DISSERTATION

THE JOURNEY BEGINS: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTO THE MENTORSHIP AND

SUPPORT OF NOVICE PRINCIPALS

Submitted by

Anna Colleen Waido

Department of School of Education

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Doctoral Committee:

    Advisor: Rodrick Lucero

    Donna Cooner
    David McKelfresh
    Joe von Fischer

ABSTRACT

THE JOURNEY BEGINS: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTO THE MENTORSHIP AND

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The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to understand the novice principals'

experiences in the principalship and the support they received from their district to make

recommendations for principal mentorship programs. The study reported on qualitative

interview methods with three novice principals and two mentors to determine essential elements

for mentorship programs and leadership development. The retelling of the stories validated the

personal experiences the researcher had as a novice principal. The collective responses from the

leaders provided new possibilities for the mentorship and support of novice principals.

The study investigated the relationships between the mentor/mentee, the structures of

different mentorship programs, and the components that were delivered for training new

principals.   The key findings from the analysis constructed what novice principals and mentors

determined were effective methods to better support school leaders. The following themes

emerged to support novice principals:

1. Mentor with meaning and purpose

2. Prepare novice principals for the realities of the position

3. Leadership skills and professional growth

4. Students are the priority

The mutual benefits and support for the mentors and novice principals were used to

design a Principal Mentorship Program. The program proposal is meant to have an effective

leader in every school, create professional development and learning for principals, and align expectations for administrators across the district. The Principal Mentorship Program is designed for school districts to provide a systematic approach and structure to support new principals and mentors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have often compared my pursuit of a doctorate as climbing a high mountain. Roberts (2010) described *The Dissertation Journey* in the same manner. "It is a long and arduous trek—not for the fainthearted… However, it also offers incomparable opportunities for personal and professional growth… Completing a dissertation changes your life" (Roberts, 2010, p. xiv). A dissertation requires the ability to plan, conduct, write, and defend an original research study. In the end, the personal adventure in learning and growth, results in extraordinary accomplishment and contribution (Roberts, 2010).

My journey to complete the dissertation was often a challenging and difficult climb, but it is who I have become as a result of the experience (Roberts, 2010). It took me six and a half years to make it to the top of the mountain. There were many peaks and valleys that contributed to the hard, often time-consuming work. I completed this journey while I worked full-time, changed my occupation six times, and tried to juggle the coursework and requirements for the degree. My personal goal to complete the dissertation took an unexpected amount of self-discipline, but it does not go unnoticed without the immense support of the people around me who helped make it possible. I have learned from their expertise and knowledge. I am indebted to their constant guidance, support, and assistance to finish the climb and complete the doctoral dissertation. Most importantly, I am thankful for their questions that were simply asked to just check in with me and make sure I continued on the right path to accomplish the goal. It was important to help me reach the top. There is immense satisfaction when you reach a lifelong goal and with a completed dissertation I am willing to simply take a moment to soak in the view from the top.

been an integral part to make my dreams come true. They have understood the time and energy

the project has taken from our family experiences together. However, when I was tired, or

wanted to walk away, you continued to push me to stay focused and write.   The love and

support continued and with every bump there was a spark; with every tear there was a shoulder;

and with every question there was an answer. I am forever grateful to my family for the support

they gave me to fulfill this goal in my life and to make this journey complete. Before the next

doors open in my life, I want to spend time to reflect on the joyous celebration and of course the

mountain top experience!

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated in honor of my parents. I am able to reach my goals and obtain my dreams with their unconditional inspiration, love, and support:

Kenneth and Colleen Waido

In addition, to the loving memory of my grandparents:

George and Helen Waido

Robert and Twila Shanahan

Finally, I want to thank my three brothers and your families. Life is a journey, and I am honored to have shared so many memorable moments with each of you. I am proud of each of our unique talents and the ability to support and love one another unconditionally.

David and Chrissy Waido

Thomas, Andrew, and Audrey Waido

Michael and Sarah Waido

Thomas J. Waido

She believed she could…

…So, she did.

Unknown

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Background

I left the principal induction meeting frustrated. The meeting was two and a half months into the school year and it was the first time we met as a cohort of new administrators in the school district. The meetings established the qualifications new administrators needed to complete with the school district to obtain a professional principal license with the state. I was a new district level administrator and joined two new assistant principals for the first meeting that was promoted as an opportunity to discuss leadership qualities. We were sent an article on the topic and told we needed to be prepared to talk about the reading. During the meeting, we did not discuss the leadership article. Instead of walking away with some valuable information I would be able to apply to my position, the hour and a half conversation was centered on how to behave at holiday parties or FAC's at local drinking establishments. I was disappointed with the outcome of our time together.

The yearlong induction program had four scheduled sessions. I anticipated that each meeting was designed with time to come together as new leaders to collectively build capacity in our role, serve as a resource to one another, expand our knowledge, and help implement leadership qualities and best practices within our positions. I imagined collegial conversations centered on our positions we held as assistant principals and district level administrators. I felt it was an opportunity to make incremental changes in our roles to be better leaders over time. The meetings I imagined did not happen.

The subsequent meetings were not a good use of my time either. The content of the four meetings were directed to the needs of building level principals, and did not address the responsibilities of a district level administrator. It was a challenge to discern applicable

information for me in my role. The content also did not address current best practices for teaching and learning, but focused on other areas that did not necessarily pertain to the leadership positions. I wanted more out of each of the sessions and felt disenchanted after each of our meetings.

My frustration level increased for a variety of reasons at the required principal induction meetings. To begin, the mentor coordinator who conducted the meetings did not have experience as a principal or as a district-level administrator. It was difficult to find credibility with someone who had not been the principal of a school. In addition the required sessions did not have an agenda. There were no clear expectations for the meeting topics. The discussions were random and not focused on an understood purpose for the group of new administrators. We also did not have an opportunity to provide feedback on what we may have needed within the new positions throughout the school year. The content of our time together was not related to the state's principal standards for learning, but rather it was based on the perception of what the mentor coordinator felt was important for our roles. Most of the conversations were centered on a building principal versus a district administrator. At the same time there was a clear disconnect between the roles and responsibilities for a principal or district level administrator. In the end, we were not provided an opportunity to evaluate the program for how valuable or invaluable the sessions were for our professional learning and growth.

I may have been the only person who felt this way after each meeting, but it ignited a spark within me to search out better opportunities for new leaders. After the final induction meeting, I reflected on the types of support provided to me as a new administrator in the district. I started to develop many questions around the mentorship of novice principals and administrators, the induction meetings to meet state requirements for a professional license, and

2

the professional development for leaders. I wondered what was available and what important elements were missing around the mentorship and support of novice administrators. My reflections also focused on another leadership position I held; as a novice principal. I held two administrative positions in the school district, one as a building-level principal and another as a district-level administrator. In each of the roles, I felt the mentor programs in my district lacked systematic implementation and had been insufficient for me as a new leader.

Mentorship programs are meant to provide support to new principals and administrators. The additional professional development or job-embedded strategies are intended to effectively link a novice administrator with a veteran leader. The partnership is intended to build a relationship to help the new leaders with their strengths and develop them with their school position or district roles (Daresh, 2004; Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007). My personal experience, inquiry, and background information lead to the main research question for the study:

1. What are the perspectives of novice principals regarding their experiences

    with mentors and mentorship programs?

When I reflected on my experience as an administrator, I decided to narrow the focus of the research to my previous position as a novice principal. A few months prior to the induction meetings as a district level administrator, I had just completed an interim principal position at an elementary school. The six-month position was for the spring semester.

During this position, I attended monthly sessions for new elementary leaders to learn the different organizational expectations for the school district. This was separate from the district induction meetings the other principals attended to obtain the state's professional principal license. The meetings for the cohort of new elementary principals included discussions on

managerial tasks, organizational requirements, and expectations from the school district to be able to perform the roles and responsibilities of the principalship. Our principal group determined the topics for each agenda based on district expectations. The sessions provided information on how to use the budget planner for determining staffing allocations, the format of the school improvement plan template, and how to complete a summative teacher evaluation form. The meetings referred to management tasks for the administrator position rather than the actions principals needed to take to strengthen their role as instructional leaders (DuFour, 2002). The sessions were helpful because I needed the information to understand district policies and procedures to manage and lead the school, but I still felt there was something missing in order to become a better principal. I felt the meetings lacked direct application to the position. Since I was new, I wanted to reflect and share the actions a principal takes to set clear goals, allocate resources to instruction, manage the curriculum, monitor lesson plans, and evaluate teachers. The other principals may not have felt the same way, but since I was a novice principal, I needed additional tools and strategies to impact my leadership skills in order to support teachers with curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

In addition to the meetings with new elementary principals, I was assigned two mentors to support me in my role. The two individuals were available to provide guidance, advice, confirmation, and support for me as a new principal. When we began our work together the partnership was not clearly defined. There was limited accountability on details of the mentoring relationship and what ought to be accomplished during our time together. We created our own expectations and met twice a month at a local coffee shop on a variety of topics. Over time we developed a relationship that helped us to collaborate and brainstorm solutions to different situations we each faced with students, teachers, parents, or other school related activities. The

bi-monthly meetings also addressed any questions or upcoming events I needed to be aware of in the principalship. I felt each of the sessions were beneficial because of the support we offered to one another around similar ideas, issues, or concerns at our individual schools.

The informal gatherings were the only times we convened together. There were a few interactions that occurred outside the collaboration through occasional phone calls or emails to address different needs. In my role, I had general ideas on how to solve problems, plan for professional development, or conduct teacher observations. However, time to arrange visits with one another at each other's schools did not occur. No one observed or provided immediate feedback to me in the position. I did not have an opportunity to reflect on my leadership skills with anyone else in the school. I wanted to ask for more help, but at times I did not want to impose on my mentors with additional needs or concerns. I understood we were all busy with our different responsibilities, and I felt the additional requests were more of a burden to the mentor principals. Eventually, I figured out how to address the issue, event, or problem. Often times, I placed a phone call after a decision was made for reassurance or reflection. I rarely tapped into the potential of the mentoring relationship. This magnified the sense of isolation I felt within the position. The loneliness was prevalent many times at the school. In some situations, I questioned my leadership abilities, confidence, and wondered if I was able to make a difference at school.

Statement of the Problem

The increased expectations new principals encounter during their first few years are overwhelming and the position does not get easier over time when roles and responsibilities increase. The professional tasks include, but are not limited to being responsible for all educational and support programs of the school, the selection and evaluation of the staff, the

building budget, cultivation of a safe and orderly learning environment, and maintenance of the facility. Principals must also be able to develop relationships with their school staff, students, parents, and community (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005). For someone who is new to the position it takes time to improve their practice and become more comfortable with the role of a school principal.

Duke (1988) explained the contradictions individual principals felt when asked to share how their school leadership experience. The principals described tremendous amounts of satisfaction with their role and at the same time overwhelming frustration. Principals cared for the needs of others, but they felt overburdened with the responsibilities, demands of the job, pressures, and high expectations placed on them as leaders (Duke, 1988). These new feelings of satisfaction combined with the sense of isolation and pressures of the job were prevalent in the role I had as an interim principal. I related to the comments made by the principals in the study because I often had similar thoughts and feelings. I felt I was not capable of achieving all of the new tasks as the leader of the school. I was overwhelmed and felt like I was drowning with the role. The irony was even though I felt alone, I still had to rely on my own resourcefulness as a leader, even when the district's attempts to provide support for novice principals was not enough for me.

When I completed the six-month interim principal position, I took time to reflect on the roles and responsibilities. I often described the work of a principal as one of the best jobs, but also one of the hardest positions I had ever had. I realized the immense challenges and rewards of being a principal, but through thoughtful reflection I questioned if I would ever choose to return to the role.

There were several reasons my journey to the principal position was difficult. To begin with, by no means did I know what it was truly like to be a principal until I actually was the principal. I felt I had prepared myself for the role with numerous experiences as a teacher leader, but I did not know what it was like until I was the principal.

I worked hard as a teacher leader to develop different leadership skill sets with various school committees and experiences. I had served as the coordinator for the student success team, school assessment team, and discipline team. In addition, I provided professional development for the staff, mentored new teachers, evaluated classified staff, and developed master schedules to gain more experience. I created a school wide discipline program and implemented a positive support system for teachers and students. I embraced each opportunity as a valuable preparation for my future role as a principal role.

I repeatedly applied for leadership positions, only to learn I did not have enough experience for the role. It was seven years after I had completed the principal preparation program at the university when I finally obtained the first principal position at an elementary school. When the moment of truth finally arrived, I realized how little I knew about the actual role and work of a principal. I was confident I was a leader, but there were distinct differences from a teacher leader to the role of principal. Teachers are responsible for a classroom of students and collaborate with others to provide success in teaching and learning. A principal's responsibility increases to address the needs of the students, parents, teachers, staff, and entire school community.

The comprehensive tasks of a principal added to the challenges and successes in the first few months. I started my first few weeks as the principal in the lunchroom every day so I could learn the names of every student. I implemented daily walk-throughs in each classroom to be

7

visible to students and teachers. The informal observations allowed me the opportunity to learn

about the curriculum, daily instruction, and student engagement in the classrooms. This was new

for the staff, and at first the teachers stopped teaching and waited for me to say something.

When I indicated they should continue to teach and I just wanted to watch, they soon carried on

with the lesson. As time passed, teachers and students became familiar with my frequent

classroom walk-throughs.

I reviewed the school improvement plan and supported the school goals through

professional development at staff meetings. I also constantly worked with students and teachers

through discipline issues. Together with teachers and parents we developed a budget to meet

school goals and growth. I hired five new teachers and created a schedule for a growing school

population. Finally, one of the largest responsibilities I had as the principal was the completion

of 14 new teacher and nine classified evaluations. Each certified observation took approximately

three to four hours to complete with the classroom visit, paperwork, and pre- and post-

conferences. The classified evaluations were also completed because they had not been done in

the previous four years. The paperwork needed to be finished to meet the district expectations.

There were numerous other tasks that needed to be completed as well, as the principal.

My school day was approximately 14-18 hours in length and I always said my work

began, once the school day ended. I struggled with the ability to feel like I completed paperwork

or other office duties during the day and rarely felt like I got ahead with the late nights in the

office. It was difficult to manage all the daily demands. The time I spent at school soon affected

my personal life. I was no longer present at family events. I turned down engagements with

friends and family to complete work related to the life as a principal. I knew I had dropped

important pieces of my personal life and at the same time, I did not feel I had fulfilled my role as

a principal to the best of my abilities. I was overwhelmed and struggled with the ability to feel

confident in my professional life.

Finally, I had received minimal feedback throughout my time as a principal. There were

positive accolades from parents, office staff, and teachers, but I did not have the same

confirmation from other administrators. My direct supervisor and mentors did not provide

consistent feedback for me to reflect and grow as a leader. I knew there were areas I needed to

improve as a principal. I desired constructive feedback in order to get better in the role.

However, the information was not prevalent from the individuals whom I desired the feedback.

The different support systems in place by the school district were not enough to eliminate how I

felt as a first year principal in the school. I kept thinking there has to be something more for me

as a new leader in the school district. Upon further reflection and consideration, I started with the

mentorship and support of novice principals.

Mentorship

Mentorship is meant to be a developmental relationship where a more experienced and

knowledgeable person helps an individual with less experience and knowledge (Casavant, &

Cherkowski, 2001; Daresh, 2004; Kram, 1985; Scott, 2010). It is one of the most common

approaches to train leaders and provide leadership for educators (Boerema, 2011). The

following is a definition of formal mentoring:

> Formal mentoring is a structured and coordinated approach to mentoring where
> individuals (usually novices – mentees and more experienced persons – mentors)
> agree to engage in personal and confidential relationship that aims to provide
> professional development, growth, and varying degrees of personal support
> (Hansford & Erich, 2006, p. 39).

Mentorship programs are important ways to provide support to individuals, who may

need to learn more about an organization, become socialized into a culture, or trained to

understand the skills necessary to perform a job (Boerema, 2011). Mentors address some practical realities of the position. They are taught to emphasize the use of feedback and strengthen the leadership skills with the new individual (Boerema, 2011). Several professional business organizations have designed and utilized mentorship programs to provide growth and development for individuals within their professions (Kram, 1983). The relationship between a mentor and a novice worker can potentially be very unique. Some relationships are meant to be developmental over time while others are shorter in duration and last for a certain period of time (Kram, 1983). Whatever the nature of the relationship, it is the mentor who takes on the role of a partner "who works alongside the mentee in order to foster learning and development, and in a variety of ways" (A. A. Smith, 2007, p. 278).

Maslow's Theory

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs can address how individuals feel when they learn to acquire the necessary skills to work with one another. Maslow's (1943) theory states humans have an innate curiosity to develop and when their needs are satisfied they move through five different stages of growth. The different levels include: physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. When the theory was first applied it was not specific to a particular role or expectation. It was determined that individuals' needs were met when they moved through the hierarchy of human needs. People become actualized to accomplish higher motives only after they have met certain basic needs (Maslow, 1970).

Maslow's hierarchy of human needs is often presented to undergraduate students in educational psychology courses (Wininger & Norman, 2010). The research has been used to support the theory within meaningful context for students, teachers, and leaders to provide a framework to bring together various motivations, concepts, and influences in the classroom

10

environment (Wininger & Norman, 2010). The theory connects the essential needs students have in their life in order to teach without interference. For example students who have low self-esteem may exhibit behavior issues or clash within the classroom culture. A teacher or principal can consider not only how a child's needs differ, but also what a student's needs are in life to be able to support and consider the realities of his or her situation (Ginsburg, 2012).

The theory can also be applied to mentorship relationships so mentors and mentees can focus on the development of the novice principals to be effective leaders and foster their personal growth (Francis & Kristsonis, 2006; Intrator & Kunzman, 2006). The feeling of belonging and success can be met with the relationships that form with new principals and their mentors. It can be assumed mentorship programs support and train administrators to learn the basic skills and support individuals to reach their greatest potential (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006). Maslow's theory cultivates the skills and knowledge of a principal's experience, but it can also address the principal's ability to reflect on his or her purpose as a leader (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006). Finally, when applied to principal leadership, the theory can help individuals transition through the different stages of growth to personally and professionally grow as the principal of a school.

In my role as an interim principal, I experienced a cycle of understanding as I acknowledged the stages of Maslow's theory. I recognized myself within the stages, doing various tasks in my new role as principal. Some of the experiences were based on what I felt was best for the school and others were a part of my personal journey with the principalship. Early on, I noticed the school had unsafe procedures regarding how students entered and exited the building with a lack of supervision. In addition, changes needed to be made with fire and lock down drills. The policies and procedures for school security were rewritten to meet district expectations and ensure the safety of the students and staff. I also went through the stages of

growth to gain a sense of belonging. Since I entered the school community mid-semester, it took

me awhile to develop relationships with students, teachers, and parents. In order to make

connections with the grade level teams, I met with the teachers to learn how they collaborated as

a group. I worked with different parents on school committees to share new and innovative ideas

to support school funding and events. Finally, I still struggled with the feeling of self-confidence

based on the tasks I was trying to accomplish within the six-month time period. At times, I felt I

had a purpose and collaborated well with the school members to demonstrate success with school

goals. Other times, I was overwhelmed. I felt disconnected with some teachers or students. I

did not always know how to recognize my abilities as a leader in order to reach my greatest

potential.

Maslow clarified that the personal satisfaction of the needs was not an "all or none"

phenomenon. The research stated individuals do not necessarily progress through each level

step-by-step nor is there a prerequisite to move from one point into the next level (Wininger &

Norman, 2010). It may be more cyclical as individuals move through the physiological needs,

safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization.   Maslow

understood it was a very fluid emergence and combination of needs and activities to everyday

life (O'Connor & Yballe, 2007).

Development of Mentor Programs for Leaders

Research studies within education have only recently focused on mentorship programs

and professional development for administrators (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2004).

This, in part, is due to the established requirements for principal and administrator licensure

qualifications through Statute and State Board of Education Rules and Regulations (Colorado

Department of Education, 2011). Many education agencies require local school districts to

develop and implement an induction program for new principals to participate in mentor

programs designed to obtain a professional license (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Colorado

Department of Education, 2011; Daresh, 2004). Initially, mentor programs were created in the

late 1980s and early 1990s for administrators to provide ongoing opportunities for professional

development and assist leaders to ensure schools are more effective (Alsbury & Hackmann,

2006; Daresh, 2004).

The increased accountability from different legislation over the years has placed an

emphasis on quality school leaders. Kearney (2010) stated, "Developing leaders is increasingly

recognized as a key strategy for improving schools and closing student achievement gaps" (p.

iv). Principals are second only to the influences of classroom teachers with their effect on

student learning and are held accountable for a school system's efforts for continuous

improvement (Davis et al., 2005; Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004;

National Association of Elementary School Principals [NAESP], 2003; Silver, Lochmiller,

Copland, & Tripps, 2009; Sparks, 2002). The principal must ensure teachers promote best

practices in teaching instruction that allows students to be successful (Darling-Hammond et al.,

2007). The accountability to guarantee quality leadership has led many states, districts, and

schools to focus on improvement strategies to prepare and support effective principals and

increase access to quality professional development to improve leadership practices (Kearney,

2010). The involvement in the learning activities normally comes from a principal's personal

motivation to learn and grow professionally (Daresh, 2003). Principals' professional

development includes opportunities to work, discuss, and solve problems with colleagues. It is

well planned, long-term, embedded in their jobs, focused on student achievement, and supportive

of reflective practice (Drake & Roe, 2002).

University principal preparation programs and district mentorship programs are designed to improve the quality of educational leadership opportunities for aspiring principals and novice principals. The elements of these programs provide benefits to the mentees with additional preparation, increased understanding of organizational structures in a school district, reflective opportunities, role clarification with mentors, and more effective leadership practices implemented at schools (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). The purpose of principal internship and field experiences is to allow the student to observe how another principal deals with problems, responds to situations, and interacts with teachers, students, parents, and community members (Daresh, 2003; Fenwick & Pierce, 2002). Increased support in the early years for new principals can help develop the skills necessary to be effective leaders of their schools over longer periods of time (Silver et al., 2009). The focus on the support and development for new leaders takes thoughtful consideration by school districts and mentor programs. These programs address the needs for principals, levels of support, commitment to preparing experienced principals to be mentors, and desired outcomes for mentors and mentees (Daresh, 2004).

Mentorship for Novice Principals

Mentor programs are an essential part of the socialization, growth, and learning for school administrators (Daresh, 2004). It is an important stage in professional development to support principals at the start of their career for learning and growth. The growth in mentoring is meant to enhance leadership competency, provide benefits to the individuals, supports relationships between mentors and mentees, and professional learning (Daresh, 2004).

The degree of success and quality of the mentorship programs vary dependent on the design and desired results from a school district. Mentor programs for new principals are

14

implemented with a variety of structures, collaborations, and institutional arrangements to learn different aspects of the roles and responsibilities (Davis et al., 2005). School districts have utilized mentoring with formal and informal structures to support and guide individuals new to the principal role (Silver et al., 2009).

Many school organizations have mentor programs to develop leaders and produce quality workers. Mentor programs partner novice principals with an experienced school leader to support them with new expectations and responsibilities. Together the mentor and mentee learn organizational expectations, reflect on their practices, model effective strategies, navigate tough situations, and affirm their different approaches to leadership (NAESP, 2003). There are mutual benefits for the leadership between novice principals and the more experienced and knowledgeable mentors (Gray, Fry, Bottom, & O'Neill, 2007; A. A. Smith, 2007; Spiro, Mattis, & Mitgang, 2007). The leadership development for mentors and mentees emphasize standards for effective principals, provide clearly defined practices, and ensure all leaders have access to improve their leadership performance (Kearney, 2010). A. A. Smith (2007) recognized the social nature of learning and the expertise mentors and mentees are able to share within their relationships. The partnerships allow mentors and mentees to support, guide, and offer advice to one another (A. A. Smith, 2007). It enhanced the personal and professional development between the principals (A. A. Smith, 2007). The collaboration between the leaders also provided benefits to school districts because individuals worked together to address important school leadership practices and issues which in turn effected and strengthened the teaching and learning at schools (Kearney, 2010).

The most important features of the professional learning built on the knowledge, skills, and confidence principals needed to continue to improve schools through a clear and established

plan for mentoring success (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Hall, 2008; Kearney, 2010). "There is

an unquestionable connection between the principal's ability to lead learning and the support

they themselves receive in their everyday work" (NAESP, 2003, p. 5). Effective mentoring

provides the vital support for job-embedded professional development (NAESP, 2003). Kearney

(2010) wrote that highly effective professional development for leaders is focused on improved

teaching and learning, grounded in standards and research based, examines personal practice,

and offer support for principals to continuously improve their practice as leaders.

Job-embedded learning allows for collaboration between new and experienced principals.

In order to create an effective mentoring program, all participants must have common

expectations for their roles and responsibilities of the mentor/mentee relationship (Hall, 2008).

The value and importance of the learning, ideally carefully matches the mentors and mentees

based on professional goals, leadership styles, learning needs, and other variables that are

explored prior to matching new principals with their mentors (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006;

Daresh, 2004). It is important for districts to focus on different methods to support the

relationship between the mentor and mentee because of the complex nature of the partnership.

The mentor/mentee relationship must be built on trust. A credible mentor needs to provide

constructive feedback to the mentee. The collaboration between the mentor and mentee connects

new learning to daily activities. In return the novice principal must be willing to accept and

respond to the information provided to them from their mentor (NAESP, 2003). The support

mechanisms provided by districts for the leaders are considerate of time constraints, roles and

responsibilities, training for mentors, encourage professional reflection, and develop goals to

ensure mentors and mentee benefit from the process (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2004;

Hall, 2008).

Researcher's Bias: Focus on the Mentorship for Principals

My own personal reflection of my experiences at the district principal induction meetings led me to focus on the mentorship of building principal. When I was a new principal, I felt I was not able to accomplish all of the school's vision or goals, because I was drowning in the logistics and paperwork. My day in the office started when the students had gone home and then another school day began with the other managerial tasks of the principal role. I worked late into the night and one evening the police even knocked on my window to find out why the lights were still on in the school office. None of these topics were ever addressed during our principal support meetings and were only briefly covered by my mentors in our bi-weekly coffee talks.

I felt like I was sinking and I did not know how to reach out to seek advice or the support I needed as a new principal. I believed the two mentors and everyone around me were successful in their roles, and they might perceive my requests for support as a weakness. I felt isolated and alone. I wanted someone to notice I needed help to understand the new roles and responsibilities of a principal. I had lost confidence in myself as a leader because I was not able to articulate my needs or even know how to begin to ask for help. I definitely wanted more out of the support provided by the school district, the mentor programs, the relationships among leaders, and professional growth to build capacity for me as a leader.

I started to wonder about the phenomenon of new principals and mentorship programs. If I felt the mentorship and supports in place within the program were lacking for me, then perhaps other new principals felt the same way too. The increased expectations to be solid leaders, ensure quality teaching in the classrooms, and promote learning for all students has made it difficult to accomplish all of the roles and responsibilities at high levels (Sparks, 2002). Often districts are not able to support quality professional learning for principals and there is

inadequate assistance to help them meet the challenges of their work (Sparks, 2002). The professional development and learning for principals was an important piece of training that enabled principals to meet the diverse roles and expectations for the position. It was especially important if principals are new to the role (Scott, 2010).

My inquiry and thoughts expanded on the original research question that sparked my interest in the topic. The study examined novice principals' experiences with their mentors and mentorship program. It also included mentors. The perspectives of the leadership development, support, and relationship with a mentor/mentee lead to the development of the following research questions:

Research Questions

1. What are the perspectives of novice principals regarding their experiences with mentors and mentorship programs?

2. How do novice principals and mentors describe the leadership skills and professional learning for new principals?

3. How does participating in mentorship programs influence the development and sense of leadership for a novice principal?

Significance of the Study

The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to understand the novice principals' experiences in the principalship and the support they received from their district to make recommendations for mentorship programs. Information was collected from new principals and mentors to determine essential elements for mentorship programs and leadership development. It was meant to identify effective programs and determine how to develop and better support school leaders who are responsible for leading effective schools. The study analyzed the

relationships between the mentor/mentee, the structures of different mentorship programs, and investigated the components that were delivered for training new principals. The skills and professional development for new leaders partnered with experienced mentors are meant to increase the success for principals and demonstrate improved educational outcomes for all students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, LaPointe, and Orr (2009) also reported ways leaders needed to assist with the improvement of student learning. Programs looked for different methods to invest in leadership with their ability to recruit, prepare, and develop principals for their challenging roles. Darling-Hammond (1997) has researched several schools to support powerful learning for students and teachers. Many of the reform efforts have focused on the improvements for teacher education, but the ability to produce highly qualified principals had been sparse (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Over the past two decades, effective principals are now regarded as an important factor to promote the teaching and learning for all students (Peterson, 2002). Principals play a critical role in recruiting, developing, and retaining teachers to support improvement efforts for teaching students (Leithwood et al., 2004). There has been an obvious need for principals to be highly skilled leaders who can create conditions for improved teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). It was important that the study examined mentorship programs that ensured mutual benefits and support for the mentors and novice principals.

Researcher's Perspective

From: Waido, Anna - PRINCIPAL
Sent: Monday, January 04, 2010 10:39 AM
To: School Staff
Subject: The journey begins...

Welcome Back!

I hope that everyone had a wonderful and well-rested break. I have anxiously been awaiting the arrival of today and the second semester. As I was out and about town swimming, ice-skating, bowling, attending movies, or shopping I ran into so many individuals from the school community. Thus, making it very exciting time to start working with you all here!

I know that you are all busy preparing for the start of the second semester and finishing report cards. I just wanted to take some time to thank you for your support and let you know that I am available at any time. I know we'll have a great year! Please watch your boxes for an invitation from me.

Best wishes for a great second-half of the school year!
Anna

Together We Do Make A Difference!
~Anna Waido
Interim Principal
Elementary School

"The journey begins…" was the subject line of my very first email correspondence I sent

to my elementary school staff as a first year interim principal. The letter expressed my hope and

optimism for a successful and collaborative second half of the school year with the elementary

teachers and staff. Little did I know the amount of time and effort needed to meet all of the other

expectations, demands, or challenges I faced as a novice principal. I wanted my staff to

understand it was important for me to make personal connections to the school community and

the email demonstrated my support for what they do with students on a daily basis.

When I accepted my interim position, I was excited to be the new principal, but in reality I was nervous. I did not know what to expect or how to prepare myself for a day on the job. There was no formal transition or training for me to move from a teacher leader to interim principal of an elementary school. The only support I received in the beginning was from a few obligatory responses from educational leaders who told me to ask if I ever had questions or needed assistance with the role. I knew I had a million questions, and in retrospect I should have asked them, but I did not even know where to start. This was my first experience to walk in the shoes of a principal and truly know what it was like to be the principal of a school.

When I began the principalship journey, my days were longer than I ever imagined because I tried to address every situation, phone call, email or interaction with students, staff, and parents. The principal expectations, district requirements, and daily school responsibilities were overwhelming. The higher accountability with the role quickly transcended to my inability to feel adequate as a principal. However, I set extremely high goals for myself and worked hard to not fail at my duties. I was not satisfied with just being status quo, because I wanted to be the best I could be in my role. I had received positive accolades from teachers, parents, and other staff members, but I received minimal feedback or confirmation from my supervisor or mentors. It was hard to believe I was a successful first year principal. There was an added complexity coming into the position in the middle of the school year. I also knew as the interim principal only had the role for the second semester and I felt it was an opportunity to prove myself to obtain another principal position in the district.

I knew that I was not the only principal who had ever felt this way. Every school year, principals enter into leadership roles and face the many challenges to learn all the important skills, roles, and responsibilities of the position. It does not matter if the principal is brand new

to the field or if the person has been a veteran administrator. The role of the principal has changed over time and it is difficult to address all of responsibilities and learn the information expected for leaders.

I had applied for principal positions in the district following my interim principal position, but did not receive a principal role. Instead, I moved to a district level administrative coordinator in professional development and support of instructional coaches. I was still new to the role of an administrator and the position was relatively new for the district. This position provided different challenges for me as a leader.

There were distinct differences between the school-level and district-level leadership positions I have held within the school district. The two types of support provided by the district also served different purposes. I realized in each position I had a desire for a mentor and program that supported the role and responsibilities. In reality, I did not imagine myself as a district level administrator. I wanted to be a principal. Instead of trying to address the challenges for each of the positions, I decided to focus on the mentorship and support of novice principals.

I used the investigation into the mentorship and support for novice principals to create a mind map for the study. The work was modeled after the research and professional learning provided by Kegan & Lahey (2009). The map provided the foundation for the study (See Figure 1: *"Minds at Work"* Map—Side 1. See also Appendix A: *"Minds at Work" Map—Side 1*). The *Minds at Work* map focused on the qualitative research design. It recognized the personal journey I had experienced within the role of a novice principal. The focus on the mentorship and support of novice principals was used to design the narrative inquiry and analysis. It also helped to develop the research questions for the study. Further examination into the principalship,

Figure 1: *"Minds at Work"* Map—Side 1

Figure 1. *"Minds at work"* map—Side 1 (Version 2.0, March 11, 2013). The map has six columns that represent the research and study. The first and second columns provide the process to determine the researcher's commitment and focus for the study based on personal experience. It also presents the research questions. The third column reviews current literature to determine what mentor programs are doing and not doing for novice principals. In addition, the fourth column acknowledges the changes and challenges within the principalship. Finally, the last two columns are the qualitative research design to include the theoretical framework for the narrative inquiry. Adapted from *Immunity to Change: How to overcome it and unlock the potential in yourself and your organization* by R. Kegan and L. L. Lahey. Copyright 2009 by Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.

relationships between novice principals and mentors, mentorship programs, and leadership development created an understanding of the current research. The design recognized several essential elements for mentorship programs and leadership development. This created open-ended questions through the narrative inquiry interview process to gather information from mentors and novice principals. The map was used throughout the data collection and analysis to learn more about mentorship programs for novice principals. In the end, an understanding of what new leaders desired or needed was created from the thematic analysis and interpretations of the findings.

My belief is that every leader needs to have someone to support them in their role. The perspectives from individuals currently in the role can create an understanding of the mentorship programs. It also was important to determine the leadership skills and professional learning for new principals. Learning does not end, and in order to continue to grow as leaders a district needs to determine what effective elements are essential to provide support for the principalship. The relationship between the mentor and mentee can provide the valuable insights that are needed for the mentorship and support of novice principals.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Mentorship is a professional practice that has been used in education and by other occupations either formally or informally to provide developmental strategies and support for individuals new to their positions (NAESP, 2003). Mentoring in education has been used for teachers, aspiring principals, and new administrators to the profession since the late 1980s to early 1990s (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2004). Mentor programs provide the additional skills needed to learn and understand the roles and responsibilities of the principalship. When individuals obtain their first principal position, most school districts have established a mentor program. The novice principals are partnered with a veteran administrator. Together principals develop a mentor/mentee relationship to guide and support them through the challenges of the first year of the principalship.

The literature review constructed the foundation for the study and developed a need for further research into the mentorship and support of novice principals. The review considered numerous studies from researchers Alsbury & Hackemann (2006); Boerema (2011); Casavant & Cherkowski (2001); Darling-Hammond et al. (2007, 2009); Daresh (2001, 2003, 2004); Davis et al. (2005); Hall (2008); Kearney (2010); Kram (1983, 1985); Mitgang (2008, 2012); NAESP (2003); Peterson (2002); Silver et al. (2009); A. A. Smith (2007); Weingartner (2009); and others in education and professional fields to define mentorship.

The research identified what mentorship programs are doing well within the school systems. It focused on effective mentor characteristics, benefits to mentors and mentees, increased levels of support, and professional development needed by novices in their positions to be successful. Mentor programs and professional learning for new principals are described to

link leadership skills that are needed to meet the increasingly difficult expectations of the principalship (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). There was a heightened awareness of the concerns within the principal position due to changes that have occurred within the role over the past few decades.

The review also built on the concepts and ideas from other professions to determine quality mentoring. It examined how mentor programs were used by the healthcare profession and construction industry to gain knowledge from different fields. The connection from the two professional fields were compared with education and developed an understanding of how other professions have utilized mentoring for new individuals in the workforce. It examined the similarities and differences of programs.   All of the evidence from the research was used to create an understanding of how mentorship supports novice principals in the principalship, the relationship between the mentor/mentee, and elements of different mentor programs.

What is Mentoring?

The term 'mentor' originated from Homer's *Odyssey*. When Odysseus left to fight in the Trojan War, he entrusted his only son Telemachus to the care of his friend Mentor. Mentor served as a teacher and wise counselor to Odysseus' son while in his father's absence. The word 'mentor' has evolved today to describe an experienced person who helps another individual through their advice, support, wisdom, and guidance (Kram, 1983; A. A. Smith, 2007). The research literature has multiple definitions for mentoring and most are synonymous in explanation. For the purpose of this study, mentorship is defined as the process where the mentor assists the mentee to enable and support their life and work (A. A. Smith, 2007). A mentor partners alongside the mentee in order to promote learning and development in a variety of ways. The relationship between the individuals is based on confidentiality, support, openness,

and collegiality with the mentor process (A. A. Smith, 2007). Mentoring offers an opportunity for both individuals to have the ability to influence one another. The mentor and mentee are able to learn and grow together and have increased mutual benefits from the relationship (Goodyear, 2006; A. A. Smith, 2007).

Mentor programs have been utilized by school districts to partner novice principals with an experienced school leader to support them with organizational expectations, help them reflect on their practices, model effective strategies, navigate tough situations, and affirm their approaches (NAESP, 2003). It was important for school districts to provide mentors to support new principals with their roles and responsibilities of their position. Formal and informal programs were designed for new administrators to help develop essential understanding of their positions and it was especially important during their first few years as principals (Whitaker, 2001). Novice principals learned from their mentors' effective instructional leadership skills to lead their schools. The leadership skills by new administrators focused on clear student achievement goals, provided guidance for teachers to ensure student learning, embedded professional development opportunities for content, built a collaborative school culture, and led changes in schools (Sparks, 2002). These instructional leadership tasks were only a few of the responsibilities where mentoring supported the necessary skills to provide effective job-embedded professional development for novice administrators (NAESP, 2003).

Hidden or Competing Commitments to Mentoring

The ability to attract and retain highly qualified principal candidates to the ever-changing role has been difficult. Previously, principals were considered managers of their schools and expected to comply with district requirements, operate building budgets, keep students and schools safe, address personnel issues, and make sure the school was operating smoothly (Blank,

Hale, Moorman, & KSA-Plus Communications, 2000). Today the role has transformed.

Principals still must be able to manage schools; however there has been an added emphasis on

being an instructional leader and providing quality education for all students. Currently the

focus is on teaching, student learning, and raising achievement (Blank et al., 2000).

Increased Accountability and Expectations

The changes that have occurred within education come from policymakers, community

members, districts, and parents for schools to establish effective instruction focused on student

achievement. The increased accountability has placed an emphasis on quality school leaders.

Principals are second only to the influences of classroom teachers in affecting student learning

and are held accountable for school system's efforts for continuous improvement (Davis et al.,

2005; NAESP, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2004; Silver et al., 2009; Sparks, 2002). Ultimately, it is

the principal who must ensure that teachers promoted best practices in teaching instruction that

allowed students to be successful (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Guterman, 2007; Sparks,

2002). The educators who worked directly with students needed to be supported by instructional

leaders. Principals have substantial effect through a variety of means on the teaching and

learning in their schools, which then impacts student achievement (Marzano, Waters, &

McNulty, 2005). The influences of a principal's leadership established a clear vision,

determined school goals, promoted the use of data to track progress of student work and

performance, and provided their teachers with the necessary support for success (Leithwood et

al., 2004).

The expectations for principals required a variety of professional tasks. Davis et al.

(2005) stated the following about principals' complex positions:

> Principals are expected to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum
> leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations

28

and communications experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, as well as guardians of various legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives. In addition, principals are expected to serve the often conflicting needs and interests of many stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, district office officials, unions, and state and federal agencies. (p. 3)

These requirements for the principal positions have also made it difficult to perform all the expectations at high levels (Sparks, 2002). This concept was often combined with districts that are not able to support quality professional learning for principals and there is inadequate assistance to help them meet the challenges of their work (Sparks, 2002). Professional development and learning for principals was an important piece of training to meet the diverse needs of the role and the expectations for the position. It was especially important if principals were new to the role (Scott, 2010).

Difficulty to Attract and Retain Highly-Qualified Candidates

There are four additional themes from research that described the challenges within the principalship. One of the concerns was that school districts were finding it difficult to attract and retain highly qualified candidates to the ever-increasing role of a principal (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Hall, 2008; Kearney, 2010; Kennedy, 2000; Knapp, Copeland, & Talbert, 2003; Miller, 2004; Sparks, 2002; Whitaker, 2000). There are many issues that surrounded the principal shortage problem. A study sent superintendents surveys to record the availability of principal candidates, quality of applications, and satisfaction with professional preparation of the leaders (Whitaker, 2001). The responses, from a variety of different-sized districts, indicated there were fewer applicants that applied for open positions in elementary, middle school, and high school. Some of the reasons included school reform efforts, increased time demands, and overall changes in the role that have made the position more complex (Whitaker, 2001). These concerns

about the demands of the job, time, and lack of parent and community support have compounded the reasons why fewer individuals seek the position (Kennedy, 2000).

However, there still are individuals who are interested in applying for principal positions. The problem for some districts was not necessarily a shortage of principals, but a lack of finding highly qualified administrators who are available and willing to work in underserved communities and low-performing schools (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Davis et al., 2005). The lack of experiences for candidates in the principal position led to the perception of lower quality of knowledge and skills within areas of assessment, data-driven decisions, and instruction (Whitaker, 2000).

"Many principals do not see the principal's job as it is currently configured in many districts, as doable or adequately supported" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p.4). The role has changed and transformed over the last few decades with higher accountability and expectations for school leaders. The concerns with the position included the following: longer hours, increased accountability with high-stakes testing by state and districts, inadequate compensation, lack of support, additional job pressures, and stress (Blank et al., 2000; Casavant & Cherkowski, 2001; Guterman, 2007; Kearney, 2010; Lovely, 2004; Whitaker, 2001). Bossi (2007) stated, "We must recognize that the challenges of the principalship in the early 1980's bear little resemblance to what our new educational leaders face today" (p. 32). The higher expectations and concerns with the position have contributed to the decline in the number of highly effective principals pursuing the principal position (Casavant & Cherkowski, 2001).

Principal Preparation Programs

Principal preparation programs added additional concerns for what was expected from the leadership position (Casavant & Cherkowski, 2001). The instruction meant to prepare

students with theory and practical learning has been criticized for being out of touch with the realities of today's job expectations and are too general for principals (Kearney, 2010). The same comments were made in a 2001 Public Agenda survey that stated 80 percent of superintendents and 69 percent of principals think leadership training in schools of education was not keeping informed with the realities and expectations for the principal role (Farkas, Johnson, Duffett, Foleno, & Foley, 2001).

Individuals who participated in principal preparation programs must possess different knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors to meet the expectations for the principal position (Casavant, & Cherkowski, 2001). There is strong evidence that programs vary across the county to prepare and develop effective school leaders (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). The principal credential classes allow candidates to practice and learn what it takes to run a school without having deep school-based experiences (Cheney, Davis, Garret, & Holleran, 2010). Some programs have principals complete an internship to provide on-the-job training. The internships are described to provide significant experience to develop leadership and management skills. When principals have completed the university courses to attain the basic knowledge and skills required by the state, then they can apply to become licensed administrator (Kearney, 2010). However, there are concerns from school district hiring officials that the internships and coursework do not adequately prepare principals for the daily demands of the position (Cheney et al., 2010; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Kearney, 2010; Silver et al., 2009; Whitaker, 2001). Throughout their internship, aspiring principals may not consistently experience all of the demands of a principal thus to not fully grasp and understand the increased roles and responsibilities for the principalship (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Whitaker, 2001).

Scattered/Lack of Support

Furthermore, a growing number of principals are not fully supported by school and

district organizational practices and policies to manage and lead the schools (Darling-Hammond

et al., 2007; Davis et al., 2005; Levine, 2005). Mentorship programs are designed to assist new

principals with the acquired skills to operate within the professional framework of the school

district and function with increased accountability and tasks for the position. There are still

problems and inconsistencies with the types of support districts provide for novice principals. In

order for districts to support new administrators to be successful with the principal position, there

is a need for ongoing professional development and time to share instructional and

organizational leadership practices (Kearney, 2010).

Shortage of Highly Qualified Candidates

Finally, a review of literature indicated a shortage of highly qualified principals is

expected to occur over the next several years (Akiba & Reichardt, 2004; Guterman, 2007; Hall,

2008; Lovely, 2004). Attrition in some regions of the country were reported to be nearly 60

percent when principals stated they would retire, resign, or leave their leadership positions in the

next few years (Battle, 2010; Peterson, 2002). Principals who have held the positions for the

past 20-25 years are creating openings for a new but less experienced principal. The new leaders

have greater expectations to guide and support teachers and determine whether a school succeeds

(Sparks, 2002).

<center>**Mentor Programs in Other Professions**</center>

Professional organizations have used mentoring as a career-development strategy to

enhance skills, personal growth, and professional advancement opportunities (Fagenson, 1989).

It was in the mid-1980s when researchers began to focus on the advantages and disadvantages of

<center>32</center>

mentorship for individuals and organizations (Goodyear, 2006). Mentor programs purpose was to share knowledge and information between the mentor and mentee. It was meant to be a developmental relationship when a more experienced and knowledgeable person helped an individual with less experience and knowledge (Casavant & Cherkowski, 2001; Daresh, 2004; Kram, 1983, 1985; Scott, 2010). Mentorship programs are important ways of providing support to individuals, who need to learn more about an organization, become socialized into a culture, or trained to understand the skills necessary to perform a job.

Several professional organizations utilized mentorship and the relationships between the mentor/mentee in informal and formal programs to provide growth, development, and career advancement within their professions (Kram, 1983). The one-on-one relationship between two individuals within the same organization has expanded to include peer relationships, group mentoring, and support from individual experts outside their current work situation (Goodyear, 2006). Mentorship programs are unique in different organizations or industries (Finley, Ivanitskaya, & Kennedy, 2007). It is contingent upon the time they work together. Some relationships are meant to be developmental and are shorter in duration, while others may last for a longer period of time (Kram, 1983). The degree of success and quality of the mentorship programs vary dependent on the design and desired results.

This study focused on the reviews of mentor programs within the healthcare and construction industries to make comparisons with principal educational programs. The healthcare and construction industries were selected over other corporate managerial examples or academic examples because mentoring was key for supporting educational preparation of the workers. The healthcare profession places students in mentoring programs to "…facilitate the students' acquisition of professional competence and the associated knowledge base in practice

33

settings" (Gopee, 2011, p. 8). Mentor programs in the construction industry provide hands-on

training, valuable skills, and experience for different workers (Breslin, 2010). The professional

experiences individuals received from construction field mentors were considered directly

related to their career path (Breslin, 2010). The research studies from both the healthcare and

construction industry evaluated the effective qualities and areas of concern. Finally, common

features from the mentorship programs were compared to education. The purpose of reviewing

the other professions helped determine features that were learned and applied to principal

mentorship programs.

Healthcare

If you have ever watched the television programs *Scrubs, ER,* or *Gray's Anatomy*, you

have observed how some healthcare professionals have experienced mentoring. The medical

students learned from their lead doctor during rounds and shared best practice ideas and

procedures for medicine. The medical rounds model used in medical schools and teaching

hospitals developed the diagnostic and treatment practice of physicians (City, Elmore, Fiarman,

& Teitel, 2009). The groups of medical interns, residents, and supervising physicians take time

together to visit, observe, and discuss patients (City et al., 2009). They looked at evidence for

diagnoses and analyzed their findings to discuss possible treatments. The rounds model

demonstrated how physicians worked together to solve problems, develop knowledge, and

improve medical practice (City et al., 2009). "Practitioners take responsibility for teaching,

supporting, and assessing the performance of students" (Marshall & Gordon, 2010, p. 362). The

supervisors, facilitators, practice teachers, and placement educators are working with mentees to

support changes and improvements in healthcare. They take advantage of the students within

their practice to support and care for more patients, and help individuals realize their potential as healthcare professionals (Marshall & Gordon, 2010).

Mentoring relationships for leaders in healthcare are based on the premise that the individuals agreed to respectfully work together with common goals for the partnership and professional practice (Hawkins & Fontenot, 2010; Marshall & Gordon, 2010). The relationships are sometimes established through professional organizations, institutions, or healthcare agencies. Other mentoring relationships evolved when connections are formed between individuals that have similar career goals, skills, or a desire to learn from an individual (Carey & Weissman, 2010; Hawkins & Fontenot, 2010). Within the healthcare profession, mentorship was used to teach skills, research, and career advancement. In addition support was provided with clinical practice, program development, leadership, business practices, conflict resolution, and team building (Carey & Weissman, 2010; Marshall & Gordon, 2010). Individuals learned from each other to improve collaboration and quality of care for patients (Marshall & Gordon, 2010).

Mentorship for healthcare professionals built the next generation of leaders and was focused on the training for the different positions in the field of medicine. When individuals' careers progress and roles changed, some found it difficult to have one mentor who was able to meet all of their needs. Over time, healthcare professionals may have multiple mentor/mentee relationships to address different goals within their fields (Carey & Weissman, 2010).

The ability for mentees and mentors to grow professionally was important based on increased demands with time, challenges to sustain mentoring relationships, isolation of individuals within the field, and conflicting responsibilities to make mentorship an essential part of the professional practice (Carey & Weissman, 2010). An important part for healthcare

professionals was to lead their organization into the future and mentoring was meant to support other new individuals within the healthcare profession (Hawkins & Fontenot, 2010).

Mentorship in the healthcare fields has focused on the training of medical students, but there was little or no evidence to suggest how programs were to be structured, delivered, or evaluated for skills in training (Gagliardi & Wright, 2010). Gagliardi and Wright (2010), explored the beneficial outcomes and barriers associated with the design of a mentorship program for practicing surgeons. They interviewed organizers, mentors, and mentees within two programs and analyzed the data thematically. The study recommended a need for more structures in place to enhance the effectiveness of mentorship programs. Participants wanted more training before, during, and after to clarify learning objectives, exchange information, and develop long-term goals. It was also difficult for the mentor and mentee to balance time and schedules to meet during mentorship sessions. However, the participants recognized the benefits of mentoring. They noted the value of the relationships and training to gain new knowledge, hands-on learning, and feedback between the mentors and mentees (Gagliardi & Wright, 2010). In the end, mentors and mentees shared knowledge and skills for professional development and career advancement within medicine.

Construction Industry

Imagine a construction site with loud noises, vehicles moving supplies and equipment, and individuals wearing hardhats overseeing the chaotic work. In the construction industry, a wide variety of individuals are employed to accomplish the many tasks to complete a project. There is a dichotomy between the different professions in construction. The industry has workers who perform the physical labor to build or maintain the structures. It also has the professional leaders responsible for a variety of decisions, experiences, and tasks for the projects

depending on the field (Hoffmeister, Cigularov, Sampson, Rosecrance, & Chen, 2011). The growth and continued value within the profession relies on the ability to ensure each of the individual groups have an opportunity to progress and have meaningful careers (Hoffmeister et al., 2011).

Mentoring within the construction industry provided experienced workers at jobsites an opportunity to oversee less experienced individuals and throughout the relationships. Apprenticeships developed to incorporate best practices for the trade (Hoffmeister et al., 2011). The mentoring relationships for mentors and mentees established in the construction workforce go through different stages. There were numerous situations where they are used to increase productivity, improve the quality of work and safety, and develop the knowledge and skills of new workers (Hoffmeister et al., 2011). The relationships between the mentors and mentees vary in length, because jobs in the construction industry can be short-term projects lasting a few days to lengthier plans taking place over several years (Hoffmeister et al., 2011). Informal programs match participants based on similar interests or job demands (Agumba & Fester, 2010). They may learn a particular skill or trade to enhance their understanding of a job through an apprenticeship.

Mentors train their mentees through personal development and career advancement in construction. They assist them with the industry, skills, and training specific to their area of focus (Agumba & Fester, 2010; Hoffmeister et al., 2011). Mentors supported mentees through a variety of stages. "Individuals in the construction industry begin as apprentices, work to become journeymen, and if desired, training further to become a foreman" (Hoffmeister et al., 2011, p. 677). There are a variety of positions and roles needed for the construction industry that are project-specific and involve different combinations of workers at different times dependent on

the tasks (Construction Industry Development Board [CIDB], 2004). A mentor and mentee relationship may be used during any time for the development of the tasks needed to grow their skills for the industry.

The mentoring programs in the construction industry may influence career plans and opportunities for mentors and mentees (Agumba & Fester, 2010). As an example, to develop an effective mentoring program, Hoffmeister et al. (2011) tried to determine important characteristics of effective mentors for plumbers in the construction industry. Survey research was used to assess 55 characteristics of superior, average, and poor mentors. The results indicated that communication skills, knowledge sharing, correcting mistakes, and giving negative feedback were important characteristics for an effective mentor. It was important for individuals who worked in the field to rely on specific knowledge and feedback about the position to avoid injury and complete dangerous tasks. It was appropriate that solid mentorship relationships developed for mentees in order to learn from their mentor different safety procedures and construction trades (Hoffmeister et al., 2011).

Research within the healthcare and construction industry recognized the benefits of mentoring as a career development strategy. The mentorship programs were able to support novice learners with the skills, knowledge, and development they needed within their career. The healthcare and construction industry began mentoring when the novice workers entered their profession to build on apprenticeships and ongoing professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). The medical field provided the need for more structures in place to develop the relationship between the mentor/mentee. Included in the design was clear learning objectives and purpose for the time individuals spent together. The construction industry stipulated that constructive feedback was important to develop as a worker in the field. The

38

positive and negative responses helped prepare individuals for precautions needed to ensure safe work situations. Each of the programs discussed the different types of mentor relationships that were appropriate at various times within their profession. When an individual grows over time he or she may have different mentoring needs, whether it is at the beginning or a more advanced time in a person's career (Kram, 1985). In the end, the mentoring relationship helped the novice workers obtain skills and knowledge needed within their field to make career advancements and grow as leaders.

Mentor Programs for Healthcare, Construction Industry, and Education

Need for Principal Mentoring

A review of the literature revealed exemplary programs for mentoring principals and for principal preparation in New Mexico, California, Mississippi, Connecticut, Kentucky, and New York. Each of the programs explained the beneficial features to the mentor/mentee relationships and the purpose of sharing knowledge and information that can be unique to the mentoring programs. In addition, comparisons with the mentoring programs to the healthcare and construction industry described how those disciplines informed education. The similarities and differences from the other organizations are interspersed throughout the following text.

Mentor programs for school administrators have recently become an area of focus within educational research in the past few decades. The complexity and importance of the principalship has placed an emphasis on mentoring as an effective and essential tool for developing school leaders (NASEP, 2003). State education departments, nonprofit foundations, colleges and universities, or districts have established principal mentorship programs (NASEP, 2003). Some limitations for training principals in university programs and districts revealed the training does not do enough to prepare them for their roles as leaders (Darling-Hammond et al.,

2007). The concerns for leadership preparation practices are disconnected to the actual

experiences. There are not enough opportunities to practice and apply the skills in real principal

situations (Davis et al., (2005). When a new principal obtains their first position, learning to lead

while simultaneously assuming all of the roles and responsibilities, presents challenges

(Sciarappa, 2010).

In contrast, the healthcare profession brings information and practice together through the

rounds process and training from an experienced professional. The mentorship programs shared

knowledge and skills needed for individuals through many years of personal experiences to

develop more competent healthcare workers (Finley et al., 2007). The process assisted the

healthcare professions with increased technical competence, improved job performance, personal

satisfaction, and collaborative decisions (City et al., 2009). The construction industry provided

apprenticeships for its workers with on the job training. The individuals learned under the

instruction of a master until they met the standard of high quality work (Hall, 2008). These

findings for healthcare professionals and the construction industry provided organizations with

the research to support mentoring programs for school administrators (Hall, 2008).

Relationships

In the field of education career advancement is generally not the focus for most

mentoring programs. The healthcare and construction industry recognized the benefits of

mentoring through the opportunities for advancement, higher salary, and job satisfaction

(Agumba & Fester, 2010; Finley, et al. 2007). Mentoring in education has more of a relationship

focus and often lasts the length of time it takes for an individual to obtain a professional license

(Boerema, 2011). Most programs for teachers and administrators focused on survivorship and

skills needed for personal enhancement (Daresh, 2004).

What Mentor Programs are Doing

Exemplary Programs: Extra Support for Principals, Albuquerque Public Schools

Several programs have successful features for leadership development and mentoring for novice principals. One exemplary model was the Extra Support for Principals (ESP) from Albuquerque Public Schools in Albuquerque, New Mexico. It was designed after a group of new principals reflected on their first year. They recognized their cohort as the only means of support available in a nonthreatening atmosphere. It was determined that some district mentor programs for new principals were overloaded with other agendas from the district or schools and tended to overwhelm a new administrator. Together with district leaders, retired Principal Weingartner was hired to create a mentorship program that made a conscious effort to encourage growth and avoid a pattern that created extra stress for leaders. The program's focus was to provide "a safe, simple, and supportive approach to mentoring principals" (Weingartner, 2009, p. 1).

At the time of development the program advocated for new principals to provide innovative support in their new roles. The program developed a strong foundation designed to recruit, support, and retain their effective principals.   ESP was consistent with their goals to provide a safe environment for new principals to develop relationships and trust with their mentors. The process was meant to be simple, so the involvement provided practical experience and support for principals dealing with school issues. The mentors and mentees were expected to commit 95 percent of their time addressing the needs and concerns of the mentee and the other 5 percent was devoted to professional development or training (Weingartner, 2009). The program worked to recruit and train mentor principals to work with new principals. The mentor principals attended professional development to provide the support needed for new principals. Finally, the program matched an experienced principal with a new principal who made the

commitment to be available to the mentee to ask questions, seek advice, help, and share about the role and responsibilities (Weingartner, 2009).

The ESP mentorship program developed a model they felt was necessary for success in the principalship. The results of the program created a coordinator that developed novice principals with the careful match to an experienced veteran leader. The program carefully planned and organized how they supported their novice principals in their schools. The ESP program built their pool of mentors by providing basic mentor training for already successful principals in their district. ESP identified attributes the mentors should possess and provided helpful recommendations for establishing a positive rapport with the mentor/mentee relationship. The training provided best practices and created awareness for the importance of the mentoring process. The program maintained the basic philosophy to provide a safe, simple, and supportive system for new principals throughout the entire process. The novice principals were encouraged to ask questions, raise issues, concerns, and frustrations with their experienced mentors to receive advice, support, and direction. Communication was an important key to the relationship. The mentors and mentees were encouraged to have planning sessions, and regular scheduled meetings to communicate with one another. The program maintained that if the mentor program was respectful of the time and support for a novice principal and if they followed their simple philosophy it was enough for a positive and successful beginning to the principalship and helped with principal retention (Weingartner, 2009). The new principals and mentors mutually benefitted from ESP (Weingartner, 2001).

Exemplary Programs: Principal Preparation and In-Service Professional Development,

Stanford Educational Leadership Institute

Another major study focused on concerns for the preparation of aspiring leaders and continued leadership development for new principals. There were eight programs selected by the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute and commissioned by The Wallace Foundation to examine principal preparation programs and in-service principal professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). The programs were selected from San Diego, California, Mississippi, Connecticut, Kentucky, and New York City, New York. They included traditional university-based programs where candidates came from a variety of districts, a university pre-service program that developed a partnership with a local district, and programs that worked in collaboration with their university.

"The programs were chosen both because they provided evidence of strong outcomes in preparing school leaders and because, in combination, they represented a variety of approaches, designs, policy contexts, partnerships between university and school districts" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 2). Some of the outcomes of the programs included opportunities to develop the capacity of principals as well as reshape the culture of school leadership. The data was collected through interviews, document analysis, observations, and surveys. It was used to draw conclusions to serve as an example for what leadership development programs do to support principals' knowledge, skills, and practices (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007).

The extensive analysis of the preparation and professional development programs to develop strong leaders from across the United States shared five similar elements:

1. Selection of teacher leaders for future principal preparation programs.

2. Professional administration standards.

43

3. Strong partnership between district and university preparation programs.

4. Model of leadership with on the job experience.

5. Resources and financial commitment to support programs.

One of the first successful features was that many candidates were selected to participate in their respective programs based on their instructional backgrounds and leadership abilities. The programs selected excellent teachers with strong leadership potential based on recommendations from district leaders. The process was highly selective because the individuals were invited to participate. This process was different than other programs because they often wait to see who may decide to apply in the principal preparation programs instead of actively recruiting individuals. In return it increased the effectiveness of the principal's leadership qualities because they had already exhibited effective leadership traits.

Next, the programs established professional administrative standards that strengthened the focus on instructional leadership and school improvement. Many states have similar preparation and professional standards, but the implementation of the professional administrator standards were strongly tied to the coursework, internships, and professional development for principals in the field.

Another essential element was that each program had strong partnerships with school districts and universities. The goals of the programs were used to enhance the professional development for principals transforming their performance through collaboration, expanded resources, job-embedded experiences, and instructional improvement. The collaboration between university and school district programs had similar goals. They were designed to produce stronger, more confident leaders and better performance. In addition, the program design reinforced a model of leadership with opportunities for participants to learn on the job

experience. Some programs had internships or professional development for principals in the field that reinforced effective leadership strategies and connected theory and practice.

Finally, each of the programs had significant resources to support the learning embedded in practice. The budgets invested in the organizations, coursework, internships, and mentoring were committed to the programs even during difficult financial times. Each of the leadership programs developed systematic learning opportunities to develop successful, skilled principals to lead and transform schools (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

The mentorship programs from New Mexico, California, Mississippi, Connecticut, Kentucky, and New York created pockets of excellence across the United States. They demonstrated supportive elements of relationship and leadership development for growing successful principals. Individual principals who participated in the exemplary programs not only felt better prepared and more committed to the principalship, but they also spent more time building the leadership capacity with their teachers and fellow principals to improve instruction and build collaboration (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).   The principals also credited high-quality training programs to reduce principal turnover and to help successfully led their schools to meet state accountability standards (Mitgang, 2012). They reported the ability to work together as beneficial to all individuals and the organization. The benefits of mentoring for its professionals and organization were echoed by the healthcare industry (Finley et al., 2007). The success of the programs, allowed the mentors and mentees to influence one another. They were able to learn and grow together and have increased mutual benefits from the relationship (Goodyear, 2006; A. A. Smith, 2007).

Effective Mentoring

There are mutual benefits for mentors, mentees, and school districts to support effective mentoring programs and develop their leaders (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh 2001, 2004; S. Harris & Crocker, 2003). Mentorship is an effective professional development tool to create a culture of learning that develops successful interactions between mentors and mentees with time to reflect and grow as instructional leaders (Daresh, 2004, Sciarappa, 2010). The programs enhanced work effectiveness, job satisfaction, and productivity (Daresh, 2001, 2004). Finally, both mentors and mentees are supported in their professional work and collaboration. This leads to more motivation and satisfaction with the professional learning and their roles (Casavant & Cherkowski, 2001; Daresh, 2004). Overall, mentoring builds a collegial network among professional colleagues, which benefits the individuals and organization (Daresh, 2001).

Furthermore, novice principals expressed how they benefited from the mentor programs provided by the school districts in a variety of ways. The new principals specifically recognized the support they received from their mentors. They acknowledged their mentors as the reason they were able to learn the roles and responsibilities while developing the skills to feel more confident as a leader (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Casavant & Cherkowski, 2001; Daresh, 2004; Hall, 2008; Sciarappa, 2010). The mentor provided professional feedback, role clarification, and socialization into the profession (Daresh, 2001).   Novice principals learned new ideas and creative approaches to solve problems (Casavant & Cherkowski, 2001). Effective mentors and mentees increased their communication skills and built trust through a wide variety of opportunities (Daresh, 2001, 2004). Daresh (2001) described a number of the fundamental skills that are used to develop the mentor/mentee relationship. The following skills included:

> …listening to others, sharing information, treating others with respect, facilitating
> team membership, using situational leadership, developing informal relationships,

giving feedback and being open to receiving feedback, giving other credit for
their ideas, demonstrating a willingness to learn from others, and recognizing and
responding to individual differences (Daresh, 2001, p. 70).

As a result of effective mentoring relationships, novice principals felt as if they belonged and it
increased their self-confidence, collegial network, professional knowledge, and leadership skills
(Casavant & Cherkowski, 2001; Daresh, 2001, 2004).

Similarly, mentors also benefited from the mentoring relationship and programs.
Sciarappa (2010) described, "The job of mentors is to support protégés as they create better
versions of themselves. The best mentors are powerful allies who provide friendship, emotional
support, resources, and reflective discussions" (p. 38). Mentors find their guidance rewarded and
they are able to see their mentees become successful in their profession (Daresh, 2001, 2004). It
also provides opportunities for personal career advancement (Daresh, 2001, 2004). The
relationship with the mentees were reciprocal for mentors because they learned new ideas from
the novice principals and were exposed to the latest creative approaches to problem solving
(Casavant & Cherkowski, 2001; Daresh, 2001, 2004). Altogether the benefits from the
mentorship programs for school districts, mentees, and mentors had significant effects on
successful leadership (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Link to Leadership and Professional Development

The research on leadership learning for principals focused on elements of effective school
leadership (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). It is important to link mentoring and professional
learning together to support the individuals that lead schools through challenging educational
initiatives (Mitgang, 2008). Mentoring programs have recognized the need to continue
professional learning for new principals and diminish the idea that one no longer needs support
when they are hired into the profession (Mitgang, 2008). Peterson (2002) described how crucial

47

it was for districts, associations, states, and other organizations to carefully design professional development for principals over their careers. In 2000, the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) described important structural components for effective programs (Peterson, 2002). Best practices in results-based professional development indicated that in order to achieve increases in student achievement, the professional learning needed to be carefully planned, collaborative, timely, job-embedded, ongoing, and directly applicable for the individuals (Peterson, 2002). The regularly scheduled collaboration between the mentors and mentees allowed for continued systemic implementation across the district. The professional learning opportunities were ways organizations improved leadership preparation practices by providing both formal and informal supports for new leaders (Boerema, 2011).

Leadership is considered a key factor in accounting for the success schools have to develop learning for their students (Leithwood et al., 2004). The elements novice principals learned about effective school leadership from professional development and mentorship programs must transfer to schools in two ways. First, leaders need to select and continue to develop teachers and the teaching process. Second, the school stakeholders must work collaboratively to develop curriculum, instruction, and assessment for better student outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Leithwood et al., 2004). The instructional leadership strategies developed the new principal's strengths and abilities. (Boerema, 2011; Daresh, 2001; Hall, 2008; NASEP, 2003; Weingartner, 2009). In the end, improving the training and support for novice principals better connects the realities of the role and eventually lifts the quality of leadership (Mitgang, 2008).

What Mentor Programs are <u>Not</u> Doing

The complexities of mentoring have been explained. Mentoring is not simple, and with every success there are several pitfalls and cautions that districts need to be aware of when implementing or supporting a mentorship program (Daresh, 2004). One such criticism is that many schools districts provide mentors for new principals however mentor programs lack systematic implementation (Hall, 2008). The professional development model varies, and district level policies, goals, and expectations are not always clear for principals (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Hall, 2008). The lack of consistency in the quality of support and development of instructional leaders caused challenges for the principalship.

Another tendency is that administrators do not see mentoring as an important support system to develop leaders overtime (Daresh, 2004). There may be opposing viewpoints from people within the organization on exactly what new principals may or may not need with support for the position. The district level administration, building level principals, or other stakeholders in a district may differ with the expectations and priorities for the mentorship program (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). Then each individual group may promote different understanding on how to develop a program and change what may already be in place for leaders within the district (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991).

In addition, many district programs do not have the resources to financially maintain a well-designed and effective program. Many mentoring programs have started, ended, restarted, and ended again, which creates problems for leaders to recognize the level of commitment by districts for support in the leadership role (Daresh, 2004). It is recommended that the mentorship programs are not limited to the early stages of a principal's training. Even established school

leaders can benefit from a mentor when trying to navigate the difficult situations that principals encounter (Malone, 2001).

The pairing of the mentors and mentees are also important aspects for relationship development and support (Daresh, 2001; Hall, 2008; NASEP, 2003; Weingartner, 2009). Equally important is to recognize not all leaders make suitable mentors (Malone, 2001). Even the most effective leaders can fail to connect with a novice principal. Some other aspects such as race and gender issues can further complicate the relationship based on experiences (Malone, 2001). The decision to pair a mentor with a mentee takes into consideration the needed skills, talents, opportunities for growth, and leadership needs (Malone, 2001). A similar caution between matching mentors with mentees was prevalent within healthcare and construction mentoring programs as well. When there is a poor match trust and confidentiality can diminish within the relationship and it may cause problems for both parties (Hall, 2008).

Finally, time constraints for principals can limit a commitment to the mentoring process. Principals put in long hours each day. The lack of quality time for participants to collaborate may contribute to unwanted commitment, and an unwillingness to attend trainings or other meetings (Hall 2008; NASEP, 2003; Weingartner, 2009). The concerns with principal mentorship programs may limit the beneficial outcomes that can be obtained from mentoring.

Conclusion

Principals have seen an increase with the complexities and responsibilities for their position. The role has become more critical to support higher accountability measures that ensure schools are performing and all children are successful (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007; Leithwood, et al., 2004; Peterson, 2002).

"More than ever there is a need for strong, effective principals who can lead their schools to excellence" (NASEP, 2003, p. 7). Many school leaders feel unprepared for the task and many novice principals are frequently left to learn the roles and responsibilities on their own (Spiro et al., 2007). School districts and educators realized the importance of mentoring their novice principals as a tool to prepare and develop effective leaders (NASEP, 2003). Mentoring programs connected novice principals with veteran administrators who supported them with organizational expectations, reflected on their own practices, modeled effective strategies, navigated tough situations, and affirmed their approaches (NASEP, 2003).

Research has identified various characteristics of mentoring, the benefits to mentors, mentees, programs, and districts, and has connected mentoring to leadership development for administrators (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2001, 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Hall, 2008; NASEP, 2003; Peterson, 2002; Sciarappa, 2010). It also shared some challenges and concerns with mentor programs as it pertains to the support individuals receive in the principalship. One thing is for certain, as noted in the literature review, research supports mentoring as an effective method to guide novice principals as they enter into leadership roles. The support networks and mentoring are important tools to have for novice principals to become effective leaders (Duncan & Stock, 2010; Miller, 2004). In the end, there still is a growing demand for what new principals need to know and do to improve their role as leaders.

CHAPTER III: METHOD

Introduction

The qualitative research design for the study examined the mentorship and support of novice principals. The qualitative method used narrative inquiry to interview mentors and novice principals that had participated in mentorship programs established in their school district within the last three school years. The interviews with the mentors and novice principals examined the different stories each individual had about his or her experience. The study was conducted using qualitative research methods because the techniques are more adaptable to the many influences and patterns that were encountered throughout the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The methods chapter is organized in the following manner to provide a clear understanding of the research. The problem and purpose are restated to recall the intent of the study. The research questions provide the focus for the study. It also included the theoretical approaches and framework that presented the design and foundation for the research. There are further descriptions of the methods and procedures to the research approaches that are explained through the narrative inquiry and analysis lens. Finally, the methods chapter concluded with detailed description and definitions of the strategies used throughout the study to establish trustworthiness. The narrative inquiry used credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reflexivity. These methods are explained in further detail. They were used to collect the data and start the analysis for the final chapters on the results, findings, and interpretation.

Problem and Purpose Restated

The ability to attract and retain highly qualified principal candidates to the ever-increasing role has been difficult (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Hall, 2008; Kearney, 2010; Knapp et al., 2003; Miller, 2004; Sparks, 2002).   The role has changed and transformed over the last few decades with higher accountability and expectations for school leaders. The concerns within the principal position include the following: longer hours, increased accountability with high-stakes testing by state and districts, inadequate compensation, lack of support, additional job pressures, and stress (Blank et al., 2000; Casavant & Cherkowski, 2001; Guterman, 2007; Kearney, 2010; Lovely, 2004; Whitaker, 2001). The problem for some districts is not necessarily a shortage of principals, but a lack of finding highly qualified administrators that are available and willing to work in underserved communities and low-performing schools (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Davis et al., 2005).

Quality leaders for schools are importance because of the increased accountability for student achievement and performance (Blank et al., 2000). The numerous changes to the principal position during the past few decades brought forth dramatic differences. Previously, principals were considered building managers of their schools and expected to comply with district requirements, operate building budgets, keep students and schools safe, address personnel issues, and make sure the school was operating smoothly (Blank et al., 2000). Today principals remain the central source of leadership influence, but what has emerged is essential for the clarity of the position on what needs to be done and how to get it done within their schools (Harvey & Holland, 2012). No longer can principals simply function as building managers, tasked with adhering to district rules and regulations. Instead they have to become the leaders of learning and develop a team of teachers who deliver effective instruction (Harvey & Holland,

53

2012). The added emphasis on being an instructional leader focuses on teaching instruction to improve to promote learning for all students. The other tasks principals are faced with include an established clear vision, create a culture and climate conducive to learning, and cultivate the leadership in others to realize and support the mission of the school. When these elements are in place within a school, then the leadership is working (Harvey & Holland, 2012).

Quality professional development and learning for principals is an important piece of training that will enable leaders to meet the diverse roles and the expectations for the position. Often districts are not able to support principals at high levels and there is inadequate assistance to help them meet the challenges of their work (Sparks, 2002). The support is especially important if principals are new to the role (Scott, 2010).

Mentoring has been used as a professional development strategy to support individuals and allow them to grow personally and professionally in different organizations (Goodyear, 2006). School districts have utilized mentorship programs to partner novice principals with an experienced school leader to support them with organizational expectations, help them reflect on their practices, model effective strategies, navigate tough situations, and affirm their approaches (NAESP, 2003). Formal and informal programs are designed for new administrators to help develop essential understanding of their positions and it is especially important during their first few years as principals (Whitaker, 2001). The mentoring relationships provide an opportunity for novice principals to learn effective instructional leadership skills from their mentors. The leadership skills focus on clear student achievement goals, provide guidance for teachers to ensure student learning, embed professional development opportunities for content, build a collaborative school culture, and lead changes in schools (Sparks, 2002). These instructional

leadership tasks are only a few of the responsibilities where mentors can support their mentees with effective job-embedded professional development (NAESP, 2003).

The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to understand the novice principals' experiences in the principalship and the support they received from their district to make recommendations for improved mentorship programs. I wanted to determine if there was truly an effective program to meet the needs of new principals. My inquiry and thoughts lead to the development of the following research questions:

Research Questions

1. What are the perspectives of novice principals regarding their experiences with mentors and mentorship programs?

2. How do novice principals and mentors describe the leadership skills and professional learning for new principals?

3. How does participating in mentorship programs influence the development and sense of leadership for a novice principal?

Research Approach and Rationale

The study used qualitative inquiry methods to evaluate administrators' perceptions of mentorship programs used to support novice principals. I focused the inquiry on the shared experiences that were shaped from the stories told by the mentors and novice principals. The ability to examine and infer the commonalities of different concepts within a story constructed understanding (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2010). The stories were used to transform the experiences to bring forth clarification and knowledge from the participants in their roles as leaders (Eisner, 1998). Qualitative research was best suited to be able to explore the issue, ask questions, and seek to understand the different viewpoints of each individual's experiences (Gall et al., 2010).

The qualitative research methods narrowed the focus to the social constructivist worldview. It was described in the following manner:

> Individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views, rather than to narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas (Creswell, 2007, p. 20).

The social constructivist goal is to rely as much on the participants' views of the situation in order to construct meaning (Creswell, 2009). Individuals each have experiences and it is affirmed through the interactions and perceptions they have with others and themselves (Creswell, 2009). The learning from the study occurred through the social interaction, different perspectives, and backgrounds constructed with its participants. The interpretations of the stories of life experiences were used to report the findings (Gall et al., 2010). The findings from the study lead to the ability to problem solve and work toward a possible solution (B. Kim, 2001).

The collaboration between the participants and myself was important to be able to construct and understand the different viewpoints from the novice principals and mentors. The inquiry developed with the use of open-ended questions and the ability to focus on the context in which people live and work. The interactions between the participants established collegial relationships where multiple stories were told to construct the social and historical significance of their views (Creswell, 2009). In addition, my own personal background and experiences as a novice principal helped shape my understanding of the world in which I lived and worked. My personal story as a new interim principal has been woven into the research around the topic of mentorship and support for novice principals. The experience was used to develop questions to interview novice principals and mentors. After interpreting the data collected from the interviews, the collective stories and personal experiences were used to construct a pattern of meaning about mentorship programs provided by school districts.

The focus on the support and development for new leaders takes thoughtful consideration by school districts and programs. Mentorship programs address the needs for principals; levels of the support, commitment to prepare experienced principals to be mentors, and desired outcomes for mentors and mentees (Daresh, 2004). Narrative inquiry was used to collect the stories, describe the educational experiences of the novice principals and mentors within mentorship programs, and write about the experiences. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) interpret narrative inquiry to be both the study of a phenomenon and method.

The work of Clandinin and Connelly (2000) defined the foundation for the personal and social balance for inquiry. They defined it as the *three-dimensional narrative inquiry space* in that "studies have temporal dimensions and address temporal matters; they focus on the personal and the social in a balance appropriate to the inquiry; and they occur in specific places or sequences of places" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50). The stories of a person's life based in a particular time and place are told through *interaction, continuity,* and *situation* (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). (See Figure 2: *Three Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space & Four Directions of Inquiry*). The first dimension, *interaction,* is a form of shared experiences. It describes the individuals' experiences through the reciprocal actions of their personal and social relationships. The next dimension, *continuity,* connects the reflections of a participant with their past experiences, their present situation, and future thoughts and feelings towards the experience. The final dimension, *situation,* the participant attributes a particular setting focused on a time and place to frame their experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Figure 2   *Three Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space & Four Directions of Inquiry*
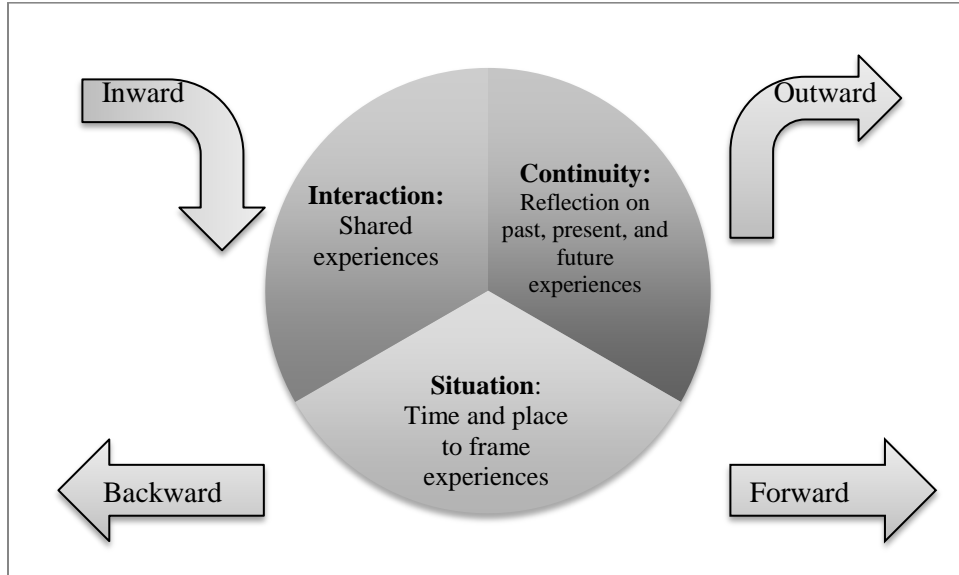
Figure 2. Three dimensional narrative inquiry space & four directions of inquiry. The visual representations of the three dimensions of narrative inquiry include interaction, continuity, and situation. These dimensions combined with the directions of inquiry, which are inward and outward, and backward and forward recognized how individuals transition through different times and events in their life with personal and social issues. Adapted from *Narrative experiences: Experience and story in qualitative research* by D. J. Clandinin, and F. M. Connelly. Copyright 2000 by Jossey-Bass Publishers.

To address the notion of interaction, Clandinin and Connelly (1994) wrote about four directions of inquiry, which are *inward* and *outward,* and *backward* and *forward.* They defined *inward* as the internal thoughts that an individual acknowledges with "feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, and moral dispositions" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50). *Outward* is described as the external influences that may impact an individual, such as the environment. The terms *backward* and *forward* Clandinin and Connelly (2000) refer to the temporality of the past, present, and future. The use of the four different terms for the directions of inquiry recognized how individuals transition through different times and events in their life with both personal and social issues (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

The study attempted to examine the elements of effective mentorship programs for new principals. The questions were designed to have the participants share their experiences based on Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional narrative inquiry space and four directions of inquiry. The research questions about the experience were meant to draw out how individual's responded simultaneously in these four ways to be able to address the four directions of inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The questions also addressed leadership development and principal needs. Individuals were invited to reflect on their past experiences, share their current situation, and describe their future hopes for their profession. The stories that emerged were told in a manner that jumped from event to event. Some events were simultaneous, some sequential, and some went back and forth to different points in time (Gall et al., 2010). "The researcher's task is to organize these accounts into a meaningful temporal sequence" (Gall et al., 2010, p. 373). By utilizing the framework, novice principals and mentors were able to provide elements of effective mentoring programs to further support the development of new leaders through the sharing of their personal and professional stories.

Theoretical Framework

The increased accountability for school principals to be able to change and support schools has placed an emphasis on effective leadership strategies to improve instructional practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Leithwood et al., (2004) designed a framework to outline possible courses of action that address how leadership influences student learning that features many complex relationships (See Figure 3 *Linking Leadership to Learning*).

The impact of a principal's leadership combined with many variables is considered very complex to improve student learning and growth (Leithwood et al., 2004). Research has clearly stated that principals are second only to the influences of classroom teachers in effecting student

Figure 3   *Linking Leadership to Learning*

1
State leadership, polices, and practices

e.g. standards, testing, funding

3
Student/ family background

e.g. family, educational, culture

6
School conditions

e.g. culture/ community, school improvement, planning

2
District leadership, policies, and practices

e.g. standards, curriculum alignment, use of data

4
School Leadership

7

Teachers

e.g. individuals' capacity, professional community

10

Student learning

9
Leaders' professional learning experiences

e.g. socialization, mentoring, formal preparation

5
Other stakeholder

e.g. unions, community groups, business, media

8
Classroom conditions

e.g. content of instruction, nature of instruction, student assessment

Figure 3. Linking leadership to learning. The research framework begins to identify the important relationships that support student learning. Adapted from "How leadership influences student learning," by Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., and Wahlstrom, K., 2004, St. Paul, MO: Learning From Research Project: University of Minnesota, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI); Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISEUT); and New York, p. 18. Copyright 2004 by The Wallace Foundation.

learning. The evidence also reinforced that principals are held accountable for a school system's

efforts for continuous improvement (Davis et al., 2005; Leithwood et al., 2004; NAESP, 2003;

Silver et al., 2009; Sparks, 2002).

The theoretical framework designed by Leithwood et al. (2004) is a key part of the

research design to review the concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that

support student achievement (Miles & Huberman, 1994).   The relationships depicted in the

figure demonstrate key factors such as how the student/family background can influence and

contribute to student learning and the presumed relationships among them (Leithwood et al.,

2004). The model identifies all the important relationships that impact student learning from

teachers, family members, school leaders, and other district and community stakeholders. It also

addressed the many direct and indirect relationships that are considered variables that impact

student learning. These indirect influences come from state and district leadership, polices,

practices, and the school and classroom conditions. When examining the framework, leadership

was central to all of the different relationships. All stakeholders have some sort of connection to

school leadership thus placing an emphasis on this dynamic. The framework helped develop a

deeper understanding of the influence school leadership has focused on student learning.

Participants

Participation in this study focused on the leaders that had completed their first three years

as a novice principal or were mentors of a new leader within the least three years. There were

five responses from three different school districts to participate in the study. Out of the five,

one was a female and the four others were males who agreed to be interviewed. The novice

principals included three males that were within the first three years of their principalship.

Within the group of new leaders there were two elementary principals and one middle school

principal. There were also two responses from mentors, one male and one female that were both from elementary schools. Once the initial recruitment and opt-in/opt-out letters were sent out to school districts and individuals no further efforts to contact were made to potential participants (See Appendix B for Recruitment Letter and Opt-In/Opt-Out form).

The study was designed with the intention to include novice principals, mentor principals, and mentor coordinators. The recruitment letter was sent to leaders in four school districts at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. Each of the school districts also received information to recruit the district's mentor coordinators for new leaders. However, there was no response from any mentor coordinators and attempts to recruit individuals for the study were unsuccessful.

Participants were recruited through a variety of means that included purposive sampling methods, convenience sampling, and a selection criteria for individuals based on similar characteristics (Patton, 1990). The different sampling methods were used with the purpose of obtaining participants with specific knowledge about the topic studied (Gall et al., 2010). The methods were used to increase the representation of people who had experience with mentorship programs for novice principals (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The combination of sampling methods was used to obtain a sufficient number of participants and to meet the multiple interests and needs for the narrative inquiry (Patton, 1990).

Data Collection

The qualitative study utilized narrative inquiry methods through in-depth interviews with individuals to review and examine the mentorship and support of novice principals within their own school district. The participants volunteered their time and agreed to be interviewed for the study. The interview method was used to confirm research findings and resolve discrepant

findings within the study (Gall et al., 2010). The interviews were conducted with open-ended

questions with the participants. Each individual responded freely without a set of fixed choices.

This allowed the exploration of the different topics with each mentor and novice principal (Gall

et al., 2010).

Once individuals opted into the study a consent form with the purpose of the study,

research methods, time commitment, and other details were shared with the participant (See

Appendix C for Participant Consent Form). In addition, the main research questions and

interview questions were included with the consent form (See Appendix D for Interview

Questions). The questions were designed to be open-ended, which allowed individuals to share

their experiences from their own personal and professional perspectives around the topic of

mentorship for novice principals.

In conducting the interviews, I chose to minimize my voice during the interview to allow

for open communication from the participants. Then I listened to the mentors and novice

principals share their activities, feelings, and lives as leaders (Eisner, 1998). The questions were

intended to develop a good conversation and obtain meaningful examples and information

(Eisner, 1998). Follow-up questions and probes were designed to seek clarification from

participants' responses or interesting points (Gall et al., 2010). The meetings and sites of the

interviews were arranged at a time and location that were mutually convenient for all

participants. There were two scheduled meetings with each participant with each session lasting

approximately one hour in length.

Each session followed a similar protocol with the participants. The initial interview

started with an overview and purpose of the study. The principals signed a consent form to

participant and to be recorded for the research. The in-depth interviews with new principals and

mentors were tape-recorded and transcribed. The open-ended questions also encouraged the

leaders to share about the status as a novice principal or mentor within mentorship programs,

school needs, district and state requirements, leadership skills and development, and professional

learning and growth for administrators (Boyce & Neale, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The use of multiple record keeping procedures aided with the data collection from the

interviews (Creswell, 2009). To begin, descriptive notes were used to interpret the dialogue,

physical location, events, or activities during the interviews. The log was used to record specific

incidents in the interview and how they were handled (Gall et al., 2010). The tone of voice, body

language of the participant, and disruptions and how they were handled were noted within the

notes after each interview (Gall et al., 2010). All field notes were connected to each of the

participant's interviews. It also included reflective field notes to collect personal thoughts and

feelings upon the completion of the interviews (Creswell, 2009). The thoughts and reactions

were important to help to join the stories from the participants and myself as the researcher (Gall

et al., 2010).

The interviews were all conducted within a three-month time frame near the end of the

school year. Each interview was recorded and then transcribed by me. The verbatim transcripts

accurately captured what participants said and the tapes were repeatedly reviewed (Gall et al.,

2010). There were three main reasons for personally transcribing each of the ten interviews. I

listened to the interviews multiple times and it allowed for repeated and detailed examination of

the conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee. Furthermore, I determined what

the dialogue meant from the participant. The ability to address Clandinin and Connelly's (2000)

three-dimensional narrative inquiry space allowed for deeper understanding within the

interaction between the participants and myself to determine the continuity of the story to include

past, present, and future experiences and expand on the situations for time and place of the shared experiences. The context and situations were reported within the field notes without any preconception or analytical bias from an outside person. In the end, personally transcribed interviews allowed direct access to the data without errors that might be associated by others that completed the transcriptions (Heritage, 1988).

Data Analysis

After listening to each of the recordings, the transcripts were read and reviewed multiple times to analyze the data from the interviews. In order to obtain a general sense of the information and overall meaning, each document was read the first time through without analysis (Creswell, 2009). Then the transcripts from the interviews were read and reread to search for patterns, narrative threads, tensions, and themes that developed stories from the leaders and were put into context around the support provided to novice principals (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The interpretation phase included the individual's behavior, thoughts, and emotions within the context of each event (Gall et al., 2010). The notes from the interviews and personal reflections provided reminders of the conversation, quotations, and details to make for credible descriptions and interpretations (Eisner, 1998).

Prior to the data collection, an initial set of deductive codes was utilized. The deductive codes in Table 1 show the symbols and meanings that were used for the research topic and presented to each participant at the initial interview. The deductive coding measures prior to the data determined possible description and analysis for the pattern of the relationships throughout the research process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The codes were determined from my personal experience as a novice principal. They were then used to identify key words from the stories shared from the participants. The analysis occurred concurrently with the interviews,

Table 1

Deductive Codes for Mentorship and Support of Novice Principals

Symbol	Definition
?	Questions
=	Balance
✪	Student achievement and growth
☐	Targets and goals
↑	Personal and professional growth
→←	Collaboration and bringing people together

Note. The symbols were used to present an initial set of codes used to interview the novice principals and mentors. They also were used during the initial coding process with the interview transcripts to determine possible themes. The symbols were used when a novice principal or mentor discussed the following: questions he or she had about the principal position or mentor program; talked about balance between work and life; articulated student achievement and growth; expressed personal and professional growth needs; shared collaboration efforts with students, parents, teachers, principals, and/or district stakeholders.

interpretations, and final writings (Creswell, 2009). Key themes emerged were identified from the initial set of codes to find meaning in the stories. It was through the data analysis of the different interviews that provided a detailed systematic approach and revealed a coding scheme that was later used and described in the findings section (Creswell, 2009).

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is used to ensure the inquiry's findings are "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). It is important to check for accuracy and credibility of the findings (Creswell, 2009). The design of the study was meant to minimize errors or researcher biases and affirm the inquiry approaches through the trustworthiness criteria (Gall et al., 2010). It addressed *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability*, *confirmability* and

reflexivity. The criterion definitions shared ensure trustworthiness of the research and the five

techniques are further explained for interpretation of the data.

Credibility

There were set questions designed to provide open-ended responses to record a true

picture of what is being presented around the mentorship of novice principals. The questions

were asked around the main research questions, demographic information, background, and

experience. In addition there were probing questions to obtain more information or clarification

with questions (See Appendices D for Interview Questions). The data collected and methods

were derived from criterion in qualitative work (Shenton, 2004). This study utilized

triangulation, prolonged engagement, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, and member

checking to establish credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation was used to compare the

responses from new principals and mentors from three different school districts who participated

in mentorship programs for novice principals. It was used to seek corroboration of the stories

told by the mentors and novice principals and to interpret the events, similar characteristics, and

piece together the themes from the situation (Eisner, 1998). The responses provided different

points of view because individuals shared their personal story from their position and school

district. The use of triangulation built justification for the themes that emerged from the

perspectives of five different participants (Creswell, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The study included two interviews with each participant. The interviews were each

approximately an hour in length. The time spent together with each participant developed a

relationship, established a rapport, and built trust. Sufficient time was allowed for individuals to

have a deeper understanding of the purpose of the study and to have input into the inquiry

process. The promise of anonymity was confirmed and every effort to ensure confidentiality was

honored (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). No identifying or connecting information about the participants, schools, or districts was used in written materials. A pseudonym was used to hide the identity of each participant.

The next strategy utilized was peer debriefing and examination of the data. The entire process from the conception of the original narrative inquiry research through the interview questions, data collection, and analysis of the procedures were reviewed with the advisor/methodologist. The feedback provided was important to continue to shape the study and to analyze the themes from the participants. It ensured the information resonated within the educational profession and not just me as a researcher (Creswell, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

During the research, negative case analysis was used to check the data and conclusions with my advisor/methodologist to discuss any information that may not support or appeared to contradict the themes. The changes in the data allowed a chance to build on the variations and thoughts on how to handle the information. It was used to broaden the themes. The most important point in the process was conducted if there were to be any changes within the findings of the data (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner & Steinmetz, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Finally after each initial interview, subsequent contact occurred with a follow-up conversation. I used member checking to share the report with the interviewee. Member checking was used with the subjects to check their reconstruction of their perspective (Gall et al., 2010).   This process determined the accuracy and obtained their approval for the transcribed notes, themes, and descriptions. It also was used to maintain open and honest dialogue interview throughout the study with the participants. It was the most crucial technique for establishing credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transferability

Transferability is the process of gaining knowledge through the empirical research that can apply to other contexts. The transfer of the information often has generalizing features where the researcher must recognize what has been learned from one situation to another (Eisner, 1998). Often times in qualitative studies there are a small number of individuals and it is impossible to demonstrate the findings to other situations or populations (Sheton, 2004). Therefore Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that it is the responsibility of the researcher to share the findings for the reader to be able to make such a transfer. The results of the study are understood based on the characteristics of the organization, participants, and location in which the fieldwork was conducted (Sheton, 2004). The use of thick description and a detailed account of the research process in the field allows for other researchers to be able to understand the process. This is meant to allow others to recreate the approach and apply it to their own programs as an attempt to meet external validity (Gall et al., 2010; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The criteria for transferability allowed for conclusions with other times, settings, situations, and people (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Dependability

An inquiry audit was used to ensure dependability and confirm trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The dependability addressed the steps to show the findings are consistent and the design can be replicated. This means that if the work were repeated with the same methods and participants, then similar results are most likely attained (Sheton, 2004). To conduct the inquiry audit, the information was shared with an individual outside the research team and participants. The person was able to evaluate the accuracy of the information by conducting an audit trail through examination of the transcripts from the interviews, comments from member

checking, reflective journal, and the dissertation text itself. This was meant to satisfy two

concerns. The first task was to ensure there were no large errors within the findings and the

second was to review it to the point of accuracy. This was important to ensure that the data,

findings, interpretations, and recommendations were supported by the data and it was accepted

for dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Confirmability

The use of a confirmability audit, audit trail, triangulation, and personal reflexivity of all

data and resources was used throughout the research (Creswell, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The major technique of the confirmability audit is similar to the inquiry audit with dependability

and attempted to ensure acceptance of the research. The use of triangulation, which describes

multiple data sources, also confirmed the audit process. A detailed audit trail provided an

account of the research documentation from start to finish. The information collected from the

recorded materials, transcribed interview notes, field notes, and reflective journal from the

interviews were used for data analysis. The analysis process examined inductive coding to

discover emerging themes and concepts. These codes were crosschecked with the relationships

and interpretations. Time was spent to make sure there was accuracy within the transcriptions of

the interviews, codes, and comparing the data. All information was used to explain the research

path and ensure accuracy within the context of the narrative inquiry (Creswell, 2009; Lincoln &

Guba, 1985).

Reflexivity

Finally, the last technique used to establish trustworthiness was reflexivity. Reflexivity is

defined as "A process that researchers used to identify their biases, attempt to take these biases

into account in their interpretations, and seek to minimize their effects on data collection and

interpretation" (Gall et al., 2010, p. 350). Reflexivity is the idea that researchers have multiple influences on the research process and they must acknowledge how it will affect them (Gilgun, 2010). The researcher studies the findings to address potential problems, assumptions, personal and theoretical orientation about the research (Gall et al., 2010).

There are three areas that I considered to utilize reflexivity. The first begins with the reason why I chose the research topic and the connections it has to my personal and professional experience (Gilgun, 2010). Personal reflexivity has shaped the original idea for this research because of the perspectives and experiences I have had as a former novice principal in a mentorship program. I have included my ideas, beliefs, views, and values around the mentorship and support for novice principals. The ideas tend to be inherently biased, but I have addressed them based on the thoughts from my own experience and work (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I was able to capture many ideas and decisions about the research in a reflective journal. The entries were made to provide information about the methodological decisions and reasons for them for the study. It included the interview schedules, logistics of the study, and reflections to share my own personal values, interests, and growing insights (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The next step with reflexivity considered the perspectives and experiences of the individuals who participated in the study (Gilgun, 2010). This includes the participants as well as other individuals or settings that may be involved such as the school districts. I felt that it was important to not only share the voices from novice principals but also mentors that support them in their journey during their first few years in the principalship. The similarities or differences can be used between the leaders to explain the effects on the data collection and interpretation (Gall et al., 2010).

Finally, the research and information was intended for a particular audience (Gilgun, 2010). It was developed for educational leaders and school districts to be able to learn from the experiences and actions that are taken to support novice principals. I then analyzed the findings to determine emerging themes and shared the findings with individuals that were interested in learning more about the study (Gall et al., 2010).

These approaches to ensure trustworthiness are specific to credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reflexivity. All of these techniques assisted in the analysis of the data and shaped the study.

The methods were established to construct the direction of the research for each participant and allow the individual's stories to emerge. The interactions with the interviews allowed the leaders to share his or her perspective regarding their mentorship program. In addition, each person shared his or her personal story with the principalship and the interactions they had with his or her own mentor or novice principal. It was through the stories, data collection, and analysis that were used to report the findings on the important elements for the mentorship and support of novice principals.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Introduction

The investigation into the mentorship and support of novice principals presented the following results and findings from the mentor/mentee experience. The interview questions intentionally were designed to ask the following: the main research questions, characteristics and examples of leadership qualities and skills, what mentor programs were doing or not doing in their district, and any hidden or competing commitments around mentorship for novice principals.

The interviews were analyzed to confirm or deny the information gathered from the principal leaders (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The participants responded to the questions that informed the technique of analytic induction. This process was used after the initial reading to make comparisons for each of the participants. It provided continuous review of the data to describe the categories and relationships developed for thematic analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The following sections included in the results describe the background of the participants, individual stories about the principalship, leadership, and mentorship programs. The information gathered leads to the interpretations of the findings.

Participants

The privacy and confidentiality of each participant was maintained, to the extent allowed, throughout the study. There was no identifying information about the participants, schools, or school districts made within any of the documentation. The interviewed conversations were collected from three novice principals and two mentors from three different school districts. Pseudonyms were used for all five participants to share the information that has been gathered. The following provides a brief description of each of the participants in the study:

73

Novice Principals

- **Michael Gray**: Mid-30s

    Third year as the principal of an elementary school

    First experience as an elementary principal

    13 years of experience with an elementary background

- **David Taylor**: Late 30s

    Second year as the principal of a middle school

    Previous experience as an assistant principal at a high school

    High school and private sector experience

- **Robert Thomas:** Late 30s

    First year as the principal of an elementary school

    Previous experience as an assistant principal at the elementary and

    middle school levels

    Elementary and middle school teaching experience

Mentor Principals

- **Andrew Bell:** Mid-40s

    Sixth year as the principal of an elementary school

    Mentored three novice principals within the past three years

    26-year education veteran with elementary, middle school, and

    high school experience

- **Audrey Berg:**   Early 40s

                Fifth year as the principal of an elementary school

                Mentored two novice principals within the past two years

                21-year education veteran with elementary experience

Journey to the Principalship

The path to the principalship is different for each individual. The reason each of the participants chose to pursue a leadership position was shared to learn more about the five principals that participated in the study. One participant described the decision to become a principal is "like a calling." For some individuals a former principal or superintendent recognized the leadership qualities or skills they had exhibited as teachers. The leader encouraged the individual to pursue a principal license in a preparation program. For others, it was a personal decision that was made in order to enhance their leadership skills and qualities to obtain a principal position. Each principal shared in his or her own words as to why they decided to pursue the leadership position:

> **Audrey Berg**. I was just a teacher and I always wanted to be a teacher and I always thought I would teach, but I loved the leadership component of what you could do as a teacher. I had been teaching for six years and had numerous leadership opportunities for my grade level and district. One day totally out of the blue, my superintendent had a conversation with me about how he really valued my leadership and saw some qualities in me that he liked. Wow! Someone saw me in a different way, so I applied, was interviewed, and selected for my leadership program.

> **Robert Thomas**. I was in a screening interview for a teaching position. I did not even have a teaching job yet, and the retired principal that conducted the interview asked me if I had ever thought about going into administration. No, I had not. I did not even have my first teaching job. Then, I was hired to work with a principal that seemed to like everything about education but the kids. There was nothing about the job that interested me and I was happy teaching. I began to take classes for my master's degree and I had a class with administrators.

75

My professor in one of my classes was a superintendent and began planting the seed and said, "You kind of think like an administrator and you kind of talk like an administrator. Have you ever thought about doing this?" I listened to the leaders talk and at the same time I had another principal that I worked with that was the complete opposite from the very first principal. I saw the way you could do the job and how you could be fun and helpful to teachers. So the two forces merged and I ended up going and getting a principal job.

David Taylor. I had briefly left education for a year and a half to explore other opportunities, but it just was not where my heart was and I had to do that in order to realize that I had something different to offer in education. I started my master's degree and then got my first leadership appointment. I hate to say it's like a calling, but it is a vocation that is something you are doing in the service mindset that is best thing for kids.

Andrew Bell. I never thought that I would want to become a principal. I loved serving in the leadership capacity, and I liked working with people to get stuff done, but when I decided to do this job I had kind of an epiphany moment. I decided that I would become a principal in order to run interference so teachers can do their best work. I wanted to make sure that teachers had more positive than negative experiences and so that is why I decided to work toward the degree and pursue the job.

Michael Gray. I was very satisfied with teaching and one time someone asked me if I would ever think about becoming a principal. At that point, I said that I was not interested. Then, I had an opportunity to walk through the building and all of a sudden, I realized that there was ineffectiveness going on in different classrooms or I saw a person that was strong throughout the day. It changed my mindset. I thought that if I was passionate enough about getting the right people in front of kids then I could summon the courage to have the right conversations with people that were being ineffective. I thought that principals needed to take their job seriously of moving people out, because there are plenty of people that we could move into the position.

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Leadership Styles and Skills

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The varied paths to the principalship prepared the individuals for their different leadership roles. The principals from five different schools in three separate school districts shared the leadership qualities and skills they felt were important as leaders. The leadership qualities were not defined previously in the study. The leadership style is defined within the context of the principal's experience and from previous research literature.

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76

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Each principal shared similar expectations for the principalship, whether they were a first-year principal or a six-year veteran. The different responses defined the thinking, skills, and knowledge that they felt was needed to be principals even before they started the position. In addition, the leaders expressed their understanding each individual needed in order to build relationships, work through the change process, collaborate with stakeholders, and recognize the impact of the work they have together for student achievement and growth. The leaders described the skills, personal energy, and enthusiasm as necessary to be the leaders of their respective schools. The following participants shared their personal understanding of the role and expectations for the leadership style and skills through their own personal experience.

Andrew Bell, a sixth-year elementary mentor principal, expressed his leadership style to be one of a servant leader. His priority is to the people that he works with each day. "Servant leadership is the means by which leaders get the necessary legitimacy to lead…because one of the responsibilities of leadership is to give a sense of direction, to establish an overarching purpose" (Sergiovanni, 2007, p. 50). A servant leader is meant to be more of an encourager and facilitator to nurture innovation and skills of children, teachers and parents (Hagstrom, 1992). The servant leadership style emphasizes personal characteristics and beliefs that include some of the following: listening, empathy, persuasion, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community (C. Smith, 2005).

Bell articulated his approach in the following manner, "I want to work alongside of people and bring them along as we are implementing changes and things that are new." He continued to expand on his way of affecting change with the support of the teachers and staff:

> Sometimes you have to be out front leading the group, and sometimes you might
> be behind providing encouragement and support to push them forward. There are
> also times when you are right alongside of your staff trying to work through
> things together.

Bell concluded with the qualities that he felt were necessary as a leader as, "Big picture thinkers, system thinkers, and people who are willing to listen and seek understanding of the opinions and ideas of others." This was not always easy for Bell because sometimes teachers or staff members continued to perform the same based on their evaluations in their teaching and student learning. The results for the students did not change and it becomes more of a challenge to address different needs for teacher improvement to increase student understanding. Bell added:

> Therefore, I need to allow reflective time for different staff needs. This needs to include what we are doing well for students to determine what is working for them and what we need to work on to get better. Then we can critically look at what may have been the impact on the kids and adjusted as we needed in order to always strive to make our teaching better.

David Taylor, a second-year middle school principal, added an additional description to service leadership. "We are here for kids and we are here to make sure every single kid has the opportunity to learn and grow. If you approach every decision you make through that lens, then it is hard to go wrong." The idea of keeping the work focused on kids helps when a principal has to make a difficult decision. He expressed that the students need to be kept first and foremost in a legitimate way. Taylor explained further:

> Sometimes the right decision is not what the majority of the staff thinks is right. Sometimes because everybody thinks it, does not make it true. Not being afraid to make an unpopular decision, as long as you can put your head on the pillow every night, and be okay with the fact that you made what you believed was best for students' academic learning and growth and social growth, then you should never have a sleepless night.

Taylor felt an important strategy to support leadership was for principals to review best practices, school data, and evidence of success or failures in order to make a decision. Equally significant was for leaders to not just jump to conclusions when a person may say what they feel is best for kids. Usually the decision for what is best for kids is made with students in mind.

Taylor concluded, "Teachers, staff, or parents may think they want a decision what is best for kids, but might have their own best interest in mind." Principals expressed how important it is to keep the students as their main focus when they make a decision for the school.

Robert Thomas, a first year elementary principal, emphasized collaborative leadership as the foundation for his leadership style. Collaborative leadership is creating a school culture that values the cooperative efforts of the people in the school to address change more effectively. It emphasizes the strength of the group verses the individual and focuses on a common mission (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991).

The collaborative leadership style, shared by Thomas, started with the work of the school combined together for all individuals directed toward a common mission and vision. Thomas shared the concept was not just the statement that was written on a document and displayed on the wall for all to see, but rather, it was a constant part of the existence of the school. It took real dedication to build the collaborative community in order to assist the staff, Thomas added, "A principal needs to have the big picture perspective." The leader has to help individuals understand what the school is striving to achieve. If the school begins with the end in mind, then the use of school data and results at the conclusion of each school year will assist with the common focus. The principal's collaborative leadership style included the ability to be conversant and knowledgeable with the skills to help staff members with curriculum, pedagogy, instruction, and assessment. In addition, he knew he needed to connect with people on the personal and professional level to collaborate, build trust, and inspire the staff to want to follow the leader and the expectations that were established.

"Often the easiest things are not the right things," expressed third-year elementary principal Michael Gray. The ability for a principal to get outside of what felt comfortable as a

leader sometimes helped when the focus remained placed on students and student learning. Gray explained further what he meant in detail:

> I needed to place the priority of my work with the focus on kids, even to the point where I might put adults in second place. If the teachers believed in me and trusted me, that I was prioritizing kids in every decision that I made, then the staff could justify my behavior and their own response.

In order to develop the understanding and trust from his staff, Gray utilized distributed leadership and encouraged the teachers to see themselves as leaders. A distributed leadership perspective moves from one individual leading the school to a more comprehensive view. It includes all of the experts in a school and reviews the different perspectives to arrive at a more comprehensive account of leadership (Spillane, 2006). Principals do not look to a formal position or role, but rather create a culture of expectation to maximize the human capacity within the school and use the numerous different individual skills and abilities (A. Harris, 2004).

It was important for Gray to develop the leadership skills of his teaching staff and others because the work they were doing together toward a common goal. He wanted to accomplish what was needed for the school by getting teachers to commit and grow. He also communicated very openly to people so they were informed on different issues that occurred. In response to his communication the school staff recognized him as an honest leader.

Fifth-year, elementary mentor principal, Audrey Berg described herself as an instructional leader. Instructional leadership is defined as a principal leader who has more skill and knowledge than anyone else in the building to be the educational visionary, offer direction, and expertise to ensure that students learn (Hoerr, 2008). The work that a principal does to support the staff must focus on the behaviors of the teachers to directly affect the growth of students (Leithwood & Duke, 1998). The principal influences teachers with goals, strategies, and best practices in

teaching to become partners in education for the work they do day to day in the classroom with students (Hoerr, 2008).

Berg shared an example from her school to clarify just how a principal may support his or her staff as an instructional leader. Berg stated that teachers do not always have the opportunity to see what instruction looks like in another class. A principal can visit and observe different classrooms and share what the teaching and learning looks like in order to support the staff. The principal may also attend a professional learning event and bring back information to his or her staff. The principal can be a learner and then facilitate the conversations in order to make connections for the staff members.

The principals also shared the leadership qualities and characteristics they felt were important for principals. "You have to be outgoing and a go-getter to want to learn everything," Berg stated. This included different characteristics for the leadership position. Berg expressed principals needed to be open, approachable, good listeners, have strong communication skills, and have the ability to see the big picture for all of the kids and staff members. In order to be a strong instructional leader involved with every grade level, curriculum, policy, and expectation, then it requires a principal to see the growth in students and teachers. It means that there are many different roles and responsibilities for a principal, but it was also important to recognize what the staff has accomplished too to celebrate their successes. Berg expressed that the instructional leadership style can be accomplished for principals by setting high expectations for themselves, teachers, staff, and students.

The leadership skills and knowledge merged together with the roles and responsibilities required for the principal position can sometimes lead to frustration. Novice principal David Taylor stated:

The ability to juggle a lot of stuff at the same time without putting on an appearance of frustration is huge. You have to be able to thrive in an environment where things are constantly changing and you are constantly shifting from one task to another and one modality to another.

The aptitude and proficiency to complete the work of a principal addressed the doing part, but Taylor also shared the mindset part that was important in the role, "You have to be confident, but also humble." Taylor felt that the two competing values provided an opportunity to be able to balance the role. He explained further, "You have to be confident in what you know and in your decisions, but humble enough to know what you don't know and that's okay."

Another novice principal, Robert Thomas also echoed the idea of "humble confidence:"

A principal has to have humble confidence. They need to be humble enough to know that they do not have all the answers and they certainly can learn a lot from their colleagues, teachers, staff, professional development, and from themselves professionally. They also need to have the confidence to know that even as they grow as a leader, they can lead.

There are some challenges presented to novice principals new to the position, simply because they have not had the opportunity to lead. However, Robert Thomas felt the leaders needed to realize they are capable of being in a leadership role. It was the reason they were hired for the position, because they were able to provide something different for a school in a way that someone else may not have been able to express. Thomas continued with his thoughts on being the leader of the school, "In order to be a really good principal, you have to get the big things right and the small things right. And it really is a huge job."

The five principals described several different types of leadership styles or skills they felt were necessary for the principal position. They felt that servant leadership, collaboration, distributed leadership, and instructional leadership were effective leadership styles needed as leaders. There were certain traits and abilities the principals expressed that were different than personality, intelligence, or years of experience in a position. The principals felt leaders in the

position needed to establish a vision, have solid communication, passion, demonstrate action with the work, and inspire others to do the same. The leadership qualities and characteristics were clearly articulated by both the mentors and novice principals on how they performed their roles as leaders. It did not mean other areas were less important but rather it was how they choose to lead. They each understood what a principal needed to have in order to be able to lead a school.

Novice Principals' Examples of Change

The novice principals in the study shared how their leadership qualities led to valuable changes within their schools. The examples that they shared demonstrated their ability to lead with minimal support or feedback from their mentor. The examples were a source of pride for the new leaders.

In the past three years Michael Gray, the elementary principal of his school, encouraged a group of his teachers to correctly use and enhance the Accelerated Reader literacy program. The program provided reading practice for students with vocabulary, literacy skills, and quizzes to build a love of reading and learning. Gray recognized that teachers had not utilized the program that was already purchased for the school. The school data reports indicated that students were having minimal success. Gray wanted a group of teachers to look at the root causes of why Accelerated Reader was not successful and to create a more clear vision to share with the staff. So he accessed his distributed leadership style and appointed one teacher to form a group to review the program. He relied on the group to dedicate the time the he was not able to develop more consistency for teachers and students.

"It was like flipping the switch for the teachers," Gray added. The effort to change a past practice ultimately came from the teachers and was shared to the entire staff. They realized what the program was capable of doing for the students. The teachers shared the results of their

collaboration with the other teachers in the school. Gray felt the teachers accomplished more with the staff than if he took on the responsibility as the principal. The group of teachers promoted Accelerated Reader to the entire staff and set up a system that was used by each grade level in the school. Gray noticed through observation and data collection that students started reading for more intrinsic reasons. The data also reflected the progress students began to make with the reading comprehension and skills.

The ability to affect change, not just in the classroom but system-wide also helped middle school Principal David Taylor. Taylor had reviewed the results of the number of students who had received discipline referrals for the past two years in the school. Based on school data he noticed significant reduction in the number of students who had discipline issues and expulsions at the end of his second year as principal. He attributed the changes to the culture and climate of the school. It started at the end of his first year, when he examined the school-wide behavior systems that were currently in place. He worked to create a new school-wide behavior program with a different perspective that resonated better for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. The start of his second year he worked with teachers to understand the expectations for students in the classroom and common areas like the hall, lunchroom, or school grounds. The school year kicked off with the new system to help students understand how their behavior affects academics. In addition, the school re-normed some of the due process for students before a teacher sent the student out of the classroom to the office for discipline reasons. Teachers were taught how to work with kids in the classroom, instead of simply sending them away. This resulted in a reduction to discipline issues and it was drastically different than the year before.

Novice principal Robert Thomas said, "Sometimes when you share an idea, you might initially get some push back or reluctance from your teachers." He experienced this reaction from

the staff when he shared what he felt was not necessarily a new concept, but one that had been a part of best instructional practices for a long time. In his first year at the elementary school, he noticed the school did not have an expectation to visually share learning objectives or targets for students. He knew it was not a new idea within education, but he wanted his teachers to add this relatively simple strategy to their instruction. He felt that if teachers were able to provide clear, defined, and distinct expectations for students prior to teaching a lesson then a change occurred in how they were learning. Thomas wanted teachers to clearly state the learning objectives before each lesson to allow students to understand the purpose and expectations for the content. In order to share this practice, Thomas started with the school leadership team. Then it expanded to other grade levels, and eventually all the teachers in the school. The teachers quickly bought into the concept and wanted more information and ideas on how to present the objectives to their students. This sparked dialogue among grade levels. Later, Thomas looked at the trajectory for students learning relative to the data results from end of the year summative assessments. The results were gratifying for the school and he attributed it to the buy in from the staff to post and state learning objectives for the students.

The ability for the three novice principals to share direct changes of their specific program or implementation at the school acknowledged the skills they have for their role. Each principal was able to affect change within their own school site and validated their purpose as leaders. Their work efforts were in response to what they were able accomplish with the necessary skills and qualities for the position. The leadership skills and knowledge each possesses is not absent from the work they are able to do, but the realities of the roles and responsibilities for principals can create unforeseen challenges and changes.

Mentorship Programs for Novice Principals

The novice principals and mentors shared what each of the school districts provided for new leaders in the mentorship programs. The programs shared similar characteristics. Each of the novice principals worked with a mentor principal during the first year of their principalship. Two new principals were assigned a veteran principal and one was allowed to select their own mentor. The mentor principals were each designated to a novice principal during the first year of the role. The mentors were paid a stipend from their district for the extra time they spent working with a novice principal and did not go through any formal training to prepare them for the role as a mentor. The programs from the three school districts did not have any formal requirements for how many times the mentor and mentee met or what might be accomplished throughout the year. The mentor and mentee met informally after district administrator meetings, for breakfast or lunch, or communicated through email or phone conversations. There were no explicit instructions from district leadership or programs for the novice principals and mentors to meet a certain amount of time or guidelines for the partnership.

David Taylor, second year principal, shared the mentorship experience he had with his self-selected mentor:

> It was less formal instruction. We would do a monthly breakfast or I could always call him. I would contact him if I had questions about logistics or if I had an upset parent. I could call and bounce ideas off and say, "Am I doing the right thing here?"

The district mentorship provided an opportunity for the mentor and mentee to have different conversations and share perspectives for the experiences of the novice principal then if they had them with their immediate supervisor. "I trusted my mentor," Taylor stated. Taylor and his mentor worked to build the relationship through their conversations and interactions about the roles and responsibilities. "I understood what my mentor knew about the position, because we

86

built up a solid relationship and I had access to him when I needed it," concluded Taylor. The novice principal and mentor built the relationship and established trust with one another through the interactions and time provided.

Michael Gray, third year novice principal, talked about the first year of his principalship. The district assigned a mentor to Gray, but in addition to the mentor/mentee responsibilities he had to complete the induction program to receive the state's professional principal license. He felt there were some hoops to jump through in order to complete the induction process and to learn how to function within the school and district. Gray was often displeased with his mentorship support and he reported:

> It was very difficult to know what to say when, and what to do when. The challenge came down to how to prioritize your time with a total lack of mentorship. Unless, I sought out the interactions with my mentor, I did not have a clear idea of how our relationship worked. My district did not have a functioning set program for mentorship of new principals.

He continued to share that he worked extremely hard to complete some tasks. The pressure to do what he believed was true for the responsibilities often ended up with him feeling frustrated or demoralized from his mentor. His satisfaction with his work depended on what assignments needed to be accomplished and the ability to understand the requirements. Gray shared how the level of understanding for a task played into the relationship he had with his mentor:

> My mentor was nice and helpful from time to time, but not nicer or more helpful then several other people. He would call me once in a while and say, "Don't forget this report is due or here is how you put out the next fire."

Michael Gray did not have any specific training or set meeting times with his mentor beyond the required administrator's meetings. They met at the district meetings and touch based

about a few things. Gray did not have a connection with his mentor to feel successful in his role

and often felt like he was "building a plane in flight." He said:

> I've had some successes and some things that I haven't been successful, but I had
> no one to help me deal with the 1,000 things to do. I felt that I'm expected to do
> them all right and know what the most important things are that I needed to do
> right now, because there was only so much time in the day. It never felt right, and
> sometimes it was learning the job, while I was doing the work.

Robert Thomas, first year principal, also described the amount there is to learn about the

principalship in a short period of time. "I understood that I needed to build a trusting,

professional relationship with the staff," Thomas stated about his first month on the job. He

added:

> I was optimistic that in the first three weeks of school that I would have my feet
> under me, and I'll have this all squared away, and I'll finally be in a good place
> with the different roles and responsibilities. And what I didn't account for was
> the fact that those three weeks weren't static, but they were ongoing and I'm
> continually making decisions within those three weeks. It was a lesson for me to
> understand that I just could not get ahead with the work that I had to do every day.

There were responsibilities that Thomas felt he was not able to accomplish right away that

he knew were important as a first year principal. He wanted to establish a plan during the first of

the school year where the staff would get to know him as a person, an educator, someone who

was trusted, and an expert in the field. Then the school year started with different expectations

from the district, parents, teachers, and students. He was now the principal and he quickly

realized there was so much to learn. Thomas was assigned a mentor and was appreciative of the

support, but stated, "We're all busy. My mentor was available to me whenever I asked for help."

They met for breakfast or lunch and the mentor was accessible through phone calls or emails.

Thomas added, "I had my mentor as well as other principals who were very willing to lend a hand

or answer my good or dumb questions. But, we're all busy and the reality is you are here by

yourself."

Robert Thomas also struggled with the isolation of the job and not having a team to work with or someone to be able to bounce ideas off of when thinking about a decision for the school. For example, it became a challenge for Thomas when he was not to be able to reflect with someone after a meeting to get a sense of how it went. "Everything continuously falls on my desk, and if I don't do it or if I don't get someone else to do it, it doesn't get done. So that sense of isolation was really powerful. It is a lonely job at the elementary level," reflected Thomas.

Mentor principal, Audrey Berg, articulated how the role of a principal can be a challenge especially for a new principal. She shared:

> As a new principal, you hit the ground running. You absolutely hit the ground running. Our job is so cumbersome; we assume people either already knows what to do or are going to pick up on it quickly. There are a lot of things about the position that are really overwhelming. For a new principal, you may not know what to expect or what may be coming at you next. I cannot imagine doing this job without having someone to contact during the first year.

She added, "I have had no training on being a mentor, but the district puts money behind it and that is how it is supported." Berg keeps a mentor log to report how much time she spends working with her mentee. She felt her priority was to connect with the mentee and develop the relationship through mutual trust and respect between the mentor and mentee. In order to develop the partnership, Berg felt that as a mentor she needed to be approachable, open, and not be judgmental. Berg stated that the relationship she established with her mentee was through an open invitation to contact her at any given time, for any reason, with a question or concern about any part of the position. Berg also shared how mentees were assigned their mentor in the district:

> Our novice principals in the school district are at the mercy of who they get assigned to work with for the first year as a new principal. It does not depend on if that is a good person or if they think the way that they think.

The district assigned a mentee for Berg to work with for the school year. This has been one of several mentees she has worked with over the past couple of years. Berg did not have any

formal training from her district, but she recognized certain expectations were important to

develop the relationship between the mentor/mentee. To begin, she felt veteran principals needed

to be a leader in everything they do. There were times when she sent information that was

important for her mentee to another new principal in the district because she felt may have needed

it too. In addition, Berg recognized the time for mentors needed to be really flexible. Berg

articulated that the mentor needed to keep the mentee up to speed with required documents by the

state or district. There were times when she placed a phone call to ensure her mentee had helpful

reminders for what was to be accomplished or information to provide background and context for

an upcoming task. A mentor can share how some of his or her previous experiences as a principal

can curtail worse situations. Berg responded to how she interacted with her mentees when they

contacted her while she was at school:

> I have to be willing to be responsive, because a lot of my work needs to stop so I
> can help my mentee make sure the systems or policies are known to make the
> right decisions. After we work through the situation, then I can then return to my
> work, but you have to be willing to spend the time and stop what you are doing to
> help.

Berg felt the mentor has to provide access and time to the mentee. The connection and

time spent together were important to build the relationship and ensure trust. The novice

principal can rely on the mentor to process and learn about situations in a safe environment

without fear the conversation is shared with other staff or supervisors.

Andrew Bell has been a mentor principal for the past three years and brings 26 years of

experience to education. He recognized that mentors needed to be accessible at any time, because

mentees need to feel comfortable and confident with their work as a principal. A mentee needs to

know he or she can call to talk, set up a time to meet, and reflect on the things about the job

together with their mentor. Bell felt mentors provided mentees with permission to step back and

recognize they may not know everything about the principalship. According to Bell, it was acceptable to ask questions, seek advice, or help. It does not make them any less of a leader to acknowledge their own limitations. Bell felt that perhaps it might even make for a better principal. Bell shared how a mentor may help a mentee prioritize the work through the collaboration of the mentor/mentee relationship:

> I am conscious of the fact that we need to work together on certain things as a principal. This means that we need to try to talk about some tasks that need to be taken care of right away and other responsibilities that you can take care of later on. The collaboration, collegiality, and meeting of the minds are extremely important for mentoring new principals. I don't necessarily have more answers than the mentees do. This job is such a multifaceted, ever changing, ever morphing position that it is reasonable to find out information and results to certain situations together.

The three novice principals and two mentors recognized the connection that needed to be made between the mentor and mentee. In order to establish trust the mentor and mentee required time together to formally and informally collaborate and develop the relationship. Then the collective support assisted the novice principals within their first few years in the school district. The confirmation from mentors provided to mentees is an obvious next step for school districts. The group of leaders also acknowledged there has been many challenges and changes to the principal position that hinder the type of support that the new leaders received from the school district and mentor/mentee relationships.

Challenges and Changes

The principal position has evolved and changed over the last thirty years. The three novice principals and two mentors expressed some of the difficulties of the role. The concerns however did not stop the principals from doing their work, but did make them more aware of the challenges.

91

In the past six years, mentor Andrew Bell acknowledged how the elementary principal position has changed. "It is not the same job I got into when I first started. It is a very different job," Bell shared. He articulated some of the different roles and responsibilities for the current principal position come from federal legislation and state expectations for increased accountability for students. In addition, the demographics for some schools have changed and the free and reduced numbers for students has grown in many communities. Parent expectations are also different for students. Some parents are not willing to have their child fail or be in trouble. Finally, another struggle included the school budget and inability to distribute the money in order to accomplish all that is needed for the kids in the school.

"You are wearing all these different hats and you're an accountant, business manager, disciplinarian, and counselor. You probably make 100 to 200 decisions a day, sometimes five or six at a time and that takes practice," stated Bell. Bell felt he was prepared for a principal position based on his years of experience as a teacher and because he understood his core beliefs, however, some things he was unwilling to change as a leader. However, there were specific aspects of the job that he did not know a whole lot about until he was in the position that included the interactions with parents, budget, and different district requirements.

David Taylor expressed similar thoughts about the principal role. He stated that principal preparation programs have a responsibility to acknowledge that new leaders are not fully prepared for the realities of the position. The preparation programs provide good mindsets, theory, and it gives new principals some background information. However, it does not teach a person how to be a principal. Taylor, who worked as an assistant principal prior to being the principal of his own school, explained what he meant about learning the roles and responsibilities:

> You don't learn how to be a principal until you become a principal. So you can't
> walk into that role and sit down in the chair for the first time and think that you

92

have any idea of what it is going to be like. And, you have to be okay with that.
There are a lot of expectations to know about the principal position. The principal
is in charge of the school improvement plan, paperwork, evaluations, budget,
managerial roles, and every angry parent phone call. The buck stops with you.
You learn more about the principal position when you come into the role.

There were many tasks that Robert Thomas had not had the opportunity to perform before

as a leader. He even had the benefit of being an assistant principal in two different school

districts at both the elementary and middle school levels prior to obtaining his first elementary

principal position. Thomas still felt he was not totally prepared, "Until you sit in this seat, and I

don't care how close you were to the seat, you don't know it…and you don't get it until you are

living it."

He shared an example with the state legislated School Accountability Committee (SAC).

The SAC was new to him and his staff. He spent nearly 30 hours in order to prepare for his first

meeting to be held with the school staff and community. There were state expectations and

district examples, but he had to review the school results, examine the school plan of action,

determine the strengths and needs of the school and finally be prepared to share with the

stakeholders of the building.

The amount of time spent with the numerous roles and responsibilities of a principal was

also an issue. The daily work and responsibilities did not stop. There was a considerable amount

of time it took for Thomas to learn and prepare for different district reports, improvement plans,

evaluations, decisions, and collaborative efforts. Most of the work for Robert Thomas began after

5:30 p.m. when the regular school day was over for teachers and students. "Three days a week I

would close out the building and be here until 11:00 at night or so" he reflected. He felt there

were tasks or assignments he could not assign to another person or could not walk away from

each day. Thomas added, "You make the final decision on some of those things, even with input

in the decision making process. You're still the one that has to write the report or make the final decisions." He continued to put in long hours to confirm his feelings to ensure he was prepared for the role of the principal.

Audrey Berg discussed the business side of the job that tended to pull her away from her ability to be an instructional leader. She described how it was almost impossible to predict what might happen each day as a principal. It was difficult to schedule large blocks of time during her school day to accomplish the school improvement plan, evaluations, budget, data expectations, or other tasks and still be visible and take care of the building. She stated that 80% of the paperwork was completed outside of the school day. Even if there was a plan in place to do an evaluation or some office work, there might be one student interaction that caused it to change or be rescheduled. The one incident might take an entire day to get to a good place. People do not recognize the intensity of the position.

"Nobody wants to do this job," Audrey Berg explained after sharing the overwhelming amount of work that is placed on a principal's plate. She tried to encourage some teacher leaders at her school to pursue a principal license with resistance from the individuals. "We have very few teachers going into administration," she stated. There are school districts which deal with principal turnover when people change school buildings, go to different school districts, or leave the profession altogether to return to the classroom. There are less and less people wanting to pursue the principalship based on legislation and district expectations. The teachers also see how hard principals work with the following: the hours that are put in each day; the night commitments; the weekend attendance to different events; parent interactions; new evaluation systems; data reports and expectations; district meetings; and trainings. The individuals compare the job to what it used to be and now they say, "Who'd want the job?" Berg felt that this has been

reflected in the school district with less and less applicants applying for the open principal

positions. "It is not like principals are exaggerating or being overly dramatic," she added, "The

job has just changed and nobody really wants it." The work and expectations of the principal

position have reduced the number of great teacher leaders in school buildings that want to take the

next step to pursue a leadership position.

In the three years that novice Principal Michael Gray has been at the elementary school,

he felt he has grown in the position, but attributes it mostly to the support he sought out from

others who were not assigned to him as a mentor. He felt other leaders outside his district helped

him get better as a new principal. Gray shared:

> You need someone to help you who is more mature in the profession than you are
> in order to recognize key indicators of an issue, understand what to do about it,
> and provide some options to help you move forward.

The feedback Gray received from other leaders who evaluated him as a teacher and a

principal had always been positive. They were satisfied with what he was doing as a principal,

but he was not satisfied. Gray shared:

> I needed somebody to build a relationship with me to provide me with some real
> valid suggestions to improve. I know that there is more I can do to be better. The
> ability to strive to be better does not come from a book or method, but rather it is
> something internal within you that is sought out to become better. It is much less
> about the theory or a comment from a district leader to keep doing what they are
> doing in order to get better and feel successful in the role. I learned to connect to
> other people and began to seek advice outside of my mentor to collect as much
> information as I could from others.

Gray also attended state trainings to complete the required state induction program. He

wanted to apply what he had taken from the professional learning for new administrators, but he

felt like it presented more theory and an extension of the principal preparation programs than an

opportunity to tie the practical role of principal. He recognized the path that each person had

taken to be a principal was different for everybody. There were varied levels of experiences.

Some individuals had years and years of experience in education. When they become the

principal, then they needed more logistical support. Other novice principals needed more to help

them feel successful. The background experience each individual goes through in education to

receive their principal training is also so dynamic. There are different programs, experiences, or

set of circumstances that someone takes to become a principal. Gray felt that the diversity and

background of each principal was important for school districts and induction programs to

recognize. The programs then strive to provide differentiation to meet the different leaders'

needs.

The changes in the role of the principal were not absent from the stories told by the novice

leaders and mentors. The role has changed over time. The increased accountabilities, duties, and

requirements lend itself to a need for the mentorship and support of novice principals.

Themes

Thematic analysis was used to identify inductive codes within the qualitative research

from recurrent patterns within the data. The themes were constructed through careful review of

the transcribed interviews, initial codes, descriptive notes, and the reflective thoughts written

about the research (Gall et al., 2010).

The stories that were told from each of the participants' experience with the principalship

evaluated common themes, concepts, and categories determined from the texts. The three novice

principals and two mentor principals each shared their experiences about their respective

district's mentorship programs. Over time, the mentors or mentees were not approached for

feedback or provided an evaluation about the different district mentorship programs and

practices. However, when asked to share ideas on mentorship programs, the five principals

reported similar themes to assist principals new to the position. The following themes emerged

from the participants' stories:

1. Mentor with meaning and purpose

2. Prepare principals for the realities of the position

3. Leadership skills and professional growth

4. Students are the priority

1. Mentor with Meaning and Purpose

The group of leaders felt that there were three main areas that assisted with the mentoring

of new principals with meaning and purpose. It started with the careful matching of the mentor

and mentee. There were no prerequisites from the school districts for mentors to partner with a

mentee. In two cases, the novice principals did not have the option to select whom they worked

with for mentor support. In addition, the principals expressed a desire for structured support with

the different tasks, roles, and responsibilities from the school and district. The current ambiguity

of the mentorship programs did not articulate to the mentors or mentees what needed to be

accomplished throughout the year. The leaders felt that the district needed a better framework to

understand how to build the relationship, to accomplish the tasks, and to support the principalship.

Finally, the leaders felt extra time was needed to be able to learn and grow as a novice principal in

the position. These ideas are expanded on in further detail to learn how school districts can

provide mentorship programs with meaning and purpose.

"Mentorship is the most effective leadership development tool," stated second-year

middle school Principal David Taylor, "It is the implementation where it becomes a challenge."

He proceeded with caution to explain that mentorship programs were not necessarily dropping the

ball, because he believed the partnerships were well intentioned. However, the expectations were

not always clear from the district and there needed to be more information for the mentor and mentee.

It also should not be just another thing to add to the "to do list" for already busy novice principals and their mentors. First year principal Robert Thomas shared:

> I'm not looking for more work or more reflections, not that I do not realize the value in them. The design should be meaningful and focused on the relationships to support the novice principal. It cannot be incredibly taxing on a new leader so that it just becomes another thing to do.

The roles and responsibilities of a principal are so complex the best starting place for mentorship programs focused on the relationship and matchup between the mentor and the mentee. The careful matching includes the psychological component to understand the social, emotional, behavioral, physical, and cognitive functions of each individual to create the pairing. There are options to help assist with the partnership. It begins by asking questions to the potential mentor/mentee or districts might use an instrument that is administered to match the mentor and mentee that does not take a lot of time. The report provided gives people in the mentorship program for novice principals a respectable shot of making a decent match.

Michael Gray, a third year principal at an elementary school, talked more about the diagnostic matching of a mentor with a mentee to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership and to move forward within the practice as leaders. Gray elaborated:

> I would rather have someone answer honestly to my questions or concerns and say that "I don't know," or "I am willing to look into that further," or "I want to help you," because the outcome can be better. I often felt that if we could not solve an issue together, then I was at a loss, because my mentor was not available or the support was not there.

He explained that in the short term the relationship between the mentor and mentee may be a little messy, but in the long-term it takes time to build trust within the relationship. It was one of the most essential pieces. "Mentors are in a position where they cannot possibly know

everything, but how they react to a situation and provide support for the novice principal is critical for success," Gray stated.

Robert Thomas emphasized trust as an important first step between the novice principal and mentor. When trust is established between the mentor and mentee then it can be used to build confidence for a leader and seek needed support and guidance. Thomas recognized that the partnership between the mentor and mentee also expanded to other principal leaders. If together a mentor and mentee are not able to solve an issue, then the partnership may include a group of other principals that can assist with a solution to the problem.

In some instances, novice principals may have an opportunity to select the mentor that they wish to work with during the first year in the position. This might occur if the leader has been a part of the district or takes the time to get to know the school leaders prior to the mentorship. It also established a protocol for a district to allow the mentor and mentee to choose who they mentor. "I think you tend to gravitate toward people that think like you and you know exactly who you are going to ask or call if you need to figure something out," stated mentor principal Audrey Berg, "There is a real opportunity to refine what we do for new principals to be able to come together to solve a problem or task." Berg reflected on her first years as a principal with a cohort of principals. She stated that the varying degrees of experiences that were in the group benefited her, just like they assisted novice principals. The diversity of the needs and issues that one principal faces at the school may not be the same at another school. New principals depend on multiple sources of support and input. They also have permission to not know everything with a chance to contact someone that they can rely on to assist them. Berg felt the communication and feedback was important for the mentee, because the mentor provided

valuable feedback without it being a part of an evaluation process that might occur with a supervisor.

The principals expressed that there needed to be a concerted effort by school districts to make the mentorship program meaningful. The program has to have structure to a point, but there were organizational cautions to not over plan the required expectations for mentoring. Sometimes with the need for structure there comes a rigid agenda and a requirement to attend additional meetings. The time to come together was important for the mentor and mentee to provide a safe place to be able learn and grow, but it cannot be scheduled minute by minute.

Robert Thomas shared, "First year principals do not know what is expected for all of the tasks or requirements when they start as the leader of a school." He discussed a desire for a timeline with key benchmarks for the role and responsibilities to prepare novice leaders for the school year. The timeline could be used as a springboard for a conversation with the mentor. He felt communication about the different responsibilities for the role was missing with Thomas and his mentor. He stated:

> It is not because we are not smart enough to figure out what to talk about, or that we had nothing to say. But it is always good to have something like a timeline to use to lead our discussions. It may be that my mentor might not be thinking about a task or requirement because to him or her it is self-evident because he or she has been doing it for a long time, and I just don't know enough about the role to ask.

The list to prepare a novice principal for some unforeseen tasks or expectations can help prioritize the work and interactions between the mentor and mentee. The mentor can provide timely support for novice principals with the work. Novice principals can then rely on their mentor to be able to access information to better prepare them for the roles and responsibilities of the position.

The final point expressed by the principals was for mentorship programs to realize that novice principals should be afforded time to grow into the roles and responsibilities of the position. The new principals often felt like there were certain expectations about policies, procedures, or the role they should understand, but in reality there were questions or concerns with little or no direction from the district or mentor. It takes time to become familiar with the culture and climate, to get better in the role, and grow professionally. Robert Thomas shared:

> This philosophy of continual growth needs to be applied to novice principals. Even though individuals have higher levels of leadership skills and expectations for the job, it still takes time to build relationships and understand the culture and climate of the school and district

A mentorship program fosters the skills and talents of the new leaders coming into the district. The assurance of having a solid mentorship program with a good mentor can help retain, attract, and encourage great candidates to continually come forward to be leaders in the schools. The focus on development of the inherent skills for new leaders can be accomplished through the mentorship and support of novice principals.

2. Prepare Principals for the Realities of the Position

The principal position is not easy, and a new leader may feel that everything is magnified because of the different roles and responsibilities. "It is important to understand that as a new principal you're drinking from the fire hose anyway," second year principal David Taylor joked when describing the realities of the position and ideas for mentorship. There were three areas the principals felt were most important to prepare principals for the realities of the position.

First, new leaders needed to know and understand the culture of the district and school in order to understand the level of leadership and quality within the district. This takes time to research and review documents to learn as much as one can about the organization. The principals recommended the importance of building their background for future leadership.

101

Mentor principal Audrey Berg felt that novice principals needed to go into the position with realistic expectations. "Each community, district, and school is different. I know that my district is very different than other school districts in the state," Berg shared, "It is important for new principals to start to learn the culture of the district and school." There are so many roles of the principal that include evaluations, professional development in the building, and to prepare and analyze data for conversations with teachers. There are also some harder responsibilities such as difficult conversations with parents about student behaviors or meetings with teachers who need additional support with their teaching and learning. Principals need to understand the philosophy of their school district and the buildings to prepare how they may approach or respond to certain situations.

It was also important for every principal to learn tips on how to prioritize the work. "It would be helpful to learn how to separate the wheat from the chaff," first year Principal Robert Thomas shared. This helps new leaders understand the bigger issues that are pressing for a principal and eliminate some of the other items that are not as immediate. There are some things that can be learned from the mentor, but there are additional ways to develop this learning. Sometimes it can come through the confirmation from leaders on how to arrange and prioritize the tasks.

Finally, the relationship between the mentor and mentee takes time to develop. The three novice principals and two mentor principals shared what they felt was important to prepare principals for the realities of the position. A big part of learning the principal role was to build trust between the mentor and mentee, and develop a relationship with school colleagues. A new principal is not going to know everything about the role and he or she needs to be able to ask for help from his or her mentor. First year principal Robert Thomas reiterated the need for the sense

102

of humble confidence, "New principals need to be humble enough to know that they do not know everything and confident enough to know that if something is not right to know who to contact or learn how to respond to that situation."

Mentor principal Andrew Bell emphasized the need for multiple people to provide support, "I still don't know everything, but I know whom to call, and that is really important." The five principals each expressed a phone list or someone they contacted to provide support. The job can be so isolating. A big part of building collaboration for the leaders was to have conversations with someone who was also living the principal position like they were currently living it.

The more opportunities to talk, collaborate, and problem solve with each other can help principals move forward with decisions, projects, or goals. It allowed mentors and mentees to build a relationship with one another when they work together for a common purpose. "This position is not something that we can do on our own," novice Principal Michael Gray articulated about the opportunity to have really effective conversations about an issue. "The education culture in general is to keep moving, keep moving, and if it is not working change it." Gray reiterated that there are many pressures to change within the system to get better, but the level of commitment from everyone is not necessarily there. He felt principals are expected to have skills at high levels and almost immediately for the position. The mentorship relationships and cohort of principals can help recognize the strengths leaders have in an area and others they may need to develop. Gray stated:

> If time was set aside to say, here is my problem, and to not feel bad about it, but to collectively come together to support that person and not judge the situation. It can help you move forward as a leader and support the process to be better in the position.

The increased assistance and knowledge from leaders can change what may initially have been impossible for the principal and something that can be accomplished. Michael Gray added, "It would help some of the similar challenges that we continue to face in our schools, and be nice to not feel like you are all on your own."

Novice principals rely on the support from their mentors and colleagues too. These partnerships can help them find balance in their role. There are many expectations placed on principals from the district level in addition to the numerous responsibilities at the school. "This job will burn you out in a heartbeat, because you are running all the time," reflected mentor principal Andrew Bell. Principals need to structure time in their day to be able to find balance. It definitely was something that each novice principal struggled with because they wanted to be able to address everything with high levels of competence.

Bell reflected how the impact of his work started to impact his health and family in a negative way. He decided to step back and gave himself permission to walk away from the office and return to work the next day. "It helped to walk away, go home, and come back the next day refreshed to tackle the role anew," Bell stated. He acknowledged that many of his mentees continue to struggle to find balance between work and life. It took a personal decision to not let the principal position run his life, because he had other important roles as a husband, father, son, and friend. He recognized the work could consume your life, if you let it. Therefore, he strived to help novice principals he worked with as a mentor to establish balance within their new roles.

Mentor principal Audrey Berg shared, "There is no way to teach a novice principal everything they need to know for the position." They may not have experienced a situation or it might be specific to their school. The mentor can help in a way. "It is kind of like been there, done that experience," added Berg. There are some things that a mentor may be able to predict

because he or she has already experienced similar scenarios with district expectations, parents, or teachers. The opportunity to have a conversation between the mentee and mentor can assist with some of the experiences and overwhelming aspects of the position. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. The time to come together was important to sit down and talk with one another to find out how they might be handle the situation or accomplish the task.

Finally, mentorship programs are meant to develop and grow the novice principals but sometimes the ability to continue to do the work comes from within you. Audrey Berg shared:

> The principal position is a thankless job. When things are going poorly or there is an issue, then it is all consuming. And when the role is going well, rarely do we step aside and say to our peers, you did an excellent job with this project or I appreciate the time it took to do your work, and say, "Thank you."

The personal celebrations or accolades for the role do not always occur for principals. The leader has to keep their focus with his or her core values they first established when he or she decided to be a principal. This was important for the make-up of a principal's leadership style and skills during times when adversity arises. It helped leaders continue to move forward through the challenges of the position. First-year principal, Robert Thomas reflected on his promise to realize it was important to believe in what leaders are capable of doing, even with moments of doubt. He stated:

> I walked out of the door every day for the first semester wondering if I could do this job. I don't know if I'm ready for the job. When I reflected on my first year here, there were plenty of stressors and I made plenty of mistakes. I just kept pushing forward, and I had to realize that you could be successful and follow your instinct and what makes sense to you and is planned and what is best for kids. Even when there might be no one else to acknowledge what you are doing on a daily basis.

The new leaders entered into the principal position benefited from someone to help prepare them for the work. The role does require many skills, but with support, a novice principal can learn and grow to become better every day.

3. Leadership Skills and Professional Growth

A principal begins his or her role with specific qualities and skills required for the position. These leadership skills can be enhanced with the work that is done with the mentor and mentee relationship. It also can be improved with the work and experiences gained in the role. There are areas the five leaders felt were important to do and not do as a new principal. Some of these expectations are well known and are predicated on the fact the principals wish they had done them better. Other responses were issues that the novice principals and mentors have learned simply in the role. The principals shared several examples about the role of the principal and how they grew as leaders.

David Taylor, a second-year middle school principal, shared a few ideas he felt were essential for a novice principal based on his experiences. He wanted to make sure that new leaders did not make any quick decisions. According to Taylor, there are always going to be teachers or parents who try to change a past practice or want something to be different because a new principal is in the school. The decision making process can be time consuming for a new leader. As a novice, the principal may make attempts to talk to everyone involved with the decision so his or her voice is being heard. Then there is the time it takes to think and reflect on the process before the final decision is made for the affected group. "Quick decisions, for the most part are pretty benign, but the one time that you make a decision without thinking it through is the one time you get yourself backed into a corner," replied Taylor. He experienced this when he was passing through the halls to a teacher observation when another teacher caught him off-guard about a student discipline issue. He agreed and then upon further reflection, "I had to back paddle to reverse what the teacher set in motion."

He also cautioned new principals to realize there is not time to get any real work done during the school day. The role is so multifaceted and each day is different. "What you may have expected to work on for the day gets pushed back because you are dealing with something you never imagined would happen," Taylor shared. Over the past year, Taylor has established a routine that works for his schedule to arrive early to return phone calls and reply to emails. He learned that simply responding to emails throughout the day took up a significant portion of his time. So he made a decision to not spend the day providing an immediate response to every email. Then when school starts and the doors open, he is present and available to the kids. He can then address the unforeseen issues that come up in the day.

Taylor's final recommendation was to be very deliberate with the use of time. This was especially important when parents or staff members wanted him to be readily available at any time. He wanted to be accessible to parents and teachers, but realized he needed to establish a protocol for individuals to talk to the principal out of a sense of urgency. If a parent or teacher came into the office and wanted immediate attention it pulled him away from other commitments. He shared:

> Just because a parent or teacher may want to put their finger in the face of the principal and demand to know why or how something happened and what you're going to do about it does not mean that you have to immediately address it. It is perfectly okay to say, "I'm going to have to think about that, or I haven't thought about that."

Taylor established a procedure for individuals to set an appointment with the office staff to get on his schedule. It allowed him time to think and respond to the emergency situations with a clearer perspective.

Michael Gray also shared some ideas to assist principals with the role and responsibilities. It started in the very beginning of his principalship to build trust with teachers. He felt it was

important to establish the relationships through open and honest feedback that was offered to teachers in a timely fashion. It was a process that can be transformational to be able to help teachers live up to the support provided to them as educators. He shared a story about a habitually tardy student that was failing in class. The parent was upset because the teacher was not able to support the student with make-up work and re-teaching material. He felt it was his responsibility to learn as much about the situation to be able to support the teacher, student, and parent, and make an informed decision. The principal built the relationships with the teachers in the school through solid lines of communication. The support and collaboration assisted teachers with their job and with the goals and expectations to address teaching and learning.

Robert Thomas thought it was important to be consistent and available to the stakeholders of the school community. The open and direct communication to the group was valuable to make sure individuals understood what was expected from each group. He established clear and purposeful communication because people listened to what a leader says. He felt, "It should not be off the cuff." The better prepared a leader was to understand and articulate the school needs can assist with the development of the expectations. He prepared himself for the role by building his background information. He reviewed previous school improvement plans, data reports, and evaluations at the start of the year. He read current research to be able to address issues or changes that he felt were necessary in the school. His preparation for staff meetings, parent/teacher meetings, or other reports took time, but he felt he was more credible with the stakeholders because of his preparation.

In addition, Thomas felt like a leader needed to be cognizant of the work the people throughout the building performed each day. He walked through the building to observe what students and teachers were doing in the classrooms. He stated:

Principals need to recognize and celebrate the success of the teachers and students. I would do a simple walk-through of a classroom and I could learn a ton of information in the short time period about the students and teacher, then I could from just reviewing a data report. I felt it was important to recognize the great work I saw at staff meetings.

Later in the school year, when he reviewed a summative report in math, he noticed significant growth for students in one particular class. The students made over a year's growth and the class had most of the students within the advanced range. There were only two students who were not advanced. In that situation, he immediately walked down to the teacher's classroom to share the report and celebrate the success. It made a huge impact for the teacher. "Her response was grateful and I could tell there was a sense of pride. It was so simple, but so satisfying," reflected Thomas.

The principals expressed different leadership qualities and skills that helped them understand what was important for the principalship. Some of the skills they felt were important were the following: build background about the position, nurture relationships with stakeholders, strong communication, solid decision making processes, being transparent, prioritize the work, and celebrate successes. These skills were not necessarily taught within the mentorship program, but the principals believed they were important enough to be able to assist a leader with the professional growth of the position.

4. Students are the Priority

The mentors and novice principals continually articulated that students were the priority for every individual who worked at the school or provided support at home.

"We are here for kids, and we are here to make sure every kid has an opportunity to grow," second-year principal David Taylor stated. The leadership group has the ability to ensure students are able to learn and grown. Taylor established a list with some non-negotiable items

that prioritized expectations for students. He wanted learning to be student-centered and focused on at-risk students. He created a common time for daily reading and solid blocks of time for literacy and math. Taylor made sure all decisions related change in the school focused on the students and the list of non-negotiable items.

Audrey Berg, mentor principal, reiterated the emphasis on student achievement to make sure that all of the resources of the school benefited the students. It did not matter if it was time, materials, mentors, or support, because students were in the school for such a short period of time. Berg articulated the need for continued professional development for her teachers to help them be successful with the teaching and learning. "We need to be forever growing as a system of learners and continue to push our thinking to have our work benefit the kids," stated Berg. If teachers needed support with writing, then she felt it was her responsibility to make sure the teachers had the background and information to develop standards based lessons focused on successful writing practices. "I needed to design my trainings to get the right people in front of my staff so they can be successful with their teaching. In the end, it benefited the kids," Berg articulated.

Mentor principal Andrew Bell also spoke about providing the best learning environment for kids and staff. "Everything we do creates a productive setting for students and it means that we have to continue to support the teachers," stated Bell. There are many opportunities with continued Professional Development to provide teachers with the opportunity to talk about what students need through collaboration and learning. "We have found value in our Professional Learning Communities and school-wide goals. If we're all working toward a common goal, with students as our priority, then we continue to push for student success," Bell concluded.

Michael Gray, third-year principal, added that his push for increased student success has lead to improvement for the teachers. It meant he needed additional resources to support the teachers. He felt that a principal can help teachers identify what they need to be better, but rarely the principal is what the teachers' need to be successful. Gray shared:

> I am the person that gets to be in every classroom almost every day. I watch to find something that might benefit another teacher, and then I need to make it work. It might be to provide the time to have teachers observe and learn from each other, what needs to be done for students, and how they are going to be held accountable for the student results. I have to make it work for my staff by providing substitutes and time to collaborate. The opportunity to learn from one another is more valuable than a dictated expectation from the principal.

The main goal for first-year principal, Robert Thomas was to help every student realize as much of his or her potential in a one-year span. "We need to help students become the very best people," added Thomas, "They need to have the absolute most opportunities to avail themselves in their life, and that is why the work teachers do every day with students is so crucial." He reflected on work the teachers did in the school to support the whole child was more than what was reported within final test results or a database. The academic, social, and emotional support for students embraced the relationships teachers created each day to help them realize as much of their potential in life.

It was important for the participants to provide necessary professional development and support for teachers to meet expectations for student achievement. It was vital to make sure novice leaders knew what to do to support teachers and students.

Conclusion

The participants shared perceptions about the principalship, leadership qualities, and mentorship programs. The opportunity to speak from the perspective of a person currently living the position shaped the context and meanings. The three novice principals and two mentors

provided their own story based on past experiences with their mentors or mentees and district

mentorship program. The programs were different based on their mentor/mentee relationship and

experiences.

The leaders expressed their hopes for the future of the mentorship and support for novice

principals. The principals discussed the matching of the mentor and mentee and concluded that

the ability to build a trusting relationship was vital for success. The principals acknowledged that

districts matched the mentor and mentee based on choice from the novice principals or

availability of the experienced mentor principals. They determined their district programs did not

provide clear expectations for the relationship or elaborated on the interaction between the

mentor/mentee. The programs also did not provide a structure for what needed to be

accomplished with the roles and responsibilities of the principalship.

The principals shared important leadership skills and qualities they felt were necessary for

the role. The different skills that the principals brought to their role were based on their personal

background and experience. The novice principals and mentors each expressed the intensity of

the role for all leaders.

"The most powerful thing we can do for the mentorship and support of novice principals

is to elevate the expectations, elevate the success for the leaders, and the respect of the profession

will be elevated too," expressed Michael Gray. Gray felt it might change the perception people

have about the challenges of the role. Then more individuals might feel that the principal position

was well supported and an excellent profession to pursue.

A novice principal experiences the work of the position, while they are currently in the

role. This really is no different than other workforces, but sometimes leaders do not know what to

expect or what may be the next assignment or issue ahead of them. The novice principals needed

112

to have time to develop relationships, make connections from past experiences, communicate with stakeholders, and make decisions. The cycle of learning can be accomplished with the mentorship and support of a novice principal.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Introduction

The narrative inquiry and analysis of in-depth interviews were from three novice principals and two mentors in three different school districts. The individuals each shared their stories and perspectives about the mentorship and support of novice principals. The significance and purpose of the research is reiterated within the summary to reveal the extent of the principalship and mentorship support to novice principals. In addition, the literature review provided the foundation and context for the study. Next, the discussion section constructed the meaning of the results by tying it to past theory, research, policy, and practice. An ideal mentorship program is presented to assist leaders and districts with a potential guide to provide mentorship and support for novice principals. The results are used to extrapolate ideas for future research. The concluding researcher's reflection provided the understanding and an explanation to why this research was valuable for the study.

Summary

This study examined the principalship through the mentorship and support of novice leaders. The increased accountability from legislation the past few decades has stressed the importance of quality school principals. The role of the principal has changed within the school system. Kearney (2010) stated, "Developing leaders is increasingly recognized as a key strategy for improving schools and closing student achievement gaps" (p. iv). Principals are second only to the influences of classroom teachers in affecting student learning and are held accountable for a school system's efforts for continuous improvement (Davis et al., 2005; Leithwood et al., 2004; NAESP, 2003; Silver et al., 2009; Sparks, 2002). This has placed an emphasis on mentoring as an effective and essential tool for developing school leaders (NASEP, 2003).

114

The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to understand the novice principals'

experiences with the support they did or did not receive from their mentors and district to make

recommendations for mentorship programs. Information was collected from new principals and

mentors to determine essential elements for mentorship programs and leadership development.

The study analyzed the relationships between the mentor/mentee, the structures of different

mentorship programs, and investigated the components that are delivered for training new

principals. The skills and professional development for new leaders partnered with experienced

mentors are meant to increase the successes for principals and improve educational outcomes for

all students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

The literature review constructed the foundation for the study and developed a need for

further research into the mentorship and support of novice principals. The review considered

numerous studies in education and other professional fields to define mentorship. Background

information and research presented a heightened awareness of the concerns within the principal

position due to changes that have occurred within the role over the past few decades. The

research also identified effective mentoring characteristics, benefits to mentors and mentees,

increased levels of support, and professional development needed by novices in their positions to

be successful.

Further investigation into district mentorship programs were designed to improve the

quality of educational leadership opportunities for novice principals. The elements of these

programs provided increased understanding of organizational structures in a school district,

reflective opportunities, role clarification with mentors, and more effective leadership practices

implemented at schools (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Increased support in the early years for new principals can help develop the skills necessary to be

effective leaders of their schools over longer periods of time (Silver et al., 2009). The focus on the support and development for new leaders takes thoughtful consideration by school districts and programs (Davis et al., 2005). These programs addressed the need for prepared principal candidates, higher levels of the support in the first few years, a commitment to preparing experienced principals to be mentors, and the desired outcomes for mentors and mentees (Daresh, 2004).

Discussion

To introduce the discussion section, an updated *Minds at Work* map was developed from the participant interviews to define what was concluded and learned from the study. (See Figure 4: "*Minds at Work*" Map—Side 2. See Also Appendix E: "*Minds at Work*" Map—Side 2). The conclusions were constructed from the responses from the novice principals and mentors. It also added to a proposal for a Principal Mentorship Program that can be used by school districts to refine and/or strengthen the mentor program for new leaders. Finally, the researcher's reflection represented continued commitment for novice principals to limit the sense of isolation and to increase the mentorship and support of novice principals. The diagram reflected the understanding that better systems of support are needed within the district mentorship program. The role of mentors needs to be better defined and ultimately the clarity of the roles helps provide better support for the novice principals. The three essential elements are the mentors, novice principals, and mentorship programs are represented by a system of cogs and wheels. Each individual part is necessary to function as part of the larger system or organization. The mentorship of novice principals needed commitment from mentor programs for continued improvement, shared perspectives, and support for mentors and mentees. This would limit the sense of isolation for leaders and increase collaboration between the district, mentor, and mentee.

Figure 4: "*Minds at Work*" Map—Side 2
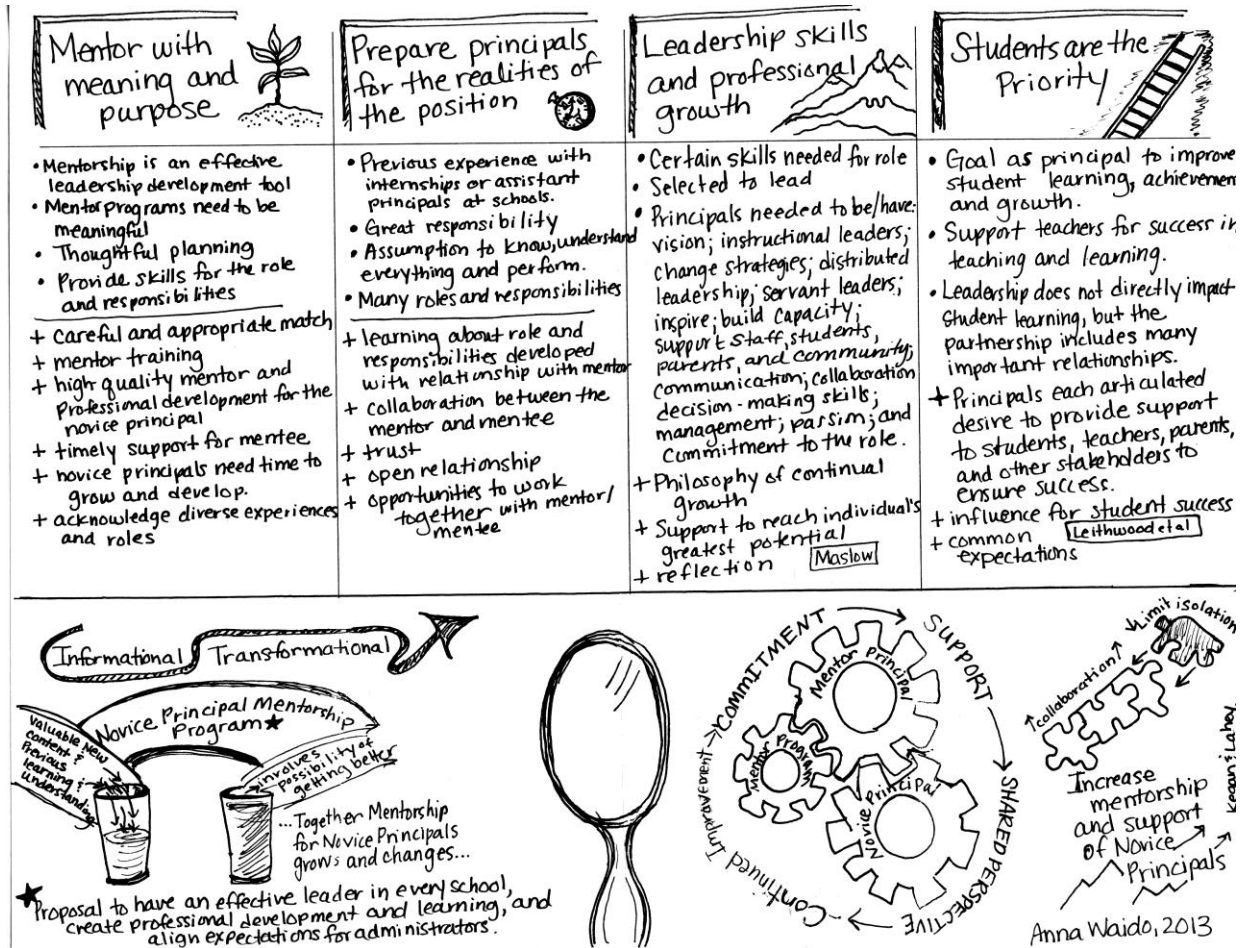
Figure 4. "*Minds at work*" map—Side 2. The map represents conclusions from the study. The map has columns that represent the four themes from the study constructed from the research and the participants' responses to the mentorship and support of novice principals. The pictures also include a diagram for a proposal for a Principal Mentorship Program. Finally, the researcher's reflection for the study based on the collective responses and personal experience. It demonstrated that the system of support for novice principals, mentors, and mentorship programs are like a system of wheels and cogs. They are connected with a purpose and work individually together. This is meant to increase collaboration and limit the sense of isolation for novice principals. Adapted from *Immunity to Change: How to overcome it and unlock the potential in yourself and your organization* by R. Kegan and L. L. Lahey. Copyright 2009 by Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.

The results of the data analysis revealed an understanding of how mentorship supports novice principals in the principalship. The opportunity for principals to share their perspective from a person currently living the position shaped the context and meanings. The interaction and relationships established with each novice principal or mentor initiated rich description and stories to shape a mentor program. The main results of the research indicated mentorship programs for novice principals are different based on the experience and relationships with the mentor. There are concerns and challenges for a novice principal because everything within the position was new. The new leaders often expressed they were learning about the different roles and responsibilities while they currently performing the principal position.

The five leaders shared similar needs for the partnership. It started with the development of the relationship between the mentor and mentee. The individuals first needed to establish trust in order to build the support needed from the mentor. New principals then utilized the partnership with their knowledge and leadership to perform the duties of a principal. The mentor and mentee relationship assisted with the responsibilities, challenges, and changes in the role of principal throughout the course of the program.

The results of this research are not defined beyond the study. The implementation of principal mentoring for the participants varied and the support was different. Any generalization beyond this population and setting is unknown. However, the main lesson learned was the mentorship and support of novice leaders was an effective leadership development tool. Clearly, the leaders indicated that mentorship programs in some capacity provided principals with supportive elements for the first few years of their principal experience.

Theoretical Implications

For this study, the participants shared stories from their principal experiences and mentorship programs within the context of the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space and four directions of inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The novice principals articulated the complexities of the position, challenges, and desire for some changes with the type of mentorship they received from their school district. They were cautious in their reports to include an understanding of the diversity of each individual's experience and background he or she brings to the role. In addition, the support offered to a novice principal came from a mentor who was also facing similar roles and responsibilities. The mentor principals conveyed an understanding of the role with the ability to provide confirmation about the work that was conducted by the novice principals. The mentor principals revealed they often did not have all the answers for their mentees, but they were able to collaborate and guide them through the different experiences based on what they had learned as more experienced principals.

The people in the study were not isolated within the theoretical notions, but were living the stories through the three-dimensional narrative space. The dimensions of time and place, and the personal and social experiences were told in the continuum of one's experience. The analysis of the participant's stories provided inductive themes that were used to move forward through the understanding, making meaning, and significance of the events (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The rich description and insights from the novice principals and mentors shared the findings from the main research questions. The following themes from the data collection emerged from the participants' stories:

1. Mentor with meaning and purpose
2. Prepare principals for the realities of the position

3. Leadership skills and professional growth

4. Students are the priority

The importance of the mentor and mentee relationship was significant for the participants. They expressed what they felt were relative components of the mentorship program. The leaders also shared their experiences from different schools and districts. The four themes along with the results are connected to the research questions in the study provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Research Questions and Themes

Research Question	Themes
1. What are the perspectives of novice principals regarding their experiences with mentors and mentorship programs?	1. Mentor with meaning and purpose 2. Prepare principals for the realities of the position
2. How do novice principals and mentors describe the leadership skills and professional learning for new principals?	1. Mentor with meaning and purpose 2. Prepare principals for the realities of the position 3. Leadership skills and professional growth
3. How does participating in mentorship programs influence the development and sense of leadership for a novice principal?	1. Mentor with meaning and purpose 2. Prepare principals for the realities of the position 3. Leadership skills and professional growth 4. Students are the priority

The research questions provided the foundation for reflection of the four themes in this narrative inquiry. The complexity of the principal position combined with mentor programs and support for new leaders provide the context of the narrative description. It was from the collective voice that the suggestions and conclusions were brought together and connected to previous research. The main research questions are answered and represented in Table 3.

Table 3

Research Questions and Answers

Research Question	Answers
1. What are the perspectives of novice principals regarding their experiences with mentors and mentorship programs?	The participants determined that a principal program must **mentor with meaning and purpose**. The new leaders needed to learn the culture and climate of the district. It starts with choice and availability for the mentee with a well-matched mentor. The district program must provide realistic expectations and time to **prepare the principals for the realities position**. The mentor program builds the capacity of the leaders in the district.
2. How do novice principals and mentors describe the leadership skills and professional learning for new principals?	The participants identified continued **leadership skills and professional growth** for principals. The mentor program provides clear expectations for the relationship, structure, leadership skills, and professional growth.
3. How does participating in mentorship programs influence the development and sense of leadership for a novice principal?	The principals recognized federal legislation and state expectations to ensure student achievement. The leaders continued to articulate **students are the priority** for leadership skills and professional development.

The thematic analysis allowed for continuous and simultaneous collection between data and the new concepts. The findings derived from the transcripts of the interviews and field notes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maldonado, Rhoads, & Buenavista, 2005). The transcribed interview texts were each read and reread to allow the themes to emerge from the data, rather than searching for pre-defined themes.

The principal position was defined as complex with the different responsibilities that are required in the role. "I had been a long time assistant principal before I obtained my first principal position at the elementary school. During the first semester, every night I walked out of the door wondering if I could do this job," reflected Thomas. He felt there were many new

aspects to the position that he either did not know or had any previous experience. As a new principal, he learned about the new experiences, different decisions that needed to be made in the role, communication to the school staff and community, and other aspects while working on the job. He stated, "A mentor was a good place to start to acquire certain knowledge or skills about the culture of the district, expectations for the role, and to build the trust in the relationship." The mentor provided clarity for the principal position, but there were aspects that were not clear. Therefore, one of the themes that emerged from the participants was to mentor with meaning and purpose. The first research question and corresponding themes are in Table 4.

Table 4

Research Question and Themes

Research Question	Themes
1. What are the perspectives of novice principals regarding their experiences with mentors and mentorship programs?	1. Mentor with meaning and purpose 2. Prepare principals for the realities of the position

1. Mentor with Meaning and Purpose

It was understood from preceding research and comments made from the principals, that mentorship is an effective leadership development tool (NASEP, 2003). The opportunity to learn to be a great principal takes time in the early years of a career. The new principals sometimes felt like they struggled in the role and at times it was overwhelming. The mentor program has to be meaningful for the individuals involved. It takes thoughtful consideration and planning by school districts to ensure the success and sustainability for new principals (Davis et al., 2005). Mentorship programs provided the additional skills needed to learn and understand the roles and responsibilities of the principalship (Daresh, 2004).

It should address the needs of the mentor and the mentee. The first step in a program is to carefully and appropriately match the mentor and mentee. The process allows for individuals to build trust with one another through the relationship.

"The mentor program is meant to provide safety for the mentee," according to Audrey Berg, "You have to establish a safe relationship so a novice principal can flat out say, 'I don't get it or I don't understand.' And we can talk it through." The relationships are meant to develop a collaborative partnership to provide guidance with school and district policies and procedures, have open and safe communication, and receive supportive and constructive feedback for the mentee.

Another thoughtful consideration for the district is to support the mentor with training and guidance for the support. The mentor has his or her own building and duties to be responsible for during the partnership with a mentee. Professional development for the mentors provided valuable tools to support them in their role as a mentor. New principals needed a high-quality mentor and professional development that meets the needs of the district and leaders. Therefore, careful planning and implementation of a mentorship program reached out to the participants to understand the individual needs of the mentor and mentee.

Mentor programs are provided by many states, but training for mentors has been inadequate to provide support for new leaders (Mitgang, 2012). The two mentors in the study did not receive training, any expectations, or additional information on how to support the novice principals. The partnership between the mentor and mentee was meant to address the district procedures and policies for the partnership and the mentor program. The relationship for the novice principal from the mentor developed through observations, reflective conversations, and continuous improvement of the roles and responsibilities. The support was conducted in a timely

manner to address the questions, reflections, or concerns from novice principals. The mentees had access to their mentor in person, email, or phone. The relationships between the mentor and mentee helped to prioritize the work and prepared him or her for some unforeseen tasks or expectations.

Finally, novice principals needed time to grow and develop in their role. "I knew I was making mistakes," concluded first year principal Robert Thomas, "However, I never felt like I had the time to develop. It was like an unmentioned expectation that I needed to be perfect the first time." The district must support the development of effective principals over time to improve school leadership (Mitgang, 2012). The mentorship and support of novice principals can enhance the diverse experiences that individuals bring to the district. Finally, opportunities to support principal development leads to sustained improvements for the role, clear articulation for expectations, the ability for leaders to strengthen teacher instruction, and ultimately lead to student achievement.

2. Prepare Principals for the Realities of the Position

Each of the participants in the study articulated the complexity of the principal position. The role of principal was not a position that initially was fully understood, until each person was the leader of the school. There were aspects of the job that were not experienced by the principals, even if they had previous experiences as an assistant principal or had completed an internship with a university principal preparation program. The principals realized the even greater responsibility as the leaders of their own schools. The district, staff, parents, students, and community members relied on the leadership skills and qualities of the principal. "You are in this position of authority as a principal, you feel like you should know everything, or maybe that is the

perception or the pressure that is given to us," added third year principal Michael Gray, "Principals need support in order to assist them with the intensity of the position."

The participants shared many of the expectations of the role that included teacher evaluations, professional development in the building, the preparation and analysis of school data for conversations with teachers, budgets, and school schedules. Then there were additional responsibilities that were more challenging. Sometimes there were difficult conversations that occurred with parents about student behaviors or meetings with teachers who needed extra support with their teaching and learning.

The participants learned about the role from the relationship with the mentor. The district also provided additional professional development and support. The principals relied on what they knew about their own knowledge and skill sets to perform the position. Sometimes there were mistakes that were made, but the novice principals kept pushing forward to learn and grow.

The ability for leaders to sustain and spread effective leadership training requires the commitment from school districts and is significant to all principals (Mitgang, 2012). Mentor principal Audrey Berg expressed:

> The district office needs to realize that all the expectations put on principals can be hard. People are going to need support otherwise we are not going to be able to do everything that is expected for the position, because there are always struggles, even for a more experienced principal. There really is an opportunity to refine what we do for principals. There needs to be ongoing professional development to support all principals in the area of teacher evaluations, data collection, and data conversations as just some examples.

The district needed to provide a structure and clear expectations for the partnership between the mentor and mentee. The collaboration between the mentor and mentee then allowed individuals to build trust and have an open and honest dialogue. The more opportunities for

principals to problem solve, share, and communicate with each other developed teamwork

between the leaders to understand the different roles and responsibilities.

3. Leadership Skills and Professional Growth

In addition to the novice principal's experience with mentors and mentorship programs,

they relied on their leadership skills and professional growth. The next research question was

added onto the previous themes presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Research Question and Themes

Research Question	Themes
2. How do novice principals and mentors describe the leadership skills and professional learning for new principals?	1. Mentor with meaning and purpose 2. Prepare principals for the realities of the position 3. Leadership skills and professional growth

The novice principals each entered their positions with certain skill sets necessary for the

role. They were selected to uphold the policies and procedures from the school district and

perform the position of principal. Individually, they each described the leadership qualities they

felt were important to build relationships with the school community which included the

following: develop a shared school vision; provide instructional leadership strategies; use change

strategies to implement a new behavior system, develop educational programs or teaching and

learning strategies; utilize distributed leadership to build the capacity of the teachers; and servant

leadership to inspire and offer support for school staff. They also listed the following skills that

are vital for the principal to achieve success: communication, collaboration, decision-making

skills, discipline, decisiveness, management, passion, and commitment to the role. "Successful

leadership is not the result of obtaining a position, but rather it is the knowledge and

understanding of the leadership skills along with the personal ability to effectively implement

those skills" (Sharma, 2010, p. 1). The ability to articulate and apply the skills was important for the principals.

The mentorship and support for the novice principal position developed realistic expectations for the diversity and experience for each individual. The leaders thought extra time was needed to allow novice principals to grow into their positions. First-year principal Robert Thomas shared:

> It is not ethical to hire a new teacher and expect that he or she will be a master educator within a short period of time. I would never hire a new teacher and be disappointed if after three to nine months he or she was not an expert like another rock star teacher that has exhibited great teaching and learning. That is unethical for me as a leader. The same principles must apply to novice leaders. If the school districts are going to hire a new principal, then they have to understand that he or she is going to learn and grow into the role. There are going to be some successes and failures with their position.

Thomas continued to share district leaders should recognize what new leaders are doing every day in the position. "If the effort, aptitude, and skills are strong, and they recognize the leader has been able to grow in his or her job, then the novice leaders can continue to move forward as the principal of the school," he concluded. The support was accomplished with a trusting relationship established with a mentor in a mentorship program.

The understanding of the roles and responsibilities was crucial for the success of novice principals. The assumptions many individuals felt as principals was that they were able to perform all of the role expectations, qualities, and skills at high levels. However, the new leaders expressed a philosophy of continual growth. This process was supported through what Maslow (1943) described within the hierarchy of human needs with the highest level of self-actualization. The three novice principals expressed what they were capable of doing as leaders, but also the struggles they had within the position. The mentorship of novice leaders provided an opportunity to assist them and help them to reach their greatest potential and become satisfied

127

with their sense of self (Martin & Joomis, 2007). Maslow's theory cultivated the leadership

skills and growth of a principal's experience, but it also addressed the principal's ability to

reflect on their knowledge as a leader (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006). It was applied to mentorship

relationships so mentors and mentees focused on the development to be effective leaders and

foster their personal growth (Francis & Kristsonis, 2006; Intrator & Kunzman, 2006).

4. Students are the Priority

The final research question connected to the study by bringing together the meaning and

purpose of mentorship, the roles and responsibilities of the position, the continued professional

learning and the overall goals for student learning and growth. The final research question and

corresponding themes are represented in Table 6.

Table 6

Research Question and Themes

Research Question	Themes
3. How does participating in mentorship programs influence the development and sense of leadership for a novice principal?	1. Mentor with meaning and purpose 2. Prepare principals for the realities of the position 3. Leadership skills and professional growth 4. Students are the priority

The novice principals and mentors all expressed the overall goal of principal leadership

was to improve student learning. The impact of their leadership combined with many variables

was considered very complex to ensure improved student learning and growth (Leithwood et al.,

2004). The principals articulated that student achievement and growth was their first priority.

This combined with the support that was offered to the teachers in the building helped to promote

successful teaching and learning for student results.

Leithwood et al., (2004) addressed how leadership influenced student learning in a framework that featured many complex relationships. The theoretical framework identified all the important relationships that played a critical role to support learning for students. The partnerships included principals, teachers, family members, district leaders, and other stakeholders. It also addressed the many direct and indirect relationships that are a part of the efforts to impact student learning. These indirect influences come from state and district leadership, polices, practices, leaders' professional learning, and the school and classroom conditions.

When examining the framework, leadership was the linchpin between all the different relationships. Their ability to work with the different internal and external factors and relationships between the groups was vital for student success. Principals are second only to the influences of classroom teachers in affecting student learning and they are held accountable for a school system's efforts for continuous improvement (Davis et al., 2005; Leithwood et al., 2004; NAESP, 2003; Silver et al., 2009; Sparks, 2002). Therefore, the five principal leaders each articulated their desire to provide support to ensure success for students. This occurred when the leaders utilized their skills and knowledge to foster the desire in other stakeholders to attain their school goals, get better student results, and inspire others to perform.

The four themes brought forth by the five leaders were essential to the research questions. The thematic contexts linked together the support for the novice principals and provided for valuable discussion on the transformation of mentorship programs. The importance of providing a systematic mentorship program with desired outcomes and a solid mentor/mentee relationship was seen as a crucial step for the leaders. In addition, the realities of the principal position were not entirely known until one attained the role of a principal. This awareness for principals can

129

lend itself to better-prepared leaders. The leadership and skills that a principal brought with them to the role was enhanced with further support and professional development. Finally, all of the principals understood their influence and work was meant to support the students and teachers. In order to ensure student achievement and continued growth, the principals focused on the leadership qualities and skills meant to improve the teaching and learning process. This work was best accomplished through the collaboration between districts and leaders to support and sustain the principal position.

Principal Mentorship Program

Quality leaders are essential for education. The attention paid to the principal position by researchers has contributed to the link between school leadership and student achievement (Mendels, 2012a). The training and support is especially important in the first few years on the job. "Principals need high-quality mentoring and professional development tailored to individual and district needs" (Mitgang, 2012, p. 24). Increased demands on education required effective principals who can guide schools and provide solid instructional practices that ensure increased student achievement.

The five principals in this study stressed some of the difficulties of the leadership position. The role of the principal can be cumbersome. The challenges of the position dealt with the numerous responsibilities and the ability to be able to perform all of the expectations for the role at high levels. The efforts of each individual did not go unnoticed. The novice principals in the study attributed some development to the support from their mentor or other principals with whom they reached out to for support. They also relied on their own leadership capabilities and skills. The mentors and novice principals acknowledged some requirements for the position are not inherently known until a principal is the leader of the school. Mentor programs have the

potential to provide novice principals with support that is vital during the first few years in the role.

The current research defined what mentorship programs are doing and not doing for principals. It also addressed the challenges within the position that attributed to higher accountability and a need for more effective leaders. However, the literature does not have a defined principal mentorship program. It presented principles such as the careful match between the mentor and mentee, professional support, and alignment of district expectations. The feedback from the three new principals and two mentors in the study felt there needed to be a better system for the mentorship and support of new principals. The ideal mentorship program addresses the support for new principals and provides solid professional development around effective leadership skills and knowledge.

See Figure 5 for the Principal Mentorship Program, an organizational representation of an explicit mentorship program and the necessary elements for novice principals. The program proposal coupled with the themes from the study created the need for a strategic and systematic principal mentorship plan during the first year on the job. In order to mentor with meaning and purpose the program design develops a vision and mission; goals and objectives; professional development learning activities and plan; and desired outcomes for the mentorship program. Personnel from the district leadership prepare principals for the realities of the position with training for the mentor and careful parings of the mentor/mentee. The professional development is based on district policies and procedures, and supports continued leadership skills and professional growth. The continued improvement of the program is evaluated through several means to ensure students are the priority.

Figure 5: Principal Mentorship Program

Program Design **1. Mentor with Meaning & Purpose**	Personnel **2. Prepare Principals for the Realities of the Position**
• Vision and Mission • Goals and Objectives • Professional Development Learning Activities and Plan • Desired Outcomes • The district will define the purpose of the program. • The district will develop the necessary policies and procedures for the program. • The district will have a clear and common understanding of the support and mentorship program for principals.	• District Leadership Team for Principal Mentorship Program • Create Selection Process for experienced Principal Mentors • Oversee the program to ensure the program's goals and objectives are fulfilled. • Facilitate the interaction between the new principals and mentors. • Pair mentors with mentees. • The mentors will receive professional development to learn important aspects of the program while directly supporting the novice principal. • Mentors will collaborate and develop relationships with mentees.
Professional Development **3. Leadership Skills and Professional Growth**	Evaluation of Program **4. Students are the Priority**
• Provide professional development for mentors and novice principals • Mentors learn the importance of their role with communication, collaboration, and support. • Novice principals learn district expectations, policies, and procedures. Principals will increase leadership strategies and other skills to use and implement in their own school. • Mentors support novice principals with the roles and responsibilities of the position. • Novice principals demonstrate their understanding of leadership skills to integrate strategies into their own school.	• Survey • Interviews • Document Review of Principal Mentor Program • Student data (after three years) • Collaboration and support from mentors and novice principals. • Novice principals have an increase of support with the roles and responsibilities. • Interview teachers for feedback about new principals • Collect and analyze student data to determine if there is any student achievement over time.

Figure 5. Principal mentorship program. The figure design emerged from the thematic analysis of the narrative inquiry. The program proposal is designed to have an effective leader in every school, create professional development and learning, and align expectations for administrators.

The proposal design for a Principal Mentorship Program expanded on how school districts can have an effective school leader in every school, create professional development and learning for principals, and align expectations for administrators across the district. Principals new to the district learn culture and climate expectations within the school system. In addition, principals use applicable strategies for the position to implement at their school site and with the support of their mentor. Finally, the program is meant to streamline the additional meetings that occur from varying district leaders or expectations. The caution that was articulated from the novice principals was the mentor program should not be one more thing to do. If the program is meant to be successful, then novice principals and their mentors meet according to the proposal design and do not have additional district meetings or expectations added to their plate.

The design to enhance or create a mentorship program includes a collaborative effort between district leadership, mentor principals, and novice principals. The team works together to shape the program and share areas of expertise to enhance the mentorship experience for new principals. It is established with a clear purpose and vision, develops goals and objectives for mentoring new principals, and creates a learning plan with research-based learning activities for novice principals. The goal of the program helps cultivate strong instructional leaders within the district. Mentors provide support to new principals to assist with the demands of the role and share insight on time management, rigor, accountability, and commitment. Novice principals collaborate with their mentors to gain support and affirmation they are progressing as effective school leaders.

Teams of district and schools leaders determine important elements of the program to implement for novice principals. To revamp or create a program requires energy, money, and cooperation from many individuals (Mendels, 2012b). To start, team members evaluate the

program already in place for new principals by the district and review any documents and current practices. The analysis determines the opportunities for support from other experienced principals and enhances professional development. The district collects feedback from principals who have recently participated in the mentorship process to gain insightful information and ideas for support. The district group determines from the review their overall mission and goals.

Next, the collaboration with an experienced mentor provides a novice principal with a support system to feel successful in their role. The relationship will foster an understanding of the responsibilities of the position, the culture and climate of the district, and expectations for the role. The new principal increases his or her abilities to lead, affirms their strengths, builds on the knowledge that they are on the right path, and utilizes the skills at his or her own school. The Principal Mentorship Program Plan creates an overall mission; short-term, and long-term goals; learning actions and activities for both the mentor and mentee. (See Appendix F: A Principal Mentorship Program Plan).

Some of the essential components of the Principal Mentorship Program establish the policies and procedures regarding the selection and pairing of the mentors with the new principal. The mentors participate in training to gain expertise in relationship skills, administrative expectations, communication, instructional leadership skills, technology, and expectations for the program (Mendels, 2012b). The relationship between the new principal and mentor may be one of the most important aspects of the program. The careful matching of the mentor and mentee establishes the mutual relationship. It is based on factors that include the demographics of the school, characteristics of its teachers, and the ability to help mentees understand the new responsibilities (Mendels, 2012b).

The program provides ongoing professional learning for the mentors and novice principals. The new principals attend professional development sessions focused on the quality standards for principal effectiveness where states have already taken action or adapted standards outlined by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008; Colorado Department of Education, 2012). Principals learn federal and state requirements and district polices related to strategic leadership; instructional leadership; school culture and equality; human resource leadership; managerial leadership; external development leadership; and student growth (Colorado Department of Education, 2012). Comprehensive training includes instruction on leading change, distributive leadership, school vision, mission, and strategic goals. The curriculum, content, and standards for learning are taught to understand how the content for teaching and learning models are addressed within the classrooms. Other topics may address improving instruction through technology integration; managing change within their school buildings; establishing a culture of collaboration; building relationship with teachers, parents and other colleagues; providing professional development for staff members; support collaboration with staff to ensure improved student learning; conflict resolution; staff evaluation; hiring or dismissal of staff; family and community involvement; and student growth and achievement. (See Appendix G: Principal Mentorship Program Learning Plan; Appendix H: Principal Mentorship Program Month-by-Month Detailed Topics; and Appendix I: Timeline for Implementing the Principal Mentorship Program).

Finally, one of the most important responsibilities of the district is to determine how to evaluate the mentorship program and support the principal performance (Mendels, 2012b). The goals and objectives of the program should be measured for success. Evaluations are designed to address the expected outcomes the program might achieve based on the identified goals and

intended results of the mentorship program. The assessment tools are used to interview

participants, collect survey information, and other evidence based projects already connected to

the role of a principal with a document review. The overall goal of the mentorship program is to

improve the instructional leadership of a principal to affect the teaching and learning in the

school.

The principal mentorship program streamlines continued improvement, shared

perspectives, and commitment by districts to support novice principals. Its purpose is to not only

answer why mentoring is important but how to accomplish the program with a set of guidelines

and principles that can be adapted for school districts. The opportunity to have better trained

principals is an investment, but in the long run it will build the capacity of the leadership for

schools and districts.

Recommendations for Further Research

The results of this study are in line with many of the research documents and studies that

have been conducted around the mentorship and support of novice principal by such researchers

as Daresh (2004), Darling-Hammond et al. (2007), NAESP (2003) and Silver et al. (2009). It

may be difficult to find something new to study within the context of this research. However, if

previous research has documented the principal position is a challenge and there needs to be

better support for the leaders, then we as a state, district, and school must take the opportunity to

focus on the mentorship and support of novice principals.

The development of the studies through a constructivist perspective guided the research.

The learning process engaged principals and expanded on their personal experiences through

exploration, thinking, interactions, and reflection within their own environment (Hickman,

Neubert, & Reich, 2009). The different research possibilities around the principal position can

be elaborated in the following ways:

1. Professional Development for Principals

2. Districts Partnership with University Principal Preparation Programs

3. Support for Mentors

4. Systematic Structures in place

1. Professional Development for Principals

The principals in the study sought out different professional learning and often took

responsibility for their own professional development. They attended national and state

conferences on leadership to focus on teaching, learning, and student achievement. There was

merit in many conferences and outside training opportunities. However, to explore what can be

offered within the context of a school district changes the leadership support and learning. The

expanded research on what districts can provide for their school administrators builds the

leadership capacity with a cohesive approach to school improvement, and the knowledge and

skills needed for the role. There are a multitude of possibilities presented for the professional

development for principals like instructional best practices, standards-based expectations, or

teacher evaluations.

2. Districts Partnership with University Principal Preparation Programs

The partnership between school districts and university programs creates solid

professional and educational learning opportunities. The collaboration between the two

organizations develops effective principals at every school. This includes the entire learning

process to become a principal for an individual. The experience starts from the selection into a

principal program, learning and training, to the final role as a new principal. The theory learned

in principal preparation programs for aspiring principals then connects the principal preparation to the application of practical experiences. It must be applied in the training process. This incorporates more innovative approaches to address the complexity of the principal position. Research in this area strengthens the roles and responsibilities new principals' experiences and an entire principal preparation program. It eventually leads to more qualified principals.

3. Support for Mentors

The mentors in this study did not receive any additional training to prepare them for their roles. The districts also did not provide guidelines or expectations for meetings to support the partnership between the mentor and mentee. The ability to draw off one's own experience and instinct can take the mentor/mentee relationship so far. A comprehensive look into what is provided to mentors through training might change the relationship for the mentor/mentee. The study examines the skills used to build trusting relationships, listening skills, effective communication, constructive feedback, and development strategies to prepare mentors to work with novice leaders.

4. Systematic Structures in Place

The support for novice leaders requires an investment from district leaders and administrators to ensure principal effectiveness. To avoid turnover or poor principal leaders, there needs to be further investigation into the structures for principal mentorship programs. Programs need to clearly define expectations for the mentors and mentees. The accountability addresses different measures to include a more streamlined process to eliminate additional tasks for already busy principals. A quality program includes transition time for the new principal to become familiar with the school, district, educational initiatives, and support them through social, emotional, and professional needs.

The research possibilities provide novice principals an opportunity to work with their mentors to improve mentorship. There are several key factors to obtain an effective principal at each school. These include principal standards, high-quality training, selective hiring, and a combination of solid on-the job support and performance evaluations (Mendels, 2012a). These concepts were especially important for new principals. This process is transformational to elevate their expectations for the profession, to collaborate with the mentors, and understand the support needed for leaders. The process of continuous growth needs to be the mindset of individuals to be able to improve the practice of mentorship for novice principals.

Researcher's Reflection

I often sat in my principal's office late into the night completing documents to prepare for a meeting, district expectation, teacher evaluation, or another task. I knew it was not the best scenario for me to be working so late into the night, but I had lost my ability to find balance in my life. While in the office I experienced a feeling of isolation, yet I preserved with the leadership qualities and skills that got me to the position to make sure I was the best principal I could be at the time. This study confirmed for me the high expectations we have for ourselves as principals, for our schools, teachers, and students, and within the school community. It also expanded my understanding as an administrator in a school district. The diversity of each of our journeys is linked together by one important goal to make sure all that we do is done for the success of students. The numerous roles and responsibilities shared by the participants expanded on the successes and challenges of a being a principal. The final consensus from the principals was for some type of improvements to support our leaders to allow for professional learning and growth within the position.

Together with the mentors and novice principals we were able to construct a shared perspective about the mentorship and support of novice principals. The participants articulated the changes and complexity with the roles of the principal. The shortage of leaders interested in pursuing a principal position was obvious to many of the leaders. Teachers in their schools were not interested in pursuing their principal license, because they watched their own leaders work extremely hard. The leaders also articulated how difficult it had been for different school districts to attract and retain highly qualified candidates. The position has changed with increased expectations and responsibilities. It continues to evolve with new state legislation and educational initiatives. The assumption has been that leaders either already know how to do many of the tasks or they are going to pick up on it quickly. A partnership with a mentor is an important developmental tool for the novice principal. The different school districts and principals experienced varied levels of support from their mentors. Therefore, the novice principals wanted to have more from their mentorship program to assist them. The mentors felt that a better system with clearer expectations from the district would better support their growth.

This study confirmed the focus on the mentorship and support of novice principals. There were so many times when I listened to the stories from the participants when I heard my own voice through the shared experiences. I easily could have expanded on similar situations with the district, teachers, parents, or students. I found myself feeling almost relieved someone confirmed exactly what I had felt, thought, or experienced when I was a novice principal of an elementary school.

The work of a principal is extremely important. Principals are expected to provide a vision; understand curriculum, instruction, and assessment; build relationships with all stakeholders; communicate clearly the expectations for the district and school; discipline

140

students; evaluate staff; budget for school staff and programs; facilitate professional learning; complete additional managerial tasks; understand legal regulations and policies and procedures; and ensure student achievement and growth (Davis et al., 2005). The reality is that principals are able to do the position, because they exhibit the leadership qualities and skills. It cannot be left up to one mentor to assist the novice principal with the roles and expectations or for novice principals to do it alone. The systematic support structures are intended to decrease the feelings of isolation and increase support to help principals learn and grow. The journey begins with the mentorship and support of novice principals.

Conclusion

There was a commitment to convey the final results of this qualitative study to add to the research findings for mentor programs, mentors, and novice principals. The mentorship and support of novice principals varied in many districts. It was reported by the participants as scattered with multiple meetings, misalignment of expectations, and the assumption that the individuals come with higher levels of expertise and should easily transition into the role. The novice principals in the study expressed the need for a collaborative effort from district leadership, mentors, and novice principals. They were cautious in what it should look like, only because of the demands of the role. However, in the end a more structured program that benefited novice principals and mentors with clearly defined expectations of the partnership, a structure to share information about federal, state, and district requirements, and the opportunity to reflect with individuals in similar situations provided the development of the Principal Mentorship Program.

The Principal Mentorship Program presented is for school districts to have a systematic approach and structure to support new principals and mentors. The program proposal is meant to

141

have an effective leader in every school, create professional development and learning for principals, and align expectations for administrators across the district. Mentorship programs require a concerted effort from states and districts to support their leaders with effective mentor/mentee relationships and professional development. The school districts need to be committed to support the new leaders with time, resources, highly qualified mentors, and a strong mentorship program. The design of the program was constructed from the results of the narrative inquiry and lives of the principals. The program shared experiences that were examined by our own perspectives and interest into the mentorship and support of novice principal.

In order to continue move forward in an era of higher accountability for educators, the support for principals can provide a solid foundation. There are many responsibilities for leaders. The challenges that have been identified by mentors and novice principals can be reduced with a solid relationship and support. The isolation and feeling that you are the only person still in the school office at 11:00 at night can be reduced with a successful and effective mentorship program to support novice principals.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A: *"Minds at Work"* Map—Side 1

(Version 1.0 March 1, 2012; and Version 2.0 March 11, 2013)

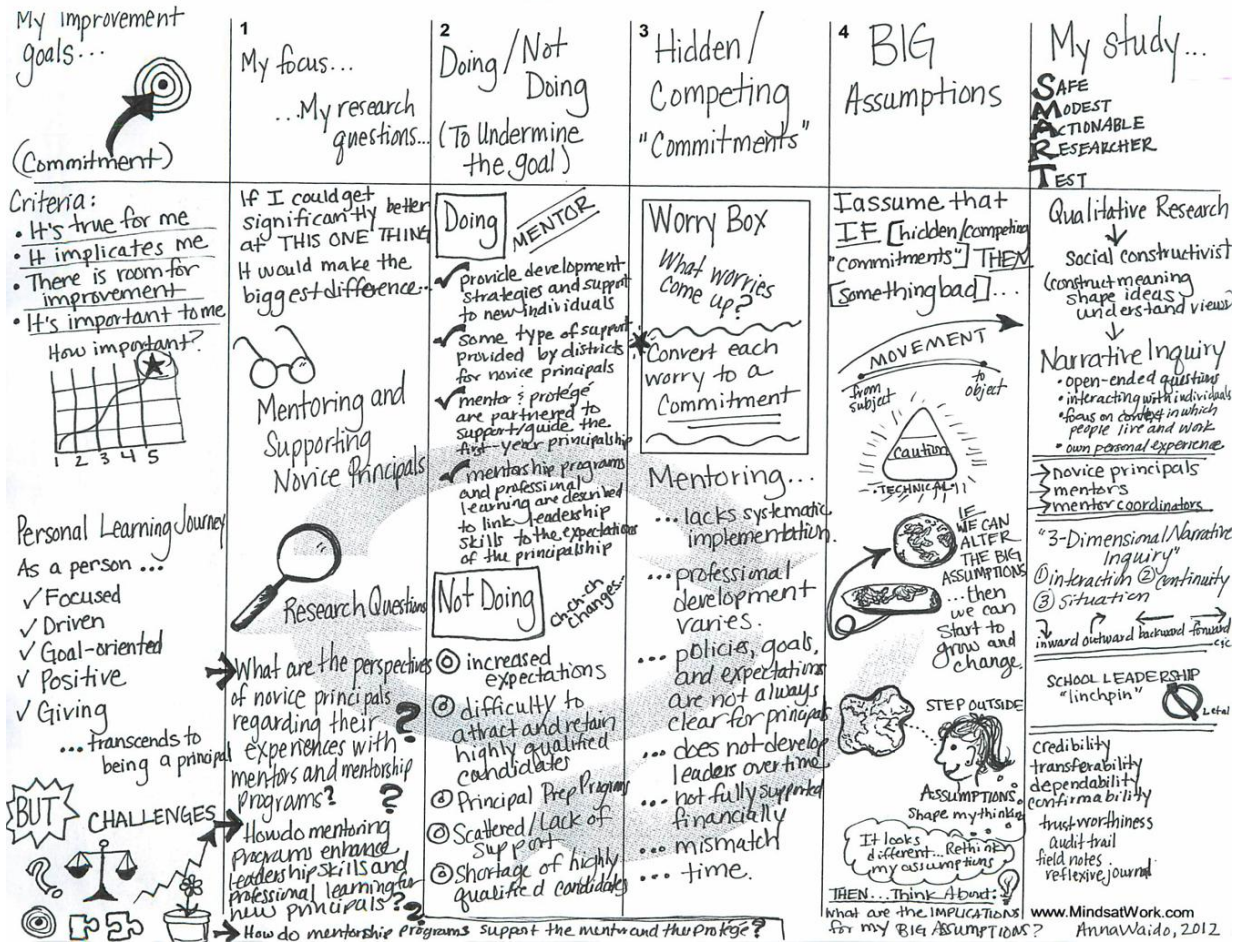*"Minds at Work"* Map—Side 1 (Version 1.0 March 1, 2012)

Figure 1. *"Minds at work"* map—Side 1 (Version 1.0, March 1, 2012). The map has six columns that represent the research and study. The first and second columns provide the process to determine the researcher's commitment and focus for the study based on personal experience. It also presents the research questions. The third column reviews current literature to determine what mentor programs are doing and not doing for novice principals. In addition, the fourth column acknowledges the changes and challenges within the principalship. Finally, the last two columns are the qualitative research design to include the theoretical framework for the narrative inquiry. Adapted from *Immunity to Change: How to overcome it and unlock the potential in yourself and your organization* by R. Kegan and L. L. Lahey. Copyright 2009 by Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.
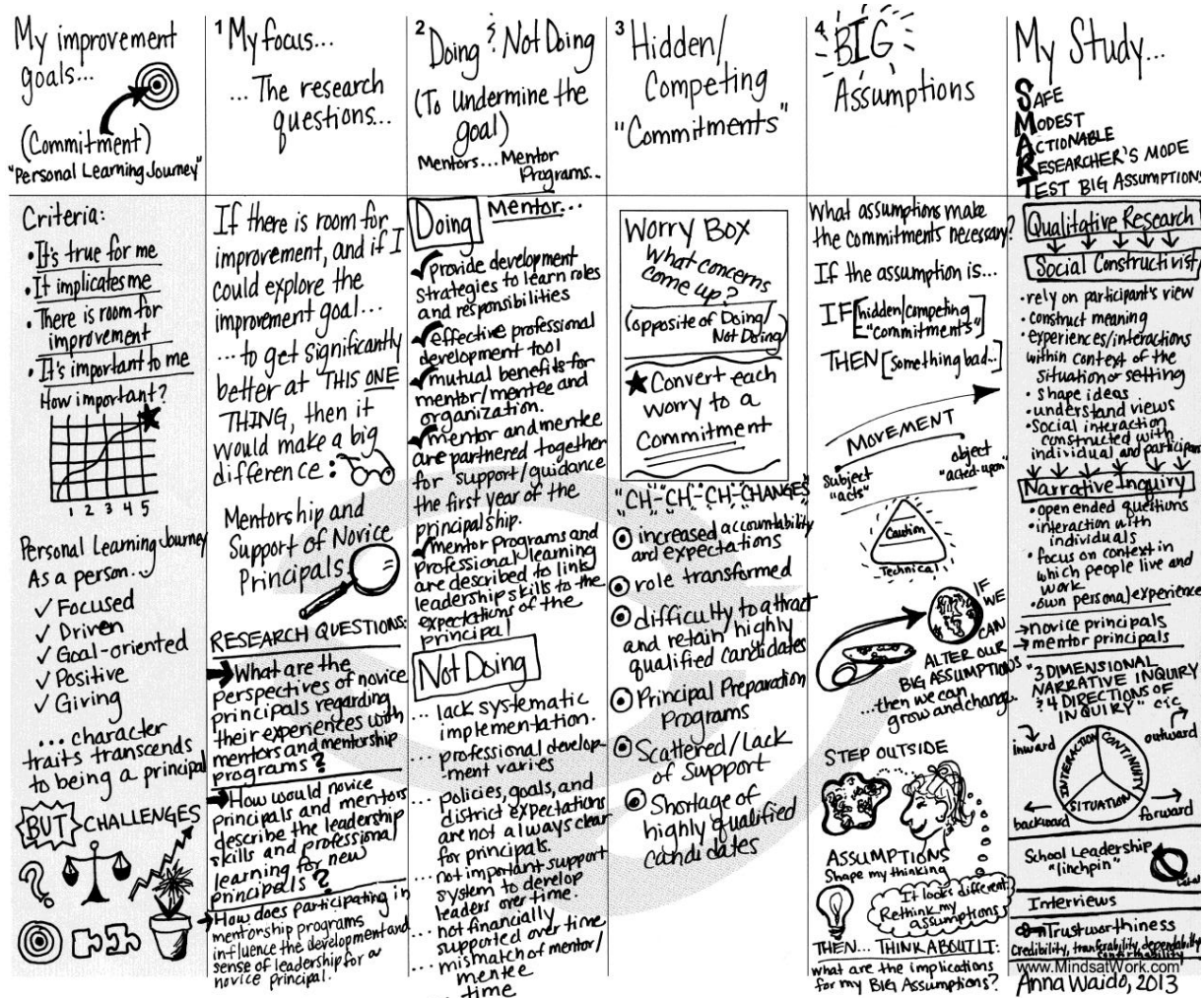
Figure 1. *"Minds at work"* map—Side 1 (Version 2.0, March 11, 2013). The map has six columns that represent the research and study. The first and second columns provide the process to determine the researcher's commitment and focus for the study based on personal experience. It also presents the research questions. The third column reviews current literature to determine what mentor programs are doing and not doing for novice principals. In addition, the fourth column acknowledges the changes and challenges within the principalship. Finally, the last two columns are the qualitative research design to include the theoretical framework for the narrative inquiry. Adapted from *Immunity to Change: How to overcome it and unlock the potential in yourself and your organization* by R. Kegan and L. L. Lahey. Copyright 2009 by Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.

Appendix B: Recruitment Letter and Opt-In/Opt-Out Form

March 28, 2012

Dear Participant,

My name is Anna Waido and I am a researcher from Colorado State University in the School of Education department. We are conducting a research study on the mentorship and support of novice principals. The title of our project is *The Journey Begins: A Narrative Inquiry into the Mentorship and Support of Novice Principals*. The Principal Investigator is Rod Lucero, School of Education, and the Co-Principal Investigator is Anna Waido, School of Education.

The purpose of this narrative inquiry is to understand the novice principals' experiences in the principalship and the support they receive from their district to make recommendations for mentorship programs. Information will be collected from new principals, mentors, and mentor coordinators to determine essential elements for mentorship programs and leadership development. We are seeking interest to take part in the study based on your position as a novice principal, mentor principal, or mentor coordinator. Here are the criteria for the study depending on your position:

- **Novice Principal:** You must be within your first year as a principal in a K-12 public school and not have held the position for more than three school years.

- **Mentor Principal:** You must currently be working with a novice principal as an assigned mentor in a K-12 public school district or you must have worked with a novice principal within the last three school years.

- **Mentor Coordinator:** The exact mentor coordinator title may vary depending on the district but the job description includes working with novice principals as part of their first few years within the position and mentors in a K-12 public school district. You must currently hold the position as the coordinator for a school district.

We would like to conduct an interview with you. The location of the interview will be determined with a mutually agreed upon space that best meets your schedule. Participation in the study will take approximately three hours and will be completed within two sessions. Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participation at any time without penalty.

The privacy and confidentiality of each participant will be maintained and only the researchers will have access to the data. The records of this study will be kept private. The interviews will be tape-recorded with your permission. While there are no direct benefits to you, we hope to gain more knowledge on effective elements a district needs for novice principals.

We do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. There is a risk that you may find some of the questions about your job to be sensitive. If you decide to take part in the interviews, you are not required to answer every question and you may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. Please complete the Opt-In/Opt-Out form and return it in the postage paid envelope. If you have any questions, please contact Rod Lucero at 970-491-6316 or Anna Waido at 970-218-5136. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator, at 970-491-1655.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Sincerely,

Rod Lucero   Anna Waido
Associate Professor   PhD Student
School of Education   School of Education
Colorado State University   Colorado State University
Email: rodrick.lucero@colostate.edu   Email: awaido@psdschools.org

The Journey Begins: A Narrative Inquiry into the
Mentorship and Support of Novice Principals

Please complete this form and return in the pre-paid envelope provided by April 30, 2012.

☐ I am interested in learning more about this study. Please contact me using the following information:

Name: _____
Telephone(s): _____
Best time and day to call: _____
Email: _____@_____

☐ I am <u>not</u> interested in this study. Please do not contact me again about this study.

☐ I recommend the following person to contact about this study:

Name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone(s): _____
Best time and day to call: _____
Email: _____@_____

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

<div align="center">

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Colorado State University

</div>

TITLE OF STUDY:
The Journey Begins: A Narrative Inquiry into the Mentorship and Support of Novice Principals.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:
Rod Lucero, PhD
Associate Professor, Associate Director-School of Teacher Education and Principal Preparation
School of Education, Colorado State University
 (STEPP) CAHS MTI Coordinator
Office Phone: (970) 491-1916
Email: rodrick.lucero@colostate.edu

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:
Anna Waido, PhD Candidate in Education & Human Resources Studies
School of Education, Colorado State University
Phone: (970) 218-5136
Email: awaido@psdschools.org

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?
You are being asked to take part in a research study to learn more about the mentorship and support of novice principals. You have received a letter of interest about this study and have inquired more information. We are asking you to take part because of your current position as a new principal, mentor, or mentor coordinator. Here are the criteria for the study depending on your position:

- Novice Principal: You must be within your first year as a principal in a K-12 public school and not have held the position for more than three school years.
- Mentor Principal: You must currently be working with a novice principal as an assigned mentor in a K-12 public school district or you must have worked with a novice principal within the last three school years.
- Mentor Coordinator: The exact mentor coordinator title may vary depending on the district but the job description includes working with novice principals as part of their first few years within the position and mentors in a K-12 public school district. You must currently hold the position as the coordinator for a school district.

Please read through the form carefully and ask any questions you may have prior to your participation in the study.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?
Rod Lucero and Anna Waido are conducting the study. The qualitative inquiry with a research design focused on narrative analysis will study novice principals and their mentoring experiences. It will determine several essential elements for mentorship programs and leadership development.

<div align="center">

Page **1** of **5** Participant's initials _____ Date _____

</div>

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?
The purpose of this study is to understand the novice principals' experiences in the principalship and the support they received from their district to make recommendations for mentorship programs. Information will be collected from new principals, mentors, and mentor coordinators to determine essential elements for mentorship programs and leadership development.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?
We would like to conduct an interview with you. The location of the interview will be a mutually agreed upon space that best meets your schedule. Participation in the study will take approximately three hours and be completed within two sessions. The first session will be the initial interview and the second session will be a follow-up, each lasting approximately one hour. The third hour may include phone or email contact to clarify responses or further information. This approximate hour of time is only necessary if needed by the researchers. Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participation at any time without penalty.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?
If you agree to be in this study, you will participate in a series of interviews with the researcher. The interviews will include questions about your position, your mentorship experience as a novice principal, mentor, or mentor coordinator, and leadership. The study will begin by scheduling two interviews. The same process will be conducted for each interview. The interviews will each take about 60 minutes to complete. With your permission, each interview will be tape-recorded. The interviews will then be transcribed and each transcription will be shared with you to check for accuracy. Any additional information or clarification after the second interview will be conducted through email or phone.

The approximate timeline and commitment can be summarized by:
- Schedule Interview #1
- Session 1: Interview (60 minutes)
- Schedule Interview #2
- Session 2: Interview (60 minutes)

One-hour of additional time for follow-up or clarification will be conducted by phone or email.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?
There is the risk that you may find some questions about your job to be sensitive. You may choose not to answer any question that you do not want to answer.

I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researchers have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?
There are no known benefits to you for participating in the study. The role of the principal is a very demanding position and we hope to learn more about the principal role within the mentorship process for the novice leaders, mentors, and mentor coordinators. We anticipate that the study may provide more information to school districts and leaders on how to support novice principals.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?
Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may choose not to answer any question that you do not want to answer.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE?
All research records will remain private and no information will be written that can identify you, to the extent allowed by law.

The privacy and confidentiality of each participant will be maintained and only the researchers will have access to the data. The records of this study will be kept private and be kept in a locked file within the principal investigator's office.

Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. No identifying information about the participants, schools, or school districts will be identified in these written materials. Your name and other identifying information will be kept private.

Every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information or what that information is will be kept confidential. There will be a code system for participants. Your name will not be included on any documents or research records. All research records and transcripts will be stored under lock and key in the principal investigator's office.

CAN MY TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY?
If you agree to participate in the study we will make every effort to work together to coordinate schedules and fulfill the two interviews. However if we are not able to schedule the two interviews or a second interview after the first one has been conducted based on schedules, then you may be removed from the study. This circumstance would be the only reason why the researcher would remove the participant from the study.

WILL I RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?
There is no compensation for this study.

Page **3** of **5** Participant's initials _____ Date _____

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

The researchers conducting the study are Associate Professor Rod Lucero and Anna Waido. Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the researchers with the following information:

      Rod Lucero at rodrick.lucero@colostate.edu or at (970) 491-1916
      Anna Waido at awaido@psdschools.org or at (970) 218-5136

If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator at 970-491-1655. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

      The first interview will be scheduled on:
Location: _____
Date: _____
Time: _____

      The transcribed interviews will be shared with you on: _____

      The second interview will be scheduled on:
Location: _____
Date: _____
Time: _____

      The transcribed interviews will be shared with you on: _____

      In order to contact you after your initial participation, please add the following information:

Phone: _____
Email: _____

Please check off and initial each step you agree to:

    ☐   Interview #1 (tape-recorded)

    ☐   Interview #2 (tape-recorded)

    ☐   I understand that the researcher may contact me through email or phone for further clarification after the completion of two interviews.

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature means that you agree to take part in the study. It also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 5 pages.

_____ _____
Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study   Date

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to having the interview tape-recorded.

_____ _____
Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study   Date

_____ _____
Signature of Research Staff   Date

Page **5** of **5** Participant's initials _____ Date _____

Appendix D: Interview Questions

Main Research Questions

1. What are the perspectives of novice principals regarding their experiences with mentors and mentorship programs?

2. How do novice principals and mentors describe the leadership skills and professional learning for new principals?

3. How does participating in mentorship programs influence the development and sense of leadership for a novice principal?

Introduction at the beginning of each interview will review and remind participant:
- Thank you
- My name and role
- Purpose
- Confidentiality
- Duration
- Interview will be taped
- Opportunity for questions

Interview Questions
for Novice Principals, Mentor Principals, & Mentor Coordinators

1. Demographic information about participant: Gender, age
2. What is your role or position with the district?
3. How long have you been in this position?
4. How long have you been with the district?
5. What is your prior experience/training did you have for the role?
6. What is your prior educational leadership experience?
7. What motivated you to get your administrative license?
8. Describe the mentorship program for new principals in your district.
9. Describe the relationship you have with your mentor/mentee. What have you learned from each individual?
10. What are the leadership competencies the mentorship programs is trying to develop?
11. What have you learned from your mentor/mentee? What support have you given or taken from your mentor/mentee?
12. What feedback have you received from your mentor/mentee?
13. Have you had an opportunity to share any feedback about the mentorship program in your district?

1. How do you describe yourself as a leader? What qualities are important in your role?
2. What are the greatest rewards as a leader?
3. How do you know you are successful in your role?
4. What challenges are you faced with in your position that inhibits you from reaching your potential?
5. What are mentoring programs doing for novice principals?
6. What are mentor programs not doing for novice principals? What are the changes that have affected the position?
7. What are your worries about the mentor program in your district?
8. What are your worries about being a leader in your mentor program?
9. How can you alter your worries (assumptions) and start to grow and change?
10. What are the implications for leadership? Mentorship? Your school district?

---

1. Is there anything from the last time that we met that you thought about that you would like to add?
2. What is the main goal of being a principal?
3. How does or should principal induction and mentoring support professional principal learning? What are some keys to the program?
4. Now that you know what you know about being a principal, what advice do you have for your peers?
5. What is missing from principal mentoring?
6. What do novice principals need?
7. What are some of the dos and don'ts of being a principal?
8. What are some suggestions to district leaders for the principal mentoring?
9. How has the role changed from state legislation and/or requirements from the district? (Educator Effectiveness)
10. What are three wishes for principal mentoring?

Probing Questions
1. Please provide me an example?
2. Can you elaborate on that idea?
3. Please explain further?
4. Is there anything else?

Closing Review and Reminders
- Additional comments
- Transcription and analysis
- Next Steps
- Thank you

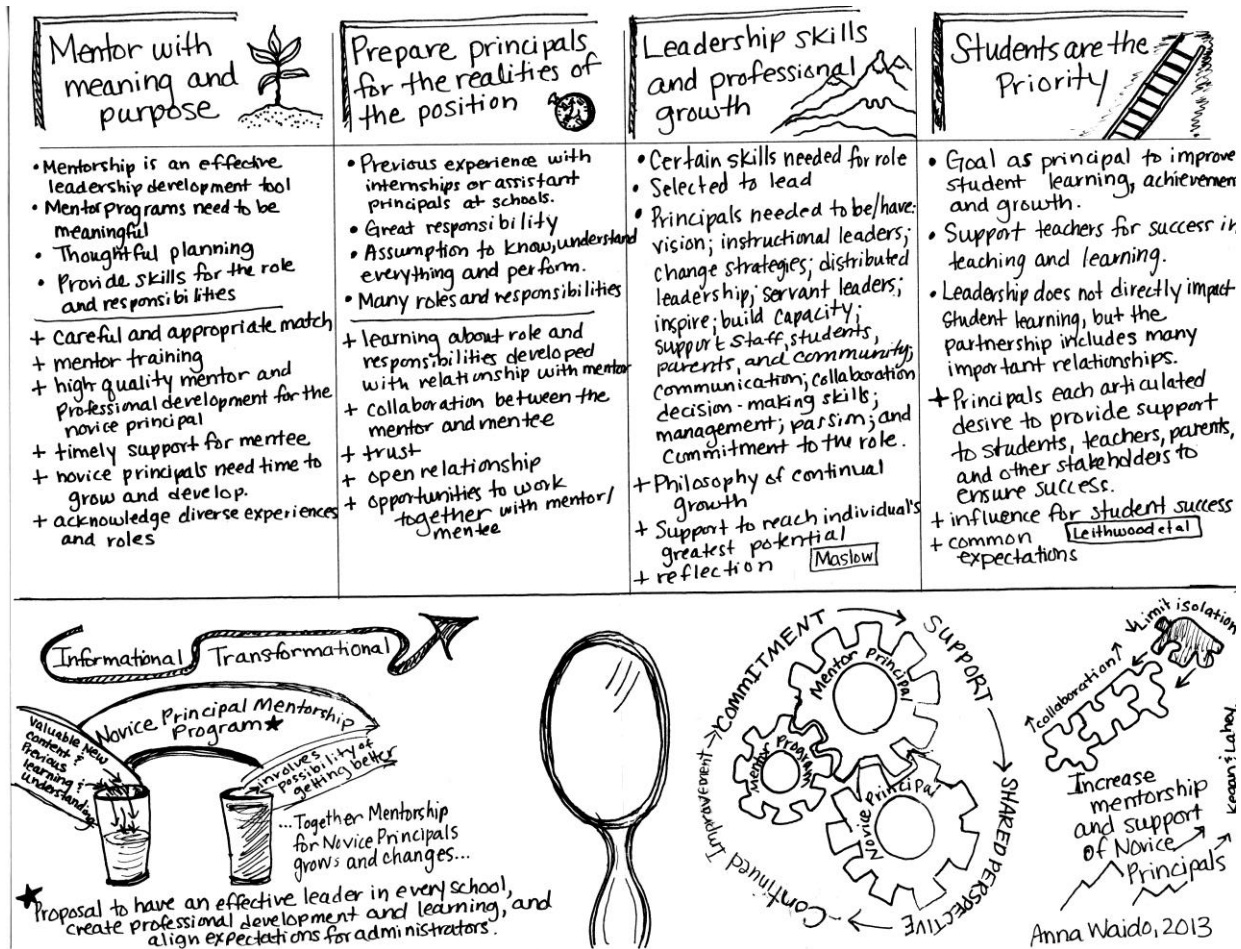Appendix E: "Minds at Work" Map—Side 2 (Version 2.0 March 11, 2013)

Figure 4. "*Minds at work*" map—Side 2. The map represents the conclusions from the study. The map has columns that represent the four themes from the study constructed from the research and the participants' responses to the mentorship and support of novice principals. The pictures also include a diagram for a proposal for a Principal Mentorship Program. Finally, the researcher's reflection for the study based on the collective responses and personal experience. It demonstrated that the system of support for novice principals, mentors, and mentorship programs are like a system of wheels and cogs. They are connected with a purpose and work individually together. This is meant to increase collaboration and limit the sense of isolation for novice principals. Adapted from *Immunity to Change: How to overcome it and unlock the potential in yourself and your organization* by R. Kegan and L. L. Lahey. Copyright 2009 by Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.

Appendix F: Principal Mentorship Program Plan

Principal Mentorship Program Plan

Mission

The mentorship program provides a positive support system for principals. The collaboration allows novice principals and mentors to connect leadership skills and professional learning to influence development and growth.

Goal

A trained experience principal mentor and a strategic professional development for novice principals will support the necessary skills to be an effective leader.

Short-Term Goals
- New principals will develop relationships with their mentor and collaborate with other principals.
- Mentors will provide useful information and support.
- New principals will enhance instructional leadership skills.
- New principals will understand the roles and responsibilities of the district, school, and position.

Long-Term Goals
- New principals will develop relationships with their mentor and collaborate with other principals.
- Mentors will provide useful information and support.
- New principals will enhance instructional leadership skills.
- New principals will understand the roles and responsibilities of the district, school, and position.

Learning Actions and Activities
- Mentors will be selected and trained through a process to ensure quality partnerships with mentees.
- The new principal and mentor will be matched based on criteria for the collaboration.
- The new principal will attend six three-hour evening professional development sessions and complete one school site visit with their mentor.
- Professional development sessions are designed around Colorado Standards for Principal Effectiveness.
- The new principal and mentor will meet for approximately three hours a month for collaboration and support.
- The new principal will collect artifacts and reflect on the job throughout the year to provide feedback and assess the program.

Appendix G: Principal Mentorship Program Learning Plan

Principal Mentorship Program Learning Plan

Desired Results:

1. Professional Development focuses on federal and state requirements and district polices related to strategic leadership; instructional leadership; school culture and equality; human resource leadership; managerial leadership; external development leadership; and student growth (Colorado Department of Education, 2012).

2. New principals will collaborate with mentors and have leadership skills and knowledge influence the core work of teacher instruction in the classroom that influences student achievement.

3. The learning plans are based on the seven quality standards for principal effectiveness as described by the Colorado Department of Education (2012).

Assessment Evidence:

1. New principals will demonstrate their learning into practice.

2. New principals will have a Documentation Review and Artifacts for their work throughout the year.

3. New principals will maintain a reflection log and complete a Professional Development Evaluation after each session.

Learning Plan:

1. Each professional development session will be three-hours in length. One evening per month.

2. Content and instruction will be taught within the first hour and a half. The principals will then have time to collaborate with their mentor and apply the strategies and skills to their school with current projects for the final hour and a half.

3. The end of each session time will be provided for mentors/mentees to complete a reflection of the activities and evaluation.

Appendix H: Principal Mentorship Program Month-by-Month Detailed Topics

Principal Mentorship Program Month-by-Month Detailed Topics	
Session 1 (July): Strategic Leadership • Partnership with Mentor • School Vision, Mission, and Strategic Goals • Leading Change • Distributive Leadership	**Session 2 (August): Strategic Leadership & Leadership Around Student Growth** • School Improvement Plan • Student Academic Achievement and Growth • Student Growth and Development
No meeting in September	**Session 3 (October): Human Resource Leadership** • Professional Development/Learning Communities • Recruiting, Hiring, Placing, Mentoring, and Dismissal of Staff • Teacher and Staff Evaluation
Session 4 (November): Instructional Leadership • Curriculum, Instruction, Learning, and Assessment • Instructional Time • Implementing High-Quality Instruction • High Expectations for all Students	**No meeting in December** • Mid-Year Interview
Session 5 (January): Site Visit with Mentor/Mentee • Principal Action Day	**Session 6 (February): Managerial Leadership** • School Resources and Budget • Conflict Management and Resolution • Systematic Communication • School-Wide Expectations for Students and Staff
No meeting in March	**Session 6 (April): School Culture and Equity Leadership** • Intentional and Collaborative School Culture • Commitment to the Whole Child • Equity Pedagogy • Efficacy, Empowerment, and Culture of Continuous Improvement
Session 7 (May): External Development Leadership • Family and Community Involvement and Outreach • Professional Leadership Responsibilities • Advocacy for the School	**No meeting in June** • Final reflection • End-of-the-Year Interview

Appendix I: Timeline for Implementing the Principal Mentorship Program

Timeline for Implementing the Principal Mentorship Program		
Strategies/Activities	**Implementation Benchmarks**	**Timeline**
Develop Principal Mentorship Team and begin planning and training for program.	1. Create goals, objectives, and desired outcomes of the program. 2. Begin learning plan for professional development and training. 3. Develop learning plan, evaluation tools, and documents to support program.	October to May
Recruit and identify potential experienced principals to be mentors for Principal Mentorship Program.	1. Mentors apply for program 2. Select mentors based on a criteria	April to May
Implement three-day training for new mentors with Principal Mentorship Team	1. Mentors will attend training 2. Leadership team works with mentors to identify and match new principal hires	June
New Principals will participate in the "Principal Mentorship Program"	1. Attend New Administrators Orientation. 2. Met and develop goals and partnership agreement with mentor. 3. Attend additional six evening professional learning sessions and one site visit with mentor principal throughout the school year. 4. Keep a monthly reflection and collect documents of professional learning.	July to June
Evaluate the "Principal Mentorship Program"	1. Mid-year and End-of-Year Interview 2. Pre/Post Assessment Survey Tool 3. Evaluations after each professional development session designed around novice principals' needs, concerns, or successes. 4. Quarterly report by Mentor Coordinator or Principal Mentorship Team.	June to June
Plan strategies for additional sustainable measures of the program for the school year	1. Analyze feedback from data collected for program and evaluate success of program. 2. Solicit feedback from mentors, mentees, coordinator, and mentorship team. 3. Adjust as required.	Ongoing throughout implementation from June to June