'm friendly and just because I like people and smile does not mean I'm not intelligent. I had a little bit of

> that going on in me. Just because I'm young doesn't mean I'm not intelligent. So anyway, I didn't get a lot of encouragement.

Michelle remembers, in particular, feeling that she didn't want others to think that she wasn't competent:

> I would suspect this would be true of a lot of new teachers—this feeling of not wanting the person to think that you're not in the know, like being a little shy about your vulnerabilities. Of course, everybody understands what a first-year teacher's going through, but first-year teachers don't understand that we understand.

Michelle anticipated that part of her role as mentor would be to remind beginning teachers that they were not alone and to alleviate their fears regarding their struggles and challenges.

Michelle's notion of mentoring was also influenced by her observations of beginning English teachers' first year challenges. In general, Michelle believed that new teachers often overwhelm themselves as a result of desiring to be "perfect." Michelle identified time management as the most challenging aspect beginning teachers must face. She recalled observing Beth struggle with this during their year as mentor and mentee:

> I could just see the panic on her face at different points, you know, when things were just stressed. I know that she would stay late a lot. I remember talking about how late she was staying and working on that perfectionism. You know, I'm going to be a perfect teacher even if I have to kill myself to do it.

Michelle witnessed this phenomenon in other beginning teachers as well. One new teacher also coached volleyball and was extremely stressed for time. Michelle felt that the new teacher wasn't even willing to admit that she had a time management crunch because she didn't want anyone to advise her to drop something from her schedule.

Another challenge Michelle had watched new teachers face is dealing with feeling isolated:

> You know how isolated teaching is. You don't know how you're doing. You have no way to judge. It's not like as a brand new teacher you have those letters that once you've taught for a few years you've accumulated from kids where they say you've made a difference, or you have adult kids come back and talk to you. You don't have that.

Michelle mentioned that not having time to talk to others also adds to a new teacher's sense of isolation. At West Kennedy, lunch lasts for only twenty minutes. With so little time to talk to one another, many teachers opt to spend their lunchtime grading papers or attending to other paperwork. Michelle adds that people do tend to talk with those they share planning periods with, but even then teachers are still preoccupied with all they need to get done.

Teacher Challenges and Frustrations

Finally, Michelle believes that beginning teachers simply aren't prepared for the many challenges that all teachers face every day. Michelle, herself, was facing a number of challenges that contributed to her perception of the needs of novice teachers.

Extensive workload

As an English teacher, Michelle felt particularly overwhelmed with her workload:

> I am swamped with grading. I am completely overwhelmed and feeling a little bitter about it too. I was thinking to myself last night all I do in this career is work for this career. That's all I do. I go home and work. I work all through the day. Little by little I'm losing all these other parts of my life. And I keep thinking that it'll be different next year, and it never is. [Beth said], "You can get to the surface and then it just pounds you right back down." That is so true because I finally caught my breath for 24 hours last week and I'm buried all over again. Incredibly frustrating.

Adding to the frustration was the fact that the year after Michelle had worked with Beth, Michelle had been given a new course to teach. She felt that she could relate to new teachers who had to create all new materials for their courses:

> A lot of what [Beth] is going through I'm going through this year too because I have a whole new prep. And I think every time you get a new prep, you're just right back at square one, just surviving from day to day. That new prep is kicking my butt this semester. I was thinking about that walking up to school this morning that I can't get ahead. Yesterday I was here till 5:30, and I didn't come close to getting everything done. I'm so swamped right now.

Michelle's notion of mentoring, then, included empathizing, perhaps commiserating, with novices about teachers' extensive workloads, in particular

the time required to research course content and create meaningful lesson plans in preparation to teach a new course.

County and state policies on standardized testing

In addition to the extensive workload associated with teaching high school English, Michelle was facing a number of other frustrations regarding the teaching profession. One of those frustrations concerned Wilson County's policies on standardized testing. Michelle was unhappy with the state's emphasis on standardized testing and the way it was affecting the teaching profession:

> People in education know that this standardized business is no good, that it's not helping, but nobody from the political perspective seems to care. Did I tell you about that thing I saw on 60 Minutes? [It was] about the teachers who had been forced to do a statewide kind of testing like we're moving toward, and the first time they did it, the test results were awful and their jobs were on the line and they were being held accountable, so, of course, everybody started teaching to the test, and, of course, test scores just soared and all the politicians were so happy, and everybody was "See? We forced them to make a change." And what was happening was simultaneous to the test scores going up, performance by college freshman was going down at the university because they weren't able to think anymore. They had been taught to take a test, and we know that, we have that data out there, but we're still going to have to go through this

> in [this state] because this is what they want us to do at the moment, so it's a very frustrating career.

Michelle felt that teachers were too often required to adhere to state mandates that were in conflict with their teaching philosophies and, ultimately, counterproductive to student learning.

Clearly, Michelle was opposed to the notion of placing so much emphasis on standardized testing to begin with. Even more problematic was that in addition to the state's mandatory graduation test, the county had instituted two additional standardized tests—exit exams at the end of particular grade levels and countywide final examinations for each course offered in the county. Michelle struggled with meeting the expectations of the county exams while also meeting the needs of the specific groups of students under her instruction. Michelle was philosophically opposed to the notion of mandatory county exams for each course but, as an employee of Wilson County, was obligated to adhere to the policy. Michelle had this to say about the County exams:

> When I first started teaching, I really felt that we could go do that traditional close the door and do your own thing. I really felt like that was still a possibility, but within the last 2 or 3 years in Wilson County, that's not possible anymore. I think what we're doing is bringing everyone down to some sort of mediocre middle…. I know that's true…in my classroom. My final exams were much more stringent and demanding and required much more critical thinking [than the mandated end of course tests].

Not only was the test, in Michelle's opinion, not as rigorous as her teacher-made exams would have been, but they also emphasized material that she might not have emphasized were it not covered on the test. She felt that the test was in some ways dictating instructional decisions because of constant pressure to "cover" particular material in an already ambitious curriculum:

> The thing is when you're teaching a subject like English, you are really backed against the wall because to begin with it's a tight subject to teach because we're supposed to cover so much, vocabulary and writing and literature. And then there's the whole historical/philosophical side of it, too. You've got all of that that you're supposed to do, and now you're supposed to be sandwiching [the exam] in…. It is a constant challenge. I can't make connections like I used to be able to make because I don't have enough time to stop and spend with stuff because of these county finals. Last year I vowed to myself that I would not change what I did in the classroom to accommodate these stupid finals, but I still find myself doing it. I don't know. It's just frustrating.

Michelle found herself becoming more and more preoccupied with covering specific material for the final exam and regretted being unable to "get the big picture" like she used to have time to do.

Even more frustrating than having to administer the exam at all was the fact that Michelle and a colleague had traveled to the county office to proofread the exam. They had noticed several errors including misinformation and mechanical problems and had spent hours making corrections and revisions. To

their dismay, the county exams were still sent out to the schools in their original state, none of the revisions having been made. Michelle could not miss the irony in having to administer in an English class an exam that had not been carefully edited.

Politics of teaching

Michelle's experience with the county exams exemplified the feelings of helplessness often associated with the politics of teaching. Teachers often become discouraged when they provide important input to decision-makers only to have their comments, questions, or suggestions disregarded:

> We've all had the human cry, "nobody cares, nobody listens," and nothing changes. I mean, nobody thinks that [the exit exam] is a good idea. Nobody likes the county final exams; [everyone] thinks we're testing kids too much, but none of that matters. You know, we say it here at school; we say it at our county meetings. Nothing changes.

Michelle felt that the philosophy of the administration contributed to her sense of frustration. Whenever teachers voiced dissatisfaction, they were made to feel as though they were not "team players." Although Michelle recognized that some teachers are habitually unhappy and establish reputations as chronic complainers, most educators voice valid concerns that should be acknowledged and addressed. Michelle noticed the same phenomenon to be true of departmental meetings:

> Department meetings are another lesson in frustration because you have these department meetings where you really could sit down and say,

> "Okay, West Kennedy does not agree with this county policy. We need to take a stand; as a department we need to write a letter and take a stand." That would mean something in this county if West Kennedy took a stand. It would mean something. We don't do it. We gripe, and then people get impatient, they look at their watches [and think] "we're running out of time, we've got to move on to the next item, okay, just drop it, quit whining, quit complaining, we can't change anything, move on." And that's frustrating.

Even if nothing ever changed, Michelle still wished that teachers would have a "voice" and be more proactive.

State policies

State policies were also creating challenges and frustrations for Michelle and others. At the time of this study, many educators were opposed to new policies that had been introduced by the Governor of the state, particularly those policies instituting more standardized testing. He sent surveys to some schools eliciting teachers' feedback. Michelle's response to receiving this survey was as follows:

> [The governor] got some flack because people feel like he's just doing this because of elections coming up here in November and wanting people in his party to be voted in. But he sent out a letter to all of us explaining that he really was on our side and he never meant to be critical of teachers and he believes in teachers, blah, blah, blah. And then he wanted feedback, but instead of just something quick we could do and send, he

offered space for people to write things, but it's just a matter of do I even have time to sit down and formulate anything intelligent. I don't have time.

Michelle felt that many teachers would probably voice opinions similar to hers but that teachers had simply become too cynical to even take the time to respond, feeling that whatever they wrote was likely to be "disregarded" anyway.

Society's perception of teachers

In addition to dealing with politics, Michelle was also frustrated by what she felt to be a general societal negative perception of teachers:

> I think they [people in society] are semi-sympathetic, but I don't think they get [how draining teaching is]. Even my own family maybe. And I don't even think people who have been trained to be teachers get it until they live it. I don't know what it's going to take to change things for teachers; most people don't understand, don't get it, think that since we have summers off and Christmas break and Spring break that we should just shut up and put up with whatever.

Michelle theorized that one of the factors contributing to society's perception of teaching is that everyone has been to school; therefore, everyone seems to think he or she knows as much about education as educators. Michelle attributed part of society's misperception to the way schools have been portrayed by politicians:

> I just think the general public has a slanted view. I read something once that an overwhelming majority of parents think that their school is doing a good job; it's the other schools. So what they're involved with personally,

they think is fine, but they just have this misconception about education as a whole.

Michelle felt particularly "used and abused" by politicians regarding society's perception of teachers: "They can just stomp all over us, but they don't know what they're talking about." Since Michelle, herself, was becoming increasingly frustrated with so many outside factors influencing her teaching career, she could only imagine how beginning teachers must feel just entering the profession.

Local school context

Finally, Michelle felt that a challenge to teachers at West Kennedy, in particular, concerned several other factors related to school context. Although she was quick to point out that she was very happy to be at West Kennedy, she still felt that, as in any school, West Kennedy's school community presented particular challenges. First, Michelle felt that dealing with the large numbers of students was difficult. The school facility was far too small to house the number of students attending there, so the school had purchased over forty trailers to accommodate their ever-growing numbers. As a result, many new teachers, including Beth, found themselves teaching in trailers during their first years. Although most teachers readily agree to teach in a trailer if the only other alternative is to float among different classrooms, being outside the central structure of a school increases the sense of isolation many teachers already encounter.

In addition to having to hold classes in trailers, the size of the school resulted in large class sizes. Michelle communicated a preference for smaller classes:

> I want more time for writing, which is where having smaller classes or fewer classes would come in, 'cause right now as it stands we can't do what we need to do with writing with the number of classes and the number of kids we teach.

Michelle also felt that smaller classes would create a more respectful classroom community:

> I have a theory that anonymity breeds rudeness. I think when you're as big as you are and kids don't know each other and you don't know them, they will be ruder, more obnoxious than they would be in a small school with more of a community feel. I think one of the reasons we have such a problem in cities and in overcrowded schools and such is because of that idea that you're just anonymous and you get away with [stuff] because you're just going to fade into the crowd. Which unfortunately happens. The kids do get away with stuff. They feel like they can walk through the halls and do what they want because nobody knows who they are.

Michelle felt that the size of the school would likely contribute to specific challenges Beth might face as a new teacher, particularly teaching in a trailer and developing effective classroom management policies.

Another challenge related to school context had to do with its extraordinary reputation within the county. Michelle mentioned that as far as

public schools were concerned, West Kennedy was a “dream situation.” Michelle attributed part of that reputation to that fact that “it’s always stood for strong academics.” There had been a strong respect for the school well before it was named in *U.S. News and World Report* as one of the top schools in the nation. The down side to teaching in a school with such a powerful reputation was feeling pressure to maintain that reputation even in the midst of a changing community:

> The area’s changing. It used to be more upper middle [class], and now it’s more middle. The area’s changing, but we’re maintaining. The only thing I can attribute to that is just a history and a tradition of excellence. [But we’re still being pressured] to raise test scores even when we’re scoring 98s and 99s on these statewide tests. We’re still being told to go up even a little bit, which is frustrating because you cannot maintain that, not as our population changes and as we become bigger and bigger. There’s no way. I don’t think that we can. We’re just going to get too big.

Michelle felt this pressure even in the school’s college preparatory approach to curriculum. She found herself becoming frustrated attempting to make British Literature relevant to high school seniors:

> [I’m] feeling like I’m accomplishing absolutely nil because I’m trying to teach *Canterbury Tales*, Renaissance poets, *Beowulf*, to these kids who don’t care. I might as well be beating my head against a wall. We’re all pretending that they’re going to go to college, and it’s never going to happen. And the ones that do go to college, of those a lot of them won’t

make it. And I'm doing them a disservice. They need more hands on, real world kinds of things. And I believe that they could be reading, too, but they need to be reading what they're going to be interested in.

Since Michelle understood first-hand the challenges of "living up to" the school's reputation of academic excellence, she felt that Beth was likely to experience many of the same pressures.

Assumptions regarding the mentor role

Michelle had little to go on as she constructed her notions of mentoring. Having no formal mentor training, she was left to rely on her own experiences, first, as a new teacher herself; secondly, as an observer of beginning teachers' struggles in the past; and thirdly, as a veteran teacher, one who was intimately knowledgeable of the challenges particular to working within the specific school context at West Kennedy in Wilson County. As a cumulative result of those experiences, Michelle came to some conclusions about mentoring and induction support.

First and foremost, Michelle's reflections on her own first year of teaching led her to envision her role as listening with an empathetic ear, answering questions, and providing words of encouragement. In addition, Michelle's first-year experiences led her to conclude that beginning teachers need a designated mentor who is a member of the same department who would be closer in proximity and would better understand struggles specific to English teachers. Michelle's observations of beginning teachers' challenges over the years as well as her own frustrations as a veteran teacher in Wilson county led her to perceive

her mentoring role as understanding new teachers' challenges and being available to listen and answer questions.

Michelle's own struggles and frustrations led her to believe that in addition to difficulties particular to first year teachers, beginning teachers also face many of the same challenges that veteran teachers, including herself, face. Some of the challenges Michelle described concerned the overwhelming number of responsibilities associated with the teaching of English in the high school setting. Other frustrations arose from state and county policies regarding standardized testing and an overall lack of consideration for teachers' views about those policies. Michelle also described being frustrated with society's negative perception about education in general and educators in particular. Finally, Michelle felt that beginning teachers and veterans alike often face challenges at the local school level such as overcrowdedness or lack of administrative support. Overall, Michelle's ideas of mentoring were shaped significantly by her own experiences and little else, causing her to construct a narrow definition of mentoring as rarely doing more than providing emotional support.

The Beginning Teacher: Beth Darcy

At the time of the study, Beth was beginning her second year of teaching at West Kennedy High School in Wilson County. She has a BSED in Secondary English Education at the University of Georgia as a graduate of the year-long UGA-NETS program, during which she completed her teacher candidacy at a small rural/suburban high school. During her student teaching, the teacher Beth had been assigned to (her Mentor Teacher) left for maternity leave, and in an

interesting turn of events, I ended up substituting for the Mentor Teacher during Beth's last month of student teaching. As a result, I became both Beth's university supervisor and her Mentor Teacher.

Although Beth and I had been working together on campus and at her school for eight months, we knew we would be entering new territory having to work together on a daily basis. However, we were not surprised that we were able to develop a remarkable team-teaching relationship, often speaking "in stereo," or saying the same thing simultaneously. We laughed together so often in class that we sometimes drew curious looks from students who were unaccustomed to teachers having so much fun. Particularly rewarding to me was having the opportunity to witness firsthand Beth's growth as a teacher. Over the course of the year, I witnessed Beth grow into an incredible teacher and motivator of students. She established a tremendous rapport with the students she worked with and demonstrated interest regarding their performance by spending extra time with them individually to provide additional assistance. She displayed a genuine, caring attitude and supported students' extracurricular activities by attending school play performances and by practicing with the cross-country team.

A particular strength of Beth's was her comfort with classroom management. She easily maintained clear expectations of student behavior and handled any unacceptable behavior quickly and appropriately. She set a positive example and promoted a comfortable atmosphere that was conducive to active

learning and academic success. She demonstrated a balance between sensitivity and assertiveness that all good teachers possess.

Beth also successfully created a student-centered classroom. She provided students with opportunities to make personal connections to literature by creating lessons that were both engaging and meaningful. She planned each lesson with specific goals in mind and applied a wide variety of methods to reach each goal. She regularly evaluated students' performance using a variety of assessments appropriate for her stated objectives. Because of her excellent planning skills (particularly important for 4 x 4 block scheduling), she was always organized and prepared for class.

Beth inspired me that year with her energy, enthusiasm, and creativity. While her mentor teacher was on maternity leave, she served as full-time teacher to three college preparatory senior classes. Teaching upper level students independently can present quite a challenge to student teachers, but Beth handled the situation remarkably. She was solely responsible for grading all sorts of student writing and other work, communicating both on the phone and in conferences with parents of students whose grades placed their graduation in danger, and planning and executing all lessons for the comparative literature courses including units on *1984*, Renaissance and Enlightenment literature, Romanticism and Realism, *Tartuffe*, as well as integrated lessons on grammar and vocabulary.

I was so pleased that Beth not only fulfilled every possible obligation, both at school and on campus, but also did so with openness and maturity. Although

she was a “natural” as a teacher, she remained inquisitive and reflective. I remember that year considering her to be one of our strongest candidates in the secondary English Education program. I thoroughly enjoyed our experience working together; I found her to be dedicated, fair, insightful, dependable, and completely professional at all times. I knew that she would undoubtedly be an outstanding teacher who would be an extraordinarily positive addition to any English department lucky enough to hire her. After several interviews and offers, Beth chose to teach at West Kennedy High School.

Expectations regarding the mentor role

Since Beth was entering a new setting for her first year of teaching in 1999-2000, she felt strongly that she would need an assigned mentor. She remembered feeling more confident her first year knowing that someone specific had been available to answer questions and lend emotional support. She indicated that she had needed a mentor to tell her:

> …that everything’s going to be okay, this is not the end of the world, veteran teachers are still dealing with this problem. It’s not just a first year teacher thing.

She felt comforted “just having the knowledge that someone is there” and was relieved when Michelle would “alleviate [her] fears.”

Beth perceived a mentor’s role to be one of a guide, a role she described as different from the mentoring that takes place with student teachers:

> I think I didn’t expect the mentor relationship to be at all like student teaching because in student teaching you’re following that teacher’s every

move. You're doing what they've set out for you to do even though you're manipulating that a little bit. So I really wasn't expecting that full on "I'm involved" relationship. I guess I was expecting [Michelle] to be a guide, and she was that. A guide. If I needed help along my journey, I just went and asked her. Whereas in my student teaching experience, I kind of felt like she was more of the authority instead. So, from authority to guide.

Beth's idea of a "guide" was someone who would mainly listen, understand, and provide general suggestions:

> I think it would be oppressive if it was a different kind of relationship because even though I was stressed, I wouldn't have wanted someone to say, "You have to do this now and you should do it my way."

Beth admitted that in that first year she really didn't want someone to "tell [her] what to do." Rather, she preferred someone who would be reassuring and say, "I understand, and it's all going to be okay."

Beth also stated that mentors to English teachers should definitely be English teachers themselves:

> See I think it's ridiculous if we have mentors that are in other disciplines because so much of the stuff that you talk about is planning and pacing, and you can find out other things from anyone, I mean, stop somebody in the hall and ask them. You need someone to talk about English students because it's just a completely different area.

Beth felt strongly that mentors of English teachers "definitely [need to be English teachers], because if they don't understand the subject, then they don't

understand the needs, the important details involved." Fortunately for Beth, in her first year of teaching she was paired with Michelle, who could be of particular assistance since they were teaching a course in common.

Influences on Mentor-Mentee Transactions: Beth's Perspective

Beth met Michelle even before school began when they both attended a county textbook adoption meeting. Beth recalled instantly feeling comfortable with Michelle and already perceived her as a very sweet person, so when the 1999-2000 year began, Beth said that she had anticipated "nothing but niceness." Although Beth was happy to be working with Michelle, transactions between Beth and Michelle were influenced by Beth's experiences prior to and during her first year. Their transactions were affected by Beth's teacher preparation at the university, her perceived first year challenges, and her help-seeking decisions regarding addressing those challenges.

Teacher preparation

First of all, mentor-mentee transactions between Beth and Michelle that first year were affected by Beth's experiences during her year of teacher candidacy in the UGA-NETS teacher preparation program. Beth expressed that her experiences in the UGA-NETS program, particularly being in a school for an entire year, contributed to an overall sense of confidence: " I think it's more that I know what I'm doing is okay because it's stuff that I learned with [UGA-NETS], so I know I'm going down the right route."

In addition, Beth felt that her student teaching had prepared her well for teaching and assessing writing as well as managing a heavy workload:

> The writing wasn't as difficult as I thought it would be. I think if I hadn't student taught, it would have been really difficult, but I did some papers in student teaching, so I was used to correcting and making comments. I remember doing that first set in student teaching and that took up a lot of time, so I think English teachers have a lot more outside time that they have to work, and I think I was prepared for that after student teaching.

Overall, Beth entered the teaching profession feeling confident and ready to face the challenges that lay ahead.

First Year Challenges

Although Beth felt adequately prepared to begin her teaching career, she knew that entering a new setting and having full responsibility for five classes would present her with many new challenges her first year.

Adjusting to new surroundings

Unlike Luke who had completed his student teaching in the school where he was hired, Beth needed to become oriented to her new surroundings:

> And learning the school as well is difficult because you have no idea where to find substitute forms, or where to turn in your list of books that you give out, and you don't know anyone's name, and you have to ask where everything is, so that's a struggle.

Beth also had to adjust to teaching in a trailer. Since West Kennedy was not built to house the large number of students enrolled there, many classes took place in trailers. Beth felt that the school's overcrowdedness prevented students from getting to class on time:

> [West Kennedy] wasn't built for this many people, so the halls are very crowded. I've been in the halls when the kids are in the halls, and it's insane. Kids have to have locker partners. So you always have "Well, my locker partner has my book." Getting kids to class on time is frustrating. Having all the trailers outside is frustrating even though I'm glad I'm in a trailer as opposed to floating. I think they need to build a new high school out here because it's just huge.

Since Beth had completed her teacher candidacy in a smaller school, she encountered some new challenges as the result of the greater number of students at West Kennedy.

Extensive workload and lack of time

At the same time Beth was learning about her new environment, she was facing much greater challenges. Beth, like Luke, felt that her greatest challenge was facing the overwhelming workload she encountered and the lack of time to adequately attend to that workload. One of the situations that contributed to this problem was the fact that West Kennedy was operating on a six-period schedule. Therefore, Beth was responsible for teaching five classes, two sections of senior Honors British Literature and three sections of junior college preparatory American Literature. Having taught on block scheduling during her student teaching, Beth needed time to adjust to the amount of grading associated with teaching five classes as opposed to three. In addition, she now had only a 50-minute planning period (as opposed to a 90-minute planning period on block scheduling) during which she could attend to any number of other teaching

responsibilities including completing and submitting required paperwork, planning unit lessons, reviewing and creating materials, grading, and communicating with parents and colleagues, to name just a few. This enormous workload resulted in Beth's having to complete work at home even on weekends:

> But seriously, how does it all get done? I spent all weekend doing grading. All weekends are spent doing that, and I have no time for life. It's just piles and piles—it never ends. You can get to the surface, and then it just pounds you right back down. We're so swamped that we don't have any life. And there's no break in sight, no break in sight.

Beth expressed that feeling constant pressure to stay "caught up" had left her physically exhausted and often mentioned being "tired" or "drained."

Researching course content and materials

Another challenge Beth faced was the overwhelming amount of material she needed to research in order to teach her classes effectively:

> I would say that at the very beginning the biggest challenge was just the overwhelming amount of material that I had to work with. We had just done a new textbook adoption, so we had the transparencies, the work booklets, the book itself, so it was just a lot of material to get through. You only take so many English classes in college and so a lot of the stuff I hadn't even read, so it was kind of like being in school again and having a full-time job where you're having to read everything, understand it, and then think of a plan, so that was a struggle, just the amount of work that I

had. It's so frustrating. Everything just takes so much time. So where do you need to put your time? I just don't know yet.

Beth felt that the amount of material that needed researching was a particular challenge to beginning English teachers because of the multiple responsibilities encompassed in that discipline:

> I think it's more difficult for the English teacher because we're not just an English teacher; we're language arts, [we're] covering grammar, we're covering writing, we're covering literature, so we're having to cover three things, not just one, and that's a struggle, too.... So I don't just have a literature book; I have a writing book, and I have grammar stuff. You know, so you have to plan for all those things. I also had to relearn my grammar.

Beth related constantly feeling frustrated that she didn't know enough yet to make lesson plans that were as engaging as she would like them to be:

> There's just so much that you need to know in the very beginning and you want everything to be great. You're thinking, "How much time can I actually put into this without becoming insane?" You do want to be a great teacher, but to be a great teacher, it takes a lot of know how or knowledge of your subject as well as how to apply it.

Beth wanted to be able to create lessons that were interesting and engaging:

> I know those days when the lesson isn't great, and it stinks because you're standing up there doing this thing that you know they don't like, and

> you're bored and they're bored and it's not fun to be here, but when you're doing something interesting and engaging, well time flies and that's great.

Beth described the perfect classroom as one that students looked forward to but eventually came to accept that "that just doesn't happen all the time."

Lack of student motivation

Beth felt it was important for students to be engaged since she was also struggling with students who appeared to be unmotivated. During her own high school experience, she had never encountered what she considered to be unmotivated students. Beth had been in advanced classes in high school and remarked, "I was surprised with the college prep kids here because I had never seen students like that because I was never around people who failed." Many of her students seemed to display attitudes toward education that were foreign to her, and she was confounded about what to do about them:

> I realize that another challenge was the unmotivated students. You spend so much time making these lesson plans and you come to class and you have people that obviously don't care; you've talked to these kids over and over and over again and they won't do anything you ask them to do, and they won't put forth any effort, so that was a struggle.

Beth found herself staying late and working on weekends in order to create lesson plans that would be more engaging and meaningful for students, but she eventually had to sacrifice the time she spent working on lesson plans in order to keep up with reading course content and grading student work.

In addition to wanting to create engaging lessons and motivate students, Beth's desire to learn as much as possible as soon as possible also stemmed from a very real fear of facing students who potentially knew more than she did about a particular subject:

> Most of the struggle that I had [as a first year teacher] last year was just being concerned with going into a classroom of senior honor kids and having them know more than I did. That didn't happen, but I really did have to prepare myself so whatever questions they had I had the answer to it. It was a real concern of mine that, "Oh my gosh, I'm not as good at this grammar stuff as I should be." I really needed to learn it.

Like many beginning teachers, Beth feared losing students' respect for her as the authority in the classroom; therefore, she spent a considerable amount of time doing her own "homework" in order to know as much as possible about the course content she had been assigned to teach.

Second Year Challenges

During her second year, Beth found herself still dealing with some of the same issues she faced during her first year of teaching. In addition to those issues, she found herself facing some new challenges as well.

Lack of time

During her second year of teaching, Beth still struggled with issues of time: "You have to split time between grading and planning and actually having a life." Beth had even more demands on her time than she had during her first year since she was taking a class once a week for five hours in order to receive

gifted certification. In addition, other circumstances in life needed her time and attention, leaving her feeling behind in her work for school:

> I have friends' weddings coming up, and I'm thinking, "Oh my gosh, when I have all these things coming up, I'm not going to have time to catch up on school stuff and then I'm just going to be even more behind than I already am." I'm going crazy. I need Christmas break or something. And I'm moving in two weekends. That same weekend it's my grandfather's estate sale and I'm moving into another apartment.

Beth was also applying to begin graduate school the following summer and was in the process of registering for all the appropriate tests and filling out her applications. Since she was using weekends to attend to these matters instead of school work, as was her custom, she reported feeling frazzled and that not doing any work on the weekend caused "the week to be insane." Beth indicated that she still struggled with the overwhelming workload and its demands on her time and at times still found herself just "going from lesson to lesson" without much time to reflect.

Beth's second year, according to her, had been less stressful is some ways and more stressful in others. Creating lesson plans was slightly less challenging because she had been assigned the same courses to teach and had at least already read the material:

> Just knowing the material makes all the difference in the world because that just takes so much time just to read the selections. You're spending

> all that time outside the classroom reading what takes a whole semester for them to do in the classroom, so a semester of time extra.

On the other hand, Beth anticipated that should she be assigned a new course to teach that she would face this challenge all over again, just as her mentor teacher was at the time.

County policies on standardized testing

Beth's greatest challenge her second year was trying to serve her students to the best of her ability and still "cover" a wide range of material in order to prepare students for the standardized final exam required by Wilson County. Wilson County required that all teachers of each grade level issue the same final exam that must count for at least fifteen percent of their final average for the semester. Beth indicated that it had been speculated that even that percentage was going to increase to twenty percent by the next year. Although the county exams had also been required during Beth's first year, she had been so preoccupied with more pressing challenges that she only began to see the exams' impact on her planning processes during her second year. Beth shared Michelle's frustrations regarding the final exams and felt that the content of the exam too often dictated her decision-making during the planning process:

> I'm still stressed trying to fit everything in the semester when there's just not enough time to fit everything in. That's been stressful knowing that we have to get through a certain amount of stuff, and you can't do it in the most timely manner because you have the county-wide final exam, so you have to cram everything in. If I were making my own final exam, I could

> just choose to omit something. We are teaching to the test to an extent. Knowing let's say that "The Raven" is definitely on the final exam and "The Fall of the House of Usher" is not; I'm definitely going to cover "The Raven."

Like Michelle, Beth was extremely frustrated with having to cover specified material and was convinced that doing so was not in her students' best interest. She had learned during her teacher candidacy the importance of tailoring lessons to students' needs and interests in order to make their learning experiences more memorable and meaningful. Beth and her colleagues felt that having to issue a standardized final exam did not accurately reflect all their students had learned throughout the semester.

> People have expressed that a problem with these tests is that teachers know their own class, what their classes need, what their classes know, and this exam does not allow for those differences.

According to Beth, the County's explanation for the emphasis on standardized testing was that they were "looking toward that overall knowledge." Teachers, however, felt that the exams did not appropriately match the ability levels of different groups of students: for some, the test was too challenging, and for many, it was not challenging enough.

In an attempt to address teachers' concerns about the countywide exams, Wilson County decided to require teachers to issue school-wide standardized exams in place of the countywide final exams. Therefore, teachers were going to be required to create a test for each grade level using only questions from a test

bank of acceptable questions provided by the county. Beth found this requirement to be even more stressful:

> Everyone at West Kennedy High School who has 11th grade college prep will have the same exam. We will go into the test bank of acceptable questions and pull those together, so it will be more stressful because we'll all definitely have to be on the same page because we're going to come up with the exam together. It's frustrating because I know that not all teachers have the same thought about which selection is most important or what they focus on.

Even though it had been Beth's experience that she and her colleagues worked together well and that grade level meetings had helped her in the past with pacing and other planning issues, this time she felt that asking teachers to agree to cover one particular set of materials was placing too much pressure on them and could potentially strain an otherwise positive working relationship. She also felt that requiring her to make instructional decisions based solely on test content was asking her to move away from creating the student-centered classroom she so desired.

In addition to the countywide final exam, Wilson County students were also expected to perform well on the county's exit exams at the end of particular grade levels, the state's high school graduation test, and college entrance exams such the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). According the Beth, her highest priority was supposed to be standardized test scores "because that's something that parents see on paper." Indeed, the County had reinforced the notion that the

school's high test scores presented a particular draw to families either moving into or remaining in the community:

> [West Kennedy's reputation] is very high in the county. I mean, top ranking if you want to go scoreswise. We constantly hear about where our scores stand. Families come here to live because they know of West Kennedy's reputation, so when they are looking for a house, they look for one in our district because they know we're a good school.

Although Beth agreed that West Kennedy had a prestigious reputation based on test scores, she was gravely concerned about a political push toward teacher accountability. She was extremely uncomfortable with, even incredulous at, the suggestion that she was to be somehow held accountable for every student's performance:

> You come and try to teach 28 kids at one time and see how far you can get. See how well you can know each of the students. That's like you going to a doctor, the doctor telling you what you need to do to improve, and you don't take your medication. How can the doctor be accountable for you getting well when you don't do what the doctor tells you to do? You cannot make a kid learn the stuff. You can present it in a way that is the best way for them to learn, and they're still not going to learn it unless they put in some effort themselves, so I don't understand how they can possibly put teacher accountability into practice. [Students] just already bring so much to the table that you can have no control over.

Beth was beginning to feel frustrated and intimidated by the notion of being held accountable for students' performance, especially in a school like West Kennedy known for its strong reputation in academics.

Lack of student motivation

One of the factors that prompted Beth's reaction to the idea of teacher accountability was her frustration regarding unmotivated students. Beth had difficulty reconciling some of her students' attitudes with her own experiences with school:

> I understand the lack of motivation because of the lack of interest. I do. I understand that because I've had that. [For me] it was okay to make a B, for them it's okay to make an F. They're like, "I can get an F; it's okay." When I was in school, you didn't even think about retaking a class. That was not a thought that even flitted through your mind for an instant. So that's what's so new. I don't understand how something wouldn't kick in saying, "Hmm, I'm not doing enough because I have a 58 in Miss Darcy's class." I don't understand that mentality.

According to Beth, even some of her students expressed disbelief and dismay as they watched their peers earn failing grades:

> It's amazing. I don't understand. I have another student who's failing, and he's very vocal about the fact that he's failing and laughs about it. And the other kids are like, "How are you failing? Just don't fail. Stop talking about it and just don't fail. You know, do something about it." So the other kids get irritated with him in that honors class.

Although Beth continued to be confounded by unmotivated students, she recognized that most of her students, many of them in her honors courses, did not fit into that category. She admitted not knowing if she would have been able to handle a teaching assignment that involved only average or lower ability level students: “I can’t imagine what the other schools that supposedly don’t have the highly academic students must feel like if I feel frustration with my college prep kids and their lack of motivation.”

Communicating with students’ parents

One of the many ways that Beth attempted to address the issue of unmotivated students was to provide parents with updates regarding students’ progress. Although Beth often found parents to be extremely supportive, at times communicating with parents could be quite trying. Parents’ responses ranged anywhere from resignation to blame. One parent was just as frustrated as Beth regarding her child’s progress, responding with, “I’ve done everything I can; he’s just going to have to learn the hard way.” Another went so far as to accuse Beth of preventing her son from “having any sort of future,” saying that it was her fault that “he was going to be a nobody in life.” Beth felt that this parent’s reaction was indicative of the attitude toward teachers that many students learn from their parents:

> That’s the message that you’re giving your son, that it’s the teacher’s fault. That’s a problem that parents don’t give teachers the respect they need. At home, they don’t act like teachers should gain respect, so the kid’s not going to give the teacher respect.

When Beth communicated with parents she was often surprised to discover how little information her students had communicated to their parents in order to avoid taking responsibility for their lack of progress. Among other things, she had already discovered three progress reports with forged parent signatures. In addition, many students had not communicated that they could go to Miss Darcy for extra help before and after school, could take advantage of test retake opportunities, and could earn extra credit. Beth felt that many parents simply weren't reinforcing the importance of making education a priority in their children's lives:

> A lot of the kids that I have now get brand new cars even though they have a 55 in my class, so they're not taught what are the priorities here. The priority should be school, and the priority is buying the fanciest car, so I think that changes a lot of actions in the classroom.

Beth believed that perceptions of education communicated to students in their homes, either directly or indirectly, influenced student attitude and behavior at school.

Frustrations with the teaching profession

Beth felt in general that society has little understanding of how difficult the teaching profession is:

> This is an impossible job, and I wish that everyone could understand how hard teaching is because no one does. You're responsible for their learning. Every day. It's just a lot of responsibility. And I try to explain it as you have a 9 to 5 job [during which] you are giving a presentation all day,

> and then afterwards you have to do all the paperwork that wasn't done during the lecture. It's just overwhelming. There are so many problems.

Beth found her job to be particularly demanding in light of information she was receiving from her closest friends about their jobs. Beth could see many benefits to being in the teaching profession that her friends were not enjoying, such as job stability and more independence (within the classroom); however, when she began making comparisons with their jobs in the business world, she found many aspects of the teaching profession to be lacking:

> It's strange because in business, you're doing this job now so you can move on to bigger and better things whereas I stay in my same job; I never go anywhere. There's no room for growth within the company of school whereas in every other company you move up and you get better and you get rewarded. I think it's just that people are recognized in other companies when they move up, you know, with new titles, and so when people hear about what they're doing, they're respected whereas we are still teachers. You know, same old boring teacher. So that's frustrating.

Beth acknowledged that a teacher could eventually become a department chair but also recognized that "they do a lot more work without a lot more reward. " She also mentioned that companies encourage and even finance employees' studies toward more advanced degrees whereas teachers are encouraged, sometimes even required, to work toward advanced degrees but are often responsible for paying for schooling themselves. In addition, Beth felt that teachers were "held to much higher standards than other professions." She

mentioned Bill Clinton as an illustration, “like Clinton, not if he were a teacher. Oh boy. [He’d be] out of a job quickly. No job ever again.”

Beth’s friends were also reporting to her how little work they were actually doing on any given day, reinforcing her frustrations regarding her enormous workload:

> I feel like I have a really hard job and no one else has a really hard job. In my closest circle, [my friends say], “I was bored; I didn’t have anything to do at work today.” I’m like, “Is that possible to not have anything to do? Is it possible to be bored?” Maybe I’m bored doing Transcendentalism, but it’s not like I’m sitting there surfing the Internet or talking on the phone. That’s frustrating because I’m jealous. I am. I’m jealous of the amount of work that they don’t have to do and I do have to do. They come home and they’re completely done and sometimes didn’t do anything at work. I come home and I’m never done.

Beth eventually gave up trying to talk to her friends about the challenges associated with her job because “no one else understands besides other education people.” Beth wondered if she would ever experiment with other professions but doubted if she would because she was not willing to risk losing her position at West Kennedy, which is where she knew she wanted to be.

In spite of the many difficulties associated with the teaching profession, Beth was not ready to give up on teaching. She began to recall many of the positive aspects that drew her to teaching in the first place and also felt that teaching would become more rewarding as she gained experience:

> If I perfect up to a point my lessons and develop a good rapport with all the students in a way that I think is effective and then discover that this isn't rewarding anymore, I won't do it. But I can't give up on something that easily. Just because I'm frustrated now, that doesn't mean anything because I haven't had enough experience. There are pluses. I'm alone most of the time, and I pretty much can do what I want to do in my class. I have my own sense of power over there because I am in charge of a hundred and some kids. Most people don't have that kind of power when they work in businesses because they're under people whereas I'm over a certain amount of people. You're on your own doing what you need to do every day. Yeah. And that's good not being told what to do every day.

Beth found gaining information for future parenting decisions to be another positive aspect to being in the teaching profession:

> I do think it's a great thing to do, to teach at some point, because in my whole scheme of things, in my life plan to have kids and to raise my kids well, you know so much about what your kids are going to go through…. You're aware of the system. You know educational terms. I just think it's important to be knowledgeable about those issues, and I think that people who aren't in education are not.

In spite of her many frustrations Beth enjoyed being a teacher and expressed feeling "lucky to be in this school" and that "the goods greatly outweigh the bads." Although Beth described her overall experience to that point as positive, she clearly faced numerous challenges as she began her career in the teaching

profession. The next section explores when, how, and from whom she sought support during her first year and a half.

Help-seeking Decisions

Several factors affected Beth's help-seeking decisions as she attempted to address the difficulties she encountered as a first year teacher. One aspect of her personality that affected her help-seeking style in general was her willingness to ask questions. She described herself as someone unafraid to admit that she needed assistance:

> So much of the stuff you have to learn as soon as you get here, so you just find a way to find out. You ask your mentor, you ask your neighbor. I'm not usually someone who gets intimidated or anything like that, so I'll just tell it like it is: "Hey, I'm having a problem with this, please help me."

She recalled being hesitant at first to ask grammar questions for fear of being considered lacking in knowledge, but she felt that in general she was the kind of person who was not shy about asking for help.

The English department at West Kennedy

The English department at West Kennedy consisted of approximately 25 teachers. There is a core group of teachers who have been employed there for many years, some since the year the school was built. Most were in their 40s or 50s and a couple of teachers were in their 30s. West Kennedy had recently acquired a number of young teachers. According to Michelle, the school had been focused on hiring new teachers because they had "looked around and decided they had become too mature and that they needed to bring in some new

blood, so they kind of made it a point to hire young teachers." Simultaneously, the department acknowledged that new teachers would need support, so they fostered an atmosphere of fairness by assigning new teachers only two different courses for which to prepare, one of which was an honors course.

Both Beth and Michelle agreed that West Kennedy was a good place to begin a career in the English field for a number of reasons. First of all, courses were distributed throughout the department in such a way as to avoid loading new teachers up with classes considered to be on the lowest level. In addition, because of the size of the school, there were more honors courses offered than might be found at a smaller school. As a result, new teachers often had the opportunity to teach a variety of levels right from the start rather than having to wait until someone retired or otherwise relinquished coveted courses.

Another positive aspect of the English department at West Kennedy was their overall willingness to offer assistance and their philosophy toward the success of new teachers. Michelle commented:

> It's just a good department in terms of caring for each other and caring about the kids and wanting everybody to succeed because if they fail it reflects on all of us. I think that there's just been a history here of working together, sharing plans, sharing ideas. I don't know if Beth has mentioned it, but we meet by grade levels once a month and talk about where we've been, so that's helpful for new teachers because they can bring up questions and concerns, and they can get information. If we type something up, we'll send it over email to everybody. So we're just good

about stuff like that. And like I said, we have so many new teachers we've kind of had to be aware of what's going on with new teachers.

Beth was particularly pleased to begin her career at West Kennedy. She felt that the grade level meetings helped her to learn each course's basic requirements, such as what overall units were included in the course, so that she could feel confident that she was meeting curricular requirements and wasn't going off on some unrelated tangent:

> Knowing what you have to cover provides a good support system because you're not thrown out there to find resources and all that stuff. That was good because I always knew what I was supposed to be doing; I wasn't just thrown out there—do whatever you want—because I don't think I could have done that. I had guidelines and [units] I knew I had to cover in a certain amount of time, which helped me to organize myself.

Knowing that she had colleagues she could approach with questions specific to the courses she was teaching created yet another source of support available to her as she progressed throughout the year: "[It] helps, I think, to have a lot of people working together in one subject."

Beth also felt relieved that she hadn't been given a schedule of five classes that were all "the lowest of the low." She felt that having the opportunity to teach Honors courses her first year prevented her from becoming discouraged about less motivated students:

> It's important to see that there are kids who care. I just really needed to see those different types of students in order not to get as frustrated as I probably would have.

Finally, she felt that the people in the department were generally very caring and that they enjoyed "helping out the young newby…to fit in and have a good time." She felt that the entire department was interested in her as a new teacher and wanted her to succeed:

> It's not just Michelle that mentors; it's just having a supportive department overall. I had planning, for instance, with [another department member], and I would ask her when I had a question because she was right there for planning. I'd say, "Listen, I need to talk to someone about this student" and she would answer the question. If you ask for help, anyone in the department will give it to you, so just having a support team that wants the new teacher to succeed is helpful.

Beth felt that her colleagues in the English department had an "open door" policy and anyone would be willing to assist her if she asked.

Beth remembers talking with one member of the department, Linda, in particular. Linda was in her third year of teaching but was new to West Kennedy the year Beth began teaching. Beth felt that they were experiencing similar feelings and stresses:

> Since we were both first years and both in similar situations, we talked about the difficulties, not so much planning stuff, but just what we were going through.

Beth felt that it was good to be in a place with another new teacher because she completely understood where she was "coming from":

> You can share tears about "Do I really want to do this as a career? Because I'm so stressed, and I don't know if I can handle it."

Beth said that she cried to Linda instead of Michelle, not because she didn't want to go to Michelle or was afraid to, but because Linda was "right there."

Reflections on First-year Mentor-Mentee Transactions

The most important member of the English department providing support for Beth was Michelle, Beth's designated mentor. Although Michelle acknowledged that Beth and others tend to talk most with people who share planning periods, she also knew from her own experiences the importance of knowing that a particular individual was available to offer guidance and support. As she and Beth began working together, they found they needed to consider their individual notions of a successful mentor-mentee relationship in light of the school's mentoring program.

The mentoring program

The mentoring program at West Kennedy was still in its developmental stages. New teachers were assigned to a mentor within their department and were introduced to one another the first day of preplanning. The year Michelle and Beth worked together, the program seemed to entail more requirements than usual. Mentors were being offered a small stipend somewhere in the range of $100.00 to $150.00 if they met the basic requirements. The requirements for the mentors, as Michelle understood them, were to meet with their mentees once a

week, to attend monthly school-wide meetings that began during preplanning and ran throughout the course of the school year, to observe her mentee's classroom at least once, and to read a journal to be kept by the mentee. Beth, as the beginning teacher, was to meet with Michelle once a week, to attend the same monthly meetings, to keep a journal, and to read an assigned text (by Harry Wong) related to being a first year teacher.

Interestingly, these requirements affected the transactions between Beth and Michelle only minimally. Michelle did attend the monthly meetings and did observe Beth's class one time and also covered her class once during an emergency. Other than that, both Michelle and Beth dismissed two particular requirements, reading the assigned text and keeping the journal, agreeing that engaging in those activities would not be the most beneficial use of their time. They felt that requiring beginning teachers to read a book and keep a journal held low priority on their already overwhelmingly long list of "things to do." Beth expressed not having time to keep a reflective journal or read a book that wasn't directly related to material she was teaching. Other beginning teachers did not read the book either, and eventually the plan to discuss the book was dropped, and no one seems sure what became of the journal assignment. Overall, the only formal part of the program that remained was the meetings once a month for an hour after school. Beth attended these meetings but sometimes felt that particular topics needed to have been addressed earlier in the semester:

> They have topics, which was frustrating because let's say we're at month six and they're just now talking about procedures for tardy students or

what your rules can be, and you're thinking, "I've already tackled that issue."

Both Beth and Michelle felt that the topics discussed during the monthly meetings could have been more logically organized to address beginning teachers' questions and challenges.

The next year, the mentoring program fell under the leadership of a different person and was restructured to be much more informal. Mentors were offered no stipend, and there were no monthly meetings or other requirements. Michelle and her new mentee met at a meeting for new teachers during preplanning, at which time mentors and mentees ate lunch together, and then mentees were shown around the school. Michelle's department chair had asked her to serve as mentor to another new teacher, and Michelle had agreed only after being assured that the program had been restructured to be much more informal.

First-year Transactions between Beth and Michelle

Rather than adhering to prescribed requirements, Beth and Michelle fell into a comfortable pattern of transactions that was much more informal. Rather than scheduling a set meeting time once a week, Beth simply went to Michelle after school on an "as needed" basis. Beth did not feel that she needed a set meeting time:

Well, my problem with the whole mentor program was we were supposed to have a certain meeting time every week, but that's not what I need. I

> just need to know that someone is there so that if I have a problem, I can go to them.

Beth acknowledged that some new teachers might be afraid that their questions might be "stupid" and wouldn't want to go talk to a mentor unless there was a specific time, but "never felt that there was a problem with going to ask." She stated: "I think it's important to let people know that you can make it flexible to fit your own mentor relationship."

For administrative questions regarding where to turn in specific forms and the like, Beth tended to ask those who shared planning time with her since they were the most readily available. However, for matters relating to her classes specifically, Beth sought Michelle's advice. Many times she and Beth discussed curriculum issues such as how to set up a calendar, syllabus, and unit lessons for a specific course they were both teaching. Although Beth never "raided" Michelle's files, she did benefit from getting an overview of how Michelle organized and paced the course. Beth also approached Michelle to seek advice about particular students and situations. Both Michelle and Beth remembered discussing issues such as discipline and student motivation.

Michelle's approach to mentoring included lending an empathetic ear and providing Beth with encouraging words. This approach worked well for Beth since it matched her notion of mentoring. Beth remembered going to Michelle just to receive confirmation that what she was experiencing was "normal":

> Sometimes I would just go over there and just chat about what's been going on and what's frustrating me and basically have her just as an ear to

> listen to and someone to say, “Everybody has to do that, everyone deals with that. You know, you have all these unmotivated kids, well I do too, and a lot of times it doesn’t get any better” So just to know that it’s not just ‘cause I’m first year; it’s a problem that everyone deals with, so that was helpful.

Beth appreciated Michelle’s willingness to listen, commiserate, console and advise. When Beth became overwhelmed, Michelle suggested strategies for dealing with the extraordinary workload associated with teaching English. Michelle related this incident:

> I remember telling her some advice that my first department head gave me…. Try to have the weekends to yourself. I remember telling Beth that, and I remember she just looked at me like I was crazy. You know, which is true because as English teachers we know that you really do have to work on the weekends, but it was always a goal of mine to try to have a weekend off. It didn’t always happen, but it was always a goal, and I would encourage her at the holidays, you know, but she still [worked], and I knew where she was coming from.

Michelle understood the tremendous workload Beth was experiencing and encouraged her to take some time for herself in order to avoid getting “burned out” too quickly.

Michelle’s approach to mentoring was also influenced by her experiences as a sorority sister. She recalled that during rush, Big Sisters would make small gestures of support such as buying new sorority members presents and

remembering them on their birthdays and at Christmas. She recalled doing similar things for Beth just to make her feel welcome and at home.

Mentor needs

Michelle's approach to mentoring was also influenced by Michelle's own needs as an educator. At this time in her life, Michelle felt that she, too, could have benefited from having someone to talk to about her own experiences and challenges. She found herself in a unique place in her career. Having just completed a doctoral degree, she felt that she now had options to do other things besides teach high school--opportunities that had not been available to her before. She was having difficulty deciding whether or not to pursue any of those options and ultimately opted for "staying put" for a couple of years. She weighed applying for a position at the county office or teaching at the college or university level against remaining in the high school classroom and keeping the salary that accompanied Wilson County employment. She expressed that she missed having someone who "understood" with whom she could discuss these issues. Instead, she knew that she was being counted on to be the one who offered support rather than received it:

> Cause you know I'm having a difficult year this [2000-2001] year, a "Do I want to do this the rest of my life?" kind of year. And I don't have a mentor right now. I'm at the age where I guess I am the mentor…. And I've always had somebody until these last couple years here at West Kennedy because I came here as a teacher with experience, and I lost that core feeling of having somebody there. And not even just a mentor, but just a

> friend…. Somebody to decompress with. I think that's it a little bit. I think people look to me to try to be the support person instead, and I still have 20 years of this career left, I mean, I'm only a third of the way through it and I think you need that, somebody there who's telling you, "You can do this and it's worth it to do it."

Michelle, in some ways, found herself in the same place as Beth in that she still needed someone in her life—someone in education—to listen to her struggles and give her a "pep talk" now and then.

When asked if there were a colleague who could fulfill that role for her, she commented that she didn't feel she could say everything she was thinking to anyone in the school because of "all the politics." She also felt that people assumed that she no longer needed support because of her years of experience as an educator:

> I think I'm in a place where people are looking at me to have all this under control and not necessarily to need that kind of support. They see that I've been in this and that I'm successful, so to speak, and that I have it together. But what I'm going through right now is that whole "Am I making a difference?" I'm doing all this work, and these kids don't really seem to care, and I'm having to adhere to state standards that I don't agree with and county standards that I don't agree with, and what I believe is teaching is being buried under all of that, and it's just very discouraging. And I also think when you get toward the end of your career, you know you're going to stick with it, so you just resign yourself to that. You've put

> that many years into it, retirement is on the horizon, so there's light at the end of the tunnel. I think probably where I am is difficult because there's so much left and you don't necessarily have the support you had originally.

In the past, Michelle had always sought out people whom she respected, people who were excellent teachers themselves, warm and motherly people. She respected mentors who wouldn't let her "sit around and wallow in it" but who gave her "directed advice." She missed having that person in her life.

Because of the wonderful support Michelle had experienced herself, she put tremendous pressure on herself to measure up to the kind of mentor she had. She expressed always wishing that she were as wise as her mentor had been: "The lady just always knew how to handle anything well. She just always had the gracious and graceful way of handling any situation. I don't always feel like I know exactly." In addition, Michelle experienced feelings of guilt, thinking that she needed to seek Beth out more often. The only time Beth and Michelle could meet was after school since they did not share a planning period. Michelle admitted that the afternoons that she thought she might have time to meet, she would inevitably find herself in the middle of something else:

> We couldn't always connect, so I always felt guilty like I was letting her down, and I remember kind of telling her something about it at the end of the year, and she just laughed and said that I was being silly. But maybe I expected [too much]; maybe I was doing the perfectionism thing there.

Beth reassured Michelle that she had “no reason to feel guilty” but understood how being a mentor to a first year teacher could be difficult:

> I thought she was there for me whenever I needed her. Again, I feel like I’m the kind of person that will ask if [I] need help, but I hadn’t really even thought of the fact that mentors are just as busy as mentees, and they’re having their own stuff to do, so it would be difficult to guide someone else through that process.

Beth was so focused on keeping up with her own work that only after reading Michelle’s interview transcript did she fully realize that Michelle had been just as overwhelmed.

Second year transactions

Since Beth and Michelle had established a comfortable relationship during Beth’s first year, their transactions continued into Beth’s second year even though Michelle was no longer assigned to Beth as her official mentor. Although Beth and Michelle talked less frequently, Beth still appreciated the comfort of knowing Michelle was there for her should she need someone to talk to. She recalled talking with Michelle on one particular occasion:

> I had a gay student who had written a paper or she was sketching it out, and it was about needing gay and lesbian organizations in the school, etc. and at the end of class, [the student] surprised me by coming up to my desk and asking me if I would support such a thing. Taken off guard and not wanting to offend the student who had just talked about high suicide rates and gay teens and how passionately she felt about this issue, I just

said, “ Yes” even though I would probably have more to say about it if I were talking to another adult about the situation. Then I was worried about what the word support meant, whether she was expecting me to be the sponsor of her club, which I certainly would not feel comfortable doing. But as the teacher you want to make sure that the student feels welcome in your class and that they don’t feel intimidated by you or afraid of you because you don’t agree with what they believe. I went to Michelle to kind of ask her about it, and she made me feel better because there’s someone else that is supposed to sponsor that club if it goes through.

Beth expressed that was extremely helpful “just having someone to be able to go relay that story to and have them put me at ease with the situation.”

Although Beth did not talk with Michelle as much as she would if she had more time, she envisioned having meaningful conversations with her in the future:

> I think a lot of the reason why I don’t talk [with Michelle] more is because of lack of time. Someday I’d want to sit down and talk about, “how exactly can I go about teaching writing in a better way, talk to them about making better sentences and stuff like that,” and maybe discuss lessons with her, but [I don’t right now] just [because of] a lack of time and [because I’m] just getting through what I can this year. Maybe next year I can come up with more things like that, but that is something I would definitely talk to her about.

Also Beth did not talk with Michelle as much her second year since Beth felt that some of the challenges she faced her first year were not as pressing her second year. She had been assigned the same courses and felt that she could use some of the knowledge she had gained the previous year as well as materials she had collected and created. She felt she had a better understanding of how to approach the course, plus she had already read the material. She expressed that she didn't feel as stressed:

> Luckily I have the same prep this year, so it's so much easier, and even though I'm stressed, my stress level is nothing like it was last year because I've read the material, I have sketched out plans, so now I really feel like I'm able to make them better as we go, just especially pacing wise. I know how long this is going to take. I know stuff that I can do with this.

Beth also said that her second year was easier because she didn't need time to become oriented to her setting:

> Another thing that's better this year is I know where everything is. I know what I'm supposed to do. You know, work week I didn't stay up here 'til 6:00 at night every time trying to organize my room. I know what works, what setups work. I already have all my discipline rules laid out. I have my syllabus and all that, so that makes it a lot easier.

Another difference her second year in comparison with her first was that Beth had come to realize that she could not plan a "perfect" lesson for every class period of every day. She accepted that, "it's not always going to get done as well

as I want it to get done." Beth described this realization as a difficult lesson to learn:

> I can't come out of college with these fabulous lesson plans for every single class. I just have to try to implement as many as I can and still retain my sanity, which was a hard lesson, but it's something that you have to learn. By the end I was still doing some fun stuff, but not trying to kill myself in reading, learning, and spending hours and hours on plans. Sometimes I just can't come up with anything exciting. So that's what I learned throughout the year.

Beth expressed a desire to continue working on better lesson plans and foresaw being able to do so in the future, but she felt that she was still trying to "keep her head above water," so there wasn't time to focus on that area just yet.

Mentoring Issues

What is encouraging about this case?

In spite of having no time to meet together except after school, Beth and Michelle established a comfortable mentor-mentee relationship that met many of their expectations for a positive mentoring experience. First, they were in the same department, a condition that both had emphasized as being important. Both felt strongly that a novice teacher should be assigned to someone within the same department--someone who would understand the challenges faced by English teachers in particular.

Secondly, both felt that their relationship was enhanced by the context of a supportive department overall. Michelle was aware that Beth approached other

department members with questions and supported the notion of the entire English department serving as part of a larger support network for beginning teachers. Beth felt that the English department fostered a nurturing environment for new teachers; they displayed a genuine interest in new teachers and were available and willing to assist her at any time. She felt that her department supported her even further by conducting grade level meetings to discuss curriculum and by distributing courses throughout the department in such a way as to avoid assigning new teachers only those classes considered to be on the lowest ability level. In addition, even though teachers at West Kennedy taught five classes, courses were assigned in such a way that new teachers were given only two different courses for which to prepare.

This case illustrates that induction support involves more than simply pairing a new teacher with a veteran teacher. Beth considered the mentor-mentee relationship to be important and felt that having a mentor--someone who agreed to be available to listen to concerns and answer questions--provided a type of "psychological advantage." On the other hand, Beth identified the support she received from her department as equally important, if not more important. She felt that the department as a whole understood that successfully supporting beginning teachers involved creating a desirable working environment as demonstrated by their careful consideration regarding the distribution of teaching assignments.

In addition, Beth and Michelle shared common views regarding the mentor-mentee relationship. Rather than adhering to specific mentor program

requirements they found to be counterproductive, they established a comfortable pattern of meeting after school on an "as needed" basis. Michelle assured Beth that she was available whenever Beth had a question or concern, and in turn, Beth felt comforted knowing that Michelle was there for her should a question or problem arise. Their expectations regarding the mentoring relationship were evident in transactions between Beth and Michelle. When Beth approached Michelle with specific questions or difficulties she was experiencing, Michelle listened with an empathetic ear and offered Beth reassurance and guidance. Beth and Michelle's relationship extended, albeit unofficially, into Beth's second year of teaching. Although Beth and Michelle did not talk as often, Beth still felt comfortable with Michelle and continued to approach her when difficulties arose. Both Beth and Michelle felt that they benefited from their relationship and considered it an integral foundation of support for Beth as she embarked on her career in the teaching profession.

What is troubling about this case?

Although Beth and Michelle found their work together as mentor and mentee to be satisfying, their transactions illustrate the kind of "feel good" mentoring mentioned in the literature on induction support—that is, mentoring that makes novices feel comfortable but doesn't promote future growth or cultivate powerful teaching (Moir & Gless, 2001; Huling-Austin, 1986). This level of mentoring is the result of two influential factors: 1), the participants' assumptions regarding the mentoring relationship, and 2) the context in which participants were operating.

First of all, this case provides one example of how participants' assumptions about mentoring influenced their mentor-mentee transactions. The first assumption, held by both Beth and Michelle, was that mentoring involved providing emotional support—listening, commiserating, consoling, encouraging. Michelle had received no training to prepare her for her mentor role, leaving her to construct her notion of a mentor-mentee relationship from her own experiences. Although receiving training may not have fully prepared Michelle for her role as mentor (since mentor training programs are often insufficient as mentor preparation), some training might have provided Michelle with an additional source of knowledge to contribute to her conception of mentoring. Relying only on her experiences, Michelle perceived mentoring a beginning teacher to involve providing encouragement and being available to answer questions.

Likewise, Beth indicated that she wanted a mentor who would alleviate her fears and tell her that "everything's going to be okay." The assumptions about mentoring Beth held led her to approach Michelle with the goal of being listened to and sometimes provided with general guidance, but not with the goal of engaging in thoughtful, potentially "educative," dialogue regarding larger issues related to her classroom experiences. Although beginning teachers have identified emotional support as one of the things mentors offer that they find the most helpful to them (Rigler, 1998; Abell, et al, 1995; Huffman & Leak, 1986), Daloz (1999) asserts that emotional support alone may result in feelings of confirmation but no growth. Beth felt comfortable approaching Michelle when

she had a question or concern, and Michelle trusted Beth to do just that. Similar to the case of Luke and Corky, Beth and Michelle had arrived at a conceptualization of mentoring that placed all the responsibility on the beginning teacher to seek assistance and little responsibility on the mentor teacher to maintain the relationship. Although Beth was not shy about asking questions and often sought Michelle's assistance, at the end of Beth's first year Michelle expressed feeling guilty that she did not take initiative and approach Beth more often.

Beth's help-seeking styles followed a pattern that also supported the notion of mentoring as providing emotional support. Although Beth felt prepared as she entered into her first year of teaching, she still faced many challenges as a beginning teacher. These challenges included adjusting to new surroundings, facing an overwhelming workload, and feeling constantly pressured for time. In addition, she faced researching new course material, covering material included on county-wide final exams and other standardized tests, and searching for ways to address the problem of unmotivated students. Although Beth encountered these numerous challenges as a novice teacher, like Luke, she addressed nearly all of them independently. For practical questions, Beth sought assistance from other members of the English department, particularly those who shared the same planning period. She also sought help from Linda, a colleague who Beth felt related to her challenges since she also was in her first year at West Kennedy (although in her third year of teaching). On some occasions, Beth did talk to Michelle about some of the bigger issues she faced such as the lack of

student motivation; however, according to what Beth identified as her expectations of the mentoring role, her motives for talking to Michelle were not really to receive advice about how to make her lessons more engaging and meaningful for students. Rather, she was anticipating receiving confirmation that Michelle, as a veteran teacher, also faced similar difficulties, and, therefore, she wasn't the only one facing this problem.

This case provides an example of how participants' assumptions regarding the mentor role influence mentor-mentee transactions and, in this case, result in "feel-good" mentoring. In addition, this case illustrates how the overall context in which a mentoring relationship operates also has a profound effect on mentor-mentee transactions, and can also contribute to mentoring on an "emotional" level. In this case, "context" includes the participants' daily schedules, the school's mentor program, and issues related to teaching at West Kennedy—specifically, coping with Wilson County's policies on standardized testing, and dealing with difficulties arising from the school's overcrowdedness.

One hindrance to Beth and Michelle's mentor-mentee relationship was their lack of time to meet together. They were both incredibly overwhelmed with their workload; they didn't share a planning period; and they had only 20-minute lunch periods. Their teaching schedules barely left time for the occasional after-school chat. In addition, during Beth's second year, Michelle had been assigned to a new beginning teacher, in effect taking what little time Michelle had and focusing it in a new direction. Like Corky and Luke, Beth and Michelle probably could not have accomplished much more than they did with the little time they

had to work with. Their case is yet another example of why incorporating release time into induction programs could be beneficial.

Beth stated that she hoped in the future to have time to talk to Michelle about issues directly related to the teaching of secondary language arts, such as improving in the areas of teaching writing and creating more engaging lesson plans. She felt that once she had taught the same course a few years, she might not have to spend as much time on researching course material and creating lesson plans. Therefore, she might have a few spare moments to reflect on her teaching and discuss with Michelle ways to improve. In addition to providing release time, this case illustrates the importance of extending the mentoring relationship beyond a novice's first year of teaching. Beth was in her second year and was still facing some of the same issues she faced her first year. In addition, she had yet to find time to engage in thoughtful reflection and dialogue regarding her teaching practices.

The lack of time to meet, in combination with their assumption of mentoring as providing emotional support, also affected the way Beth and Michelle addressed meeting West Kennedy's mentor program requirements. Beth and Michelle opted to omit two of the program's requirements—Beth's two assignments of reading a text on beginning teaching and keeping a journal in which she recorded questions and concerns. Their explanation for choosing not to complete those two requirements was simply a lack of time. However, in light of their assumptions about the mentor role, they might not have considered those assignments as facilitating the kind of support beginning teachers need.

Regardless of whether or not they considered those assignments to be worthwhile pursuits, those tasks were forced to the bottom of the priority list in light of more immediate and pressing needs. The question remains whether Beth would complete them if given more time, but, again, incorporating release time for beginning teachers and mentors would at least provide the opportunity to complete program requirements.

Beth and Michelle met two of the requirements necessary for Michelle to receive her stipend—they attended monthly meetings and Michelle conducted one classroom observation. Neither Beth nor Michelle found the monthly meetings to be beneficial since they had not been organized in a logical manner. The mentor program requirements are problematic because they lend themselves to fulfilling duties related to quantity rather than quality. The guidelines focus on the mentor completing x number of things in order to receive x amount of money. Although Michelle was to conduct one classroom observation, she was never instructed as to how to go about approaching that task. Unlike Corky, who had received some training in this area, Michelle did not recall conducting either a pre- or post-observation conference. Under these circumstances, the purpose for the observation is all but lost. One also must question how much information a mentor can hope to gain about a mentee as a teacher from only one observation over the period of an entire year. With so little time and without specific issues to discuss, it makes sense to me that conversations between mentors and mentees would remain on the level of

providing emotional support or addressing simple questions that can be readily answered.

Beth and Michelle were not alone in their dismissal of some of the program's requirements. Since the mentor program at West Kennedy was designed and implemented entirely within this one school context, independent from any larger induction program, they could restructure the program from year to year. Although that freedom could be viewed as a positive thing, the result was that the goals (if there were any articulated) and requirements of the program were never consistent from one year to the next. At the end of Beth's first year, the school's response to participants' dissatisfaction with the program's design was to place the program under new leadership and remove all formal aspects of the program (including the stipend for mentor teachers), rather than to investigate ways to make the program more effective and meaningful to those involved.

Finally, this case illustrates that the context in which Beth and Michelle operated contributed to mentoring that was supportive but did not promote Beth's professional growth and development as an educator. As educators, Beth and Michelle shared many of the same frustrations regarding the teaching profession, some of which related specifically to teaching at West Kennedy in Wilson County. Both taught 5 classes each day, and Michelle, like Beth, continued to be overwhelmed by the enormous (but, unfortunately, typical) workload. Michelle had been assigned a new course for which to prepare; therefore, like Beth, she, too, needed to research material for a new teaching assignment. In addition,

both Beth and Michelle were experiencing a number of frustrations including the county's emphasis on standardized testing, society's perception of the teaching profession, and the overcrowdedness at West Kennedy. These were all issues over which neither Beth nor Michelle felt they had control. Beth knew that Michelle had no power to eliminate those frustrations from the enormous list of challenges she found herself facing her first years (as evidenced by the incredibly long list outlined in this chapter). The cumulative effect of sharing so many experiences and frustrations was a relationship based more on empathy than on growth. Empathy is an admirable quality, to be sure, but, again, empathy alone does not provide either teacher the opportunity to move beyond the frustrations to discussing possible courses of action that could be taken to address such important issues.

Summary

The case of Beth Darcy and Michelle Doty provides one example of how one mentor teacher and one second-year teacher reflected on their first year together in a mentor-mentee relationship. This case discusses how they went about constructing their notions of mentoring and how their personal assumptions and their school contexts influenced their mentor-mentee transactions. The next chapter presents implications this study may have for future research and practice regarding mentor programs and induction support.

CHAPTER SIX

IMPLICATIONS FOR INDUCTION SUPPORT OF BEGINNING ENGLISH TEACHERS

The purpose of this research study was to explore the mentoring needs of two beginning high school English teachers as manifested in mentor-mentee relationships in the local school setting. In addition, I wanted to investigate how prior experiences, participants' assumptions, and local school contexts affected notions of mentoring as well as actual mentor-mentee transactions.

Discussion of Similarities and Differences in Case Studies

The purpose of Chapters Four and Five was to provide an in-depth description of each mentor teacher, each beginning teacher, and each mentor-mentee relationship in order to learn more about mentor-mentee transactions. In this section I will discuss the similarities and differences between the two mentor-mentee cases and their contribution to issues surrounding induction support.

Mentor-mentee relationships

The first thing that stands out about these two cases is that the mentor-mentee relationships of Luke and Corky and Beth and Michelle bore little resemblance to "classical" mentoring relationships (Gehrke, 1988; Odell, 1990; Daloz, 1999). Mentoring in the classical sense involves a learning process similar to Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Vygotsky, providing a learner with the opportunity to collaborate with a more capable peer enhances the possibility of reaching

developmental potential. Similarly, Odell (1990) contends that the goal of mentoring is the beginning teacher's eventual self-reliance. Odell describes the mentoring process as developing a trusting relationship, posing questions about mentees' teaching, and guiding them toward self-reflection. This process resembles Feiman-Nemser's (2001) notion of "educative" mentoring—mentoring that encourages novices to use their teaching as a site for learning. Along with teacher retention, improving teaching performance is often stated as an important goal in induction programs (Huling-Austin, 1986)—a goal that seems to be in line with those of classical mentoring relationships. However, the cases presented in this study do not illustrate purposeful progress toward that goal. The question is: Why not? A closer examination of these mentor-mentee cases indicates two factors that significantly influenced what did and did not happen in the mentor-mentee relationship: 1) participants' personal experiences and assumptions, and 2) the school contexts in which participants were operating.

The influence of personal experiences and assumptions

According to the constructivist view, participants bring to any transaction multiple sources of knowledge including their prior experiences, or the "history" of the people involved (Vygotsky, 1978). The cases of Luke and Corky and Beth and Michelle raised a lot of questions for me and complicated my thinking about mentoring relationships. First of all, I wondered if the goals of the mentoring programs my participants were involved in were ever clearly articulated or communicated to them. My interviews and observations led me to believe that participants constructed their notions of the mentoring role from their own

experiences and assumptions. As a result, there seemed to be a mismatch between the goals of mentoring as discussed in research literature on induction and what actually occurred in these two mentor-mentee relationships.

Luke and Corky's experiences led them to view mentoring as addressing "practical" matters, resulting in "low-level" mentoring that never moved beyond addressing practical matters. Gehrke (1988) would assert that Luke and Corky opted for the more pragmatic relationship, Buber's I-It relationship, rather than the more powerful I-Thou relationship that offers opportunities for personal development. Beth and Michelle's experiences led them to view mentoring as primarily providing "feel good" encouragement, thereby engaging in Daloz's (1999) notion of support (making the novice feel comfortable) but not challenge (promoting critical thinking about one's teaching). Neither mentor-mentee pair conceptualized mentoring as including a critical view of teaching and learning.

If the goal of a mentor-mentee relationship, as expressed in literature on mentoring, is to promote the beginning teacher's growth, how can mentoring relationships break out of the pattern of "low-level" and "feel good" mentoring to viewing the mentor as a friendly critic? Little (1990) contends that participating in a "serious" mentoring relationship may actually make the first years of teaching more strenuous in the short run, but that the effort is worthwhile since teachers and students would experience greater rewards in the long run. Is it possible to set up a critical view and not overwhelm beginning teachers even more than they already are?

Daloz (1999) asserts that if challenge is high but support is low, the learner may retreat or embrace conformity, or worse, I would add, give up and leave the profession, thereby defeating one of the purposes of induction programs—teacher retention. In the *Odyssey*, Mentor was able to make Telemachus aware of his mistakes without his becoming rebellious. How does a mentor establish the necessary balance of support and challenge that leads to novices' development? Is it possible to achieve effectively both purposes of induction programs simultaneously—teacher retention and improved teaching? Should induction programs address this challenge by making mentoring relationships evaluative or even high stakes as modeled in Kentucky's program in which teacher certification is a factor (Brennan, et al, 1999)?

A closer look at the two cases presented in this study raise additional issues about mentor-mentee relationships and the factors that influence their work together. The two cases provide examples of how participants' assumptions regarding the mentor role influenced mentor-mentee transactions and contributed to low-level or feel good mentoring. The most important question these two cases raise is: What are the factors that prevent mentors and mentees from moving beyond low-level mentoring relationships? These two cases illustrate how the overall context in which a mentoring relationship operates also has a profound effect on mentor-mentee transactions. In these cases, "context" includes participants' daily schedules, their respective mentoring programs' requirements, the dynamics of their respective English departments, and in Beth

and Michelle's case, issues related to teaching within their specific local school setting.

The influence of the local school context

According to constructivist theory, people construct knowledge as they transact with the environment and with others (Dewey, 1934). Constructivists contend that learners draw upon the influences of the environment that suggest appropriate ways to respond. Learners attach meaning to experiences as they encounter the context of the experience and participants involved (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Bakhtin (1981), context involves a "set of conditions" that shapes the meaning participants attach to experiences (p. 428). In light of these constructivist views, it is important to understand the context in which participants were operating because of its influence on their mentor-mentee transactions and the meaning participants attached to them.

The greatest hindrance to both mentor-mentee pairs was their lack of time to get together with one another. All participants were so busy with their daily responsibilities that one can only question whether or not they could have constructed a mentoring relationship any more meaningful than they did. Although some might contend that lack of proximity was an issue, with the little time these participants had to work with, I don't think it would have mattered if they were next door to each other. Furthermore, these two cases involved beginning teachers that university professors and supervisors considered to be strong teacher candidates, and even they identified long lists of challenges they faced their first years of teaching. Considering the little time mentors and

mentees had to spend together, I can't help wondering what kind of support a mentoring relationship operating under these conditions could possibly provide a beginning teacher who was really struggling.

Another aspect to consider is that these two cases each involved one mentor paired with one mentee. In some instances, however, mentors are assigned to work with more than one mentee at a time or even to several teachers new to the school (but not novices). I know I was. At one point I was in charge of 12 teachers, some novices and some just new to the school, and I had at the most only four colleagues available to assist me and serve as mentors. The cases presented in this study, as well as my own experiences, illustrate the that the results of assigning a practicing teachers to mentor novices under such limiting time constraints are mentoring relationships that fail to move beyond practical or emotional support.

This study's two cases also illustrate that in addition to lack of time, mentoring program requirements also affected mentor-mentee transactions and contributed to low-level mentoring. Each program was designed to support the beginning teacher for only one year and outlined minimal requirements, and those few requirements emphasized quantity, not quality. The mentoring programs represented in this study illustrate what can happen when the mandated "minimum requirements...become the total program" (Huling-Austin, 1986). The goal of developing and improving performance was replaced with the goal of making teachers feel better.

The mentor programs represented in this study further complicated my thinking about the goals of mentoring programs. It seems that there is a mismatch between what policymakers claim to be the purposes of induction programs and the requirements of these two mentoring programs. Policymakers claim to support a view of mentoring as teacher development whereas the requirements of these two mentoring programs would support a view of mentoring as practical and emotional support. Is the goal of improving novices' teaching and enhancing their professional development just rhetoric on the part of policymakers? If not, then why do some programs simply assign a novice to a mentor and then call it induction support?

Is the goal of mentoring really just to provide feelings of support for beginning teachers? If the latter is true, then policymakers could argue that their mentoring programs were successful in achieving their goals. Beth and Luke were happy at the end of the year and expressed feeling that their expectations for the mentoring relationship had been met and that they had been fully supported by their mentors. If providing emotional and practical support is the goal—a goal that can be met by pairing a novice with a mentor, as illustrated in these cases—then why are educational institutions pouring incredible amounts of money into elaborate induction programs?

Another often cited goal of induction programs is teacher retention (Huling-Austin, 1986; Odell & Ferraro, 1992). Is emotional support alone enough to retain teachers? Although Luke and Beth envisioned themselves remaining in teaching, their future is yet uncertain. My experience, however, as a mentor to

novices would indicate that emotional support alone is not enough to retain beginning teachers. I know I provided as much practical advice and encouragement as a novice could ask for, but many of the new teachers I worked with did not remain in teaching. Therefore, "low-level" and "feel good" mentoring were not enough to achieve the goals of the mentoring program.

In fact, a closer look at these cases illustrates that although mentoring is an important component in induction support, the context in which a beginning teacher is placed has a significant effect on their perceptions of their first years of teaching.

In Beth's case, the context in which she worked often acted against what she had come to value in teaching and learning. In other ways, the context in which she worked offered her vital support. First, the context of teaching at West Kennedy affected Beth's perceptions of the challenges she faced her first years of teaching. Beth experienced specific planning dilemmas because of Wilson County's emphasis on students' performances on numerous standardized tests. She found herself choosing to include some literary selections and omit others based upon whether or not they were represented on the course's mandated county wide final exam rather than on whether or not they would reflect students' interests or learning needs. Therefore, the context of Wilson County's emphasis on standardized testing hindered rather than promoted Beth's growth as a professional by requiring her to adhere to mandates which compromised her teaching philosophies. In addition, some of Beth's perceived challenges resulted from problems specific to the setting at West Kennedy; specifically, the school's

overcrowdedness contributed to her being assigned a trailer classroom outside the main structure of the building, further contributing to a new teacher's sense of isolation, even though it was located just outside the English hall.

Because many of the teaching dilemmas Beth faced extended to all teachers employed by Wilson County, she and Michelle shared many of the same frustrations regarding their teaching context—teaching 5 classes, researching new course material, coping with the county's emphasis on standardized testing, facing society's perception of the teaching profession, dealing with the overcrowded situation at West Kennedy. As a result, their mentoring transactions rarely moved beyond emotional support and empathy since Michelle was feeling the same frustrations as Beth and could do little about them. In fact, Michelle expressed needing someone herself to whom she could "vent" occasionally—someone who was in education, who was available to listen, and who "understood."

While the context in which Beth worked provided challenges for her in some ways, it also served her in others. Beth and Michelle felt that their relationship was enhanced by the context of a supportive department, one that fostered a nurturing environment for new teachers and displayed a genuine interest through their willingness to provide assistance. The English department supported Beth by conducting grade level meetings to discuss curriculum and by distributing courses throughout the department in such a way as to avoid assigning new teachers only those classes considered to be on the lowest ability

level and to avoid assigning new teachers more than two different courses for which to prepare.

In Luke's case, although members of the English department were also willing and available to answer questions and provide assistance, they did not support him in some of the ways Beth's department supported her. He was assigned three different courses for which to prepare and was also assigned to a trailer, this one on the opposite side of the building from the English wing. In addition, sometimes when fellow English teachers offered Luke advice, that advice actually acted against his personal knowledge. Like Beth, Luke experienced particular planning dilemmas because of his teaching context. In Luke's case, though, the dilemmas were due to departmental expectations rather than county requirements. Because of widely accepted departmental practices, Luke felt pressured to make instructional decisions that conflicted with his personal teaching philosophies.

The influence of context on the experiences of these two beginning teachers raises two key issues. First, these cases illustrate that induction support involves more than simply pairing a new teacher with a veteran teacher. Both Beth and Luke considered the mentor-mentee relationship to be important and felt that having a mentor—someone who had agreed to be available to listen to concerns and answer questions—helped them by relieving any feelings that they might be imposing on someone's time when they needed to ask for help. However, these cases illustrate that successfully supporting beginning teachers involves more than just providing a mentor; it means creating a desirable working

environment. In Beth's case, her department's careful consideration regarding the distribution of teaching assignments was one very important step in that direction.

Secondly, these cases illustrate that teacher socialization is a complicated process—one that does indeed involve, as Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002) point out, "an interactive process between the new teacher and the context" (p. 106). These cases support the notion that one of the challenges of learning to teach is negotiating entree into a community of teachers within a specific school culture, especially within the subculture of one's department (Grossman & Stodolsky, 1995). Even well-intentioned mentors alone cannot effectively assist novices as they transact with the local school context. Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) discuss the potential tension that can result when a mentee who has been introduced to new developments in learning theories enters a school context that fails to support those theories. They contend that the process of induction may, in fact, seduce the new teacher away from the purposes and practices they acquired in their preparation program (p. 53). As Wang (2001) contends, induction programs must take into account how school contexts influence the socialization process and how different contexts create different learning and mentoring opportunities (p. 51).

These cases support Wang's findings that without a clear understanding of the goals of mentoring programs and support at the local school level that values those goals, beginning teachers will typically receive the kind of guidance that will help them adapt to the existing context and culture of teaching, rather

than support them in improving their teaching and developing as a professional (p. 70). Although Beth and Luke found the mentoring relationships to be supportive, they experienced other aspects of their school contexts as oppressive rather than supportive. In Beth and Luke's cases, neither their mentoring relationships nor their school contexts significantly contributed to their growth and development as reform-minded teachers and life-long learners. I agree with Feiman-Nemser (2001) who concludes: "Educators and administrators must create the structures and culture that enable all teachers to continue learning in and from practice as they address the complex challenges of public education" (p. 29).

Recommendations for Improving Induction Support

In light of the two cases presented in this study, those who design and implement programs that strive to better meet the needs of beginning English teachers and their mentors might consider the following recommendations:

Teacher preparation—new issues to consider

Although Luke and Beth indicated that their participation in the UGA-NETS program had prepared them more than adequately for their first year, I might offer one brief recommendation to those involved in teacher education programs. Because the context in which new teachers are placed is so extremely influential in shaping their first year challenges and their perceptions of the teaching profession, teacher educators might stress to teacher candidates the importance of investigating local school contexts before accepting any teaching positions.

Induction support—beyond the traditional

In light of the findings of this research study, I would suggest several recommendations for induction support. First of all, any program that desires to support beginning teachers should articulate and communicate to participants a clear set of goals and provide the structures necessary to support those goals. These cases demonstrate that in the absence of a shared understanding of a program's goals and without substantial support for achieving those goals, participants will simply adapt their mentoring relationships to fit their assumptions about the mentoring role. Induction programs typically list as goals to nurture and retain good teachers and to help novices become more effective teachers.

In addition to those, Little (1990) reminds us that another goal is to contribute to the improvement of the educational workforce, thereby facilitating school reform. Induction programs also typically include "mentoring" as a central component (e.g., Chartrand, et al, 2000; Brennan, et al, 1999), but clearly (as evidenced in these cases) not all mentoring programs are part of larger induction efforts. Is it reasonable to expect mentoring programs without the support of larger induction efforts to achieve the goals generally accepted for induction work? If policymakers are sincere in these goals, then educational institutions must demonstrate that they value the professional development of beginning teachers by creating contexts that provide them with safe places to grow.

One alteration in the context of induction programs might be to extend support to new teachers into their second year of teaching. Although some state university systems are mandating colleges of education to design induction

programs that will involve supporting its graduates during their first two years of teaching, not all public school systems include the second year in their mentoring programs. For example, both Spring Mountain and West Kennedy instituted mentor programs that assigned beginning teachers to their mentors for only one year. During Luke and Beth's second years of teaching, both Corky and Michelle had already been assigned to a new mentee. During Beth's second year she still struggled with some issues that she felt she needed to discuss with someone whom she trusted. Fortunately for Beth, Michelle was still willing to be available for Beth in an unofficial capacity, but second year teachers might not always encounter willingness like Michelle's, particularly when the mentor is already working with a new mentee or, in some cases, once the incentive of receiving a stipend is removed.

Extending the mentor-mentee relationship into beginners' second year fits well with Daloz's notion of the mentoring process. Daloz (1999) conceptualizes mentoring as a balance between support and challenge. However, the mentoring relationships of Luke and Corky and Beth and Michelle never moved beyond low-level or feel good mentoring, falling into Daloz's category of offering support, but not challenge. Daloz and others (e.g. Vygotsky, 1978; Odell, 1990) would argue that abandoning the mentoring process at that stage hinders the development of the new teacher. However, if the mentor-mentee relationship officially extended into the second year, then a mentor might have the opportunity to develop a trusting relationship and introduce challenge as well as support. Extending into the second year, therefore, would provide additional

structure to supporting the goals of induction programs by enhancing the possibility for new teachers to reach their full developmental potential.

Extensive and focused mentor training

Another recommended structure that could better support the goals of induction programs might be the implementation of more thorough training and support programs for mentor teachers. Mentor programs need more extensive and more focused mentor training that is ongoing rather than all taking place prior to establishing a mentor-mentee relationship if they are to achieve the goals of induction programs. As indicated in Chapter Two, mentor training experiences are often far too brief (sometimes even reduced to a "one-shot" seminar) and insufficient to prepare mentors for the important and complex role they assume in a mentor-mentee relationship. Evertson and Smithey (2000) contend that preparing mentors for their role enables them to be more successful. They add that if mentors are to support new teachers as they learn to teach, "then attention to what mentors know and how they support proteges' practice is of paramount importance" (p. 303). The cases in this study indicate the need for more focused mentor training and suggest some components that might be included in a more thorough, ongoing mentor program.

The cases in this study illustrate the impact that participants' prior experiences and assumptions have on mentor-mentee transactions. In light of these findings, mentor training programs might consider placing emphasis on participants exploring each other's expectations regarding the mentor role and the mentor-mentee relationship. Young and Wright (2001) describes establishing

the mentor/protege relationship as the process of assessing why a mentor is needed and what the protege hopes to gain from the mentor, setting ground rules for the relationship, and thinking in terms of what should or should not be expected (p. 205). In addition, mentors and mentees should consider the mentoring process in light of program expectations and the goals of induction support. Although Luke and Corky shared with each other different notions of the relationship than did Beth and Michelle, both pairs shared similar ideas about mentoring. However, their shared ideas resulted in low-level and feel good mentoring relationships. Understanding each other's experiences and assumptions would help participants negotiate mentor-mentee transactions by identifying and addressing early in the relationship any "mismatches" in expectations—mismatches with each other's assumptions as well as mismatches with the goals and purposes of induction support. A mentor training activity might include reading cases, such as the ones represented in this study, that illustrate well-intentioned mentors and mentees who share similar notions regarding the mentor role but whose relationship doesn't demonstrate progress toward the goal of improved teaching.

In addition, all participants emphasized the importance of working with people within their own department. Participants mentioned that some of the benefits of pairing mentors and mentees in the same department were that they had more occasion to see each other (even if they were not close in proximity), they shared a common knowledge base, and they shared a common understanding of the challenges of teaching English in general, as well as the

challenges of teaching English within their school setting, specifically (e.g., teaching on block scheduling). According to constructivist theory, individuals construct knowledge as they are influenced by their context. At the secondary level, beginning a teaching career means being socialized into what Grossman and Stodolsky (1995) refer to as subject "subcultures" (p. 5). Therefore, mentoring a novice teacher should not be viewed as a "generic" activity but one that specifically investigates beginning teachers' beliefs about the subject matter they will be teaching.

Mentor training might include more in-depth explorations into the unique needs and challenges of teachers within specific disciplines and how those unique challenges potentially affect mentor-mentee relationships. By approaching mentoring with specific disciplines in mind, mentor training programs would present a broader view of the needs of beginning teachers. It is important to investigate the needs of English teachers in general since beginning teachers in that discipline face those challenges in addition to those particular to new teachers. A more thorough program of induction support would take into consideration that beginning teachers face many of the same challenges as veteran teachers. Identifying and addressing those challenges as well as those specific to new teachers would provide a more comprehensive support system.

Finally, because both cases involved contexts in which the English departments played important roles in the socialization of new teachers, another important component of mentor training might be discussing the dynamics of English departments. Stodolsky and Grossman (1995) found that subject

departments were “one of the primary organizers of the professional life of secondary school teachers” (p. 228). Mentor training programs might initiate discussions exploring ways mentors could involve their departments in providing support for new teachers. In addition, discussions might explore ways of motivating department members, particularly the department chair, to take interest in the success of beginning teachers in general and, in specific, demonstrate that interest through the actual distribution of courses and room assignments. As indicated previously, Beth felt she benefited tremendously from being given only two courses for which to prepare. Luke, however, was assigned three different courses to teach—and this in addition to his coaching responsibilities. Mentor training might include ways mentors could encourage administration or even school districts to carefully examine the overall number of responsibilities given to new teachers.

Mentor support

Extending induction support into beginning teachers’ second year and implementing extensive and ongoing mentor training will not be possible without also providing mentor teachers with the support they need as they assume the roles and responsibilities associated with inducting a new teacher into the profession. Mentor programs should create space for that support since mentors face challenges of their own even as they take on new teachers. As Weaver and Stanulis (1996) explained, helping induct a novice into the profession is a highly complex and time-consuming process that involves, among other things, allowing the relationship to evolve over time and “putting yourself out there” as a

teacher and learner (p. 3). As mentor teachers in this study, Michelle and Corky illustrate this need for ongoing mentor teacher support as they attempted to balance meeting the needs of beginning teachers with attending to their own lives and responsibilities.

Both Corky and Michelle were experiencing desires to leave secondary teaching. They had each been teaching for over ten years and were questioning whether or not they wished to remain in the classroom or pursue making a career move. Corky had expressed a desire to move to the elementary level within the next few years, and Michelle had just completed her doctoral degree and was contemplating exploring some of the new opportunities having that degree afforded her. She was at a point in her career in which she was perceived as someone who was being counted on to offer support rather than receive it. However, like Beth, she continued to be overwhelmed by the enormous workload involved with teaching English. She, too, needed to research material for a new teaching assignment. She was just as frustrated as Beth with the county's emphasis on standardized testing as well as society's perception of the teaching profession.

In addition, Michelle mentioned placing en enormous amount of pressure on herself to measure up to her own perception of the "perfect" mentor, as defined by the unofficial mentor she had when she was a beginning teacher. She remembered feeling "guilty" that she did not approach Beth more often or did not provide Beth with enough attention. Corky also experienced guilt that he did not have more time to talk with Luke. Upon reflection, Corky felt that he took for

granted that Luke didn't need him as much as most beginning teachers would since Luke had been at Spring Mountain the previous year during his teacher candidacy.

One way mentors could be supported would be by providing them with release time so that they may have more time to participate in ongoing mentor training and to better address their mentee's needs. Although many induction programs have begun to incorporate release time (e.g., Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Chartrand, et al, 2000; Gilles, et al, 2001), the cases in this study illustrate that some programs fail to support mentors in their important work with new teachers. Mentors might use release time to meet with their mentee during their planning period, to observe their mentee's teaching including ample time for pre-and post-observation conferences, or to cover classes for their mentees so that they may spend time observing their mentors or other teachers. Beth indicated that she would have really appreciated the opportunity to visit other teachers' classrooms:

> You know how isolating teaching is; you don't know how you're doing. I would like a chance to go visit everyone's classroom and see what other people do. I have a very narrow knowledge as to how people run their classrooms.

Release time would also provide time for mentors to take a more proactive approach to mentoring, that is taking the initiative to seek out mentees and check on their progress rather than waiting for the mentees to seek advice. A more proactive approach would be particularly helpful in situations where mentees are reluctant to ask for assistance for fear of appearing incompetent. In addition, a

proactive approach might be necessary if mentees have difficulty even recognizing some of the struggles they might be encountering.

Both Michelle and Corky expressed feeling as though they had taken for granted that all was well with their mentees unless or until their mentees indicated otherwise. Although Luke and Beth were very comfortable with this unspoken arrangement and were not hesitant to approach their mentors for help, both acknowledged that given different circumstances, especially given different departmental dynamics, they would have been less likely to speak up when they encountered difficulties. I chose Beth and Luke for this study because they were considered to be strong teacher candidates and I wanted to investigate mentoring from a best-case scenario. They managed to negotiate their way through their first years with only minimal input from their mentors. However, I wonder what would happen to struggling teacher candidates upon entering the teaching profession. Would those novices remain in teaching with only minimal input from a mentor? Would they ask for help? Without more time to observe classes and engage in more meaningful dialogues with mentees, would mentors even be aware of beginning teachers' struggles?

Another way mentor programs could lend support to mentors would be to provide opportunities for them to interact with other mentor teachers, including mentors from other schools. As stated previously, both Corky and Michelle found themselves in a unique place in their careers and were at points in their lives when they were contemplating leaving secondary teaching for one reason or another. Michelle expressed that she could benefit from having someone to talk

to about her experiences and challenges. Mentors might benefit from speaking with other mentors about the challenges of supporting new teachers or just about the challenges of being in the teaching profession in general. Michelle stated that as teachers, "we're so bad about taking care of ourselves and attending to things that would really help our growth as people and teachers." She felt she could benefit from interacting with "a group of colleagues who were focused on intellectual conversations."

University support

Michelle mentioned that she would rather talk with people outside her school. She didn't think she would be comfortable sharing some things with people employed at the same school because of school politics. Her comments lend support to the notion that these two mentor-mentee relationships could have benefited from universities' participation in induction support. As discussed in Chapter Two, literature on induction indicates that university-public school collaboration is a key component in successful induction programs (DeBolt, 1991; Resta, et al, 1997; Reiman, Head, & Thies-Sprinthall, 1992; Perez, et al, 1997; Brennan, et al, 1999; Yopp & Young, 1999; Chartrand, et al, 2000). Induction programs that involve close collaborations between local school systems and universities traditionally designate university faculty to be a member in a support team for beginning teachers and their mentors (Varah, Theune, & Parker, 1986; Hegler & Dudley, 1987).

Support teams typically consist of an administrator, a mentor teacher, a university faculty member, and sometimes the principal. The university faculty

member's contribution to the induction support team includes, among other things, providing assistance to the mentor and inductee through frequent on-site observations and conferences. Since school contexts in this study's cases affected mentor-mentee transactions and in some instances hindered rather than enhanced new teachers' development, incorporating input from an outside party who doesn't share the same vested interest might prove to be beneficial. Mentors, like Michelle, may feel limited by their schools' contexts because they must continue operating within that context before, during, and after their mentoring relationship. A university faculty member would probably not feel as constrained by school or departmental politics and, therefore, could provide beginning teachers and mentors with multiple perspectives from which to view their teaching and mentoring experiences.

Beyond observations and conferences, some additional contributions might be considered. University faculty might serve mentor teachers in much the same way that mentors serve their mentees, that is by being available to answer their questions and listen to their concerns, not just those of the beginning teachers. In addition, they might provide release time to beginning teachers and mentor teachers; for example, they might cover classes or serve as a substitute teacher. In order to provide time for university faculty to serve beginning teachers and mentors more effectively, university teacher preparation programs must hire full-time faculty to follow up on their graduates and to maintain relationships with mentors in the public schools.

Ideally, a faculty member would be hired specifically for induction work within a particular discipline and would be familiar with the teacher preparation program at the university. Research investigating the role of university support in induction indicates that in order to best support novices and mentors, universities must commit to induction programs and must demonstrate that commitment in several ways (DeBolt, 1991; Reiman, Head, and Thies-Sprinthall, 1992; Resta, et al, 1997). Universities should demonstrate their commitment to the induction process by supporting further research in the area of induction and by establishing and maintaining ongoing collaborations with school districts. Most importantly, universities must designate faculty positions specifically for induction work so that university faculty can effectively design and implement appropriate, comprehensive mentor training and support programs.

Implications for Future Research

This in-depth exploration of beginning English teachers and their mentors has raised some additional questions regarding teacher preparation, mentoring programs, and induction support that might be explored in future research.

Teacher preparation

The first question that might be explored in future research is: What is the relationship, if any, between beginning teachers' preparation and certification program and their perceptions of mentoring needs during their first years of teaching? This question is important because Luke and Beth completed the same year-long teacher preparation program and both expressed entering their first year feeling extremely well prepared. Beth's skills as a beginning teacher

were even publicly acknowledged when she received the “Rookie Teacher of the Year” award at the end of her first year. Future research might investigate the components of the UGA-NETS program that contributed to Beth and Luke’s initial strong sense of confidence. Was it just that the program spanned an entire year, or were there other contributing factors? If so, what were they? A future study might compare UGA-NETS graduates with beginning English teachers who experienced a more traditional, less comprehensive teacher preparation program. Would entering the teaching profession after completing a training program that spans only the ten weeks of student teaching rather than an entire school year affect beginning teachers’ perceptions of their challenges and mentoring needs?

Another question related to teacher preparation is: What is the relationship, if any, between beginning teachers’ level of performance in their preparation program and their perceptions of challenges and mentoring needs? This question is important because for this research study I chose participants who were considered by their university professors and supervisors to be exceptional teacher candidates. I chose these participants in order to investigate a best-case scenario with the assumption that if even outstanding teacher candidates face tremendous challenges their first years (and, thus, require guidance and support), then struggling teacher candidates would potentially require even more guidance and support their first years. Future research might entail choosing participants considered by their university professors and supervisors to be struggling teacher candidates. Would struggling teacher

candidates' perceptions of first year challenges and mentoring needs differ in any way from the perceptions of outstanding teacher candidates such as those represented in this study?

The mentoring process—support and challenge

The findings of this study also have implications for further research into the mentoring process. Future research might investigate Daloz's (1999) concept of mentoring as a combination of support and challenge. This kind of investigation is important because the participants in this study expressed expectations that mentors would be available to answer questions, listen to concerns, and provide general guidance—assumptions that resulted in low-level and feel good mentoring. This description of the mentor role echoes Daloz's definition of "support." Specifically, he writes that support involves listening, providing structure, serving as advocate, and sharing oneself (p. 209). This study has also demonstrated that participants' expectations of the mentor role affected mentoring practices and mentor-mentee transactions. The mentors offered support, but did they offer challenge? Daloz defines challenge as opening a distance in the relationship, heating up dichotomies, constructing hypotheses, and setting high standards (p. 216). Findings in this study would suggest that Corky and Michelle offered support but not challenge. A study using Daloz's concept as a theoretical framework might ask beginning teachers and their mentors to categorize their transactions as providing support or challenge. It might also investigate the following questions: What factors affect the amounts of support and challenge provided by mentor teachers? Does the extent of a

teacher candidate's preparation upon entering teaching affect this balance in any way? Is offering challenge important? If a mentor balanced support with challenge, how would a beginning teacher respond? What would be the outcome? What would challenge look like? Would offering challenge benefit the beginning teacher during the first year? Would mentors have more opportunity to provide challenge if mentoring programs were extended into the beginning teacher's second year of teaching?

Mentoring programs and second year teachers

Other questions this study raises are: How can mentoring programs be restructured so that mentor-mentee relationships can be extended into the second year of teaching? Would mentor-mentee transactions the second year be any different from transactions the first year? If so, what would those differences be? These questions are important for a couple of reasons. First, literature on mentoring indicates that mentoring works best when it is an extended process that results in the mentee's eventual full development and self-reliance (Gehrke, 1988; Odell, 1990). Can beginning teachers' full development be achieved in just one year? The case of Beth and Michelle indicates that during her second year Beth felt she still needed a mentor. Secondly, because Michelle had already been assigned to a new mentee and was no longer Beth's official mentor during her second year, more research is needed to explore "official" mentor-mentee relationships during beginning teachers' second years.

Induction support and specific disciplines

A question for future research in the area of induction support is: What is the relationship between induction support and specific disciplines? The question is important because research on teacher socialization (e.g. Grossman & Stodolsky, 1995) and the cases described in this study indicate that English teachers face specific challenges that are directly related to their field. All teacher preparation and certification programs at the secondary level are discipline specific, but induction programs seem to treat the teacher socialization process as a generic activity. Although the findings of this study provide a few glimpses into the particular mentoring needs of beginning English teachers, a broader study involving more participants would likely provide deeper insights into the relationship between specific disciplines and mentoring needs.

Induction support and teacher retention

A final question for future research is: What is the relationship between mentor-mentee transactions and teacher retention? Research on induction suggests that induction support significantly affects teacher retention rates (Varah, Theune, & Parker, 1986; Hegler & Dudley, 1987; Odell & Ferraro, 1992). However, these studies and others investigating the relationship between induction support and teacher retention rates generally examine induction programs that involve collaborations between local school systems and universities (DeBolt, 1991; Resta, et al, 1997). Neither of the induction programs at Spring Mountain or West Kennedy described in this study involved universities. Instead, Beth, Luke, Corky, and Michelle all participated in

mentoring programs designed and implemented at the local school or county level. These types of programs rely heavily on the practicing classroom teachers who serve as mentors to beginning teachers.

The questions, then, are: Which specific components of induction programs affect teacher retention? What role does the university's participation play? Can a positive mentor-mentee relationship alone significantly impact teachers' decisions to remain in teaching? When asked where they saw themselves in five years, both Luke and Beth indicated they envisioned themselves still teaching (and in Luke's case, still coaching as well). Findings from this study suggest, though, that their overall satisfaction with their first year teaching experiences (in spite of the many challenges they faced) was due to several factors, of which the mentor-mentee relationship was only one, albeit a significant one. As indicated previously, Luke and Beth benefited from a more elaborate support network that included their extensive teacher preparation program and the demonstration of support from the entire English department. Research on teacher socialization (e.g., Weiss, 1999; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Wang, 2001; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000) supports the notion that workplace conditions and school contexts significantly affect new teachers' experiences. That research, as well as the experiences of Luke and Beth, suggests that future studies investigating teacher retention should explore the total contexts in which beginning teachers are placed in order to determine more clearly what factors contribute to their decisions to remain in the profession.

Summary

A careful examination of the cases in this study confirms what many educators have suspected for years about mentoring and induction: beginning teachers' experiences will not improve until stake-holders such as policymakers, administrators, university personnel, and public school educators address important questions about the teaching profession in general. What does it mean to be a good teacher? What does it mean to support good teaching for both novices and veteran teachers? What do policymakers perceive to be the goals of induction programs? How are those goals enacted in the teacher socialization process? What role do mentor teachers play in this process? Can induction programs offer support systems that allow mentors to do more than simply socialize new teachers into existing school cultures? Until these and other questions become part of the conversation regarding mentoring and induction programs, the issues surrounding beginning teachers' struggles and challenges will likely remain unchanged.

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APPENDIX A

GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

General Interview Guide

Mentoring Needs of Beginning English Teachers

Possible topics/questions for the beginning teacher:

1. Tell me about some of the new challenges you faced this year or about some of the challenges you've experiences in new ways.
2. Do any of these challenges pertain to English teachers in particular ways?

Possible topics/questions for the mentor teacher:

1. Tell me about some of the challenges you see your mentee facing as a beginning teacher.
2. Do any of these challenges pertain to English teachers in particular ways?

Mentor Program and Perceptions of Induction Support

1. Describe the mentoring program at your school.
2. How did you become a part of it?
3. How were you paired with your mentor or mentee?
4. How do you feel about the mentoring program in general?
5. How do you feel about your school's overall support for beginning teachers?

Mentor-Mentee Transactions

Possible topics/questions for the beginning teacher:

1. Tell me about what you and your mentor have done/talked about.

2. What have you gone to your mentor for? Why?
3. What have you not gone to your mentor for? Why not?
4. When you've gone to your mentor, has s/he been helpful? What was his or her response?
5. What seems to be your pattern of communication?

Possible topics/questions for the mentor:

1. Tell me about what you and your mentee have done/talked about.
2. What has your mentee come to you about?
3. What was your response?
4. What seems to be your pattern of communication?

APPENDIX B

SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS AND COMMON THEMES

LUKE

MENTORING NEEDS

Beginning English Teacher Challenges:

I. Time challenges

A. Physical challenges

1. I for one am as tired as I can remember being in a couple of years.
2. The 12 and 13 hour days combined with my new compulsion that won't let me sleep until I feel like I have accomplished everything that I had set out to for the day have left me exhausted.
3. I have to echo everyone's sentiments about feeling run over by a truck. Or maybe it was a train. I don't know, but it was damn big.
4. I'm suffering from sleep deprivation and information overload…. I've forgotten what my apartment looks like in the daylight.
5. Maybe UGA-NETS can use some of the grant money to invent a sleep pill or something so I don't need so much sleep.
6. I'm to [sic] tired to do the research to find out who [sic] your schools play and how'll [sic] they'll do.

7. Is anyone else as tired as me [sic]. [sic] [sic] I can barely hold my eyes open these days.
8. I'd like to get more sleep.

B. Workload in general

1. I can't wait for the kids to start so that I can focus on them instead of emergency evacuation plans, phone trees, what I can and can't hang where in my trailer, and why it takes 3 memos and a meeting to remind me to turn the air cond. And lights off every day.
2. Too many meetings that could be handled with a DAMN memo, and too many things to do.
3. But I get here at 7 and get home at 8 every night. And then I feel like when I get home I should work for at least 30 minutes because I didn't do anything here after school because I went straight down there to practice.
4. My biggest problem is still time. I'm using my time as efficiently as possible. I feel comfortable about what I am doing. I just need more time to get it all done.
5. I'm just riding the line right now. Just trying to figure out what the next 3 or 4 days are going to be.
6. I've been getting here before 7:00 every day to make up for that time when I'm not getting stuff done after school.
7. My biggest challenge is the time thing.

8. Fact is I've been more busy than I ever could have imagined.
9. My stress level keeps getting higher and higher and the list of things to do keeps getting longer.
10. It just seems every time I get caught up I have something new to worry about.
11. Let me say that when I saw the length of your message I decided that I could not read it and still be at work on time to grade three more essays before first period. So I hit the print button grabbed my daily dose of caffine [sic] (in the form of Mountain Dew) grabbed your printed email and made for the door. I read your email at every stop light between here and Spring Mountain.

C. Multiple responsibilities

1. However, 3 preps (four if you count football which adds an extra 5 hours to my day) is [sic] wearing me out.
2. That, to me, has been my biggest challenge—going straight from down here to coaching every day. I mean from up here to down there and then home and trying to be good at both of them without one of them suffering.
3. I have to say right now, I'd be a better teacher if I wasn't coaching, but on the other hand, I think my teaching would suffer a little bit too because I think that part of my role

here has a big impact on the classroom. And I'd definitely be a better coach if I wasn't teaching. My coaching has suffered severely because I can't, I don't have any time to prepare what I need to before practice every day.

4. This is something I got to adjust because I don't get enough done on my planning period because I do this. I eat lunch with the coaches during first lunch and then I come in the English department when they're all in there during second lunch.
5. And the coaches' meetings right now are, see, we get through with practice at 6:30, but I don't get home until almost 8, and last night it was 8:30 because I had to go to the grocery store.
6. So when track starts in the spring because I'm going to be even busier, I think. The hours won't be as long, we won't practice as long, but I'm going to have more to handle mentally.
7. I got budget concerns, you know, practice schedules, bus requests, roster stuff, and eligibility stuff and physical stuff.
8. I feel like I need to take care of both of those relationships.
9. ... we're not supposed to miss department meetings, but we have to as coaches.

10. I forgot to do duty yesterday. In the morning. I was here at 6:30. I just forgot to go out there cause I got wrapped up in planning.
11. You got myths over here and 200 football players over here, trying to figure out Huck Finn, Lord of the Flies, quizzes for tomorrow, you know.
12. My biggest struggle is still time. Coaching and teaching (and being good at both) is a huge struggle.
13. I constantly feel pressure to be grading, reading, and planning.
14. We had to enter grades into the computer…. Instead of taking 20 minutes it took an hour…. After I choked down some lunch I realized oh yeah I still need a lesson plan for the first 45 minutes of 4th period.
15. I try to keep reading, but get bogged down grading and preparing for the two other classes. I feel like I am just scraping by until the bell rings in there every day.
16. I think I'll go sit outside and knock out a few rough drafts, or should I do lesson plans, or read some mythology, or enter some grades, or watch a football film, or get some sleep.
17. All this track stuff I have to think about.

D. Content knowledge/research/materials

1. I love what I am teaching, but having no background in mythology is requiring extensive research on my part so that I feel adequete [sic] to teach it. I'm learning right along with the kids.
2. To me, it's [mythology] the most fun class right now to teach, but it's also the hardest one to prepare for because I don't know anything about it.
3. I don't have the content background at all.
4. I still feel like I need to read everything they do before they do it. I mean, even the short stores for 9th grade that I've read before, I feel like I need to read them again. You know, even if I don't write any notes on it, I feel like I need to read it, just so I know when I want to stop and talk about things.
5. And I think next semester will be better because I won't have to do all this mythology research. That's the one that's killing me right now. It's keeping up. I've never taught it; I've never had it. I didn't have the background.
6. Theirs are on mythology allusions. They have to find 50 and give me a picture if it's possible…. Yeah, apparently I didn't do enough web research on this, but there's like a web site that has boo coos of them, so they just….

E. Organization/planning/instructional issues

1. It [preplanning] was too far removed and Gary was already way too organized for me to be able to know what it was going to be like to have to do it for the first time. When I walked in, all his files were already where he wanted them and everything was already the way it was. I had no concept of getting it from a pile in my apartment to the way I wanted it in there.
2. I don't have the content background at all, and I don't feel like I can, you know, some of the things I do in other classes like free writes and QSR.
3. Another challenge has been how I want to organize the way I do my plans.
4. Planning for mythology hasn't been real easy because of the research I feel like I have to do before I can even start to make a lesson plan. I mean, heck, some of the stuff we've done I read the night before.
5. The whole thing seems harder [than student teaching last year]. I think it's because I know that I have to do it continuously for 18 weeks, and I wish I had a better vision of where I want to be in 18 weeks than I did when I started, and I need to sit down now and reevaluate that. I mean, I have the whole 18 weeks planned of where I want to be.

6. Obviously it's [teaching in a trailer] not a natural thing because if it was they'd build a new school with trailers…. I don't know that I see it as a challenge. The biggest challenge is how can I do it better? It's just how it's shaped…. It becomes a big problem when you try to watch TV and it's on a table that's this high. You know, they can't see over each other, and it's a 40-foot long trailer, or however long it is.
7. Mythology is still hectic, trying to figure out what to do wit them, where I want that class to go still.
8. I found out that the class that I thought was going to be 10th grade in the spring is going to be 12th grade…. It'll be a new prep. Instead of being 3 of the same, it'll be 2 of the same and 1 new one.
9. It's still hard for me to plan one unit 'til right up to the point we're finished with another…. It's hard for me to think about one while I'm in the middle of trying to do another one…. I can't start one and think about the next one at the same time.
10. I like the idea of rotating desks. However, movement in a PEA (that's Portable Educational Arena/Trailer) is rather hectic.

11. The coverage problem plagues me. I have to teach this material. I feel like I have to COVER it. However, I want to do so much more. Shouldn't a curriculum be a starting block instead of a tie that bind us. [sic] [sic] Shouldn't our classes be an ongoing adventure instead of a two-week [sic] hike to get to the next unit. [sic] I have this huge concept in my head, but I feel bound by things like coverage, content knowledge, sleep deprivation, and for god sakes time.
12. Another problem that plagues me is make up work and late work.
13. I too feel the grading push. I am exploring ideas on how to grade less while assessing more. How do I do this? I keep running into things like that are high stakes. If I take less grades then each one becomes more important, right? I don't want the kids' measure of success to fall on a handful of grades. I don't even want to measure success by a number system.

F. Instructional interruptions

1. But it was difficult today because that period was the period they were calling all the 9th graders out to get their picture taken.. . . What bothers me is that, you know, every time somebody cam back in, I had to catch them up with

the story. And they don't, they go out as a group, but they come back in. . . one every two minutes.

G. No time for reflection

1. I have trouble taking time for reflection, because I always am wanting to work on the next thing. Or maybe that just makes the reflection come on the run.
2. …helping you with this research actually benefits me. I actually take time to reflect. Stopping or slowing down is hard for me to do these days. I really don't want to fall behind, but everyday I feel like I am slipping.

H. Life

1. I had to drive home last night to get my birth certificate so I could get my driver's license replaced today, so that's two and a half hours by the time I drive home…. So that's keeping my tied down this week trying to get all that stuff straightened out.

II. Mental/emotional challenges

A. Isolation

1. There are still a lot of teachers that I don't know. If they're not administrative people or coaches, I haven't. If I didn't meet them last year, all those new people, I don't know they yet, just one or two. I know the trailer people.

2. Like I had 2 classes in the lab and one in the media center the other day, so I was up here all day, so I was calling myself a real teacher.

B. Feelings of inadequacy

1. . . .having no background in mythology is requiring extensive research on my part so that I feel adequete [sic] to teach it.
2. They think I know it, but I don't feel like I know it.
3. I just hope every day that they don't ask this big huge question about stuff we haven't gotten to.
4. One of my kids asked what we were doing for the 1st half tommorrow [sic] before we go to the Media center. I said we would probably finish working on the crossword. They are having to look up the answers because most of it is new material). The student's reply was, "oh so you don't have to teach again." I was shocked. I felt terrible, but it was the truth. I don't feel like I am doing any real teaching in there because I just don't know enough material.

C. Feeling overwhelmed/Sense of responsibility/Growing up

1. I'm sentimental just thinking about hearing others distressed over their kids, preps, or time. Hell, I'm distress [sic] over all of these things now.

2. Losing two football games in one week doesn't help my demeanor either.
3. I'd like to win a football game this week.
4. I've been walking on the edge for a few weeks. Maybe we can get a varsity win now and teaching will turn fun again.
5. I feel guilty for taking a break.
6. I am already feeling track pressure and I expect it to get worse. Most of it is pressure I put on myself to be ready when the time comes.
7. We won our 9th grade game today. 16-12 a fourth quarter comeback. These close games are going to send me into early retirement. It's a great feeling though.
8. My stress level keeps getting higher and higher and the list of things to do keeps getting longer.
9. What happened to skipping class, sleeping late, going out, getting drunk, and just not having a care in the world. Oh yeah, we had to pay for that. Now we get paid and it's just the opposite. Instead I skip sleep, stay in, and just plain get tired. What the hell is the matter? I'm 22 for crying out loud, and I havn't [sic] been fishing in over three months!
10. Unfortunately the cougars lost tonight to a very athletic…team. It's been a long and very emotional 18

hours day. Well I guess I should say it's been a long and emotional four months.

D. School politics/curriculum

1. …one of the 9th grade coaches came in right at the beginning of class and wanted to show me something about practice that day and wanted to draw it on the board, and the bell had just rung. He starts drawing football stuff, and I said, "Coach, I'm sorry, but I got a class to teach."
2. I type the practice schedule…, but I'm doing the job of the 9th grade head coach, but I'm not the 9th grade head coach. I do the bus requests, and I do the practice schedule because he doesn't want to do it…. He asks me to type the practice schedule every day, but then we don't adhere to it.
3. I feel like I need to take care of both of those relationships. I need to eat lunch with the coaches, but I need to be up here, too, you know?
4. It's just these damn research papers for 10th. I don't like the process we teach. However I feel that it is necessary because THAT'S THE WAY WE DO IT IN THE 11TH GRADE. I love Donna to death, but if she says that to me again, I'll flip out. I would never go about writing a paper the way we teach it. Donna's rationale is that the entire dept. made an attempt to solidify specific requirements for

the research this summer. They all want to do the same thing so that parents and kids can't complain about the way one teacher does it.

5. *Huck Finn* is required…. That's just what they tell me, the teachers here. It's on our curriculum…. They [the kids] absolutely hated it. And I didn't like it.
6. I'll ask Michael, but I'm pretty sure *Antigone* has to be taught.
7. I can't do this you have to do 40 note cards this way, and you gotta put them in order. I looked at that and I thought, I never did a note card in my life to write a paper. Somebody said, "Well, that helps you put your paragraphs in order." I said, "No, putting my paragraphs in order helps me put my paragraphs in order, not doing note cards." I'm doing it that way for them so when they do it next year, it counts. Either they pass the research paper, or they don't pass the 11th grade.

E. Politics beyond local school

1. I do thing that this job will get easier as we get older. That is as long as we get a new governor in 3 years.

F. Society's perception

G. Teacher accountability

1. I had to be evaluated 3 times this year.

H. Students

1. I asked them what they learned about me, and most of them was that I was 22. For some reason they fixated on that and that fact that I'd rolled a house.
2. The most interesting one, the one we had the biggest discussion on, was in 4th period a girl wrote about the fact that football gets too much money which was a huge discussion which I had to stay out of because I had preferences, so I did a good job of being neutral in that.
3. I probably shouldn't categorize them like this, but this end of the trailer is sort of the fine arts kind of group, and then right in the middle there's some rednecks pretty much, and at the end is all the jocks, all the athletes sit over here. You can, I can draw a line down the row, and then right in the middle there's like these three computer geek guys…. Yeah, and during discussion you could really see it because, you know, the athletes thought football didn't get too much money except for the girls who thought that it did. And then the art people down here were just, you know, irate, and they, of course, had better answers than the football people did, and then the rednecks were just like nobody cares about band anyway. You know, I mean you could segregate them from that whole discussion which

was kind of neat, and I had to keep walking back and forth to the other side of the room, so I wouldn't get sucked in on one side.

4. And they did such a good job with their projects, I let them, we took about 3 days of class and made a movie…. But it was hard to keep all of them involved with it all the time just dong one for the whole class.
5. Apparently some of them are struggling with the process of doing it.
6. I had a kid who cheated.
7. The top end of college prep to the bottom end, to me, is just unreal. I had a couple of kids who decided they just aren't going to turn in research papers…. I didn't count them when I got them. So I graded them all, and I said, "Okay, I don't have 4 research papers." So I went to them, and I told them, "You didn't turn a research paper in. You now have a zero for two test grades." Excuses, excuses. So I said, "Well, this is what's going to happen. You have until Friday, and you can make a 50 on it. You're still not going to pass it, but it might keep you from failing the class because you won't have a zero on your research paper for two test grades." Well, one person brought me theirs.

8. I do not hunt kids down to make up assignments. Thus they never get done. I make them responsible for asking me. “Coach Braswell what did I miss?” When they do not and it becomes a zero they are upset. And that Damn late work. Why can’t kids get things in on time. [sic] I only extended the research paper deadline by three weeks from the original. Here I am 20 days past that deadline and still missing three research papers. That’s almost 6 weeks from the original deadline. For crying out loud the kids has had twelve weeks to write three freaking pages. I could have written 150 in the class time that they had to do this. So how did I fail in getting the point across that two test grades as a ZERO will cause on [sic] to fail 10th grade English.

I. Parents

1. That reminds me, I gotta call parents of kids…. Yeah, kids that are under 75 we’re supposed to call them.

J. Money

1. I don’t have any intention of leaving here at all right now, but salary-wise there would be no reason for me to stay. There’s no doubt that I can make more money doing the same thing somewhere else.

2. I won't find a better place to teach…but, I don't know, there could probably be a better coaching situation. Which, you know, mine now is not bad, but there are places that pay more.

K. Love of kids/teaching/coaching (feeling conflicted)

1. I can't wait for the kids to start so I can focus on them.
2. Otherwise bring on the kids cause I'm fired up BABY!!!
3. I am excited about all my classes.
4. I love what I am teaching, but….
5. …it's the most fun class to teach, but….
6. It's not that I don't enjoy coaching. I didn't quite realize the time constraints of it right now.
7. I have to say even though it's hard I am loving every second.
8. These close games are going to send me into early retirement. It's a great feeling though.
9. Here's to being busy but still loving it.
10. We completed th [sic] 9th grade football season tonight with a 23-16 win. That makes us 5-1 for the year. Not bad for a bunch of freshmen and a first year coach who can barely keep his eyes open.
11. I don't know if there is an answer for these problems. However, I must say that I enjoy looking. These are not

things that are insurmountable. There are days when it seems that they are.

12. It's been a long and emotional four months. However, in all of this heartbreak and hard work I was reminded tonight of why I wanted to get into this business in the first place…Kids.
13. What you do really does make a difference.
14. I hate to admit it, but some days the only thing that keeps me going is the coaching. I don't mean to sound like one of those coaches who put sports first, but there are days when I do not want to be a teacher. However, I get to look forward to something that I know I could never give up right now.

L. Life

1. ... having a sinus infection last week. That made it very hard.
2. To make things worse my truck was broken into last night.
3. Going home last night was actually good. I thought it was going to be stressful, but it was good. My nephew played with me for the first time in months and months.

III. Responses to challenges

A. I've turned it into a research class. It takes the pressure off me having to know everything there is to know about it at this point….

I'm trying to get them to do things where they're teaching themselves stuff and I don't have to stand up there and tell them about it or do whatever, and that way it makes them be the expert on a certain myth and they ask questions of each other. So they're not pointed at me cause I can't keep it all straight in my head.

B. I have eliminated as much busy work as possible. I took out the free-writes, which I enjoy reading. I think they help with fluency, but they take too much of my time and the result is just not worth it right now. I have gone to the journal approach with 9th grade.

C. I did move my room since last time we talked…. It's just my desk is on the other end away from the TV and away from that white board so more kids can see the TV.

D. He stopped coming in. The football coach.

E. I haven't watched as many videos lately in mythology….

F. I figured out how to do plans better. I got them all in one place. I had to get rid of that little lesson plan book. That thing just didn't work.

G. Yeah, I've cut out everything that I don't, you know. And I haven't graded anything for Mythology. It's been over a week and a half since I've given them anything I put a grade on. I graded something they did in class yesterday, but it was a group project, so I only had to grade 6 of them instead of 27.

H. Even though I like them doing those free writes, I cut it out because I wasn't going to get them read.

I. But in the 9th grade I have *Lord of the Flies*. Instead of them doing free writes, I have them do journals on the book, and I go through, they did 6 and I graded 3 of them.

Beginning English Teacher Preparation:

IV. Thoughts on teacher preparation

A. The most important part of time on campus was the building of community.

B. The new class may have no idea what kind of support network they are involved in.

C. Because of time on campus I learned to take what I saw in the schools and apply it to a bigger picture . . ..

D. Vera, Shelly, and Sharon are amazing . . .. I have accomplished so much more than I ever thought possible because of them.

E. When it's all said and done. You'll be stronger people. You'll be better students. You'll be best of friends. But most of all you'll be teachers.

F. I'm not sure I would feel so confident if not for the instruction last year. I don't view a bad class period as failure but as a stepping stone. A starting point rather than a source of frustration.

G. And I think having a mentor all of last year had a big effect too because I haven't felt like really that I needed Corky that much.

H. I felt confident enough about what I was doing here.

I. And I think being here last year had a lot to do with that, too.

:

Luke

Beginning English Teacher-Mentor Teacher Transactions

Beginning Teacher:

I. Profile

A. There are a ton of new teachers, but I don't think there are any first year teachers that I know of. I think I'm the only one.

II. Experiences

A. Like last year with Gary when I wasn't so time constrained, of course, ya'll set that up so he and I were together a lot, but even when we weren't we'd email like about this and this and that. And I think having a mentor all of last year had a big effect too because I haven't felt like really that I needed Corky that much.

B. And I think being here last year had a lot to do with that, too.

C. I don't know that I see it [teaching in a trailer] as a challenge…. Probably because it's the only place I've ever been.

D. That's what Gary was good at, you know, pushing me in the right direction and then letting me go.

III. Assumptions

A. About what would make things easier

1. I think it'll be easier next year, as long as they don't give me an 11th grade class or something that is going to be a new prep. I won't mind having 3 preps again next year as along as they're the same 3.

2. Even in the spring it will be easier. I won't have to do near the research in the spring as I have to do right now. The 9th and 10th will be easier. I won't feel like I need to reread those short stories again 5 months from now.
3. If I had 4th planning I'd feel a lot less strained about getting from here to down there and taking care of those responsibilities….
4. I think next semester will be better because I won't have to do all this mythology research.
5. … I see it getting easier…. I won't have to learn all over again. I can go from doing to changing and making things better.
6. I do thing that this job will get easier as we get older.

B. About the mentor role/support

1. I don't want to have another time requirement because I'll forget.
2. I like knowing that if I have a question I can go to him. I don't ever have to feel bad about going to Corky and asking him something. Because he's, you know, agreed to do that.
3. I think he realizes what the struggles of teaching English are, you know, how long it takes to grade a set of papers as opposed to running stuff through scantron machines. I

don't know. I probably never would meet with a math teacher mentor. I would feel more resistant. It just doesn't make sense to me.

4. You can have a professional talk about literature. You know, if I'm struggling with doing something with *Lord of the Flies*, chances are Corky's taught it before.
5. It seems like the knowledge base is so much wider. He's be able to help me with so many more things…. I think they're area of help would be very limited having never taught any of the literature, or taught writing or grammar or, you know, any of that.
6. Yeah, see that [explanation of event that occurred during observation] would have been another 5-minute thing in a meeting obviously I don't have.
7. He probably understands the struggles of a 90 minutes class in English, you know, where you have to do things like reading and writing and you know how do you break that up and not have 90 minutes of kids reading out loud. That sort of thing.
8. I still think having somebody in field is more important than having the same planning period.
9. I don't see much benefit at all for someone not in the field.

10. I didn't think he'd be evaluating me. I knew that would come from Michael or whoever.
11. I know everyone in this department. I still think it's a good idea to have that individual.
12. It's Corky; I know he does what he's supposed to do. I guess if I had somebody who never did anything, if I didn't feel like they were doing what they were supposed to, I'd probably wonder what they were supposed to do. I know Corky's not going to look at the list and say, "Well, I don't feel like doing that." He's not that way.
13. Yes, I see mentors as part of a support system.

C. About beginning teacher support

1. I don't think I could work anywhere in the state where I would feel like I have this much support. UGA-NETS combined with the dept. at Oconee (which I guess you would say is a big part of UGA-NETS) have made this start as smooth as possible.

IV. Help-seeking style

A. In general

1. I just don't like to show it a whole lot. You know, I'd rather have everybody think that I'm doing fine.
2. Donna cornered me in the lab this morning and forced me to talk about being stressed out, which I don't talk about. .

.. I'd have to think about it again…. I can put it on the back of my mind for a little while, but if I have to talk about it, I have to reproduce the thoughts.

3. I'd rather figure things out for myself.
4. What Corky says about not asking for help. I don't feel that way exactly, but I like to try to figure things out on my own before I go and ask for help.

B. Friend

1. I really haven't talked with anybody about that . . . except for, yeah, Annette. Annette and I talk a lot.
2. Yeah, because we both came through the program and we're both at a little bit different point in our career.
3. Just the fact that someone else knows that you're struggling with something.
4. Right now she has year book, but they're selling business ads this week, so they have permission to leave school. So they're gone.
5. Closeness, same age.
6. Same program.
7. Probably in similar situations. She's busy with yearbook, and in the same way I'm busy with coaching.

C. Department

1. See that's the thing about our department is there are so many people involved in different things, I'll ask them a question.
2. I wouldn't go to all these people with all these questions if I didn't know them like I do.
3. Yeah, I just, if a questions pops in my head, I just ask it. A lot of that had to do with last year.
4. I wouldn't be as quick to throw a question out in the middle of the workroom if I were somewhere else.

D. Me

1. I don't feel like I am doing any real teaching in there because I just don't know enough material. I try to keep reading, but get bogged down grading and preparing for the two other classes. I feel like I am just scraping by until the bell rings in there every day. Any words of wisdom?

E. Possible problems

1. One problem I don't think he and I would have, but one problem you might see, you might have someone who was too clingy.

V. Descriptions of transactions with Mentor

A. General patterns

1. I think we are going to meet for lunch. . ..

2. I don't know that we've been meeting. I don't think we even meet over lunch. We just had talked really more regularly. . .. Just in passing. We haven't actually sat down any more than we were. Just kind of running, bumping into each other in the workroom.
3. He'll come to me um probably I guess about once a week and ask me, you know, how things are going.
4. When I have questions I ask him.
5. Yeah, we haven't been meeting once a week at lunch. That may have been my fault. We may have decided to and I forgot.

B. Practical

1. Corky helps me with logistical things like, you know, especially the computer stuff because he's great at it and I'm oblivious to it.
2. You know, Grade Quick, Corky helped me with that.
3. The email stuff, my email stuff wasn't working.
4. Mainly it's stuff like that kind of thing. You know, all those forms kids have to fill out. Corky, where do I have to send these forms? Whose box do I put these forms in?
5. Corky and I have been talked a little more recently. He is mostly helping me with computer problems.

6. It's mostly administrative questions like Where does this go? Who does this go to? And who gets this? Why do I have, why is this in my box?
7. He still helps me all the time when I'm in the computer lab and stuff.

C. Observations

1. It [unsolicited observation] doesn't bother me at all.
2. I knew he was gonna, that he had to do it at some point anyway.
3. The reason I asked him those things, they were things I though I had a pretty good handle on anyway, but I just wanted to make sure that more than one person saw what I thought I was seeing, too. So I just wanted a confirmation, really.
4. He asked me for a list of things that I wanted him to look for and that way it was things he was looking for that he knew I was interested in. It wasn't just him taking random notes on what he saw. Because if he did that it may not help me at all anyway.

D. Students/classes/courses

1. I had a kid who had cheated. Well, it appeared to me that he had cheated on a project…. So I brought it up here to

Corky and asked him what I should do about it.… That probably saved me a headache.

2. The thing about the curriculum, he asked me to make him a list of what I had left to do, and I did, but we never sat down and went through it.

E. Departmental issues

1. To me, it's important enough that I be at department meetings, but the coaching, the football staff doesn't under stand that . . .. I hadn't had to talk to Michael about this one. I don't really know. I probably need to talk to Corky about how to approach him about it.

F. Omissions

1. Not the time issues or anything like that.
2. It's not like I hadn't had questions; it's just that I don't go to Corky with everything.
3. He said he couldn't make the day last for 27 hours. What are mentors for anyway?

G. Hindrances

1. I don't think I've cause I've been so busy, I don't think I've put a lot into it. Because it, I think time wise is the reason I haven't done it mostly. If I was getting home at 4:00 every day, I'd have time to meet with Corky. I would probably want to.

2. I don't even have time to think about what I would want to ask him to do or to help me with right now, so I can't even figure out what to go to him with, so I definitely don't have time to go do it.
3. He doesn't have a planning period, and I don't have time after school.
4. I didn't think about it that much, but I guess me being way out there has a lot to do with our not meeting much.
5. I didn't know we were required to meet once a week.

VI. Descriptions of Context

A. Mentoring program

1. I think the rules say for him to be my mentor he has to do it [an observation].
2. I got invited to a meeting at the Board office on Monday about this program, but I'm not going to be able to go…. Questions that we have about the program. I just emailed [name of coordinator] and told him that I thought it was a great program, that it worked fine for me, and I couldn't think of any questions that I had…. The note said that mentors need not attend.

B. Department

1. I feel like I need to go in there because [another coach] doesn't and nobody really says it, but he's not really seen

as part of that whole department. You know how that department is.

2. Our department's different from any other department in the school.
3. That's where the whole rest of the department comes in because they're all so, you know, you don't have a choice but to talk about it with them. Donna cornered me in the lab this morning and forced me to talk about being stressed out. . ..
4. I realized that all of them care about what's going on.
5. I think it's the professional dialogue that goes on there.
6. And another thing is most of the department are very close friends.
7. Interested in what everyone else is doing. I think UGA-NETS has a lot to do with it cause they're all so devoted to developing assessment and all that stuff that's going on over there.
8. I think being here last year also made them all take an interest in me.
9. Most of them went to the principal or whoever when it came time for me to try to get a job. More than one.