A QUALITATIVE STUDY INVESTIGATING ADMINISTRATOR PERCEPTIONS ON THE

NEED, BENEFITS, CHALLENGES, AND AREAS FOR PRINCIPAL MENTORING

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

with a

Major in Educational Leadership

in the

Department of Graduate Education

Northwest Nazarene University

by

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April 2016

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AUTHORIZATION TO SUBMIT DISSERTATION

This dissertation of Elisa Saffle, submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

with a major in Educational Leadership and titled "A Qualitative Study Investigating

Administrator Perceptions on the Need, Benefits, Challenges, and Areas for Principal

Mentoring," has been reviewed in final form. Permission, as indicated by the signatures and

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The journey of research and writing cannot be done without support and guidance from many others. My family and friends provided ongoing encouragement throughout the entire process. My professional mentors sometimes made things look easy when, as I now know, they were not easy. I am happy to have the opportunity to thank you.

Thank you to my committee, Dr. Curtis, Dr. Robinson, and Dr. Rochelle for agreeing to be part of this journey, and supporting me along the way. Dr. Curtis, you were so kind to add me to your already full list of students when I needed a chair, and you were so encouraging throughout this process. Thank you.

My cohort was an amazing group of people to laugh with, and commiserate with throughout the last couple of years. Thank you, Brady, for answering my texts when I needed to know I was not alone in this process.

Valerie, I learned from your edits, and was impressed that you knew when I needed a kind comment mixed into the corrections.

Although far away, my parents have supported me through every educational pursuit throughout my life. I know you prayed for me and thought about me throughout this process, and for that, I am grateful. Grandma and Grandpa Henry valued educational opportunities and celebrated academic accomplishments, I know they would be proud.

Finally, to my husband, Troy, who is my best friend, and the love of my life. You know exactly what I need and when I need it; you also know when I need to be left alone to struggle to figure things out on my own. I would not have been able to do this without your love, encouragement, and support. I also would never have eaten a meal had you not prepared it and served it to me. I am a better person because of you; I am happy to be part of our G.E.O.

DEDICATION

To school administrators who never know what a day will bring but continue to do all they can for students. Thank you to those administrators who spent time sharing your experiences and ideas with me. This dissertation would not have happened without your help.

To Troy – my family.

ABSTRACT

Structured mentoring programs for new principals are designed to support and enhance their professional abilities. Providing mentoring support for new principals has benefits that extend beyond the novice principal to the mentor, school, and school district. Although the benefits of principal mentoring are established, mentoring of new principals is not a common practice in many school districts. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of principals and district administrators regarding the benefits and challenges of principal mentoring, as well as perceptions surrounding implementation. This qualitative phenomenological research was structured to describe views on principal mentoring and determine areas of focus for mentoring. This study examined views of principals and district administrators in a semi-rural area of Idaho, a state without mandated or funded principal mentoring.

The data from the participants in this study produced three areas that should be part of a formalized mentoring process: personal (organization, time management, emotional support, managing stress, and professional ethics), instructional leadership (district-specific learning and curricular requirements, teacher support and evaluation, using data to make decisions, and staff development), and management (district financial and policy processes, student behavioral issues, difficult relationships and stakeholders, and legal compliance). The three areas are foundational for a program and need balance to help support student learning. Mentoring can ensure the necessary balance.

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Chapter I

Introduction

School principals are tasked with an increasingly complex job as the expectations and demands of their profession continue to multiply (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). Principals must be prepared for leading in both management and instruction (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001; Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2007; Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004). Principals are expected to hire high-quality staff; analyze and make decisions based upon assessment data; successfully manage finances; communicate with stakeholders; organize and maintain schedules; know and follow the legal obligations of special education, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and child custody; evaluate teachers, paraprofessionals, and other staff; and perform numerous other tasks. Principals must do all of this while holding the role of instructional leader and shouldering accountability for student learning and academic achievement (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008; Seashore Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). Support through a formal principal mentoring process helps novice principals navigate the management and instructional leadership aspects of the role. (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2007, Seashore Louis et al., 2010).

Background

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014) reported 231,500 elementary, middle, and high school principals working in the United States in 2012. By 2022, the projected growth in principal positions is 6%, resulting in a projected employment figure of 244,700 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). More than 20% of first year urban principals leave within two years of accepting the position (Burkhauser, Gates, Hamilton, & Ikemoto, 2012). Of those who leave,

11.8% left within one year and 10.7% more left within two years (Burkhauser et al., 2012). Each year, on average, 22% of principals leave their position in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (Béteille, Kalogridees, & Loeb 2011). The trend in attrition rates is detrimental to schools, particularly less-advantaged institutions; additionally, high principal turnover rate has been associated with high teacher turnover (Béteille et al., 2011).

Principals, and the teachers they supervise, have primary accountability for student learning and achievement (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Seashore Louis et al., 2010). Mentoring programs for new teachers are prevalent; however, similar opportunities for novice principals are uncommon (Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, & Burn, 2012; Mitgang, 2007). The benefits of principal mentoring abound, yet even as states and districts continue to show support for new teachers, support for beginning principals is overlooked (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2004, Daresh & Playko, 1993; Dukess, 2001; Goldrick et al., 2012; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Mitgang, 2007). Moreover, mentored principals demonstrate increased job satisfaction, collegiality, professional growth, and instructional leadership qualities (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2004, 2007; Daresh & Playko, 1993; Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007; Dukess, 2001; Grigsby, Schumacher, Decman, & Simieou, 2010; Hess & Kelly, 2005; Ortiz, 2002; Parylo, Zepeda, & Bengtson, 2012; Saban & Wolfe, 2009; Skinner, 2006; Taylor, Pelletier, Trimble, & Ruiz, 2014). Consequently, with ever-increasing demands, expectations, and accountability, new principals in particular should receive support with managing and leading schools (Seashore Louis et al., 2010). As beginning principals are expected to lead in a multitude of areas, mentoring can assist in supporting those new to the profession (Bloom & Krovetz, 2001; Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2007, Seashore Louis et al., 2010). New and

experienced principals can benefit from mentoring and ongoing professional support as the principalship evolves (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Statement of the Problem

Mentoring programs for new principals are important in developing solid leaders with the capacity to be strong instructional leaders with good management skills (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Hess & Kelly, 2005; Parylo et al., 2012; Saban & Wolfe, 2009; Taylor et al., 2014). Principals often are not prepared for the challenges of the job because they have a vision of what the principalship entails, but do not have a full grasp of the daily obligations, roles, and challenges (Dodson, 2006; Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004; Hess & Kelly, 2005). Mentoring helps new principals transition into the role of leading a school (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2004, 2007; Dukess, 2001; James-Ward, 2012; Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, & Gundlach, 2003; O'Mahoney, 2003; Ortiz, 2002; Saban & Wolfe, 2009). According to Saban and Wolf (2009) in *Mentoring Principals Around Leadership Practices*, "The job of leading a school is overwhelming, and in order to be successful principals need significant support" (p. 2). Mentoring and ongoing professional support are necessary in assisting new and experienced principals as they contend with the challenges of instructional leadership, sustaining leadership, and professional practice (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Cook, 2014; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Teacher mentoring programs are commonplace in school districts; lacking in many school districts, however, is a mentoring, coaching, or induction program for principals. In a review of state policies on teacher induction for the New Teacher Center, Goldrick et al. (2012) found 27 states require some form of teacher mentoring or induction for first year teachers, and 11 states require teacher mentoring or induction for at least the first two years of teaching.

Moreover, ten additional states address new teacher mentoring by making implementation optional for school districts (Goldrick et al., 2012). In contrast, 16 states require some form of mentoring or inductions for first year principals, and merely three states require the induction or mentoring for principals to extend for two years (Goldrick et al., 2012). Research confirms that the benefits of a principal mentoring program extend not only to the mentee, but also to the mentor and the school district (Allen et al., 2004; Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2004, Daresh & Playko, 1993; Dukess, 2001; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Yirci & Kocabas, 2010). Yet, principal mentoring programs are still neither required nor implemented in most school districts (Goldrick et al., 2012).

In mentoring relationships, both mentors and mentees need specific and ongoing training. Training demands a significant time commitment to realize measureable outcomes, and implementing a mentoring process also requires a similar time commitment (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2007; Sammut, 2014; Simieou, Decman, Grigsby, & Schumacher, 2010; Skinner, 2006; Wardlow, 2008). Determining school and district leaders' perceptions of formal principal mentoring programs, in particular the possible benefits and barriers of implementation, may aid in developing more mentoring programs. An increase in mentoring programs would likely result in increased principal effectiveness (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2004).

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceived benefits, challenges, and need for formal principal mentoring programs. This qualitative phenomenological research was structured to analyze current views of mentoring and assess the potential of mentoring in developing and enhancing leadership skills for principals. There is a stark contrast between the

abundance of teacher mentoring programs in school districts and the dearth of principal

mentoring programs (Goldrick et al., 2012; Mitgang, 2007). Nevertheless, the benefits of

principal mentoring have been well-documented and far outweigh the drawbacks, barriers, or

challenges (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2004, Daresh & Playko, 1993; Dukess, 2001;

Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2001; Hansford, Tennent, & Ehrich, 2003; James-Ward, 2012;

O'Mahoney, 2003; Ortiz, 2002; Simieou et al., 2010). This research evaluated the areas in which

public school principals in a semi-rural region of Idaho perceived the need for mentoring

support. The objective of this study was to explore two research questions:

1. How do principals and district leaders perceive the benefits and challenges of principal

    mentoring programs?

2. What are the perceptions of principals and district administrators as they relate to

    implementing a formal principal mentoring program?

Description of Terms

Different professions develop a distinct vocabulary unique to the work of that business.

At times, familiar language may be defined in multiple ways. The topic of principal mentoring is

an area where neither researchers nor practitioners agree on common definitions (Brondyk &

Searby, 2013). The complexities of the mentoring process leads to complications in defining and

explaining mentoring. When many different terminologies are used, each may, or may not, have

the same or similar definitions (Brondyk & Searby, 2013). The unique cultures of various

schools may contribute to the lack of fixed definitions in the terminology for principal mentoring

(Yirci & Kocabas, 2010). Because mentoring and being mentored is open to many interpretations

and methods, narrowing down terms and definitions continues to be a challenge (Brondyk &

Searby, 2013; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006). The following description of terms designates and defines the terminology used throughout this research:

Formal mentoring. The relationship in a formal mentoring process should mutually benefit the mentor and the mentee and include professional development, support, and growth (Hansford et al., 2003). Further, Hansford and Ehrich (2006) in *The Principalship: How Significant is Mentoring?* define formal mentoring as a process in which "the organizational structure instigates a structured program and informs staff regarding how the program will proceed" (pp. 38-39).

Instructional leadership. Principals as instructional leaders focus more on learning than on teaching (Lashway, 2002). The learning needs to occur not just for students, but for staff as well. As instructional leaders, principals distribute or share leadership and everyone in the school is held accountable, in a safe environment, for understanding and working toward a common goal. Instructional leaders commit to modeling learning (Lashway, 2002).

Mentee. The less experienced professional in a mentoring relationship. For this research, the term *protégé* is used if that term is used in a specific research study.

Mentor. The more experienced professional in a mentoring relationship. For this research, the mentor may also be called a *coach* when the terminology is used in other studies.

Mentoring and coaching. Although some studies use *mentoring* and *coaching* to describe two separate experiences, they can also describe the same experiences. The goal of the mentoring or coaching relationship in the principalship is to support, strengthen, and encourage leaders (Carey, Philippon, & Cummings, 2011; Sammut, 2014). To expand this definition, Mullen (1994) in *Framing the Mentoring Relationship as an Information Exchange* offered that mentoring is a relationship between a more experienced member of the profession and a less

experienced member of the profession where a "relationship is developed to promote the professional and personal growth of the protégé through coaching, support, and guidance . . . the mentor transfers needed information, feedback, and encouragement" (p. 259). *Mentoring* is the term used throughout this research except when citing specific studies where a synonym for mentoring is used.

New principal. For the context of this research, new, novice, or beginning principals are defined as principals in their first or second years as a building principal; this does not include time as an assistant principal.

Semi-rural. A term of art used in this study to reflect Idaho's population distribution. Most of Idaho's population live in relatively geographically small, urban population centers located within sparsely populated rural areas. The land area in Idaho is classified as 99.4% rural and 0.6% urban (United States Census Bureau, 2015).

Significance of the Study

Mentoring programs for principals demonstrate benefits that outweigh the challenges (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2004, Daresh & Playko, 1993; Dukess, 2001; Ehrich et al., 2001; James-Ward, 2012; O'Mahoney, 2003; Ortiz, 2002; Simieou et al., 2010). This study determined how administrators in a semi-rural region of Idaho, a state without mandated or funded principal mentoring, perceive the benefits, barriers, and need for formal principal mentoring programs. Principals in the study also shared the areas where a need for mentoring or ongoing support exists.

Implementing formal principal mentoring programs may result in stronger and more stable school districts with increased student achievement (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2004; Saban & Wolfe, 2009). Therefore, an investigation which describes the perceived

needs, benefits, and challenges of a formal principal mentoring program as well as the areas of

mentoring needs for principals will assist school district leaders in attracting, hiring, and

retaining quality principals. With a growing job market (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014) and

ever-increasing responsibilities and accountability for principals, states may be looking for ways

to grow, hire, and retain effective administrators (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Council of

Chief State School Officers, 2008). District administrators who desire to build strong

administrative teams and retain good principals will benefit from this qualitative study of

principal mentoring. This research may prove useful for school districts with geographic and

demographic characteristics similar to the area of the study. Additionally, State Departments of

Education and State Boards of Education in the study area, or similar areas, may find this

research useful to better understand the needs of school principals.

Theoretical Framework

Mentoring is, above all, a learning process. Through the lens of adult learning theory, the

recognition of mentoring as a learning process is fundamental (Dominguez & Hager, 2013).

Learning takes place over time, and through the learning journey those being mentored need to

discover and construct knowledge and understandings (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; D. A. Kolb,

1984; Sammut, 2014). For this research, new and veteran principals provided information about

the demand for mentoring, along with its barriers and challenges, and shared how they

transitioned, learned, and grew into their positions. The adult learning theory of experiential

learning was examined in connection with principals' perceptions surrounding mentoring. The

experiential learning theory structures four stages adult learners work through to assimilate ideas

into current understandings and to construct new knowledge (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; D. A.

Kolb, 1984). The framework of the experiential learning theory provided a foundation to analyze

if multiple learning styles were incorporated into the learning process of a new principal position, and if, or how, mentoring played a role in that process.

Overview of Research Methods

Qualitative research is conducted when a deep understanding is sought regarding a phenomenon (Creswell, 2008, 2012). There are many approaches to qualitative research with a phenomenological approach focusing on the perceptions and experiences of individuals (Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2013). The goal of phenomenological research is discovering the perceptions of individuals and developing an understanding of how individuals perceive an experience (Englander, 2012). This qualitative research study employed semi-structured interviews with new and veteran principals and school district administrators as a means of data collection.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of principals and district administrators concerning the benefits and challenges of, and the need for, formal principal mentoring programs. The review of literature uncovered research about the foundational structures of mentoring, the many facets of mentoring, and the wealth of expectations and responsibilities for principals; the literature provided a foundation for the data collection process. Data were collected through semi-structured individual interviews which provided rich information from both principals and district administrators. Principals from traditional, public schools and district administrators who supervise principals were included in the study. Twelve principals and four district administrators participated in the study and consented to interviews as well as follow-up interviews if needed. The interviews were transcribed and coded to discover common themes and draw conclusions.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

Introduction

Principals have a high level of accountability for teacher effectiveness, student achievement, and school success (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008; Seashore Louis et al., 2010). Whether one is a first-year principal or a 30-year veteran, the expectations are the same. As the level of responsibility for principals continues to increase, support from districts is crucial in helping principals meet the challenges of greater student achievement and more effective instruction. This support includes professional learning opportunities, induction programs, and mentoring (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010). The emphasis on mentoring for administrative positions in education, and specifically principal mentoring, is not nearly as prevalent as that for teachers. A 2012 report from the New Teacher Center (NTC) found 27 states require some type of mentoring for new teachers, and just 16 states have a requirement for new principals (Goldrick et al., 2012). Additionally, many school districts require and implement teacher mentoring but lack the requirement for principal mentoring (Goldrick et al., 2012; Mitgang, 2007). Mentoring programs for new principals are important for developing solid leaders evidenced by instructional leadership and management skills (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2004, 2007; Daresh & Playko, 1993; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Dukess, 2001; Grigsby et al., 2010; Hess & Kelly, 2005; Ortiz, 2002; Parylo et al., 2012; Saban & Wolfe, 2009; Taylor et al., 2014). There is a demonstrated need for principal mentoring with ongoing professional support to continue the learning and growing process (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Ehrich et al., 2001; Gettys, Martin, & Bigby, 2010; Parylo et al., 2012).

During principal preparation programs, Hess and Kelly (2005) discovered a lack of training in management, accountability, data analysis, and personnel decisions. Portin et al. (2003) described many principal preparation programs as "middle management training" (p. 38), while Levine (2005) concluded that principal preparation programs are outdated and not preparing future leaders for the principal job as it currently exists. School district leaders ought to understand the gaps in programs and be prepared to train and support new principals in these areas (Hess & Kelly, 2005).

By realizing the potential deficiencies that new principal candidates may have, districts can structure professional development and mentoring to supplement areas where a novice principal may lack essential skills (Dodson, 2006; Hess & Kelly, 2005). Mentoring helps beginning principals bridge the gap between professional theory and the realities of daily decision-making and job tasks (James-Ward, 2012; Portin et al., 2003). Formal mentoring opportunities which address topics and areas not covered in a preparation program help provide the necessary support for new principals' success in both management and instructional leadership (Daresh, 2007; Potin et al., 2003; Saban & Wolfe, 2009). Using the structure of adult learning theories, specifically the experiential learning theory, adds to the rigor of mentoring and professional development. While mentees learn necessary leadership skills, mentors help them network thus limiting the isolation of the new position (Dukess, 2001; James-Ward, 2012; O'Mahoney, 2003; Ortiz, 2002). Simply stated, mentoring is used to support and strengthen leaders (Carey et al., 2011).

This review of the literature provides research to demonstrate the integral role mentoring can play in the development of a leader. The following categories are explored: (a) foundational structures of the mentoring process, (b) benefits and challenges of mentoring in education and

management, (c) selecting and training mentors, (d) principal preparation and leadership, (e) time commitment for mentoring and ongoing professional support, (f) financial commitment for mentoring and ongoing professional support, (g) characteristics of effective mentoring programs, and (h) theoretical frameworks. According to Bottoms and Schmidt-Davis (2010), the primary way to support principals is through quality mentoring. Adding to the importance of mentoring, Saban and Wolfe (2009) found mentoring may help principals learn about relationships that are essential in building effective schools. New principals can grow in their positions through critical reflection leading to the transforming of frames of reference and, as those frames of reference are transformed through experiences, knowledge is constructed (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; D. A. Kolb, 1984; Isopahkala-Bouret, 2008; Mezirow, 1997, 1998, 2003).

Foundational Structures of the Mentoring Process

A foundational structure exploring the phases of the mentoring process was developed by Kram (1983). After a first interview with younger managers, Kram (1983) determined who, in a senior management role, contributed to the development of the young manager and included them in the research process. While determining the phases of the mentor relationship, Kram (1983) found the process enhanced development of both mentor and mentee, and both found value through the relationship. The phases presented by Kram (1983) were: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition; these are summarized and illustrated in Figure 1. Kram (1983) identified that the mentoring relationship can impact and enhance the career development and psychosocial development of both the mentor and the mentee. Psychosocial development areas, as defined by Kram (1983), "enhance sense of competence, clarity of identity, and effectiveness in the managerial role" (p. 614).

Figure 1

Kram's Phases of Mentoring

Initiation
- There is admiration for the senior manager and the senior manager sees potential in the younger manager.

Cultivation
- The younger manager finds confidence and displays competence while the senior manager finds fulfilment knowing there is a positive influence.
- The relationship typically lasts two to five years before moving to the third phase.

Separation
- The separation may occur both physically and psychologically.
- The younger manager has the ability to successfully work without close mentoring or coaching.
- If the separation phase is forced to come too early or is delayed too long, there may be resentment from one or both parties.

Redefinition
- The two managers enter into a more friendship-based relationship where they act more as equals.

Summary from "Phases of the mentor relationship," by K. E. Kram, 1983, *Academy of Management Journal, 26*(4), 608-625.

Ehrich et al. (2001) presented a model of mentoring developed through a meta-analysis of 151 educational and 159 business mentoring studies. The model has three sections: initiation, processes, and outcomes, and is summarized and illustrated in Figure 2 (Ehrich et al., 2001).

Figure 2

Model of Mentoring

Initiation
Development of the relationship.

Processes
Development as a result of the relationship.

Outcomes
Challenges and benefits of the mentoring process.
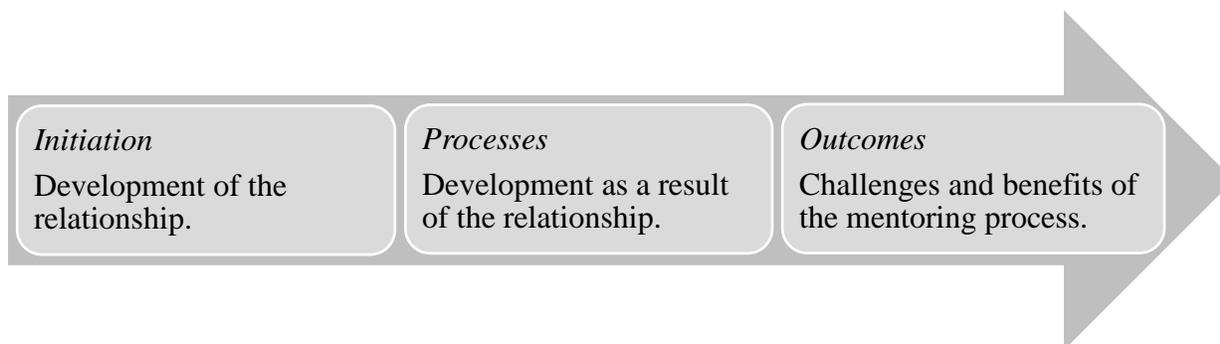
Summary from "Closing the divide: Theory and practice in mentoring," by L. C. Ehrich, B. Hansford, and L. Tennent, December, 2001, paper presented at ANZAM 2001 Conference, 'Closing the Divide,' Auckland, New Zealand.

Initiation is developing and maintaining the relationship while navigating the challenges to its formation. Barriers that may be detrimental to the mentoring relationship, such as incompatibility, are sometimes found during initiation. As mentoring is a process, the *process* segment of the model refers to the development that occurs as a result of the relationship. Although mentoring is structured to primarily benefit the mentee, the mentor often benefits from the relationship as well (Ehrich et al., 2001). Mentoring relationships, however, are not always mutually beneficial, as the arrangement may not always function as intended; this is revealed in the *outcomes* element. *Outcomes* are both the positive benefits and complications of mentoring, from the perspectives of the mentor, mentee, and district or business organization (Ehrich et al., 2001).

A significant finding from a study of beginning principals categorized four phases of socialization occurring in the first year: idealization, immersion, establishment, and consolidation (O'Mahoney, 2003). During these phases of socialization, the mentoring needs to evolve (O'Mahoney, 2003). The idealization phase occurs before actually taking a position when new principals have grand ideas about how they will meet goals. The principal who previously supervised the beginning principal is often the informal mentor at this time (O'Mahoney, 2003). After taking on the new role, the novice principal moves into the immersion phase and is overwhelmed by all of the new information and tasks. During this phase, mentees require a formal, assigned mentor to help with the isolation of the new position (O'Mahoney, 2003). Feelings of inadequacy permeate this stage and regular meetings with a mentor are necessary. During the establishment phase, the beginning principal seeks out informal mentors whom they trust and perceive to have knowledge or expertise in certain areas. When new principals move into the consolidation phase, the need for a formal mentor is minimized and informal mentors,

typically colleagues, are found and consulted when necessary (O'Mahoney, 2003). A necessary

part of the principalship is finding informal mentors, colleagues, and others, through professional

networking (Ortiz, 2002). To help sustain their practice, principals must build a professional

network of other principals and school administrators, community groups, and other individuals

(Ortiz, 2002).

Historically, mentoring is considered a relationship between two people, but Higgins and

Kram (2001) argued that mentoring goes beyond that primary relationship to a network of

support. Through the use of social networks theory, Higgins and Kram (2001) developed a

typology describing the developmental networks that occur to support a protégé. The typology

included two sections, the diversity of the network and the strength of the network. Those

sections then produced four concepts about developmental network structures: (a) the actual

developmental network, (b) the relationships in the developmental network, (c) the amount of

diversity in the developmental network, and (d) the strength of the relationships in the

developmental network (Higgins & Kram, 2001). Using social networks theory research, Higgins

and Kram (2001) described the developmental network as a subset of an entire social network,

and the assistance given by those in the system fell into the categories of support for career and

psychosocial support. The relationships in the developmental network could include mentors,

coaches, peers, sponsors, and those described by other terms. Higgins and Kram (2001) used the

term *developers* to describe those who mentor or provide support in the developmental network;

this term could include a traditional mentor. Developers emerge from a diversity of social arenas,

and are potentially connected to each other. Finally, ties in the developmental relationships vary

in strength (Higgins & Kram, 2001). If the protégé does not reciprocate in the relationship, the

ties may be weak. To create strong bonds through the relationship, mutual assistance, motivation,

and communication are required (Higgins & Kram, 2001). As Higgins and Kram (2001) assert, "The phenomenon of mentoring – that is, the provision of career and psychosocial support – is still of primary interest, but *who* provides such support and how such support is provided are now more in question" (p. 267).

Benefits and Challenges of Mentoring in Education and Management

After a review of 159 mentoring studies, Hansford et al. (2003) concluded that almost 90% of the studies reported positive effects for mentoring. It was found that 35.8% of the studies conveyed only positive outcomes for mentoring, and 54.1% reported both positive and negative results; among the 159 studies reviewed, 2.5% reported only negative outcomes to mentoring (Hansford et al., 2003). The principal mentee receives multiple benefits from the mentoring process (Allen et al., 2004; Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2004; Daresh & Playko, 1993; Dukess, 2001; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Hansford et al., 2003). Using mentoring to develop leadership was examined in a review of multiple qualitative studies (Daresh, 2004). Those being mentored identified benefits to the process:

- feelings of competence and confidence,

- realizing the relationships between the theories studied in school and on-the-job issues,

- developing better communication skills,

- learning some of the "tricks of the trade," and

- feeling supported and connected to the position and school (Daresh, 2004).

In a meta-analysis of 43 studies on professional mentoring, Allen et al. (2004) found those who were mentored perceived greater career outcomes than those who were not. Career outcomes were defined as job and career satisfaction and commitment, promotions, compensation, and expectations for advancement (Allen et al., 2004). Ragins, Cotton, and Miller (2000) examined

how job satisfaction and employee attitudes were affected by having a mentor. The study showed that protégés in satisfying mentoring relationships have attitudes that are more positive than those who are not mentored; conversely, those protégés who are dissatisfied or marginally satisfied with the mentoring relationship have the same attitude as those not mentored (Ragins et al., 2000). Although the benefits for the mentee in a mentoring relationship are numerous, a primary benefit is reducing the isolation of the leadership position (Dukess, 2001; Ehrich et al., 2001; James-Ward, 2012; O'Mahoney, 2003; Ortiz, 2002; Simieou et al., 2010). The isolation and stress that accompany leading a school can be mitigated through mentoring (Dukess, 2001; Ehrich et al., 2001; James-Ward, 2012; O'Mahoney, 2003; Ortiz, 2002; Simieou et al., 2010; Yirci & Kocabas, 2010).

Like mentees in the mentoring relationship, mentors also report greater job satisfaction, as well as more recognition from colleagues; additionally, mentors were offered more opportunities for advancement (Allen et al., 2004). Opportunities for professional development, networking, and reflection were also reported as benefits for mentors (Hansford & Ehrich, 2006). The benefits of mentoring included the improved ability of mentors to assess their skills and competencies when working with a mentee (Dukess, 2001). In addition, school districts reap the benefits of principal mentorship programs because principals who are mentored tend to have more success, be more productive, and are more motivated (Daresh, 2004). Mentored principals are also more satisfied with, and loyal to, a district that shows support through a mentoring program (Daresh, 2004). Increased retention of staff provided a major benefit for districts (Ehrich et al., 2001). Retention of principals is critical, because teachers and principals are responsible for student achievement and turnover threatens district stability; even with strong teachers, a change in principal leadership negatively impacts school performance (Seashore

Louis et al., 2010). Positive benefits for districts with successful mentoring programs also include improved education for students, increased support for the school, and reduced work for district staff (Ehrich et al., 2001).

By studying the value of a mentoring program for aspiring administrators, Daresh and Playko (1993) gave a slightly different perspective on mentoring, which may apply to principals, as well. Practicing administrators were trained and available for the would-be administrators. The value of the mentoring was evident for the candidates, and likewise revealed positive effects on the current administrators (Daresh & Playko, 1993). Mentors enjoyed being teachers, learning about other school systems, and learning about recent research. By mentoring others, the mentors felt confident in their abilities and felt an overall satisfaction. Through the process, the mentors found they learned as much as they taught to the candidates (Daresh & Playko, 1993). The results of this study showed mutual benefits in the mentoring process; both the mentor and mentee gain value and professional growth (Daresh & Playko, 1993).

Much of the research on the benefits of mentoring focuses on formal mentoring programs and practices (Allen et al., 2004; Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2004, 2007; Dodson, 2006; Dukess, 2001; Gettys et al., 2010; Simieou et al., 2010). Parylo et al. (2012) studied four districts that displayed different approaches to mentoring, yet shared the same goal of supporting and encouraging current principals inside the district system. Three of the four districts in the study offered formal mentoring programs using retired principals, superintendents or other district leaders, principals (peer mentors), and/or outside contractors. Informal mentoring occurred in all four districts with part of the process occurring during monthly administrator meetings (Parylo et al., 2012). Both informal and formal mentoring programs demonstrated benefits, and principals who participated in both forms of mentoring

found greater benefits than those who participated only in informal mentoring (Parylo et al.,

2012). When principals' mentoring experiences were studied and rated in relation to the 13

Critical Success Factors from the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), those

participating in formal mentoring programs rated their informal mentoring, in relation to the

SREB 13 *Critical Success Factors*, higher than those who participated only in informal

mentoring (Dodson. 2006). The 13 *Critical Success Factors* were researched and organized by

the SREB from successful leaders in schools traditionally identified as "high risk" (Fry, Bottoms,

& O'Neill, 2005). Those formally mentored principals rated the structured mentoring higher than

the unstructured mentoring in all 13 areas (Dodson, 2006). Essentially, principals who

participated in a formal mentoring program experienced positive results in both the structured

and unstructured realms (Dodson, 2006). Every surveyed principal, whether part of a formal

mentoring program or not, sought an informal mentor. While informal mentoring can be

beneficial, formal mentoring is demonstrated as a valuable form of professional development

(Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Dodson, 2006; Ehrich et al., 2001; Gettys et al., 2010; Parylo

et al., 2012; Wardlow, 2008).

The studies reviewed illustrate the many benefits of principal mentoring. The benefits

encompass the mentee, mentor, and school district. Some of the rewards for the mentee are

expanded or increased:

- leadership development and abilities (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2004;

  Daresh & Playko, 1993; Dodson, 2006; Ehrich et al., 2001; Gettys et al., 2010; Parylo et

  al., 2012; Wardlow, 2008),

- confidence and competence (Daresh, 2004),

- communication skills (Daresh, 2004),

- day-to-day management efficiency (Daresh, 2004),

- collegial connections and support (Daresh, 2004; Dukess, 2001; Ehrich et al., 2001; James-Ward, 2012; O'Mahoney, 2003; Ortiz, 2002; Simieou et al., 2010; Yirci & Kocabas, 2010), and

- career satisfaction and outlook (Allen et al., 2004; Ragins et al., 2000).

Even with all of its benefits, the mentoring process is not without challenges, which are also considered in mentoring studies.

Ehrich et al. (2001) presented a model of mentoring developed by synthesizing over 300 research studies on business and educational mentoring. The model has three parts: initiation, processes, and outcomes (Ehrich et al., 2001). *Outcomes* described both the rewards and potential problems of mentoring for professionals and institutions. Although the benefits of mentoring are numerous, they are often accompanied by challenges (Ehrich et al., 2001). Benefits discovered by other researchers are echoed by Ehrich et al. (2001), who also noted some accompanying complications. Table 1 synthesizes the research on problems associated with educational mentoring, and summarizes the work of Ehrich et al. (2001) for issues in business mentoring. Although the mentoring process contains occasional obstacles, its rewards far outweigh these challenges (Allen et al., 2004; Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2004; Daresh & Playko, 1993; Dukess, 2001; Ehrich et al., 2001; Hansford et al., 2003; James-Ward, 2012; O'Mahoney, 2003; Ortiz, 2002; Parylo et al., 2012; Simieou et al., 2010).

Table 1

Summary of Potential Problems Associated with Mentoring

Group	Problems (cited in educational mentoring)	Problems (cited in business mentoring)
Mentee	- Lack of time - Mentor who is critical - Scheduling time - Lack of mentor support - Professional area mismatch - Personality mismatch - Incompatibility	- Gender/race issues - Cloning - Untrained mentor - Competitive mentor - Incompatibility
Mentor	- Lack of time - Lack of training - Professional area mismatch - Personality mismatch - Extra burden - Frustration with mentee	- Lack of time - Lack of training - Mentee negative attitude - Jealousy - Pressure
School District / Business Organization	- Cost - Lack of partnerships	- High staff turnover - Gender bias

Selecting and Training Mentors

Choosing the right mentors for the formal mentoring process and training those mentors in the process is essential in developing positive and productive mentoring relationships (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2004, 2007; Daresh & Playko, 1993; Dukess, 2001; Gettys et al., 2010; Taylor et al., 2014). Mentees occasionally noted incompatibility, and mentors cited lack of training as an impediment to the process (Ehrich et al., 2001). Satisfaction with the mentoring relationship was more impactful than its presence or structure (formal or informal) (Ragins et al., 2000). Simply having a mentor did not cause mentees to have a positive attitude; this result required a quality mentoring relationship (Ragins et al., 2000). The relationship between mentor and mentee is revealed as a key to a fulfilling and successful experience (Alsbury & Hackmann,

2006; Gettys et al., 2010). When the mentoring relationship does not work for its intended purpose, the mutual benefits of the mentoring process do not exist (Ehrich et al., 2001).

Mentor training is important for building a beneficial mentoring relationship (Dukess, 2001). To be effective, mentors need the opportunity to seek out training and collaboration with experienced mentors (Dukess, 2001). The same study found that a mentor should come from a well-functioning school and be willing to dedicate time to help another leader find success (Dukess, 2001). No matter how successful the mentors' schools are under their leadership, mentees may not benefit from mentors who see principals as school managers when mentees who are expected to fill the role of instructional leader from the onset of the principalship (Daresh, 2007). Additionally, it is a mistake to make the assumption that effective principals make effective mentors; this may not always be the case (Taylor et al., 2014). Mentors must dedicate time to mentoring and sharing relevant expertise (Dukess, 2001). Mentors must also have successful experiences as a principal, bring current knowledge of curriculum and instruction, be trustworthy, and have strong interpersonal skills (Dukess, 2001). The mentors and mentees stated that having experiences with a school of a similar size and demographics, being in locations of close proximity, and having mentors not supervise the mentee should be requirements (Dukess, 2001; Gettys et al., 2010; James-Ward, 2012). Matching the appropriate mentor with the mentee (Gettys et al., 2010) and having a neutral, non-evaluative mentor (James-Ward, 2012) are keys to mentoring success.

Mentoring can be a challenging job and a potential mentor would ideally be willing to assume the responsibility for developing effective leaders and socializing the leaders into new roles (Daresh, 2004). A balance is necessary to avoid over-reliance on the mentor, with mentees unable to function without mentor support (Daresh, 2004). Willing acceptance of the mentoring

role is key in creating a well-functioning relationship, in which new principals learn the job by building on their strengths (Daresh, 2004). When possible, matching the goals and leadership styles of the mentor with the mentee is suggested since this can lead to a more successful experience (Daresh, 2004).

Principal Preparation and Leadership

The burden of responsibility for an effective school is on the school principal, who may be called the "chief learning officer" of the school (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001, p. 5). With this assignment comes the necessity for skills and training to meet the demands of the position, including leading schools in raising student achievement (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001). School leaders should be well-versed in classroom methods that raise student achievement, working with faculty and staff to devise and implement practices to drive student improvement, and fully supporting teachers in applying effective instructional practices (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001).

Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) determined 21 key leadership responsibilities for principals and found that when principals improve in those areas, there is an average ten percentile point increase in student achievement. In a meta-analysis of research, Marzano et al. (2005) found evidence of a correlation between principal leadership and student achievement. Marzano et al. (2005) stated that more than ever before, effective principal leadership is imperative. In many districts, the goal is to hire principals who will be good instructional leaders. Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) looked at the qualities of eight exemplary pre-and in-service principal development programs and found the pre-service programs all emphasized instructional leadership based on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards. The ISLLC Standards are a set of standards originally developed and published in 1996 by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and updated in 2008 by the same organization.

The standards were updated again in 2015 by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration and renamed the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders. The standards provide guidelines for productive practice regarding the expected characteristics, work, and responsibilities of school and district leaders and reflect the evolving picture of principal qualities and the link between leadership and student learning (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008; National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015).

The level of mentoring and professional development appropriate for new principals depends, in part, upon the preparation received and experiences gained prior to accepting and starting a principal position (Hess & Kelly, 2005; Levine, 2005; Salazer, Pazey, & Zembik, 2013). After studying syllabi and texts used in master's degrees in educational administration programs, Hess and Kelly (2005) found that training in management, accountability, data analysis, and personnel decisions was lacking in principal preparation programs. Notably, Hess and Kelly (2005) found that of the 350 course weeks dedicated to instruction in personnel management, just three percent mentioned teacher dismissal or termination, and in the textbooks this topic appeared only three times per 100 pages. Levine (2005) studied the quality of principal preparation programs in relation to nine areas: (a) clear purpose, (b) rigorous and articulated curriculum, (c) balance of theory and practice, (d) expert faculty with current and practical knowledge, (e) selective admission criteria, (f) rigorous graduation standards, (g) high-quality and practical research opportunities, (h) sufficient program funding, and (i) ongoing program assessment. Overall, the principal preparation programs were poor in comparison to the nine standards set forth in the research, yet there were programs that did well in one or more areas and showed promise for improvement (Levine, 2005). Nine core courses formed the basis of 80 percent of the programs, yet only 63 percent of participants believed the courses to be valuable to

the job (Levine, 2005). Salazar et al. (2013), studied high-quality leadership programs and

evaluated a two-year master's degree program for principal leadership preparation, examining

the program's most and least beneficial features and its usefulness for practical implementation

according to members of the cohort. All participants ranked the program's focus on instructional

leadership and school improvement as its most beneficial aspect, with some commenting that this

focus was vital for success as a principal (Salazar et al., 2013).

Weaknesses were found in preparation programs for principals in the studies by Hess and

Kelly (2005) and Levine (2005). In a study by Farkas, Johnson, and Duffet (2003), principals

were surveyed to determine what was most useful in preparing for a principal position and only

four percent of the principals named a graduate school program as most useful (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Areas Contributing Value to Principal Preparation

Most Valuable Contribution to Principal Preparation
(from the principal perspective)

[CATEGORY NAME], [VALUE]

Your previous on-the-job experiences, [VALUE]

The mentoring and guidance you've received from people you have worked with, [VALUE]

Your graduate school studies, [VALUE]
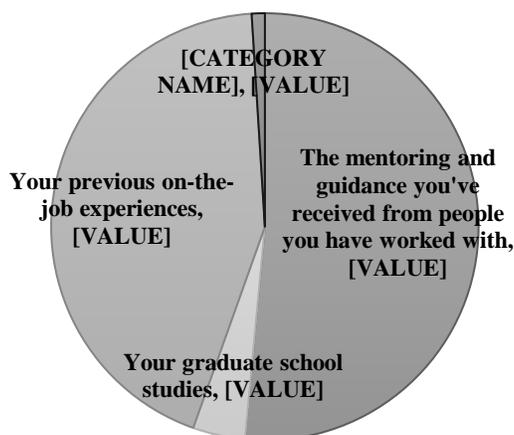
Figure 3. From *Rolling Up Their Sleeves: Superintendents and Principals Talk About What's Needed to Fix Public Schools* (p. 39), by S. Farkas, J. Johnson, and A. Duffett, 2003, New York, NY: The Wallace Foundation. Reprinted with permission (see Appendix A).

In spite of that finding, 74 percent of the principals indicated that the principal preparation graduate program did include some helpful information for the leadership position. Fifty-two percent of surveyed principals credited mentoring as the most valuable contribution in preparing for the principalship, while 44% responded that past job experiences were the most valuable contribution (Farkas et al., 2003). Yet, 16 percent still indicated that little of what was learned in a graduate preparation program was useful (Farkas et al., 2003). A small study by Szalipski and Lenarduzzi (2015) corroborated this by specifying that serving as a vice-principal is the most useful preparation for a principal job. In the same study, mentoring was shown to be the most effective means of support (Szalipski & Lenarduzzi, 2015). In addition to the graduate preparation programs, Farkas et al. (2003) found that state certification programs were an area of concern. Seventy-eight percent of principals reported the certification process should require more applied experiences, and just twenty-one percent indicated state certification guarantees the principal has the qualities to be a good administrator (Farkas et al., 2003).

The 13 *Critical Success Factors* as defined by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) were used to study how preparation through a principal internship process prepared aspiring administrators for the realities of the principal job (Fry et al., 2005). The unfortunate findings of the study were that principal internship programs lacked the experiences needed to successfully meet the expectations of the principalship (Fry et al., 2005). Most programs were not structured to support the *Critical Success Factors*, and offered limited opportunities for hands-on leadership tasks. Although the university department heads demonstrated confidence that the programs develop well-prepared leaders, their belief is not supported by corresponding leadership opportunities for students (Fry et al., 2005). The disconnect makes changes to programs improbable, as department heads may not deem adjustments necessary (Fry et al.,

2005). Another finding of the study was the lack of partnerships between the universities and school districts (Fry et al., 2005). More than one-third of the surveyed universities had no handbook or other materials describing the expectations and requirements for the cooperating principals (Fry et al., 2005). Additionally, more than one-half of the universities were unable to show evidence that graduates of the programs were prepared for principal positions (Fry et al., 2005).

To prepare for the demands of the principalship, preparation programs need more focus on curriculum and instruction, teaching and learning strategies, raising student achievement, using data to make instructional decisions, and making curricular and instructional decisions (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001). To achieve this, Bottoms and O'Neill (2001) recommended more school-based learning including mentoring and internships. The suggestions were presented to help alleviate disparities between university principal preparation programs and the realities of the principalship (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001). A conclusion from Hess and Kelly (2005) advised school districts to identify and correct areas of weakness that remain for beginning principals after principal preparation programs. Although pre-service training and preparation is important in the development of leaders, leadership development must to be integrated into daily work (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004). District support from all departments is essential when principals must make difficult decisions (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010). Leaders should learn in the context of work rather than in a place removed from the position; actively applying leadership skills is more beneficial than theoretical knowledge (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004). Highly supportive districts allow principals autonomy in making significant decisions, such as staffing and hiring (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010). Consequently, if principals are held accountable for improving student achievement, districts must allow principals to make

staffing decisions for their schools and must support them through mentoring and ongoing professional development (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010).

Bloom and Krovetz (2001) discussed the changes in the preparation of school principal candidates in Santa Cruz County, California, where candidates historically spent a few years in lead teacher or assistance principal positions gaining the skills necessary to assume a principal position. With a shortage of principal candidates, those serving as assistant principals assumed principal roles with fewer experiences and a narrow scope of responsibilities (Bloom & Krovetz, 2001). A mentor/apprentice program was designed to aid in the transition to principal. Three areas were acknowledged as central to the program's success: first, effective principals understood that developing leadership in others was essential to being a leader; second, when mentoring, principals reflected on their own practice and this led to growth for both the mentor and apprentice; last, when building capacity in others, the principals became more effective (Bloom & Krovetz, 2001). DuFour and Marzano (2011) assert that every educator should be a leader since leadership responsibilities in a school are too great to be shouldered by one person. DuFour and Marzano (2011) suggested that principals build capacity in schools by developing teacher leaders for collaboration in teams that purposefully monitor and guide student learning and achievement. Principals can uniquely impact student learning by providing opportunities for teachers to learn and work together (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). As the expectations of principals expand and accountability for student achievement increases, principals, and especially new principals, benefit from support in management and leadership because principals and the teachers they supervise have primary accountability for student learning and achievement (Seashore Louis et al., 2010). Grigsby et al. (2010) recommended an emphasis on balancing managerial and instructional leadership as a focus in principal preparation programs.

A theoretical understanding of, or even a working knowledge of, managerial and instructional leadership is the minimum prerequisite for a school principal (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Cook, 2014; Daresh, 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Grigsby et al., 2010; James-Ward, 2012). The evolution of leadership roles has expanded the distinction between leadership and management, or being a leader versus being a manager (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004). Portin et al. (2003) examined what school leaders actually do in practice as compared to what school leadership is like in a theoretical sense. One conclusion of the study was the complexity of the principal job. Rice (2010) reported that a key finding on principal effectiveness was efficiency and time management in dealing with a variety of tasks and responsibilities, and Portin et al. (2003) indicated principal preparation programs included some management and instructional leadership training. Yet, none of the participants in the Portin et al. (2003) study reported learning about the many other facets of leadership, including strategies for solving complex issues requiring a variety of leadership skills. The participants stated that mentoring helped them navigate the challenging and complex issues involved with the position (Portin et al., 2003). James-Ward (2012) reported that mentoring helped novice principals to bridge the gap between professional theory and actual day-to-day decision making.

To determine if mentoring is a tool for the development of leadership practices in school administrators, Saban and Wolfe (2009) randomly selected 180 Illinois public school principals, and 59 percent responded to the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). The study revealed the two leadership practices most influenced by mentoring: inspiring a shared vision and encouraging the heart (Saban & Wolfe, 2009). *Inspiring a shared vision* means the leader develops unity with those being led, and together determine the needs and future of the organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). *Encouraging the heart* occurs when the leader

appreciates and inspires others by recognizing contributions and truly caring about those being led (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). The practices of inspiring a shared vision and encouraging the heart are both shown to be heavily influenced by mentoring and foundational for building relationships, but they are more challenging to understand and implement than other leadership habits (Saban & Wolfe, 2009).

Salazar (2007) studied the professional development needs of rural high school principals and found they had greater deficiencies in leadership skills rather than management skills. Principals reported that professional development in the area of leadership skills would enhance instructional leadership abilities and help with shaping school improvement (Salazar, 2007). Rural high school principals reported that conferences, seminars, workshops, and hands-on trainings were the most preferred delivery models for much-needed professional development (Salazar, 2007). There were mixed results from this group of principals regarding the value of mentoring for meeting professional development needs (Salazar, 2007).

Building on the premise that involvement with curriculum and instruction is necessary for principals as instructional leaders, principals were interviewed regarding perceptions of their involvement in and responsibilities for the curriculum and instruction at their school (Grigsby et al., 2010). The results of the study were reported out by three levels: elementary, middle, and high school. Two themes emerged from the interviews at each level: the role of the instructional leader and the responsibility of the instructional leader (Grigsby et al., 2010). In the study, (a) the elementary principals were found to be more informed about the curriculum and curricular needs of the school, (b) the middle school principals stressed instructional strategies and teacher training, and (c) the high school principals delegated many of the curriculum and instruction tasks to leadership teams (Grigsby et al., 2010). Although the elementary level principals seemed

further along the road to effective instructional leadership, progress was required at all levels (Grigsby et al., 2010). Mentoring assists new principals through instructional issues such as involvement with, and leadership of, curriculum and instruction (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2007; Grigsby et al., 2010).

The manner in which mentors focus on developing instructional leadership skills in mentees was studied by Daresh (2007). The primary concern at the start of a job for beginning principals was reported not as instructional leadership, but leading in management issues (Daresh, 2007). Since new principals start with different experiences and do not have all the required skills as either managers or leaders, mentoring should be an individualized process. Moreover, mentoring for novice principals should focus on both management leadership and instructional leadership (Daresh, 2007). *Management leadership*, was described as including finances, technology programs and innovations, scheduling, and communicating with parents (Daresh, 2007). *Instructional leadership* was described as working to enhance instructional practices for increased student achievement and learning, planning professional development activities, and making staffing assignments and decisions (Daresh, 2007). As beginning principals grow in their positions, they move from what Daresh (2007) describes as "novice" to "experienced" and divide into two categories, either "risk takers (leaders)" or "risk avoiders (managers)" (p. 23). Mentoring discussions with *risk takers* focus more on instructional leadership issues while mentoring discussions with *risk avoiders* focus on managerial topics (Daresh, 2007). Research by Saban and Wolfe (2009) showed that mentored principals are involved in leadership practice more often than the non-mentored principals. As new principals are expected to lead in management and instruction, mentoring can serve as an assist in both these areas (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2007).

Time Commitment for Mentoring and Ongoing Professional Support

The relationship between mentored and non-mentored novice elementary principals and job satisfaction was studied by Skinner (2006). The study included variables such as the amount of time dedicated to the mentoring process, if a mentee was able to choose the mentor, and if the mentor was a direct supervisor or not. The primary variable affecting job satisfaction was the frequency of meetings between the mentor and mentee (Skinner, 2006). Successful mentoring programs should include goals for frequency of meetings, increasing the likelihood of a higher level of job satisfaction (Skinner, 2006).

In a study of teacher mentoring, areas of concern included scheduling and timing (Frels, Zientek, & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). Two themes which most often emerged were compatibility and time (Frels et al., 2013). Mentees wanted flexible meeting times with meetings spread throughout the school year, not scheduled only at the beginning of the school year. All three groups, the mentors, mentees (teachers in this study), and principals (teacher supervisors), discussed time as a barrier to mentoring (Frels et al., 2013). A shortage of time for mentees and mentors to work together, not just for planning purposes, but for problem solving, stress relief, and observations was a common obstacle to a mentoring relationship (Frels et al., 2013). The same issue arose in a study of principal mentoring; time constraints can negatively impact the effectiveness of the mentoring program and therefore, structured programs need to focus on quality discussions and activities (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006). In another study, lack of time for mentoring was most frequently cited as a problem, causing frustration with the mentoring process (Ehrich et al., 2001). Furthermore, principals paired with a formal mentor had more contact with their mentor than those who worked with an informal mentor (Wardlow, 2008). Access to either the formal or informal mentor contributed to job satisfaction levels; the more time with the mentor, the higher

the job satisfaction (Wardlow, 2008). A necessary step in developing an effective mentoring program is intentionally determining ways to work around time constraints (Hall, 2008).

Data surrounding novice principals' perceptions of their experiences with the induction/mentoring program and how the program impacted their level of support, ability to network, experience with the mentor, and acquisition of new skills were collected over a ten-month induction/mentoring program (Simieou et al., 2010). The induction program consisted of two meetings per month for a ten-month period. Table 2 is a summary that describes the format and structure for the meetings (Simieou et al., 2010). The results showed that regular and organized support and time dedicated to the mentoring process contributed to the success of the mentoring program (Simieou et al., 2010).

Table 2

Format for Principal Mentoring Meetings

Meeting	Format	Participants	Topic
Monthly Meeting 1	Discussion and networking	Novice principals representing all levels and two trained mentors	Curriculum, educational leadership, practical issues
Monthly Meeting 2	Individual meeting at novice principal's school	Novice principal and trained mentor	Issues related to the school, determination of professional development needs

Note. Summary of principal mentoring meeting structure from "Lean on me: Peer mentoring for novice principals," by F. Simieou, J. Decman, B. Grigsby, and B. Schumacher, 2010, *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation, 2*(2), pp. 4-5.

Mentoring is often viewed as a one-year professional development activity, which is why Daresh (2007) noted that mentoring should be described as a process which may take multiple years. Sammut (2014) described what should be in place for learning to happen in a coaching environment: (a) learning takes place over time and will not happen at once, (b) learning is a process or a journey, and (c) those being coached need to go through the process of discovering things for themselves. The principal mentoring process ought to develop and progress into

ongoing professional development that is supported by the school district (Bottoms & Schmitt-Davis, 2010; Cook, 2014; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Parylo et al., 2012; Simieou et al., 2010). Bottoms and Schmitt-Davis (2010) discovered a running theme when observing ideal conditions for principal effectiveness in leading school improvement; this theme is the importance of professional development that emphasizes skills for teachers and principals to implement effective instructional practices (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010). The research also evidenced a need for providing mentoring and ongoing professional support for principals (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010). Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) described quality in-service programs as ongoing and district-supported with a focus on professional practice. To train and retain quality principals, support must come from district leaders and autonomy in leading must be permitted (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Building upon the requirement for ongoing support and professional development, Cook (2014) surveyed teachers who were graduates of an educational administration program concerning how they perceived the need for sustainable school leadership and the potential for teachers to help develop such leadership. An overwhelming response addressed the necessity for a professional learning community for all stakeholders (Cook, 2014). Additionally, this study revealed that professional learning communities cover areas such as improving school culture, promoting professionalism, encouraging collaboration, and including others in decision-making (Cook, 2014). The participants highlighted the importance of principals who valued professional development and growth to increase student achievement. A district's commitment toward ongoing professional development assists in sustainable school leadership (Cook, 2014). Minimally supportive districts often do not provide for professional development, and many low-

performing districts do not have a plan for supporting or developing principals (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010).

Although ongoing support for professional development is essential, Parylo et al. (2012) learned through principal interviews that building future leaders was also an important part of the mentoring and ongoing support process. Validating that concept, continuity of leadership was confirmed to be important in successful organizations (Carey et al., 2011). Furthermore, low-performing districts had no plans for developing, let alone identifying or recruiting, future leaders (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010). When examining the mentoring of assistant principals, Retelle (2010) concluded that school districts are missing opportunities for developing strong school leaders.

Financial Commitment for Mentoring and Ongoing Professional Support

The ongoing professional development support from districts is time intensive, yet the discussion of the formal mentoring process, time commitment of mentors, and development of future leaders would not be complete without addressing the potential financial impact. Sustaining mentoring programs is difficult for many school districts; limited resources, in addition to communities who feel principals are over-paid, may diminish the desire to invest in programs for mentoring (Daresh, 2004). In Ohio, an unfunded mandate requiring mentoring for first-year principals had the unintended consequence of districts not hiring first-year administrators (Daresh, 2004). Nevertheless, a commitment to mentoring new principals has benefits for the entire district organization (Daresh, 2004; Ehrich et al., 2001; Seashore Louis et al., 2010). With the high demands put on school principals, and their abilities being critical to a successful school, mentors play a crucial role in developing strong leaders (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2004; Retelle, 2010; Saban & Wolfe, 2009). Since properly mentoring new

principals requires time and energy, Dukess (2001) suggests compensation should be provided for mentors.

In the sole study of its kind for teacher mentoring, Villar and Strong (2007) prepared a benefit-cost analysis for a comprehensive beginning teacher mentoring program. This study endeavored to find the rate of return (after five years) for a comprehensive program for beginning teachers and to determine if the program was a good financial investment (Villar & Strong, 2007). The program was effective in retaining teachers and increasing teacher effectiveness. The annual attrition rate for the beginning teachers in the program was half that of the state and, in the area of effectiveness, the beginning teachers resembled fourth-year teachers (Villar & Strong, 2007). In the final benefit-cost analysis, the investment in the comprehensive beginning teacher mentoring program was shown to be worth the cost, evidencing a $1.66 return for every dollar invested in the program (Villar & Strong, 2007).

Data from Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction's Office were used to determine the cost of coaching all new elementary and secondary principals throughout the state (Lochmiller, 2014). Little research or data were available regarding the cost of professional development for principals, in contrast with available research and data on similar programs for teachers (Lochmiller, 2014). As actual costs were not available for a statewide Washington coaching program, the study estimated costs. Costs were established using a fixed administrative overhead and coaching stipends of $1,625, $3,250, or $5,000 per coached principal. Costs were described in total amounts and per pupil expenditures (Lochmiller, 2014). Using personnel data about trends in numbers of new principals, the cost estimates were derived for elementary and secondary levels. Along with these groups, a category for all principals of high-poverty schools was included. The estimated average statewide total cost based upon three cost-per-pupil stipend

levels: $1,625, $3,250, and $5,000 were reported for each category (Lochmiller, 2014). Table 3

shows the cost estimates for elementary and secondary principals as well as those in high-

poverty schools.

Table 3

Estimated Statewide Costs for Coaching New Washington Principals

Level or type of school	Estimated average total cost (estimated average cost per student) based on $1,625 stipend	Estimated average total cost (estimated average cost per student) based on $3,250 stipend	Estimated average total cost (estimated average cost per student) based on $5,000 stipend
Elementary	$274,625 ($4.01)	$549,250 ($8.02)	$845,000 ($12.35)
Secondary	$153,075 ($2.63)	$306,150 ($5.27)	$471,000 ($8.11)
High-Poverty	$143,975 ($4.20)	$287,950 ($8.40)	$443,000 ($12.92)

From "What would it cost to coach every new principal? An estimate using statewide personnel data," by C. R. Lochmiller, 2014, *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 22*(55), pp. 10-12. Adapted with permission (see Appendix B).

Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) studied what is involved in preparing principals to

transform schools and how states support developing principals who lead schools with effective

teaching and learning. Pre- and in-service principal development programs were examined.

Many of the programs involved universities, districts, and state-level agencies working together.

The study found that the cost of exemplary programs were manageable because districts did not

bear the entire funding burden (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). An evaluation of costs showed

the majority went to personnel expenses. Those involved in the programs found the benefits

worth the monetary investment (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Additionally, states and

districts would benefit from policies and comprehensive plans to develop programs, with

financing for said development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Goldrick et al., 2012).

Preparation and development is essential to having high-quality leaders. Therefore, a

comprehensive plan for the preparation and development must include financial support

(Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Characteristics of Effective Mentoring Programs

With less than half of the states requiring some form of principal mentoring, determining

the quality of the mentoring programs was a key focus for a research study funded by The

Wallace Foundation (Mitgang, 2007). An unfortunate finding of the study was the poor quality

of most programs. Many of the mentoring programs lacked clear goals and focus on instructional

leadership, instead stressing the managerial roles of principals and a check-list of tasks to

accomplish (Mitgang, 2007). Clear definitions of the roles and responsibilities of mentors and

mentees is a necessary step in developing an effective mentoring program (Hall, 2008). The

same theme of principal mentoring programs being weak in supporting instructional leadership

skills emerged when Gettys et al. (2010) interviewed beginning principals who were involved

with either district-created mentoring programs (DCMP) or the Missouri state-created

administrator mentor program (AMP). The goal was to determine the perceptions and

experiences of new principals involved with those programs. Interviews focused on

characteristics of instructional leadership developed by principals through the National

Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). The data exposed both programs (DCMP

and AMP) as weak in supporting instructional leadership skills, and in analyzing, learning from,

and making decisions based on data (Gettys et al., 2010). Some participants felt the process

emphasized management over instructional leadership. Interestingly, the participants in both

programs stated that they felt encouraged by the mentors (Gettys et al., 2010).

Although many principal mentoring programs were not deemed high quality, Mitgang

(2007) stated that the mentors and mentees still found satisfaction in working together.

Researchers established, however, that the system of mentoring has to improve for true growth in leadership and development to occur (Mitgang, 2007). Using findings from relevant research, Gettys et al. (2010) and Mitgang (2007) made recommendations for effective mentoring programs.

Guided by the characteristics of instructional leadership developed by principals through NAESP, Gettys et al. (2010) studied beginning principals and discovered six strategies required to form an effective mentoring program:

1. Open communication with a mentor who is able to answer questions and be supportive is valuable to a mentee.

2. Matching the appropriate mentor with mentee is a key to mentoring success; mentors should be in close proximity, have a similar school size, and should not be a supervisor to the mentee.

3. An appropriate amount of time needs to be dedicated to the mentoring process.

4. The organization of the program should have set guidelines to ensure appropriate information, guidance, and support is available.

5. Instructional leadership training with strategies for teacher observation and feedback as well as how to use classroom information is a necessary part of the mentoring process.

6. The program must to be valuable and not just something done because of a mandate (Gettys et al., 2010).

The main goal of a mentoring program should be the development of strong school leaders with the knowledge and skills to focus on student learning and achievement (Mitgang, 2007). For this to occur, new principals need highly-trained mentors to guide and support them,

preferably for a minimum of the first two years of the principalship (Mitgang, 2007). Five guidelines for a quality mentoring program emerged from this study:

1. Training should be required for mentors.

2. Data should be gathered and analyzed on the effectiveness of the mentoring program in relation to the goals of the program.

3. New principals should be part of a formal mentoring program for a minimum of one year and preferably a minimum of two years.

4. Adequate funding, provided by the state or district, should be allocated to ensure quality training, stipends, and professional development.

5. The goal of mentoring must be the development of strong instructional leaders who are not afraid of making tough decisions that lead to better teaching and learning (Mitgang, 2007).

Supporting, strengthening, and encouraging leaders is the ultimate goal of the mentoring relationship (Carey et al., 2011; Sammut, 2014). Moreover, an objective of the relationship should be enhancement of professional skills and abilities (Mullen, 1994).

Theoretical Frameworks

Background. Building on what they determined was a weakness in mentoring research, Ehrich et al. (2001) reviewed hundreds of educational and business mentoring studies to determine if the studies were based on a theoretical framework and, if they were, what framework was used. In the analysis, it was found that 35% of the business studies and 15% of the education studies referenced a theoretical framework (Ehrich et al., 2001). The theories used in the education studies fell into seven main categories:

- developmental theories,

- adult learning theories,

- social exchange theory,

- learning theories,

- leadership theories,

- coaching/skill development models, and

- authors' own model (Ehrich et al., 2001).

A meta-summary and meta-synthesis by Dominguez and Hager (2013) found, when built upon a theoretical framework, adult mentoring research is organized around three models: developmental theories, social theories, and learning theories. The cyclical stages in the developmental theories identify, "a series of developmental stages and transitions from initiation to termination and redefinition, of the professional and personal relationship" (Dominguez & Hager, 2013, p. 173). Although developmental theories have a place in adult mentoring, the lack of diversity in the participants for the studies that led to these frameworks must be recognized when considering the developmental theories (Dominguez & Hager, 2013). Social theory frameworks are driven by relationships and meeting the developmental needs of a mentee. In social theories, mentees observe and actively learn from the mentors who serve as role models. A focus on the organization rather than the individual emerges from this framework (Dominguez & Hager, 2013). A variety of learning theory frameworks emerged from the meta-synthesis of Dominguez and Hager (2013). Although the learning theories were unique, many of their features coincided and correlated. Recognition of mentoring as a learning process was foundational for all of the learning theories (Dominguez & Hager, 2013). Emerging from learning theory was the role of the mentor as a facilitator and co-learner with the mentee (Dominguez & Hager, 2013).

Building upon the concept of mentoring as a learning process, adult learning theories build a foundation for mentoring research. Five expectations of an adult learner were described in the research of Merriam (2001):

1. The adult learner is aware of learning needs and is self-directing.

2. The adult learner has a range of life experiences that can contribute to and enhance learning.

3. The requirements of the adult learner are influenced by evolving roles and needs.

4. The adult learner is concerned with applying new knowledge and solving problems.

5. The internal motivation drives the adult learner to seek learning opportunities (Merriam, 2001).

In contrast to the developmental theories where mentees play a more receptive role, mentees, when viewed through the lens of a learning theory, are active participants who must critically reflect on success and failure, participate in self-directed learning, and learn through doing (Dominguez & Hager, 2013). Adult learning theory and transformative learning theory are two of the learning theory frameworks that encourage these roles for mentors and mentees and generate active learning from mentees (Dominguez & Hager, 2013). These theories then support the experiential learning theory which purports that learning happens as experiences emerge and transform (D. A. Kolb, 1984).

In an examination of professional development opportunities for principals in four different school districts, Zepeda, Parylo, and Bengtson (2014) determined what was in place and how, or if, principles of adult learning theory were demonstrated through the professional development practices. Job-embedded professional development was important for districts attempting to support the increased demands and accountability of the principal position. The

job-embedded nature encouraged relevant and active learning over an extended period of time. In relation to adult learning theory, the important aspect of learning being self-directed was missing from the structure of the principal professional development practices (Zepeda et al., 2014). School districts generally designed the professional development practices with little principal input regarding their needs. Zepeda et al. (2014) concluded that five areas of practice could assist in better meeting professional development needs of principals: (a) principles of adult learning should be the basis of the practices, (b) the weaknesses of the participants should be considered, (c) the needs of the system, school, and principal should be aligned with the intended outcomes, (d) all experience levels should be considered and engaged in the learning, and (e) principals should have a say in guiding the professional development topics, delivery methods, pace, and outcomes.

Novice principals are involved in what Nicholson (1984) described as *work role transitions*. Work role transitions were defined as any employment status change, whether a promotion, new position, organizational restructuring, unemployment, or retirement (Nicholson, 1984). Analyzing the outcomes of work role transitions, Nicholson (1984) identified two potential adjustment outcomes for the individual in transition: personal adjustment and role adjustment. Four variables help predict those outcomes. The four variables are: (1) the difference between the old and new role requirements, (2) the disposition of the person in transition, (3) the way the person has transitioned in the past, and (4) the social or organizational practices or induction to support the adjustment (Nicholson, 1984). Work role transitions, particularly transitions into managerial positions, may be viewed through the lens of learning. Those transitioning to new positions follow phases of transition and phases of learning as summarized in Table 4 (Isopahkala-Bouret, 2008). The phase of stabilization cannot be deemed the final

phase because most managerial positions require leading in areas that grow and change; as

stabilization begins, the leading phase may shift to a preparation phase for something new

(Isopahkala-Bouret, 2008).

Table 4

Phases of Transition and Learning for Managerial Transitions

Transition Phases	
Pre-Promotion	When the professional gained the needed education practice, and understanding for the position.
Shifting	When the professional formally accepts a new position, shifts to a new title, yet still holds characteristics of the prior job features.
Adjustment	When the expectations of the new position are made clear and the professional develops relationships, responsibilities, and tasks.

Learning Phases	
Preparation	As the new position is anticipated, professionals think about ways to be effective.
Stressful	Occurs at the start of the position as the professional settles into the position and learns how the position is different from previous positions.
Adjustment	The role expectations and qualities of the position are resolved.
Stabilization	Occurs when routines are established and there is no more new learning.

Summary from "Transformative learning in managerial role transitions," by U. Isopahkala-Bouret, 2008, *Studies in Continuing Education, 30*(1), 69-84.

Merging the transition phases with the learning phases inspires a shift into the

transformative learning theory. Sammut (2014) found strong connections between coaching and

adult learning theory, specifically the transformative learning theory. The assumption in

transformative learning theory is that reflecting critically upon activities and situations may lead

to changes in perspective regarding a new position or role (Isopahkala-Bouret, 2008; Mezirow,

1997, 1998, 2003). In the study by Isopahkala-Bouret (2008), the participants who were

transitioning to managerial positions employed self-reflection to determine the meanings and

implications of the new position.

Transformative learning is unique to adults and is described as transforming frames of reference (Mezirow, 1997, 2003). The frame of reference is characterized by two parts. The first area is *habits of mind*, which are ways of thinking that are rooted in a person's culture, background, and influences. The second area is *points of view*, which are views that can change with additional information, reflection, and feedback from other people (Mezirow, 1997). Points of view are more malleable than habits of mind because they may not be structured from predispositions and can be influenced by the opinions of others, by the situation that is presented, and by personal awareness (Mezirow, 1997). One method suggested by Mezirow (1997) for self-reflection was assessing beliefs to transform a frame of reference. Through self-reflection, substantial personal transformations may happen (Mezirow, 1997). Critical self-reflections are integral in transformative learning, requiring an understanding of where the foundation of beliefs and understandings formed. The relevance and significance of those foundations ought to be judged to determine possible consequences of transforming the understandings (Mezirow, 1998, 2003).

A goal of transformative learning is for adult learners to "become autonomous, responsible thinkers" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 8), which means that the adult learner is able to self-reflect in a critical manner and effectively dialogue while considering evidence and differing points of view. Sammut (2014) interviewed executive, life, and business coaches regarding their experiences while focusing on transformative learning and found a link to "experience; critical reflection; dialogue; and holistic experience" (Sammut, 2014, p. 42); the need for reflection was highlighted as essential for the process. According to Mezirow (1997), critical reflection is essential in transformative learning and can be facilitated rather than dictated by an *adult educator* and, through time, the facilitator should become a co-learner. Sammut (2014) found in

a professional coaching environment that learning cannot happen all at once, but takes place over time, manifesting as a process or a journey; those being coached must go through the process of discovering things for themselves.

Theoretical framework. D. A. Kolb (1984) is known for work with the experiential learning theory and agreed that the process of learning must be constructed by stating, "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 38). Experiential learning theory grew from the efforts of many theorists, including theorists John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, and Jean Piaget (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; D. A. Kolb, 1984). The creation or construction of knowledge based on changing experiences underlies experiential learning theory (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005). The foundation of experiential learning is characterized through six areas (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; D. A. Kolb, 1984):

1. Learning is a process where feedback on the efforts of the learner are incorporated and, through experiences, ideas and thoughts may be shaped and re-shaped. Experiences help modify and form the learning process.

2. As a process, learning is built on a foundation of experiences. Learners enter situations with preconceived ideas about the topic and therefore, relearning is learning. The modification of previous ideas may be needed for acquisition of knowledge to occur.

3. The learning process is driven by resolving conflicts between differing ways of handling the world. D. A. Kolb (1984) described this as a "tension- and conflict-filled process" (p. 30) with two dimensions. The two dimensions are formed by four modes of experiential learning; the first dimension involves concrete experiencing (CE) and abstract conceptualization (AC) while the second dimension involves active experimentation

(AE) and reflective observation (RO) and learners need to integrate these four modes (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; D. A. Kolb, 1984).

4. Learning is described as a holistic process needed for human adaptation; it is not just cognition but requires all aspects of the whole person.

5. Learning must assimilate new ideas into current beliefs and understandings. D. A. Kolb (1984) described learning as a transaction, not interaction, between a person and the environment.

6. Learning comes from the constructing of new knowledge (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; D. A. Kolb, 1984).

A. Y. Kolb and Kolb, (2005) describe a model of experiential learning theory with two ways to gain experience – Concrete Experience (CE) and Abstract Conceptualization (AC) – and two ways to transform experience – Reflective Observation (RO) and Active Experimentation (AE). These four areas compose the experiential learning cycle (see Figure 4). Typically, adults have a preferred mode of learning and must resolve the challenges that arise between the CE and AC and the RO and AE (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Adult learners visit each stage of the cycle throughout the learning process (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Turesky & Gallagher, 2011).

Figure 4

Cycle of Experiential Learning
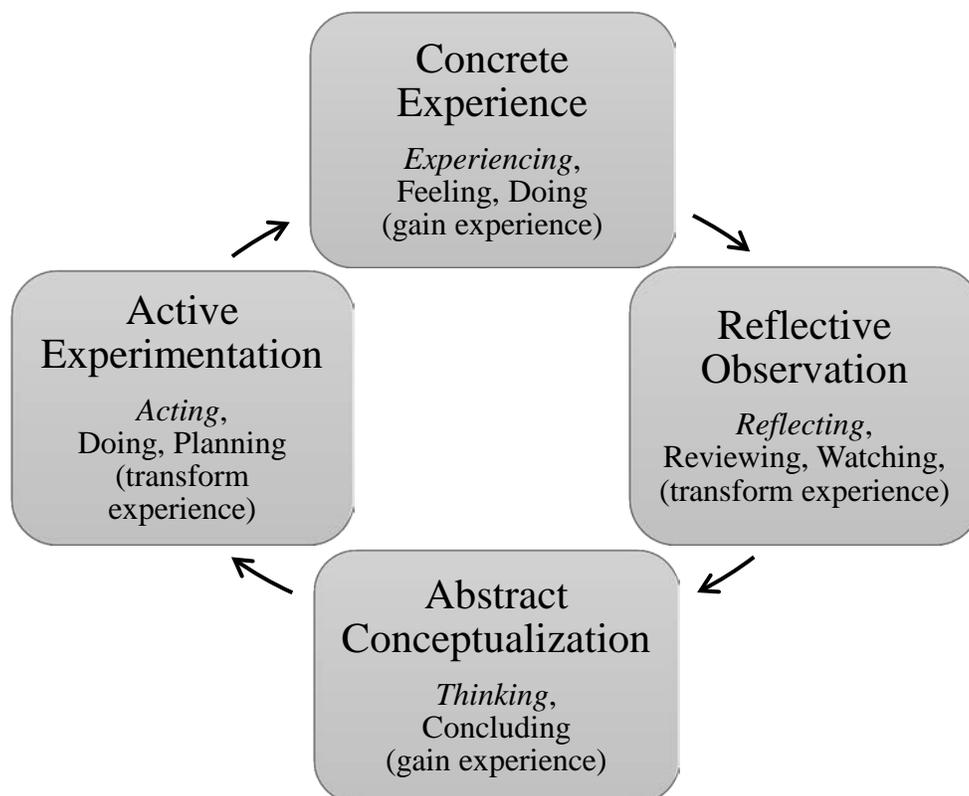
Adapted from A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; D. A. Kolb, 1984; McLeod, 2013; and Turesky & Gallagher, 2011.

In the *concrete experience* stage, a new or altered form of an existing experience occurs; this stage may be referred to as *experiencing, feeling,* or *doing* (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McLeod, 2013; Turesky & Gallagher, 2011). *Reflective observation* allows the adult learner to review and reflect upon experiences while working to understand discrepancies between what is known and what is experienced; this is the *watching, reflecting*, or *reviewing* stage (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McLeod, 2013; Turesky & Gallagher, 2011). In *abstract conceptualization*, the adult learns from an experience and may therefore modify existing conceptions; this is designated as

the *thinking* or *concluding* stage (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McLeod, 2013; Turesky &

Gallagher, 2011). Through the *active experimentation* stage, the learning is applied and the

results are determined; this may be called *acting, doing*, or *planning* (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005;

McLeod, 2013; Turesky & Gallagher, 2011).

Turesky and Gallagher (2011) concluded that Kolb's experiential learning theory was

vital in assisting professional coaches as they helped leaders develop stronger leadership

capacity. Often, leaders focus primarily on one mode of Kolb's experiential learning, limiting

their ability to fully manage in complex situations. When leaders access all the learning styles

and modes, they "become flexible and discerning in responding to organizational problems"

(Turesky & Gallagher, 2011, p. 5). Preferences for experiential learning styles may differ in a

variety of circumstances, and leaders have to adapt to the situations. Coaches who help leaders

should understand their dominant mode of learning and develop the other modes to better help

the leaders they coach (Turesky & Gallagher, 2011). Turesky and Gallagher (2011) stressed the

importance of leaders not expecting everyone to have the same learning style and not treating

everyone as if they do. Additionally, effective leadership may be hindered if the leader is unable

to access all the modes. Turesky and Gallagher (2011) suggested that developing leaders is a

"holistic process of adaptation to the world" (p. 7). Constructing knowledge based upon the

experiential learning theory supports growth through mentoring (Sammut, 2014; Turesky &

Gallagher, 2011). Therefore, the adult experiential learning theory is an appropriate lens for

analyzing mentoring structures.

Conclusion

The many benefits of principal mentoring demonstrate the need to ensure that new

principals have the opportunity to work with mentors through a formal mentoring program

(Allen et al., 2004; Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2004, 2007; Dodson, 2006; Dukess, 2001; Ehrich, et al., 2001; Gettys et al., 2010; James-Ward, 2012; Parylo et al., 2012; Simieou et al., 2010). Even if university principal preparation programs were able to adapt at the same pace as the ever-developing and changing expectations of principals, districts can help principals by instituting and supporting formal mentoring programs (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2004, 2007; Dukess, 2001; James-Ward, 2012; Portin et al., 2003; O'Mahoney, 2003; Ortiz, 2002; Saban & Wolfe, 2009). Considering their increased accountability for student achievement, principals can no longer afford to merely be school managers; multiple forms of leadership are essential for success in solving the complex issues that arise in the course of daily work (Hess & Kelly, 2005; Marzano et al., 2005; Portin et al., 2003; Seashore Louis et al., 2010; Waters et al., 2003).

Mentoring programs built upon the adult learning theories, and specifically experiential learning theory, help with the development of leaders (Dominguez & Hager, 2013; Turesky & Gallagher, 2011). Experiential learning encourages the construction of knowledge and understanding through experiences (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; D. A. Kolb, 1984; Turesky & Gallagher, 2011). Young, Sheets, and Knight (2005) summarized the significance of the relationship between learning and mentoring by stating, "Learning is the most important part of an effective mentoring program, and it is ongoing. When learning is not the primary focus, the partnership fails" (p. 2).

The benefits of mentoring extend beyond the new principal to both the mentor and the school district (Allen et al., 2004; Daresh, 2004; Dukess, 2001; Ehrich et al., 2001; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006). As such, mentoring programs are crucial to the development of solid new principals with the capacity to be superior instructional leaders with effective management skills

(Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2004, 2007; Daresh & Playko, 1993; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Dukess, 2001; Grigsby et al., 2010; Hess & Kelly, 2005; Ortiz, 2002; Parylo et al., 2012; Saban & Wolfe, 2009; Taylor et al., 2014). Most principals, however are not afforded the opportunity to engage in the formal mentoring process (Goldrick et al., 2012; Mitgang, 2007). This research analyzes views related to the benefits and challenges of implementing a principal mentoring program and the perceptions of principals and district administrators regarding the need for principal mentoring. The process of transitioning to or growing in a principal role is also analyzed through the framework of the experiential learning theory.

Chapter III

Design and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology used to gather and analyze data related to principal mentoring perspectives of school and district administrators. Formal principal mentoring programs are shown to benefit mentors, mentees, and school districts (Allen et al., 2004; Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2004, Daresh & Playko, 1993; Dukess, 2001). Mentoring is a learning process and, in that environment, learning will not happen all at once; it is a journey and needs to take place over time (Sammut, 2014). Having an understanding of adult learning theories may enhance the outcomes of the mentoring experience. Specifically, constructing knowledge based upon the experiential learning theory supports growth through mentoring (Turesky & Gallagher, 2011). The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of perceived need for a formal principal mentoring program, as well as the perceived benefits and challenges of implementing a formal principal mentoring program. This research also evaluated the areas in which public school administrators perceived the necessity for mentoring support. The objective of this study was to explore two research questions:

1. How do principals and district leaders perceive the benefits and challenges of principal mentoring programs?

2. What are the perceptions of principals and district administrators as they relate to implementing a formal principal mentoring program?

Research Design

In the development of a research study, designing and articulating the research questions is fundamental in defining the type of research and the scope of that research (Blaikie, 2004;

Creswell, 2012). Developing good research questions is the most important part of research (Lipowski, 2008). Three types of research questions have three specific roles in research: (a) *what* questions are used when descriptions or finding characteristics of a phenomenon are needed, (b) finding explanations or causes of something are the *why* questions, and finally, (c) *how* questions are used when a researcher is interested in bringing change to something or finding applicable outcomes (Blaikie, 2004). The structure of the research questions for this study set a strong foundation for a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is conducted when a deep understanding is sought regarding a phenomenon (Creswell, 2008, 2012, 2013). Many approaches to qualitative research exist and phenomenology best supports the research questions for this study; a phenomenological approach focuses on the perceptions and experiences of individuals (Creswell, 2013; Guest et al., 2013).

The goal of phenomenological research is discovering the perceptions of individuals and developing an understanding of how individuals perceive an experience (Creswell, 2013; Englander, 2012). Emphasizing a single phenomenon and doing this from the perspective of individuals who lived the experience are central features of a phenomenological study (Creswell, 2013). Principal mentoring was the focus of this study, which explored the perceived benefits and drawbacks of implementing a principal mentoring program, the importance of mentoring, and the areas for mentoring and ongoing support.

The phenomenological approach to qualitative research incorporates meanings from the common experiences of individuals surrounding some phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Both what was experienced and how an individual experienced the phenomenon are integrated into the culminating descriptions (Creswell, 2013). One-on-one interviews were used, and a semi-structured interview configuration allowed flexibility to probe and clarify throughout interviews,

maximizing data collection. A semi-structured approach requires the same basic organization (time, flow of questions, and content) for each interview (Gillham, 2005).

Structured open-ended questions lead to consistent content coverage and may be supplemented to ensure applicable areas of the research are addressed (Gillham, 2005). When possible, a semi-structured interview should be an open and interactive dialog where clarifying questions and statements are used to solicit details (Gillham, 2005). Open-ended questions in an interview allow flexibility in responses and often elicit deep and meaningful responses (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002). Research questions must serve as a foundation for the development of the interview protocol, this ensures adequate data collection to fully respond to the questions (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). When an interview is conducted for research, "the interviewer *is* the research instrument" (Gillham, 2005, p. 7); as such, questions were validated and interviews piloted to ensure an appropriate structure for the actual research interviews.

Participants

Purposeful concept sampling is used when a researcher includes participants with the knowledge that the participants will help determine the views of an idea, in the case of this research, principal mentoring (Creswell, 2012, 2013). To select participants for this study, the researcher used purposeful concept sampling together with convenience sampling. As the name implies, convenience sampling relies on the selection of participants available and willing to assist in the research (Creswell, 2012, 2013). Although convenience sampling may be limiting because there is no certainty that the sample is representative of the population, quality information can still be gained through convenience sampling (Creswell, 2012). To balance the convenience sampling, variation was sought in the sampling by contacting school districts of

different sizes. Setting differing criteria for participants prior to the study encourages maximum

variation of sampling, increasing the chance of gathering a range of perspectives based on that

criterion (Creswell, 2013). This study sought to solicit input from new principals (first or second

year), experienced principals, and district administrators who supervise principals.

The setting for this study was a semi-rural region of Idaho, a state without mandated

principal mentoring, with sampling selected from the population of a region of public school

principals and district administrators. School districts fitting the designated criteria were

contacted for permission for inclusion in the study. Qualifying districts could not have a part-

time superintendent or one who was concurrently employed as a school principal. The original

seven districts that were contacted ranged in size from approximately 700 students to

approximately 12,000 students (see Table 5). All seven districts agreed to participate, but one did

not meet the requirements for the study because the superintendent was concurrently employed

as a superintendent and school principal. As the data collection began, a second district was

disqualified due to district restructuring resulting in the superintendent holding an additional role

as a school principal.

Table 5

School District Information

School District	Approx. Total Enrollment 2014-2015	Number of Traditional "Brick-and-Mortar" Schools	
		Elementary	Secondary
District A	10,400	12	4
District B	11,900	14	4
District C	5,200	6	2
District D	5,200	6	3
District E*	4,000	7	2
District F*	700	1	1
District G**	1,700	4	2

*Excluded because superintendent concurrently serves as a school principal.
**Excluded due to lack of volunteer participation.

All participating principals and district administrators were certified through the State

Department of Education as a K-12 Principal and/or a K-12 Superintendent. The sample size was

determined by district leaders' willingness to allow administrator participation and by voluntary

participation of administrators. The four districts included in the study educate approximately

32,700 students. Consisting of elementary and secondary lead principals as well as district

leaders in supervisory roles, the sample included both new and experienced administrators.

Potential principal participants had to be the head principal of a traditional school to limit the

variables of the study. Fifteen principals responded to the email requests for potential

participants, and twelve were interviewed (see Table 6). Although the excluded three met the

threshold for participation, their demographics mirrored others who were already selected. The

excluded principals were one secondary male principal and two female elementary school

principals, all with more than five years of experience.

Table 6

Principal Participant Demographics

	Total	Female	Male	1st or 2nd year principal	3rd – 5th year principal	>5 year principal
Elementary	8	5	3	3	2	3
Secondary (Middle/Jr. or High)	4	1	3	0	1	3
Total	**12**	**6**	**6**	**3**	**3**	**6**
Excluded Elementary	*2*	*2*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*2*
Excluded Secondary	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*1*

Ten district administrators from the four participating districts were asked to volunteer

for the study; five district administrators volunteered for interviews and four were included (see

Table 7). District administrators represented each of the four districts. They held roles such as

superintendent, deputy superintendent, or director. One superintendent was excluded since the

deputy superintendent from the same district also volunteered and participated in the study.

Table 7

District Administrator Participant Demographics

	Total	Female	Male
Superintendent, Deputy/Asst. Superintendent	2	1	1
Other District Administrator	2	1	1
Total	**4**	**2**	**2**
Excluded Superintendent	**1**	**0**	**1**

To ensure ethical treatment throughout the research process, the researcher completed training

and certification for human research through the National Institute of Health (see Appendix C).

Additionally, the researcher submitted an application for approval through the Human Research

Review Committee (HRRC) at Northwest Nazarene University. The approval through HRRC

was received prior to beginning the study (see Appendix D).

Data Collection

The phenomenological approach to qualitative research incorporates meanings from the

common experiences of individuals surrounding some phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Concrete

details of an experience, as well as the individual's assessment of the event, are integrated into

the culminating descriptions (Creswell, 2013). This qualitative research study employed semi-

structured interviews with new and experienced principals and school district administrators as a

means of data collection.

District consent. District superintendents were contacted via email, with telephone

follow-up when needed, to request permission to contact administrators in their districts as part

of a principal mentoring study (see Appendix E). Leaders from seven school districts of varying

sizes were approached to be part of the study. District superintendents from all seven districts

returned consent letters agreeing to participate (see Appendix F). Two districts were omitted

from the process for not meeting the study requirements and a third school district did not

produce any principal volunteers; therefore the study was comprised of four school districts (see

Table 8).

Table 8

Participant District Information

School District	Approx. Total Enrollment 2014-2015	Number of Traditional Schools			No. of Head Principals Traditional / Total
		Elementary	Middle/Jr. High	High School	
District A	10,400	12	2	2	16 / 17
District B	11,900	14	2	2	18 / 21
District C	5,200	6	1	1	8 / 9
District D	5,200	6	2	1	9 / 10

Electronic notice. Using email contacts provided by the school district or school district

website, 56 potential principal participants and ten potential district administrator participants

were contacted via email in September and October 2015. An initial electronic notice was

emailed to principals with an introduction of the researcher and inclusion of information about

the study. The notice asked the potential participant to consider volunteering to be interviewed as

part of the study (see Appendix G). Follow-up emails were sent to two districts to encourage

participation. After the initial principal interviews, a separate notice was sent to district

administrators (see Appendix G). Those willing to volunteer clicked a link to access a Qualtrics

survey (Qualtrics, 2015). Potential participants were asked to supply simple demographic

information used for determining qualification, and to aid in selecting a range of administrators

(see Appendix H and Appendix I). The electronic notice yielded 15 responses from principals

and five responses from district administrators.

Content validation of interview questions. The content validation of the interview

questions followed the process described by Lynn (1986) and Polit and Beck (2006) which

discussed the method and merits of determining content validity. There are two stages in determining content validity for an instrument; the two stages are *development* and *judgment-quantification* (Lynn, 1986). In the development stage, there are three steps: (a) domain identification, (b) item generation, and (c) instrument formation. In the judgment-quantification stage, there are two steps: (a) using experts to determine that items are content valid and (b) using experts to determine that the entire instrument is content valid (Lynn, 1986). For this study, the research questions were used as a guide for drafting the interview questions, and information found in the review of literature helped narrow the focus. In determining content validity, a minimum of three experts should be consulted, although five experts is optimum to eliminate the possibility of chance agreements (Lynn, 1986; Polit & Beck, 2006). In a consultation with three to five experts, all must agree upon the relevance of an item to establish content validity; furthermore, at least 78% agreement is expected among the experts if there are six to ten consulted (Polit & Beck, 2006). When items do not meet the threshold for establishing content validity, the item should be omitted or edited, and, when necessary, the instrument may need to go through the content validity process more than one time (Lynn, 1986; Polit & Beck, 2006).

Experts were consulted to determine the relevance of the interview questions for providing data leading to support of the research questions. For this study, content and instrument validity for the principal interview was ensured by consulting ten educator experts, all of whom were current or former principals and none of whom were interview participants. The ten professionals judged the items and reported the results. Each respondent analyzed every question in relation to the research questions and ranked the questions as: (1) not relevant, (2) may be relevant with revisions/unable to assess relevance, (3) relevant but could use minor alteration, or (4) very relevant. Scores of a three or a four were needed for a question to be

included. As shown in Appendix J, all of the items met the minimum threshold of 78%

agreement, and questions with multiple parts were revised for clarification. No questions were

omitted after the validation process. The final principal interview protocol (see Appendix K) was

completed with clarification edits as suggested by the educator experts, and the pilot interview

participants.

The district administrator protocol was drafted in a way similar to the principal protocol;

however, in addition to referencing the review of literature and research questions, consideration

was given to the data collected from principal interviews. Five experts, all holding district-level

administrator positions, and not part of the study, were involved in the validation process for the

district administrator interview protocol. Appendix L presents the validation demonstrating that

100% of the experts analyzed the questions as relevant or very relevant. Similar to the principal

interview protocol, the final district administrator protocol was completed with clarification edits

from the validation process and pilot interview. Appendix M includes the interview protocol for

the district administrators.

Pilot interviews. Prior to the scheduling and conducting of official interviews, two pilot

interviews were conducted with principal representatives. Those participating in the pilot

interviews understood that the purpose of the interview was not for publishing data, but to test

the interview process and questions. The pilot revealed a need to clarify and expand upon some

of the questions and explicitly review the research definition of formal principal mentoring

before each interview. Following the principal interviews, one pilot interview was conducted

with a district administrator not part of the sample districts. The district administrator pilot

interview exposed the need to revise and clarify some supplemental questions. Each set of pilot

interviews was completed before any formal data collection began with the designated group of participants.

Interviews. Twelve principal interviews and four district administrator interviews were conducted to gather the data. Individuals in both groups agreed to the informed consent prior to the interview (see Appendix N). The principal interviews were completed before district administrator interviews began. The one-on-one interviews were conducted in person in a mutually agreed-upon location. Interviews were recorded using two digital voice recording devices. Participants agreed to be contacted for follow-up, if necessary, to clarify any questions, statements, or information. Similar to the pilot interviews, the actual interviews lasted between 30 and 70 minutes. Recordings from the interviews were transcribed by a research assistant (see confidentiality statement in Appendix O) to increase the efficiency of the data collection process. During the research, the data were stored on a password protected restricted computer and a password protected cloud folder. The computer files will be destroyed by the researcher three years after the study in compliance with the Federalwide Assurance Code (45 CRF 46.117).

Analytical Methods

Strategies for analyzing qualitative data are typically structured as processes with interconnected phases (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The phases may be concurrent or may repeat, therefore, Creswell (2013) described qualitative analysis as less linear and more spiral. Qualitative data analysis can be expressed in three general phases, (1) arranging and organizing the data, (2) coding the data to find themes, and (3) discussing and describing the data (Creswell, 2013).

Integrating the more detailed phases of (a) organizing, (b) immersing, (c) categorizing, (d) coding, (e) interpreting, (f) finding alternative meanings, and (g) reporting, proposed by

Marshall and Rossman (2016), the process began with an organization of the data. Following the detailed transcription of the interviews, the written data were sorted first by participant group. The independent groups for this research were the principal group and district administrator group. As the potential participants volunteered, demographic data were considered to include a range of participants in the study. New and experienced principals from all K – 12 levels representing four districts contributed to the data collection. District administrators represented a range of district sizes to assist in gathering varied perspectives. Transcription data were organized according to participant group (principal or district administrator), level of the principals' supervisory school (elementary or secondary), and experience level of the principal (new or veteran). Throughout the data analysis process, the researcher used pseudonyms for the school districts and participants to ensure confidentiality.

Immersion in the data is integral to the analysis process (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Immersing in the data involved listening to the audio recordings, reading and re-reading the transcripts, and reviewing interview notes and reflections. The goal during this stage was developing a deep understanding of the participant perspectives, and thereby begin formulating potential themes. This primed the transition to coding and developing themes (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Coding involves phrases or short words assigned to small sections of the data (Saldaña, 2013). Coding was used to help interpret the data by finding patterns; as the patterns emerged, the data that shared common characteristics were combined into categories (Saldaña, 2013). An analysis was structured to code and categorize the information to determine emerging themes from the interviews. The table of research questions in relation to interview questions (Table 9) helped guide the initial data sort.

Table 9

Research Questions in Relation to Interview Questions

Research questions / background information	Interview questions from protocol (P=principal protocol, D=district administrator protocol)
Background and/or perspective	P1, P2 D1, D2, D7
1. How do principals and district leaders perceive the benefits and challenges of principal mentoring programs? (Do administrators think principal mentoring is important and/or needed? What areas do administrators think are needed for maximum support and benefits?)	P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P11 D3, D4, D5, D9, D10
2. What are the perceptions of principals and district administrators as they relate to implementing a formal principal mentoring program? (If principal mentoring is important, in what areas is mentoring needed? If mentoring is important and not happening, why is it not happening – barriers, and what could be done to correct this?)	P7, P8, P9, P10, P11 D4, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D10, D11

Responses from the participants generated hundreds of pages of data that were categorized with key words and color-codes on the transcripts. Common themes emerged from the perceptions discussed in the interviews, and the transcript data verified the commonality among the perceptions of principals and of district administrators. Along with common themes across the range of participants, divergent information was noted and analyzed to determine if it was characteristic of an identifiable group of participants.

Marshall and Rossman (2016) suggested that reducing and interpreting data can happen throughout all stages of analysis, and this was evident in the third and fourth phases which provided a fluid transition to the fifth phase of interpreting the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Reducing the potential categories and themes by grouping similar responses and experiences was

essential in managing the data. The organization of the data and potential themes was vital for interpreting the data. The coded themes were studied in relation to the participant group as well as specific principal level or experience categories. Throughout the entire analysis process, the data sets (principals and district administrators) were analyzed independently for comparison and to find relationships, and then were interpreted together (Creswell, 2012). To ensure a complete picture of the data, triangulation was used to converge the data. Data from principal interviews and district administrator interviews were synthesized to describe overall administrator perceptions on principal mentoring. Triangulation must have two sets of data that together describe a phenomenon (Creswell, 2008, 2012; Gorard, Roberts, & Taylor, 2004). The two sets of data may give different perspectives on the same topic, and therefore, when combined give a more cohesive, fuller picture of the phenomenon. For triangulation to work, the two data sets must contain valid data; otherwise, the resulting description will not be valid (Creswell, 2012; Gorard et al., 2004). When inconsistencies or questions arose, the sixth phase of searching out different understandings was employed.

The seventh phase of reporting the data was completed and, to ensure the validity of the data, member checking was employed. The themes that emerged were emailed to the participants to ensure they were represented in the data, and to solicit feedback regarding conclusions that appeared incongruent in representing their perspectives (Appendix P). Participant feedback was considered and the data were reviewed again.

Limitations

There are limitations to all research studies, which must be acknowledged and addressed (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The limitations outline boundaries of the study, influenced by factors that may be out of the researcher's control (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The limitations

of this study stem from the narrow demographics of the study area and the use of convenience sampling. Although the study includes a variety of school district sizes, there is a lack of diversity in the rural area. The results of the study may not easily generalize to larger and more diverse areas. Another limitation is the reliance on honest and complete answers and descriptions from the participants. Ethical and thorough responses are expected from professional administrators; individual responses must be assumed honest and complete as reported.

Role of the Researcher

There are two potential threats to validity that center upon the researcher: bias and reactivity (Maxwell, 2009). Researchers cannot be bias-free. Holding professional roles as a supervisor of teacher professional development and as a school principal, this researcher has strong beliefs regarding the need for support and ongoing training for educators at every level. Acknowledging these beliefs entails an understanding that support, professional development, and training may have different structures depending upon the group or organization. As such, bracketing contributed to this research.

Bracketing is a way to minimize the influence of the researcher in the data collection and analysis process (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013; Wall, Glenn, Mitchinson, & Poole, 2004). An important aspect of bracketing is the ability of the researcher to put aside personal experiences and understandings to clearly articulate the experiences of the participant (Chan et al., 2013). As the qualitative interviewer is the research instrument, complete objectivity is not possible (Gillham, 2005); however, acknowledging preconceptions demonstrates an awareness of potential biases and allows for opportunities to diminish the influence (Chan et al., 2013). The researcher heeded the suggestion of both Chan et al. (2013) and Wall et al. (2004) and kept a

reflective journal throughout the data collection and analysis process to critically assess personal influences and prepare for interactions with participants.

To address what Maxwell (2009) calls reactivity, or how the researcher effects those being studied, special care was taken to ensure confidentiality of participants and districts, especially with colleagues in close proximity to the researcher. Maxwell (2009), in discussing this potential threat in a qualitative setting, stated, "the goal is . . . not to eliminate this influence but to understand it and to use it productively" (p. 243). A collegial relationship between the researcher and many of the participants encouraged open dialog without a lengthy familiarization process.

Chapter IV

Results

Introduction

The powerful benefits of principal mentoring for mentees, mentors, and school districts alike are clearly reinforced by research (Allen et al., 2004; Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2004, Daresh & Playko, 1993; Dukess, 2001; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Yirci & Kocabas, 2010). Despite this research, principal mentoring is not occurring, nor is it a priority for many school districts (Allen et al., 2004; Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2004, Daresh & Playko, 1993; Dukess, 2001; Goldrick et al., 2012; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Mitgang, 2007). In Idaho, principal mentoring is neither required nor funded. Determining principals' and district administrators' perceptions surrounding principal mentoring contributes to an understanding of how to best support principals, especially new principals. This study explored principal mentoring through the eyes of principals and school district administrators. Qualitative data for this research were collected through semi-structured interviews to answer two main research questions; the results are reported in this chapter. The two research questions were:

1. How do principals and district leaders perceive the benefits and challenges of principal mentoring programs?

2. What are the perceptions of principals and district administrators as they relate to implementing a formal principal mentoring program?

Twelve principals (eight elementary and four secondary), and four district administrators (one superintendent, one deputy superintendent, and two directors of elementary education) representing the four school districts contributed their insights and perceptions to this research. The 12 principals were a representation of the 51 traditional principals in the four school

districts, while the four district leaders represented 11 district administrators. In addition to presenting results of the interviews, this chapter describes participants' backgrounds, to establish their frame of reference.

Participants' Frame of Reference

This research solicited perspectives from principals and district administrators regarding principal mentoring. A range of principals contributed to the study and their diverse experiences and professional backgrounds were a basis for their views (Table 10).

Table 10

Principal Background

Name	Number of years in current position	Current level	Total years as principal	Past level(s) as principal
Ms. Carrie Anderson	1*	Elementary	1	n/a
Ms. Whitney Garner	1*	Elementary	1	n/a
Ms. Tammi Williams	2*	Elementary	2	n/a
Ms. Paige Joseph	3	Elementary	3	n/a
Mr. John Morgan	3	Secondary	3	n/a
Mr. Caleb Henry	5	Elementary	6	Elementary
Mr. Maxwell Scott	6	Secondary	6	n/a
Mr. Bob Lewis	3	Secondary	8	Elementary
Mr. Jaden Smith	3	Elementary	9	Elementary
Ms. Sasha Bailey	4	Elementary	12	Secondary
Ms. Shannon West	13	Secondary	13	n/a
Mr. Mark Jones	8	Elementary	14	n/a

* New principal: principals in their first or second years as a building principal

Different paths, such as teaching, counseling, or serving as assistant principal, led these principals to their current roles. Six of interviewees (Ms. Garner, Mr. Henry, Ms. Joseph, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Smith, and Ms. Williams) served as classroom teachers before attaining elementary principal positions. Within that group, Mr. Henry accepted his first principalship in a small rural district as a split-position elementary principal and special education director; he held these jobs for one year before moving to a larger rural district as a principal. Mr. Lewis participated in this

study as a secondary principal, but his educational progression was from teacher to elementary

principal to middle school principal, followed by special services director, and finally high

school principal. Ms. Anderson, Mr. Jones, and Ms. West all began their educational careers as

school counselors prior to moving into school administration. Ms. Anderson and Mr. Jones

transitioned from counselor to elementary principal, while Ms. West moved into a middle school

assistant principal role before accepting a middle school principal position. Three participants,

Ms. Bailey, Mr. Morgan, and Mr. Scott, began as teachers, moved to secondary assistant

principal roles, and then transitioned to secondary principal positions. When she participated in

this study, Ms. Bailey was serving as an elementary principal. Every principal in this study who,

at any time, held a secondary (middle school or high school) principal position, held either a

secondary assistant principal or elementary principal position first.

The district administrators each, at one time, served as principals; currently they all

supervise principals. The district administrators brought a two-year to 18-year range of district-

level administrative experience to the study (Table 11).

Table 11

District Administrator Information

Position	Current position	Number of years in current position	Total years as a district administrator
Ms. Miranda Campbell	Director of Elementary	2	2
Mr. Keith Brown	Director of Elementary	2	2
Ms. Marilyn Raymond	Deputy Superintendent	4	12
Mr. Gene Young	Superintendent	15	18

The two directors of elementary education, Mr. Brown and Ms. Campbell, were both in their

second year in the position, and served as elementary principals prior to the district-level role;

this is their first district-level position. Both Ms. Raymond and Mr. Young served in school and district administrative positions prior to their current roles.

The study sought to understand the perceptions of new principal mentoring, which invited a closer look at how professionals transitioned into and learned the role of principal. Mentoring, whether formal or informal, occurs during the job transition period. Therefore, the principal participants began the interviews by describing their experiences learning and transitioning to their first principalship; recounting the experience was not difficult for anyone. Those principals past their first year in the position were able to easily reflect and articulate the overwhelming adjustment that they experienced. Many described the enormity of the position, the isolation of the role, and the incredible responsibility placed on one person. Most also shared their memory of seeking out any available help to cope with the jobs stresses.

Although interviewees were credentialed and certified for the job, none felt completely prepared. Some of the principals were assigned a mentor by their school district, but none were part of a formal principal mentoring program. Formal principal mentoring is defined as a mentor assigned to a mentee with a structured program and process of expectations mutually beneficial to the mentor and mentee (Hansford et al., 2003; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006). The two first year principals were participating in a more organized mentoring process, but it was controlled by the mentor/mentee pair and not a formal mentoring program.

The principals shared their initial surprise regarding the volume and variety of tasks expected of them. Ms. Williams found, "When you do your administrative program . . . [you have] four-hundred [internship] hours at the various levels, but you never really conquer everything all at the same time. You deal with one thing at a time . . . And when you jump into that principalship, it's everything all at the same time." Her sentiment was echoed by Mr. Henry: "Being a

principal, it's tough . . . we are expected to deal with a lot more than I ever anticipated or ever knew coming out of school." The principals found there was much they did not know when hired, and Mr. Smith stated, "About three or four months into the job [my former administrator] asked how it was going and I told him, 'I have no idea why anybody would have hired me knowing what I know now,' realizing how little I knew before I was hired." The vast amount of new information was metaphorically expressed by Mr. Lewis when he said, "I definitely got to drink out of a fire hose for two years." A further burden was the increased level of stress brought about by the position. Mr. Scott shared, "I remember telling one of my assistant principals, 'I wish that I could just go work at a fast food place and not have any stress.'" These comments from participants revealed the lasting impact of their transition to the principalship, even after multiple years in the position.

Serving as a frame of reference, participants' lived experience of transitioning to their position was an unstructured and informal mentoring process where, as a new principal, they had to seek out help. Even when participants were assigned a mentor, help was sought more often than provided. Mr. Henry explained, "You've got to be proactive and look for the help," while Ms. Joseph stated, "Everything that I encountered was new, and I had to call to get help." According to Mr. Scott, "Everyone, [another principal and the district staff], was very willing to provide help. . . . I could approach them with questions, or concerns, or needing assistance." Most of the principals explained that help was available if they asked for it, but they needed to seek it out while balancing the anxiety that a supervisor would think them incapable of the job. Some described the hours spent figuring things out on their own. Ms. Bailey, who had a strong leadership background prior to her first principalship, recalled, "I didn't have a whole lot of support, but I didn't ask for a lot of support." The two first-year principals, Ms. Anderson and

Ms. Garner, were both interviewed during the second month of the school year; both articulated their difficulty in deciding what questions to ask, given that they do not yet know what they do not know. These two first year principals participate with mentors in a process more organized than any of the other principals had. They have assigned mentors and, with their mentors, have established a regular meeting schedule; guidance, however, is absent regarding what areas or information should be addressed. The responsibility of articulating what needs to be taught and learned, consequently, falls to the mentees as questions surface.

Also described was a feeling of isolation, which is common to leadership positions; this was more evident with elementary principals who function without assistant principals. Mr. Lewis's first principal position was in an elementary school, and he stated, "You're making every decision, often small, but still so many decisions; most is in isolation. It can be a lonely job." Mr. Morgan agreed, stating, "You're the last person they talk to . . . knowing that my decision's the final decision, and after that it goes to the superintendent." Considering the weight of the position, a continual area of focus for the principals was the need for a collegial network of support. The importance of developing relationships with professional peers was described as paramount to interviewees' success.

Five of the 12 principals discussed *Project Leadership* as a key component in lessening the isolation of the position. *Project Leadership* is a three-year professional development opportunity for school and district administrators organized through the Idaho Association of School Administrators (IASA). The goal of *Project Leadership* is to assist administrators in recognizing and developing their leadership style while improving their leadership skills and abilities (Idaho Association of School Administrators, 2015). Mr. Smith stated, "Luckily, the district did provide me with *Project Leadership* which was a huge help in networking and, you

know, finding out that I wasn't the only administrator struggling with the different things that we are faced with." Mr. Henry indicated, "The principal job is a lonely job and *Project Leadership* for me has [provided a] cohort that you can talk to about your job and that understand what you're going through and understand your job is huge."

Learning throughout the transition to the job was facilitated for each principal with the assistance of an informal mentor. Situations and activities prompted reflection at the same time the position's daily challenges demanded multiple approaches and strategies. The stories of their experiences transitioning into the principalship set the stage for the data collected regarding their perceptions surrounding principal mentoring.

Results for Research Question One

The career of a school principal is part of a growing job market (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). As new principals enter the field, principal mentoring produces benefits that extend beyond the principal being mentored (Allen et al., 2004; Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2004, Daresh & Playko, 1993; Dukess, 2001; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Yirci & Kocabas, 2010). This research was set in a semi-rural area of Idaho, a state without funded or mandated principal mentoring; formal principal mentoring is all but absent in Idaho school districts. The first research question asked:

> How do principals and district leaders perceive the benefits and challenges of principal
> mentoring programs?

To fully answer the first research question, participants were asked to describe their perceptions of the benefits and challenges for four groups: the mentee, the mentor, the school of the new principal, and the school district:

If there is (were) formal principal mentoring in place, what do you think are (would be)

the benefits of principal mentoring for the: Mentee? Mentor? School? District?

If there is (were) formal principal mentoring in place, what do you think are (would be)

the challenges of principal mentoring for the: Mentee? Mentor? School? District?

Following the 12 principal interviews and four district administrator interviews, the

transcript data were analyzed. Administrators shared how they believed mentees, mentors,

schools, and districts may both benefit from, and find challenges with, principal mentoring. The

perceived benefits and challenges for each of the four groups (mentee, mentor, school, and

district) were coded for both sets of participants (principals and district administrators). Table 12

exhibits the number of principal responses by group for both the benefits and challenges; the

number of codes represented by those responses is shown in the last column. The principals

reported the most benefits for the mentee. The greatest number of challenges identified were also

for the mentees. The principals listed the least amount of benefits and challenges for the school

of the new principal. The principal codes for the benefits and for the challenges produced

respectively 67 and 46 unique codes.

Table 12

Rank Order Principal Codes for Benefits and Challenges

Principal Benefits					**Principal Challenges**			
	Group	*No. of Responses*	*No. of Codes*			*Group*	*No. of Responses*	*No. of Codes*
1	Mentee	95	33		1	Mentee	37	19
2	District	56	20		2	Mentor	33	11
3	Mentor	46	21		3	District	29	12
4	School	38	17		4	School	12	4

The district administrators were asked to opine on the same topics of benefits and challenges for

each group. Table 13 displays the number of responses for benefits and challenges. Similar to the

principals, district administrators expressed the greatest benefits and challenges for the mentee. The fewest benefits were listed for the school, while the school and district had the fewest challenges mentioned. There were 37 unique benefit codes, and 10 unique challenge codes from the district administrator interviews.

Table 13

Rank Order District Administrator Codes for Benefits and Challenges

District Administrator Benefits					**District Administrator Challenges**			
	Group	*No. of Responses*	*No. of Codes*			*Group*	*No. of Responses*	*No. of Codes*
1	Mentee	35	19		1	Mentee	13	7
2	Mentor	18	10		2	Mentor	9	5
3	District	16	7		3	District	2	2
4	School	9	5		4	School	2	2

Of the 104 total unique codes described by the principals, 64.4% were for perceived benefits. Likewise, the district administrators shared more information regarding benefits, with 78.7% of the 47 unique codes pertaining to benefits. After the data from the perceptions relative to the four groups (mentee, mentor, school, and district) were compiled and coded, the groups' data were combined into an exhaustive list, and the unique codes were organized into categories. The top categories are displayed in Table 14.

Table 14

Top Benefits and Challenges Categories

Top 5 Categories for Perceived Benefits				
Principal			**District Admin.**	
Guidance	33		Support	14
Support	29		Guidance	13
Help	21		Learning/Collaboration	13
Learning/Collaboration	21		Retention	6
Retention	21		Help	6

Top 5 Categories for Perceived Challenges

Principal		District Admin.	
Time/Schedule	34	Mismatch	9
Mismatch	24	Overbearing Mentor	7
Resources	14	Time/Schedule	4
Principals out of Building	9	Mentee Viewed as Incompetent	4
Program Development	7	[no other categories]	

The district administrators named few perceived challenges for the mentoring process, especially when discussing the district and school. Emerging from the data were a set of themes related to the perceived benefits, and a set for the perceived challenges. Table 15 displays the themes to be discussed for the first research question.

Table 15

Themes for Perceived Benefits and Challenges

Themes for Research Question One

Perceived Benefits	*Perceived Challenges*
1. Help for the mentee (guidance, collaborative learning, support)	1. Mismatch between mentee and mentor
2. Retention of principals	2. Time and scheduling for mentoring

Themes for perceived benefits. When discussing potential benefits of principal mentoring, both the principal and district administrator participants agreed that the help provided to a new principal is invaluable. The first theme that emerged for the perceived benefits of new principal mentoring was the help given to the mentee. Help included the guidance, collaborative learning, and support thought to be a product of mentoring. The benefits provided to the mentee through help, guidance, learning, and support were described by all 16 participants in the study; 14 of the 16 administrators also included the benefit of collaborative learning for the mentor.

According to the interviews, guidance encompasses all aspects of leadership; it includes the opportunity to have assistance from an experienced administrator who can answer questions,

provide direction, and understand confidential situations. Help also includes learning collaboratively with another administrator. A significant portion of guidance entails instilling knowledge and comprehension of district-specific requirements, procedures, policies, climate, and culture. Mr. Jones explained, "There's a real benefit to having a mentor just for the culture and climate of things, as much as the policy and procedures." Support is demonstrated by having an assigned mentor who the mentee knows will listen, check in, and, most importantly, be there to assist with the isolation and overwhelming nature of the position. The advantage of learning by teaching another was a benefit for the mentor that 11 of the 12 principals and three of the four district administrators described during their interviews. Mr. Lewis summarized the advantages of learning via mentoring when he concluded, "Having a mentor program would foster a culture of constantly trying to improve."

Help was the benefit most recognized by the 16 participants in this study. As described, help encompasses the guidance, support, and learning that may benefit those involved in the process. The mentee is the primary recipient of the guidance and support while the learning is a reciprocal activity between mentee and mentor. Helping new principals adjust to the isolation and magnitude of the position was perceived as an important benefit to lessen the stress and encourage longevity in the position.

The supportive relationships available to new principals, according to Ms. Williams, "helps [districts] to retain people longer." The second benefit theme, perceived by half the participants: the retention of principals encouraged by mentoring. Mr. Scott says of mentoring, "[It] would show an investment in the principal. It would show a desire from the district to maintain strong leadership . . . to maintain a group of principals that rely on each other, that work with each other. That strengthens any district." The district administrators from the two smaller

districts lamented that recruiting people to move to a small area is often difficult, making retention essential. The principals noted the relationship between good collegial relationship and the retention of administrators.

According to Mr. Morgan, using mentoring to support and retain principals leads to a more stable district with opportunities to achieve at higher levels:

> I think [new principal mentoring] creates longevity in your administration. I think that this is a difficult job, and I don't think people realize how difficult it is until they're actually here. It's a high stress job, and so support of new principals helps them to build opportunities to stay in a position, feel support, feel success, [and] build trust with the faculty, so that they're able to then move into those next steps of making the changes that are necessary in their building.

Many administrators commented that principal mentoring is a win-win for the new principal and the school district. Ms. Williams summed up her thoughts by saying, "I think there's always going to be challenges . . . but I think the benefits would outweigh the challenges."

Themes for perceived challenges. The participants were generous with information about perceived benefits, but shared perceptions about challenges as well. One theme was shared from interviews with both principals and district leaders: the challenge of matching mentee and mentor. Thirteen of the 16 interviews contributed to the data regarding this challenge. Additionally, the principal interviews addressed the theme pertaining to the challenge of allocating resources such as time for meetings and a financial commitment from the district. Limited available resources were cited by 14 times by the principals.

Mr. Henry explained that "Finding a mentor that [is] a good match . . . [is] the most important thing." Ms. Garner emphasized that the district has an important job of finding the "right person" to mentor a new principal.

The district administrators' concern surrounding the challenge of an incompatible mentoring match was less about the initial pairing, and more about the extent of the relationship. Ms. Raymond described the initial partnership as a challenge:

It's being assigned a friend, basically. And so you have a new person coming in and . . . if [the relationship] doesn't work, it's a challenge. . . Oftentimes we've assigned a mentor and the new person has built a relationship with somebody else that they're closer to, and work more closely with . . . and that's okay . . .but, I think, if they were assigned someone in a structured program, there may be some difficulties in that relationship.

Mr. Brown said, "A personality conflict . . . can be very detrimental to the whole situation."

Overall, the principal participants shared a wider range of potential stumbling blocks than did the district administrators. From the principal interviews, an additional theme emerged: the challenge of time and scheduling for the mentee-mentor pair.

Mr. Scott stated,

Principals in the field know that time is valuable. . . . We all want to help each other, and we all feel the obligation to help other people when we have the capacity to do so. But, that doesn't mean it won't take away from the other responsibilities that you have.

The administrators described the perceived challenges to implementing a formal principal mentoring program, with the mismatch between mentee and mentor remaining a consistent theme for both the principal and district administrator groups. Additionally, the principal participants included the challenge of finding the resources, such as quality time to dedicate to

the mentoring process, and the ongoing financial commitment needed from the school district to ensure an effective mentoring program. Every participant believed, however, that challenges to implementation and the mentoring process were outweighed by the potential benefits.

Results for Research Question Two

New principal mentoring programs assist in developing principals with strong instructional leadership and management skills (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2004, 2007; Daresh & Playko, 1993; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Dukess, 2001; Grigsby et al., 2010; Hess & Kelly, 2005; Ortiz, 2002; Parylo et al., 2012; Saban & Wolfe, 2009; Taylor et al., 2014). Of the sixteen participants, all shared their belief that some form of principal mentoring is important. With no principal among participants having an experience with a solid-functioning formal mentoring program, the foundation for their views was experience with learning and transitioning to the principalship, often assisted by some type of informal mentoring. The following is a selection of phrases used by the principals when asked what level of importance mentoring holds for new principals:

- "High importance,"

- "It would be valuable,"

- "Huge help,"

- "Really valuable,"

- "Importance is higher than ever,"

- "Very high level,"

- "A lot of importance,"

- "Very important,"

- "Vitally important,"

- "It is crucial; probably the most important thing,"

- "High importance (if structured properly)," and

- "It's huge; on a one to ten scale, it's a ten."

The district administrators also shared their thoughts on the level of importance for mentoring new principals:

- "It's important,"

- "Pretty high, it's a very important thing,"

- "It's probably a ten," and

- "Very, very important."

After the perceived importance was established by every participant, research question two could be more fully addressed. The second research question asked:

What are the perceptions of principals and district administrators as they relate to implementing a formal principal mentoring program?

The four participating districts do not have established formal principal mentoring programs; as such, perceptions of implementation focused primarily on the areas administrators felt should be addressed in a new principal mentoring program. Descriptions of the perceived barriers to implementation were included in the interviews. Each of these topics is addressed independently in the following subsections.

Areas to include in mentoring. Participants were asked questions to gather data for the areas that should be addressed in a new principal mentoring program. The first question had a follow-up question seeking additional focused information. The questions asked:

If mentoring is important, what areas of focus should be addressed?

What do you think ranks as the top two or three needs for new principals?

The second question allowed participants to narrow their ideas to the most important areas. The data from these questions were coded and organized; the top categories are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Top Categories for Areas to Address in Mentoring

Top Categories for Perceived Areas for Mentoring			
	Principal	**District Admin.**	**Total**
Personal Support (stress/emotional/relational)	**19**	**4**	21
Instructional Leadership (eval./curric./prof. dev.)	15	**4**	19
District-Specific Areas	7	3	10
Time Management/Organization	7	2	9
Financial	5	**4**	9
Personnel Decisions	4	1	5
Difficult Behaviors/People	2	2	4
Legal Issues	2	1	3

The data results from the areas for principal mentoring fit into three main categories of needs: (1) personal, (2) instructional leadership, and (3) management. The personal category includes those areas that support personal management and wellbeing such as: organization, time management, emotional support, managing stress, and professional ethics. The instructional leadership category describes the range of district-specific learning and curricular requirements, teacher support and evaluation, using data to make decisions, and staff development. The category of management refers to district financial and policy processes, student behavioral issues, difficult relationships and stakeholders, and legal compliance. In both the instructional leadership and management areas, both the principals and district administrators stressed the need to understand district-specific requirements and expectations, with these being stated 14 different times throughout the interviews. A balance of the three areas was demonstrated not only by proportionate discussion of the categories, but also by explanations of sharing the focus

among the three. Much professional literature focuses on helping principals achieve balance in

both instructional leadership and management, but administrators in this study continually

mentioned the third area of supporting personal needs. The areas for mentoring are included in

Figure 5 as balancing spheres. If the personal sphere is not supporting the weight, the process is

not balanced. If either the instructional leadership or management is taking precedence, the other

is being neglected.

Figure 5

Areas of Mentoring Need to be Balanced
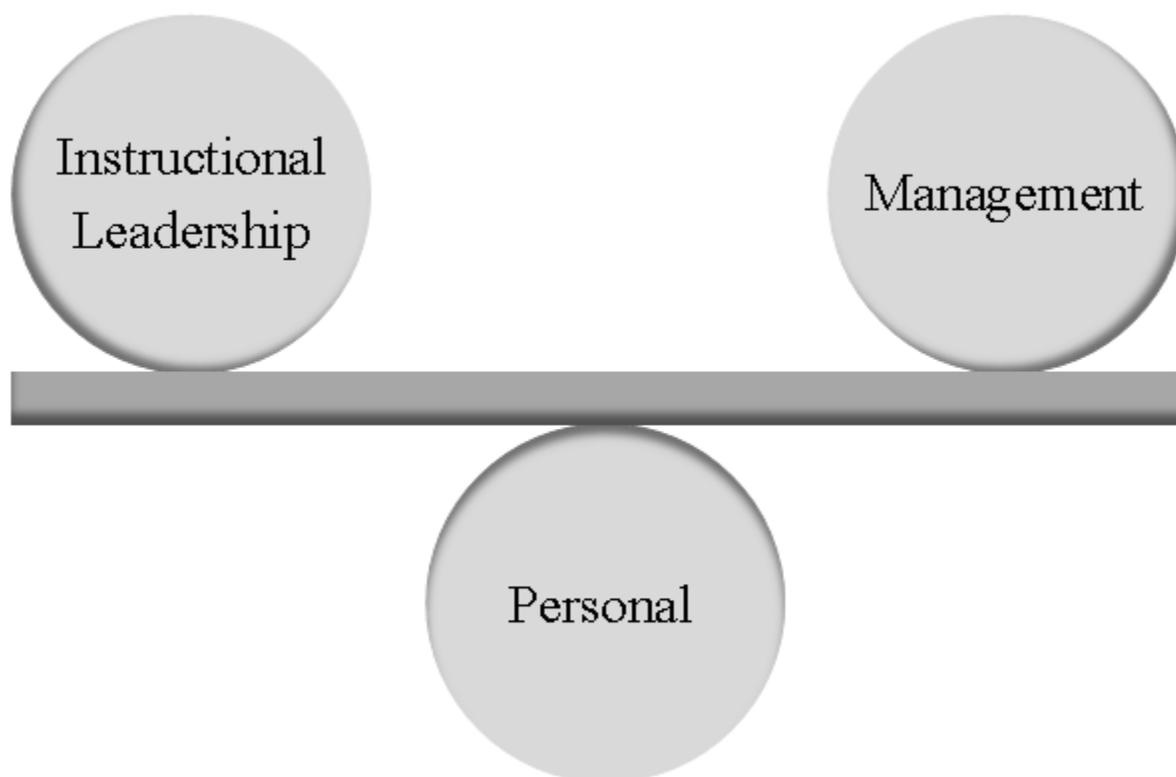
Themes for perceived barriers. Benefits and challenges may exist once mentoring is in

place, but the implementation of the mentoring process itself is also not without barriers.

Principals and district administrators supplied their thoughts about the barriers, and these were

assigned codes; those with common characteristics were merged into categories by participant

group. Similar to the few challenges noted by district administrators in the data from the first

research question, the district administrators shared few barriers to the implementation of a

mentoring program. Table 17 shows the top categories of perceived barriers.

Table 17

Top Categories of Barriers

Top Categories for Perceived Barriers			
Principal		**District Admin.**	
How to Structure	18	How to Structure	5
Money and Resources	9	Lack of Funding Source	3
Perception Not Needed	7	Perception Not Needed	2
Not a Priority	6	Few New Principals	2
Few New Principals	5	Informal is Effective	2
Perception it is Happening	5	[no other categories]	
Time Constraint	5		

The two overarching themes that emerged from the discussions surrounding the barriers

to implementing formal principal mentoring were the idea that mentoring principals is not a

priority, and determining a process to structure a program. The level of priority manifested in

three areas: the low number of new principals, the assumption by outsiders that new principals

do not need formal mentoring support, and the lack of allocated resources. Thirty-eight of the

coded responses from principals and 10 from district administrators supported this theme. The

second theme emerged from 21 coded responses from principals and five from district

administrators; a perception from administrators is that districts do not know how to organize the

program. Table 18 displays the themes to be discussed for the second research question.

Table 18

Themes for Perceived Barriers to Implementing Formal Mentoring

Themes for Research Question Two
Perceived Barriers

1. Mentoring principals is not a priority
   - Lack of new principals
   - Those not in the position do not see the need
   - Limited resources
2. Organization of the program
   - Structure
   - Individualization

Participants connected the level of priority with the small number of new principals in relation to the larger number of new teachers. Ms. Bailey reflected,

> I wonder if there are barriers or if it's just not a priority? And again, priority being that there aren't that many principals hired versus new teachers hired. Although, you know, if you flip that and realize the impact that that principal has over so many people, it should be valued more.

Mr. Smith weighed the level of priority against a lack of available resources and the small number of beginning administrators:

> I think . . . it's often just not a priority. Most school districts, especially in Idaho, are smaller and so they're going to have maybe one or two new administrators each year compared to, you know, the number of new teachers in a school district. So, that quickly becomes a much bigger priority than trying to mentor your one or two new administrators; and then everything else that is vying for time and resources versus mentoring an administrator.

Ms. Joseph voiced her concern that principals may need to explicitly ask for mentoring help before that level of support is provided. She explained that district administration may not see a

need, continuing, "It might be the last item on their list because, typically, we don't hire new principals very often; it's not necessarily every year we hire somebody, so we're kind of just looked over, brushed to the side." From a district-level perspective, Mr. Young explained that he hires few or no new principals each year and finds each brings a different level of experience to the district: "Around here, we haven't had a vast number of new principals . . . we haven't had the vast turnover; one here and one there. . . . Every position that comes open is different, it'd be difficult to have just a formalized program."

School leaders are often assumed to not need formalized mentoring support; this perception is the second aspect of the low-priority view of mentoring. Even so, both the principals and district administrators stressed the importance of the principal as the leader of a school. The principals shared the perceived expectation that, when accepting a principal position, a person already has the skills, abilities, and expertise to fully manage the many aspects of the job. They observed the expectation of capability coming from the patrons, district employees, and state leaders. Ms. Raymond believes public perception is that the principalship is, "a step-in-and-do position;" the lack of resources subsequently becomes a barrier to designing and implementing a program. One burden at the district level was the belief that if a process was formalized, then compensation would need to be provided for the mentors. Mr. Brown said, "We don't have any funding to pay for anything."

During their interviews, the principals expressed the financial commitment from the school district as a challenge and a barrier. Many of the principal participants' comments regarding lack of funding were described when discussing the challenges of mentoring; the comments indicated a perceived barrier. The financial piece encompassed payment for mentors, but also included providing training and resources, as well as oversight and evaluation.

As principals and district administrators shared their thoughts surrounding the barriers for implementation of a formal principal mentoring program, the second theme that emerged was how implementation could happen and how the framework would be structured. Ms. West linked the assumption that mentoring is not needed with a lack of knowledge or understanding of the needs of new principals. She believes principals are hired with a certain set of qualities and with those qualities, "They're going to just know what to do and how to do it." Ms. West continued that these assumptions are made by many people, but cautioned, "People don't often know what principals need to do, or people who've been in that position forget exactly what is going to be necessary. And maybe part of it is, 'Well, I figured it out, they'll figure it out too.'"

The administrators shared their thoughts on the implementation of a formal principal mentoring program. The participating districts did not have a formalized process, and although the administrators shared the necessary areas for mentoring in their districts, part of the discussion focused around the barriers. The main barriers were the lack of priority for mentoring and the organization of a formalized program. The principals found the barriers greater than did the district administrators, but, with the informal procedures in place, all felt there is already some level of support for new principals.

Summary of Results

The data presented in this chapter provides information to support the two research questions of this study:

1. How do principals and district leaders perceive the benefits and challenges of principal mentoring programs?

2. What are the perceptions of principals and district administrators as they relate to implementing a formal principal mentoring program?

Twelve principals and four district administrators from a semi-rural area of Idaho were interviewed to collect data for this study. In response to the first research question, the themes that emerged for the perceived benefits of principal mentoring programs are:

1. Help for the mentee in the form of guidance, collaborative learning, and support.

2. Retention of principals.

Developing from the data for the perceived challenges of principal mentoring programs were two themes:

1. Mismatch between the mentee and mentor.

2. Time and scheduling for mentoring.

Implementing a principal mentoring program explored the areas the participants thought are necessary in a principal mentoring program. The data described specific needs that organized into three main categories:

1. Personal

2. Instructional Leadership

3. Management.

For the second research question, the themes for barriers to implementing a process that emerged were:

1. Mentoring principals is not a priority.

2. Districts do not know how to organize and structure a formal program.

The data presented in Chapter IV will support the conclusions identified in Chapter V.

Chapter V

Discussion

Introduction

When educators transition to the role of principal, the level of responsibility and accountability can be overwhelming (O'Mahoney, 2003; Saban & Wolf, 2009). New principals must lead in all aspects of management while concurrently being the instructional leader of the school (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001; Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2007; Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004). The benefits of formal principal mentoring are abundant and reach not just the new principal but also the mentor and school district (Allen et al., 2004; Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2004, Daresh & Playko, 1993; Dukess, 2001). Both formal and informal mentoring have benefits, but more benefits are evidenced when principals are involved in formal mentoring (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Dodson, 2006; Ehrich et al., 2001; Gettys et al., 2010; Parylo et al., 2012; Wardlow, 2008). Although mentoring has proven benefits for all involved, most Idaho school districts do not have a formal mentoring process for new principals. The State of Idaho does not require, nor presently fund, new principal mentoring; the participants in this study represented a semi-rural area of Idaho. A deficiency exists in the professional literature surrounding a state without principal mentoring, and the perceptions of semi-rural school and district administrators regarding the potential benefits, challenges, barriers, and areas for implementing a formal principal mentoring program. The two research questions for this qualitative study were:

1. How do principals and district leaders perceive the benefits and challenges of principal mentoring programs?

2. What are the perceptions of principals and district administrators as they relate to implementing a formal principal mentoring program?

Gathering administrators' perceptions surrounding new principal mentoring is a step toward determining if benefits and challenges are perceived, and what issues may surround implementation. As the job market for school principals grows (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014), and the level of responsibility and accountability for principals increases (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008), this research will provide insights to support semi-rural districts as they work to train and retain quality principals. This chapter discusses the results of the study and addresses the cycle of experiential learning as it integrates with the implementation of a mentoring program. Additionally, issues surrounding principals' trepidation about formalizing a mentoring program, and suggestions for districts to consider when moving toward formal mentoring as a means of supporting new principals, will be addressed.

Summary of the Results

This qualitative study used interviews for investigating administrators' perceptions regarding principal mentoring. Twelve principals and four district administrators from four school districts in a semi-rural area of Idaho shared their experiences, observations, and views. Several themes emerged from the data collected from the administrators, and an awareness of these may assist districts in formalizing a mentoring program to further support and encourage new principals, and thereby strengthen school districts.

At its core, mentoring is a learning process, and learning is constructed over time (Dominguez & Hager, 2013; A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; D. A. Kolb, 1984; Sammut, 2014). The framework of the experiential learning cycle, based on the work of D. A. Kolb (1984), is

important in assisting mentors as they help develop strong leaders (Turesky & Gallagher, 2011).

As districts structure a formalized mentoring process, the cycle, in conjunction with the themes

of this study, will support a powerful process for growing and strengthening principals. The

mentoring process is a learning process, and through the framework of the cycle of experiential

learning (Figure 6), adult learners have concrete experiences (CE), reflective observations (RO),

abstract conceptualizations (AC), and active experimentation (AE) (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; D.

A. Kolb, 1984; McLeod, 2013; Turesky & Gallagher, 2011).

Figure 6

Cycle of Experiential Learning
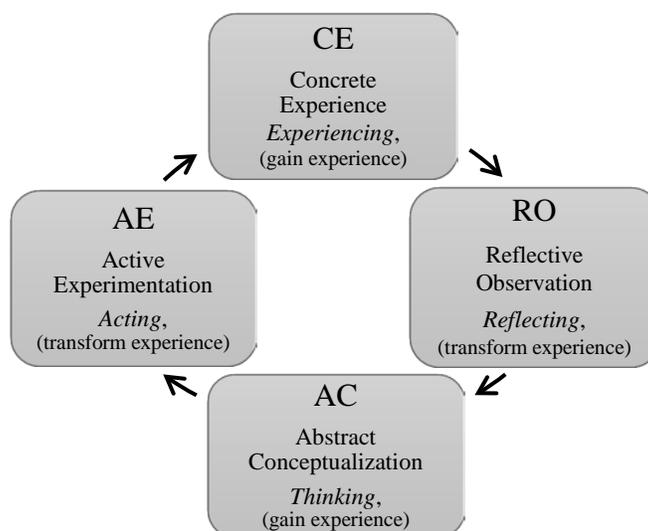
Adapted from A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; D. A. Kolb, 1984; McLeod, 2013; and Turesky & Gallagher, 2011.

The learning that occurs while transitioning into the principalship demonstrates the cycle of

experiential learning as new principals experience, and then reflect. The phases of CE and AC

are where principals gain experiences, and in the phases of RO and AE, principals transform

experiences (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McLeod, 2013; Turesky & Gallagher, 2011).

The perceived benefits of principal mentoring reveal that the experiencing and thinking in the CE and AC phases may be better structured for a quicker pace of learning. The way the mentor assists the mentee through experiences, and working through potential scenarios, may expand the learning. It is through the CE and AC phases that experiences are gained, and with the support of the mentor, the RO and AE may produce less trial and error as well as less stress and frustration. The importance of time spent in the CE and RO phases manifested in the responses of the principal participants, and in how they emphasized reflection as an integral part of learning and growing in the principalship. Mr. Jones shared,

> I think life is about experiences and so we encounter certain things and it shapes [us], and based on our experience and whether that's a positive, a negative, or if it's indifferent, [it] may shape how you do that in the future.

The importance of living experiences while simultaneously having assistance and guidance, was explained by Ms. West, "If people are going to do their jobs well, they need models and they need reflection . . . [they need] self-reflection but [also] reflection with a peer or someone who has experience." Not unlike what may be done in a preparation program, using mentoring to integrate experiences and reflections to help build understanding and confidence can push a leader to be prepared for similar situations. Mr. Morgan summed this up when he said, "My experiences . . . guide me in everything I do today."

Delving into the thoughts of administrators in relation to mentoring, four themes emerged about the benefits and challenges. The benefits themes included: (1) help for the mentee through guidance, collaboration, learning, and support, and (2) retention of principals. The two themes from the discussion of challenges were: (1) a mismatch between mentor and mentee, and (2) the time and scheduling required. Administrators shared their ideas for what areas to address in a

mentoring program. The three areas of (1) personal, (2) instructional leadership, and (3) management, all support student learning and achievement. The areas for implementation are not without barriers. The themes from the perceived barriers were: (1) mentoring is not a priority with the lack of new principals in rural areas, outsiders not seeing a need, and limited resources, and (2) the organization of the program and how to structure it to meet individual needs. This research synthesized the data gathered through interviews with principals and district administrators in semi-rural districts in Idaho to determine a basic guideline to start a formalized mentoring process for new principals that is specific to individual districts.

Summary of Research Question 1 Benefits. Help for the mentee through guidance, collaboration, learning, and support was the first benefit theme, and undoubtedly, the data collected from the administrators supports the professional literature addressing the benefits of principal mentoring. The principal participants, although not personally familiar with formal mentoring, perceived a valuable insight in describing the potential benefits. This insight mirrors Farkas et al. (2003) when it was shown that 52% of principals found mentoring and guidance received from colleagues was the most valuable contribution to their preparation for a principalship. Professional literature often compares formal and informal mentoring, or shares observations on the formal process; this research did not include any participants who had personal experiences with formal principal mentoring, but they felt strongly about the benefits of informal mentoring. The professional literature reveals the increase in benefits when there is formal mentoring and an even greater advantage when formal mentoring is supported by informal mentoring (Dodson, 2006; Parylo et al., 2012). Informal mentoring is beneficial, but formal mentoring is an established form of professional development (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Dodson, 2006; Ehrich et al., 2001; Gettys et al., 2010; Parylo et al., 2012;

Wardlow, 2008). Since the lived experiences of the participant group did not include the

formalized process, they could only surmise the way a formalized process may demonstrate

benefits.

One principal, Mr. Scott, described the advantage of a structure where the mentee has one

contact, the mentor, for direction and help. He described the mentor as "someone to go to,

someone who has the experience that could help answer questions. The sage that you could turn

to and [who will] address any concerns that you have." Ms. Joseph detailed the potential for

personal comfort from an experienced mentor:

> Some kind of a guide as to what the steps were, the processes. . . . That would be huge, it
>
> would help guide where I need, what I need to do, and I wouldn't feel like I was just
>
> wandering aimlessly throughout the year. . . . A mentor could serve as that book, you
>
> know, where it's a live book. They could help you and show you.

One of the six foundations of experiential learning is the learner building upon experiences and

changing, or modifying, preconceived ideas about a topic (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; D. A. Kolb,

1984). Through experiential learning, modification may need to occur before new learning

happens (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; D. A. Kolb, 1984). Building upon experiences and making

changes can occur through the mentoring process. As a district administrator, Ms. Raymond

acknowledged the advantages of a new principal learning using the help of a mentor by

explaining, "You have somebody that you can call, somebody who's done it, somebody who's

been there . . . [it's] that checking for understanding, having somebody that you can call and

check and make sure you're on the right path, [someone] that's not an evaluator."

Beginning principals can benefit from professional support through mentoring (Bloom &

Krovetz, 2001; Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2007; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007;

Seashore Louis et al., 2010). Support and collegial connections are reported benefits of

mentoring (Daresh, 2004; Dukess, 2001; Ehrich et al., 2001; James-Ward, 2012; O'Mahoney,

2003; Ortiz, 2002; Simieou et al., 2010; Yirci & Kocabas, 2010). Multiple qualitative studies

were reviewed by Daresh (2004), and feeling supported and connected to the position was a

frequently reported benefit. Similarly, the participants in this study perceived support as a

primary benefit for the mentee. Unlike the Daresh (2004) study, neither the principals nor district

administrators discussed the benefit of bridging the gap between the theories studied in a

preparation program, and the actual daily issues once in a position. They did, however, discuss

the amount of on-the-job learning required as principals transition into the position. Ms. Joseph

described her transition,

> I was left with an office, with files, and a school. It was pretty terrifying. . . . It took a
>
> year to adjust because everything that I encountered was new and I had to call to get help
>
> with everything, or to figure out what I was supposed to do, or the correct way [to do it].

Gaining concrete experience needs to flow into reflective observation which allows an adult

learner to resolve the conflict between what is known and what is experienced (A. Y. Kolb &

Kolb, 2005; McLeod, 2013; Turesky & Gallagher, 2011). Mentors can help mentees as they

reflect on and adapt to their new experiences.

When transitioning to the principalship, a new principal accepts a huge responsibility

with a significant learning curve (Dodson, 2006; Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004; Hess &

Kelly, 2005). Mr. Morgan suggested that, as a mentor teaches the new principal, both parties

benefit: "I think it rejuvenates [the mentor]. I think it helps them to reflect on their current

practices and helps them determine if their current practices are valid or if they need to be

adjusted . . . it's an opportunity to evaluate what you're doing as you're sharing and teaching a

new principal." In similar scenarios, Kolb's experiential learning theory was shown to be essential in assisting professional coaches to develop strong leaders (Turesky & Gallagher, 2011). Likewise, in the cycle of experiential learning, growth through mentoring is supported by gaining experiences while constructing knowledge in both concrete and abstract ways, and transforming experiences through reflection and experimentation (Sammut, 2014; Turesky & Gallagher, 2011). The administrators were quick to point out that teaching is learning; as such, learning and professional development was viewed as beneficial for mentors. Mr. Smith included that a mentor could help a mentee "identify what your strengths are and what your weaknesses are, and [provide] that support to be able to build on those but then also have a venue to be able to share your strengths." He continued by explaining that collaborating with a mentor, "helps that [new] building principal provide better instructional leadership to the teachers . . . [and] focus on what actually matters." Mr. Lewis believes that in a formal process, the mentor encourages daily decisions to occur in a more research-based manner.

Ms. Garner explained the importance of using a mentorship for understanding district-specific requirements by saying, "[Mentoring] gives you the . . . guidance you need, especially in the policies and programs . . . the district itself requires, because those look different everywhere you go." Mr. Young provided a district administrator's perspective on the importance of understanding a district in order to assimilate into local cultures and to meet expectations; for small communities, this is especially true:

> It's what you avoid when somebody says, 'Oh, you don't want to go there; in this
>
> community we don't do that.' . . . And so you can avoid things, you can avoid pitfalls
>
> before they become a problem. . . . You learn what to do, you learn what not to do. In a
>
> town like [ours], everybody's related, it's [a small town], five last names. And that's

typical throughout the rural areas of Idaho and everywhere in the United States. So you

learn about being careful about what you say and to whom because they may be related.

When a district commits to mentoring new principals, the entire district organization reaps the

benefits (Daresh, 2004; Ehrich et al., 2001; Seashore Louis et al., 2010). The participants in this

study expanded on that concept, explaining that developing a thorough understanding not only of

a district, but also, its small community, is necessary for success; it is a benefit gained by the

mentee in a mentoring relationship.

Guidance and support provided by a mentor is likely to produce a new principal who

displays certainty in decision-making. An additional benefit is the assistance available to combat

potential feelings of isolation in the position. Mr. Smith shared, "The biggest benefit would be

the camaraderie and social-emotional support of knowing that everybody else isn't doing it

perfectly." Ms. West remarked "Support inspires confidence and that would help [the mentee] be

successful; and I just really believe that success breeds success. . . . [Mentoring] just simply

provides support and knowing that you're not alone and feeling that isolation . . . it's just so

helpful." As a district administrator, Mr. Brown concurred, suggesting that a mentee,

> Would have somebody that they can get support from in many different areas. . . . Those
>
> days when they're frustrated and need someone to let them know that, *hey, I felt that way*
>
> *too* . . . they're empathetic and have been in that same situation, and validate you, and
>
> help build you back up and keep you on your feet.

In discussing benefits to mentoring, principal retention, the second benefit theme, was

important to both principals and district administrators. When principals are mentored, they tend

to be more successful, productive, and motivated, while demonstrating loyalty to the supportive

district (Daresh, 2004). Even for schools with a strong teaching staff, a change in principal

leadership negatively impacts a school and the stability of the district (Seashore Louis et al., 2010). It is especially advantageous for rural districts to retain principals because not all qualified principals are willing to move to rural locations and be part of a small community. Mr. Young, a district administrator, explained,

> Around here we haven't had a vast number of new principals. And usually when they come in, into [our district] in particular, if they want to live in [our town], there's usually reasons they want to live in [our town]. Because we're a million miles away from anywhere and it's cold and windy and that kind of thing. So when we do get people, they typically like to stay. And then when they stay, then they're typically in administration a long time. So we haven't, until just recently, had the vast turnover; one here and one there.

The rural districts have to weigh their investment against the potential tenure in their district, and find ways to encourage principals to stay, rather than use the district as a stepping-stone into a larger district. Mr. Young described,

> [Hiring principals is] an investment. . . . It's so difficult to find qualified people now; if we can incentivize them through training versus 'Well, I'm going to put three years into [this district] then I'm going to bolt to [a larger district].' And we don't want that happening; we see it as an investment in keeping talented leadership around.

> Retention as a potential benefit was not lost on Mr. Smith. With nine years of experience, he is the longest tenured elementary principal in his district. He feels a new principal mentoring program would produce "higher job satisfaction which means longer retention." Ms. Campbell, a district administrator quite familiar with seeking and hiring new principals, described the benefit of mentoring new principals and ensuring they have a connection with the district:

You have a lot less turnover. It's expensive and difficult to find good principals. And just because you can't find an experienced principal doesn't mean you can't find a new principal who's going to be a star in your district. And so providing those supports to get them to stay, I think, is really important.

Summary of Research Question 1 Challenges. A mismatch between mentor and mentee is the first theme of the challenges. The challenge of matching the mentor is placed on the school district administration, but complications arising from a mismatch fall on the mentee and mentor. Positive, successful mentoring relationships are an outgrowth of choosing and training the right mentors and establishing a productive relationship (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2004, 2007; Daresh & Playko, 1993; Dukess, 2001; Gettys et al., 2010; Ragins et al., 2000; et al., 2014). If there is an incompatibility between the mentee and mentor, the new principal may not realize as much success or feel a strong connection with the district (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Gettys et al., 2010). As smaller districts struggle to find and keep principals, ensuring a positive mentoring relationship is challenging, especially when there are a limited number of people to be mentors.

The principals and district administrators had a variety of ways to explain the common theme of incompatibility between mentor and mentee. Principals noted the unfortunate possibility of a mismatch between mentor and mentee. Mr. Smith stated, "In a profession with a high turnover rate, finding someone who has experience and is good at mentoring" is paramount. This challenge is compounded by the small size of the districts and few, if any, principals in similar positions to serve as mentors. "There's always the hesitancy that I'm going to get assigned to somebody as a mentor that I don't see eye-to-eye with, or wouldn't do things the same as," admitted Mr. Henry. Ms. Joseph related a similar concern: "The person mentoring and

the person being mentored may not get along or see eye-to-eye, or have the same values or the same vision." This may be an area where transforming experiences by reflecting, watching, and reviewing may encourage both the mentee and mentor to assimilate new information into their current structure of beliefs. Mr. Morgan cautioned that a challenge for the mentee,

> …Would be the mentor. If you get a mentor that's jumping through a hoop because they've been told to be a mentor, or isn't taking that role in a manner that's helping the mentee. . . you've added an additional meeting or additional paperwork . . . or additional hoops to jump through without the effectiveness that we would hope from a mentor program.

The principals envisioned that a mismatch between mentor and mentee could derail the entire formal mentoring process. According to Ragins et al. (2000), mentees in quality mentoring relationships have more positive attitudes than those who are not mentored, and, if the relationship is not satisfying, mentees display the same attitude as those not mentored. With the significance of retention in small districts, a positive mentoring relationship is important for building a strong administrative team. Unfortunately, with the limited selection of potential mentors in a small district, a mismatch is likely.

District administrators shared the perception of personal interaction between mentor and mentee as a potential challenge after the initial match is assigned. "[New principals are] very capable people, and so it's knowing when to advise and when to step back," said Ms. Raymond. Mr. Young pointed out, "the problem is when you go from mentoring to smothering." Mr. Brown cautioned that a challenge occurs when "the mentor really feels like it's their responsibility to make this person be successful . . . [so] where to draw the line on how much support do you provide and how much is it that person's responsibility?" Principals also shared

the concern that mentoring another principal may be detrimental to their own schools when they choose to help the mentee over addressing a need in their building. A quality mentoring relationship encourages a positive attitude and has more impact than simply the presence of either formal or informal mentoring (Ragins et al., 2000). If a process is formalized, there needs to be a way to handle a mismatch, and the participants did not share solutions for that challenge. The mismatch surfaced as a stressor for district administrators, especially if a stipend is provided for the mentor. Limited funding, coupled with the possible challenge of handling an assigned stipend for a failed mentoring relationship, could be a complication.

As principals described the overwhelming expectations of their career, the challenge of dedicating time to a formalized mentoring process surfaced. The second challenge theme was the time and scheduling required for mentoring. Mr. Morgan articulated that time is a difficulty to be addressed:

In that situation where you've got a formal program, you've got to really block out some time to meet; and in most circumstances it's not somebody in your building. You're travelling and going somewhere else to work with that principal, and so you'd have to prioritize and adjust some other things so that you could make the time to do it effectively. And, if it's not effective, then there's not a reason to do it.

Mr. Henry explained, "Everybody's go their own job, everybody's got their own full-time job; and it takes more than full-time to get a principal's load done. . . . Who has time to go spend two hours a week with somebody in their building?" Ms. Garner affirmed that, for new principals, "The challenge is being able to get together," while Ms. Anderson admitted, "I don't mean to be someone who's taking up [my mentor's] time, or interrupting her day."

There was a definite reluctance to incorporate a formalized mentoring process that may erode the informal network. The time required to adequately address the needs of new principals varies in relation to the prior experiences of the new principal, and is a challenge to the mentoring pair. According to the principals interviewed, an ideal level of district support would, as Mr. Scott explained, "Allow principals to use days as they need to. . . . If they feel like they need to go spend time at a school, or go to lunch with a colleague." Mr. Scott, and other principals interviewed, believe their districts do allow scheduling flexibility, but the challenge of making time for a formal program is still a concern. Mr. Scott continued, saying,

> That doesn't mean it won't take away from the other responsibilities you have. So is it worth taking an hour out of my day to go to lunch or go meet with my mentee because they are struggling when I really need to spend time on an evaluation of a teacher that really needs my focus right now?

There is much research suggesting that mentor training is essential to productive mentoring relationships (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2004, 2007; Daresh & Playko, 1993; Dukess, 2001; Gettys et al., 2010; Taylor et al., 2014). In addition to training, the principal participants in this study shared that a level of built-in support for the mentor is needed when a formal structure is in place; this support may be from district administrators or others in their professional network.

The struggle between keeping the informal structure as it is in each district, while adding to the level of support for new principals is a problem for rural district administrators. The four district administrators value the importance of mentoring but do not see a clear and efficient way to formalize a process in the current financial and time structure. Ms. Raymond, a district administrator, finds that assumptions regarding the expected capabilities of new principals even

come from the legislative level; she also stressed the absolute importance of leadership in a school building. This perception underscores the potential for a lack of allocated resources, another potential barrier for principal mentoring. In spite of the perceived importance of formal mentoring, there is a reluctance to implement a rigid, potentially impractical formal process that may detract from the benefits and support of an existing informal structure. Mr. Scott, a high school principal, stated his opinion,

> I certainly see the value in doing it, in something more formal, certainly for the first year. Again, do you want to force that on someone? It seems to be working, what we have in our district. Again, we're a little bigger district . . . there is a bigger pool of people to turn to. . . . Philosophically, I think mentoring a new principal is the right thing to do, and in order to correct it, develop a system for mentors like we have for our teachers, and put something like that in place where we assign them.

The State was cited by district administrators as not seeing mentoring as a priority and not providing adequate funding, while the principals felt the districts did not see it as a priority.

Summary of Research Question 2. The interview responses from the participants proved they all believed in the importance of, and benefits from, mentoring new principals. Nonetheless, they are hesitant to proceed. The same people who stressed the advantages of mentoring express uncertainty about formalizing a process to meet the individual needs of new principals. The barrier for implementation derives from assigning responsibility for structuring a formalized process, because the consensus emerging from the interviews is that districts do not know how, or where, to start. Although principals noted the need for a structured system of mentoring, their descriptions were relatively vague. Mr. Jones pointed out there should be "some structure to it [for] what the expectations would be." Similarly, Mr. Morgan emphasized,

"There's value in a structured program if it's structured appropriately." Mr. Henry captured the ambiguity of what a formalized process would entail, saying, "A research-based structure . . . would be beneficial." He later shared, "As long as the program that we had to follow was valuable and really coached you on the right things in research-based strategies." Integrating the four areas of the cycle of experiential learning may set a foundation for the process since, as Turesky and Gallagher (2011) concluded, this will assist mentors as they help support and develop strong leaders. Interestingly, administrators were easily able to identify areas they deemed imperative for a district mentoring program.

A demonstrated need for new principals is support in management and instructional leadership, and mentoring should be provided in those areas (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Hess & Kelly, 2005; Parylo et al., 2012; Saban & Wolfe, 2009; Taylor et al., 2014). General guidelines are provided for quality mentoring programs which include: appropriately matching mentor pairs, dedicating time and funding, and having a structured organizational plan (Gettys et al., 2010; Mitgang, 2007). When recommending areas that should be addressed in a mentoring program, the participants in this study included instructional leadership and management, but also included support and guidance in personal areas. The broad areas described in this study are: instructional leadership, management, and personal. In addition to the areas of implementation, barriers to that implementation were described.

Summary of Research Question 2 Areas of Implementation. Developing principals as effective instructional leaders with successful management skills is a goal of principal mentoring (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2004, 2007; Daresh & Playko, 1993; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Dukess, 2001; Grigsby et al., 2010; Hess & Kelly, 2005; Ortiz, 2002; Parylo et al., 2012; Saban & Wolfe, 2009; Taylor et al., 2014). A study by the Wallace

Foundation found that clear goals were lacking in many mentoring programs, with instructional leadership support ignored in favor of a focus on the principal's managerial roles (Mitgang, 2007). The area of instructional leadership covers topics in which principals should be fluent and competent, including: district-specific learning and curricular requirements, teacher support and evaluation, using data to make decisions, and staff development.

The principals were clear that being an effective instructional leader takes support, but when describing transitioning into the role, those who were teachers prior to being administrators were further along in instructional leadership. Ms. West felt that mentoring should be individualized, yet, regardless of need, all new principals should have support in instructional leadership:

> I think no matter what the needs are, always it's important to focus on instruction and instructional leadership and what that actually looks like. And how to support teachers and give them what they need so that they can be successful.

Management was an initial focus for Ms. Joseph, but she soon began to consider instructional leadership:

> The finance, everything that is involved in that from receiving, to coding, to writing checks, to the credit card. . . . [and] things you have to have done for the state department reports. . . . Help through the PLC [Professional Learning Community] process. How to run a PLC what the purpose of that is, what is should look like.

Principals discussed instructional leadership, in general, as a needed aspect of implementation, and highlighted specific areas surrounding working with teachers. The principal participants described the need for support in observing and evaluating teaching and learning, determining

professional development needs and structuring those learning opportunities, and knowing how to assist and oversee struggling teachers.

The management category includes a wide range of areas such as: district financial and policy processes, student behavioral issues, difficult relationships and stakeholders, and legal compliance. The district administrators were adamant about wanting the new principals to understand the school district, including policies and procedures integral for consistency and legality among the schools in the district. Many principals detailed the initial difficulty of understanding school finance. This was especially true in schools where the principal handled the bulk of the budgeting and coding or bill paying; they were acutely aware of the high level of responsibility that comes with overseeing public funds. A completely different aspect of management is managing student behaviors and discipline. Following district policies, using correct paperwork and software, and properly reporting to the state by set deadlines; all this is accomplished while addressing the child at the appropriate developmental and personal level.

Targeting areas that principals have not had opportunities to learn provides support to encourage success in both instructional leadership and management (Daresh, 2007; Potin et al., 2003; Saban & Wolfe, 2009). Instructional leadership and management often overlap on the job, such as during the process of hiring teachers or staff. The managerial process of posting openings, ensuring policies are followed regarding the interview process and offering positions, and ensuring the school board receives the proper information on time for approval is not the entire task. Consideration should be given that the principal must work with the new teachers, help them integrate with the staff, and evaluate and support the teachers, while being responsible for selecting the candidate. Ms. Anderson, a first year principal, hired a teacher just before the start of the school year, and described managing and leading through the process,

Now that I'm the actual administrator and I actually hired someone as a late hire . . . she

had great recommendations, but she's just not working out well at all, and I'm just very

conscientious to follow the HR [human resource] rules and laws; very conscientious to be

more of a support. . . . We had to . . . make an improvement plan. . . . I feel the weight of

that responsibility greater because I hired someone that didn't turn out so great.

This situation not only demonstrates the first year principal's need for mentoring support in

management and instructional leadership, but also the importance of personal support. Ms.

Anderson went on to say, "Now I'm a little bit nervous, like, wait a minute, I didn't foresee that

happening. . . . I think I lacked, I lost, a little bit of confidence."

Mr. Lewis felt strongly about the need to support new principals in personal areas. When

describing the most important areas in which to immediately support new principals, he said,

Your time management. I don't think there is anything that prepares you for the amount

of time this job takes. . . . Handling that stress is something [else] that needs to be

addressed. How do you cope with problems? . . . Time management, and organization,

and stress management would be the three things that I would focus on.

When describing their transition into the role of principal, the principal participants

shared the stressors that accompany the position. The amount of time dedicated to the vocation,

the level of stress brought on from the variety of responsibilities, the newness of every situation,

and the isolation of the position, were some of the areas noted, and mentoring in the personal

category can help with these stressors. As a fifth year principal currently participating in *Project*

Leadership, Mr. Henry reflected,

"The principal job is a lonely job. . . . So obviously, I'm the only principal in my

building, I can't expect everybody else to understand what that's like. But, here [*Project*

Leadership] I have this group of people that understand exactly where I'm at, and when

that ends, at the end of three years, . . . What about the people that I need, and what about

those relationships that I need, and what about my professional group? . . . I'm going to

be on my own again."

When discussing mentoring and personal support, it is evident that ongoing support, especially

for principals in smaller districts, is essential. Ms. Joseph stated that if she had a mentor, "My

first year would have been a lot less stressful." When asked how she managed her stress that first

year, she continued, "Apparently I ate, because I gained 30 pounds." Supporting new principals

in personal areas will have benefits for the wellbeing of the principal, the school, and the district.

The information from the participants synthesizes into a need to balance among the three

areas (instructional leadership, management, and personal) for a successful principalship to

occur. A new principal mentoring program could be built upon these areas, as the participants in

this study did not differ much on the areas of need; the principals offered more in-depth and

specific priorities, most likely because they are currently living the challenges and

responsibilities. As a program is built on the three areas, attention should be given to the

foundations of experiential learning. Specifically, the foundation that learning is a holistic

process and requires all aspects of a person (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; D. A. Kolb, 1984). The

experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting of the cycle of experiential learning incorporates

both professional and personal learning.

Summary of Research Question 2 Barriers to Implementation. The areas for

implementation show that administrators have some understanding of what should be included in

a mentoring program for new principals, but the barriers to implementation are valid. The lack of

public understanding about the position surfaced when principals discussed the barriers to

implementation. Daresh (2004) supported that, discussing the difficulty in sustaining mentoring

programs when there are limited resources and communities who feel principals are overpaid.

The principal participants felt district administrators and other stakeholders do not see a need for

mentoring support for principals. One district administrator also included the State Legislature as

a group who does not recognize the necessity.

Comments made by the principals indicated the difficulty of the perceived expectations.

Mr. Scott shared his personal story:

> You're expected to know everything; and maybe that's a societal expectation, or . . .
>
> maybe it's an expectation within the profession. As a brand new principal I was asked
>
> questions there was no way I would have answers to because I hadn't been in the
>
> building. But, that's the expectation, that the principal knows everything. . . . [Principals]
>
> are not the type that would flounder, most of the time they would sit down and work hard
>
> to figure things out regardless if they had a mentor. They are going to work hard enough
>
> to solve the problems and get answers because that's the type of people they are.

Principals and district administrators explained that communicating well with students, teachers,

parents, and other stakeholders is an expectation of the job. As a strong communicator, a new

principal may unintentionally hide the insecurity or lack of understanding of areas that could be

supported through mentoring. Mr. Lewis confided:

> I think there's an assumption that's made that this person has a Master's degree; they've
>
> seen it, they've been, typically . . . an assistant principal prior to, they've seen the inner-
>
> workings. And, there's probably an incorrect assumption made that they know what's
>
> going on, they don't need support; and probably, maybe some incorrect assumption that
>
> it's informally happening in every situation.

Some of the principals shared that perhaps principals need to proactively ask for a formalized program to occur, while others expressed reservations about formal programs hindering informal assistance. The unknown result of implementing a formalized program on the current informal collegiality remained a concern for participants.

Participants observed the perceived lack of need from many levels. Ms. Raymond, a district administrator, revealed how assumptions regarding new principals' capabilities often originate from the legislative level; she stressed, however, the absolute importance of confident leadership in a school building:

> I think there are assumptions that when you get to be a principal, you know it, you've been through the system, you know what to do. . . . And so I think the legislature makes some assumptions that, you know, it's just a step-in and do position, and maybe don't have a real clear sense of the broad spectrum of things administrators deal with. And the fact that leadership in a building is key; it's just key to the success of that building.

Mr. Henry echoed Ms. Raymond, observing, "In Idaho, in education, we take a new principal, we put them in a building, and we say, 'Go!'"

In professional literature, the lack of priority for principal mentoring typically manifests as limited financial resources (Daresh, 2004; Enrich et al., 2001). Along with others not seeing a need, the principal participants focused on the lack of financial dedication as another barrier to implementing a formal principal mentoring program. The principals described the burden of allocating resources to principal mentoring, and they were concerned with taking resources from other areas. Mr. Morgan explained the financial challenge for the district, stating, "If you want the program to be effective then you need to . . . pay a stipend for the principals doing the mentorship, provide them resources too; if it's a professional development conference . . . then

the district needs to provide those resources." Likewise, Mr. Lewis noted that, "Probably one of the reasons why we don't have a good mentoring program set up in any district is because it costs money." In a study on estimated costs for coaching new Washington principals, Lochmiller (2014) estimated using three different stipend amounts. Due to the small nature of the districts in this study, and the limited number of mentors needed, the financial piece may be more attainable than principals believe. To summarize the importance of meeting the financial challenge of mentoring principals, Ms. Bailey observed,

> I think people fail to realize what an investment [hiring a new principal] is when you add up the professional development, and you add up the time to find somebody new, and that school starts over with another principal, you lose a lot of ground. So, I think the district gains a valuable investment.

Without financial compensation, most principals will informally help each other. With the struggle to commit financial resources, Mr. Smith shared his opinion that formalization and financing of formal programs fails to materialize because:

> Most administrators are willing to help, which is why I think most school districts assume that it's going to happen, even if they don't set up some type of formal structure. The problem with that, though, is that then the mentee has to kind of develop those connections or relationships with their coworkers so that they're able to call on somebody. Whereas, you know, that formal structure, they would have someone that they could just call knowing that was their mentor.

In small districts, the challenges of organizing and implementing a formal mentoring process are significant, according to principal and district administrator participants. The rural aspect of the districts in the study manifested in not only the dearth of new principals, but also,

the lack of knowledge regarding techniques for individualizing a mentoring program to meet the unique needs of rural principals. District administrator, Mr. Young, explained the barrier, saying, "Every position that comes open is different; it'd be difficult to have a formalized program." Mr. Brown, district administrator, admitted the struggle of developing a formalized program that is "not too canned, because not everybody needs the same amount of support. . . . The types of support they need can be night and day." Principal, Ms. West, acknowledged the challenge, but also suggested that determining requirements is crucial: "What does that principal actually need? There would need to be an assessment on what the needs are."

Conclusions

This qualitative study examined two research questions:

1. How do principals and district leaders perceive the benefits and challenges of principal mentoring programs?

2. What are the perceptions of principals and district administrators as they relate to implementing a formal principal mentoring program?

The 12 principals and four district administrator participants from a semi-rural area of Idaho participated in semi-structured interviews and shared their perceptions surrounding formal principal mentoring. None of the four participating districts offered a formal principal mentoring program to new principals.

Every participant in this study shared that the benefits of principal mentoring outweigh the challenges, which is in agreement with professional literature (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2004, Daresh & Playko, 1993; Dukess, 2001; Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2001; Hansford, Tennent, & Ehrich, 2003; James-Ward, 2012; O'Mahoney, 2003; Ortiz, 2002; Simieou et al., 2010). There are some reservations in the small districts that a formal principal

mentoring program will interfere with the strong informal collegiality already occurring in those districts. The unintended result of not providing formal mentoring may be more isolation, stress, and other challenges; a formal principal mentoring process must address these concerns. The formal and informal mentoring processes can, and should, work together. In a study by Parylo et al. (2010), principals who participated in both formal and informal mentoring found greater benefits than those who participated only in informal mentoring. Interestingly, the first year principals in this study, who had an assigned mentor and met weekly with their mentors, found the level of support and guidance incredibly beneficial, even as they were still creating an informal network. The formal and informal structures are compatible, but implementation of a formal process is impeded by reluctance to lose informal support.

Principals shared that the structure of new teacher mentoring could potentially translate into a formal mentoring process for new principals. Similar to the professional literature, they explained that the formal expectations of a program would support the new principals differently than the informal process (Parylo et al., 2012). Ms. Anderson, a first year principal with an informally assigned mentor, emphasized the need for a formalized structure by saying:

> My mentor is more a response to my questions than being proactive to share things with me. So, sometimes I'll wonder, well, I don't know sometimes the questions to ask; I don't know what I don't know. Sometimes I wish it would be a little bit more that way. . . proactive.

Mr. Scott expressed the value of a more formalized process and felt districts could "develop a system for mentors like we have for our teachers, and put something like that in place where we assign them." Mr. Scott later qualified:

A structured mentoring program is a good idea. You would just need to make sure you

get the right mentor for the right person. I think that would be a good direction to go. I

think everyone would benefit from that and, well done, would be similar to something we

do with our teachers, to improve new teachers . . . and to make sure they are quality

teachers. I think the same would be for principalships.

Utilizing the people who live this experience every day is a good place for districts to

start moving toward a formal process. The principals and district administrators in this study

were able to easily identify areas of focus for serving the needs of new principals. If a district in

a semi-rural area was interested in developing a program, it should be built upon these areas and

tailored to the specifications of the school district. Supported by formal mentoring, learning

should take place through the areas of the cycle of experiential learning, concrete experience,

reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation, in the three

balanced spheres of instructional leadership, management, and personal. Effective mentoring

supports the balance among instructional leadership, management, and personal support. The

instructional leadership includes the areas that demonstrate the competence of the principal to be

the lead educator: district-specific learning and curricular requirements, teacher support and

evaluation, using data to make decisions, and staff development. The management areas are the

parts of the position that assist with the organization, structure, and legal requirements: district

financial and policy processes, student behavioral issues, difficult relationships and stakeholders,

and legal compliance. Finally, the third area contributed by this research is the personal support

of the principal. Personal support limits the isolation of the position while encouraging personal

management and wellbeing such as: organization, time management, emotional support,

managing stress, and professional ethics. Ms. Bailey explained,

I think you learn so much through experience. . . . When you go back to student

achievement and learning, which is the reason we're here, those things are the most

important things that my experience has had the most informed responses to.

The balance among the three areas of instructional leadership, management, and personal

support is crucial to the success of new principals and results in a strong leaders, and ultimately,

the success of the school, which leads to greater student learning and achievement. The supports

that help to balance the areas are provided through formal mentoring, especially while principals

are transitioning to the position. The primary accountability for student learning and achievement

falls upon principals and the teachers they supervise (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001; Council of Chief

State School Officers, 2008; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Seashore Louis et al., 2010).

Formal principal mentoring programs may ultimately increase student achievement (Bottoms &

Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Daresh, 2004; Saban & Wolfe, 2009). Multiple participants in this study

shared that student achievement is the primary goal for all of the support given to principals.

After listing the areas of mentoring needs, Mr. Scott explained why he intentionally excluded

students from the discussion surrounding the areas of need:

But I intentionally left students out of there . . . If you hire well, students are going to

learn; if you evaluate well, students are going to learn. If you manage your time you're

directing that toward student learning. So, I hope that is a given when I talk about those

. . . everything we do is about the student learning.

When the accountability of student learning is added atop the three balancing spheres, the weight

of responsibility of the principal position is more completely realized. New principals are held to

the same standards as veteran principals, expected to proficiently handle the full scope of the job,

although they begin with a steep learning curve. This expectation demonstrates the great need for

a formalized mentoring process to ensure the principal is supported in the personal, instructional

leadership, and management aspects of the position. Figure 7 helps visualize the optimal

balancing for succeeding in the principal position; mentoring is the stability and support to assist

the new principal.

Figure 7

Using Mentoring to Balance the Responsibilities of the Principalship
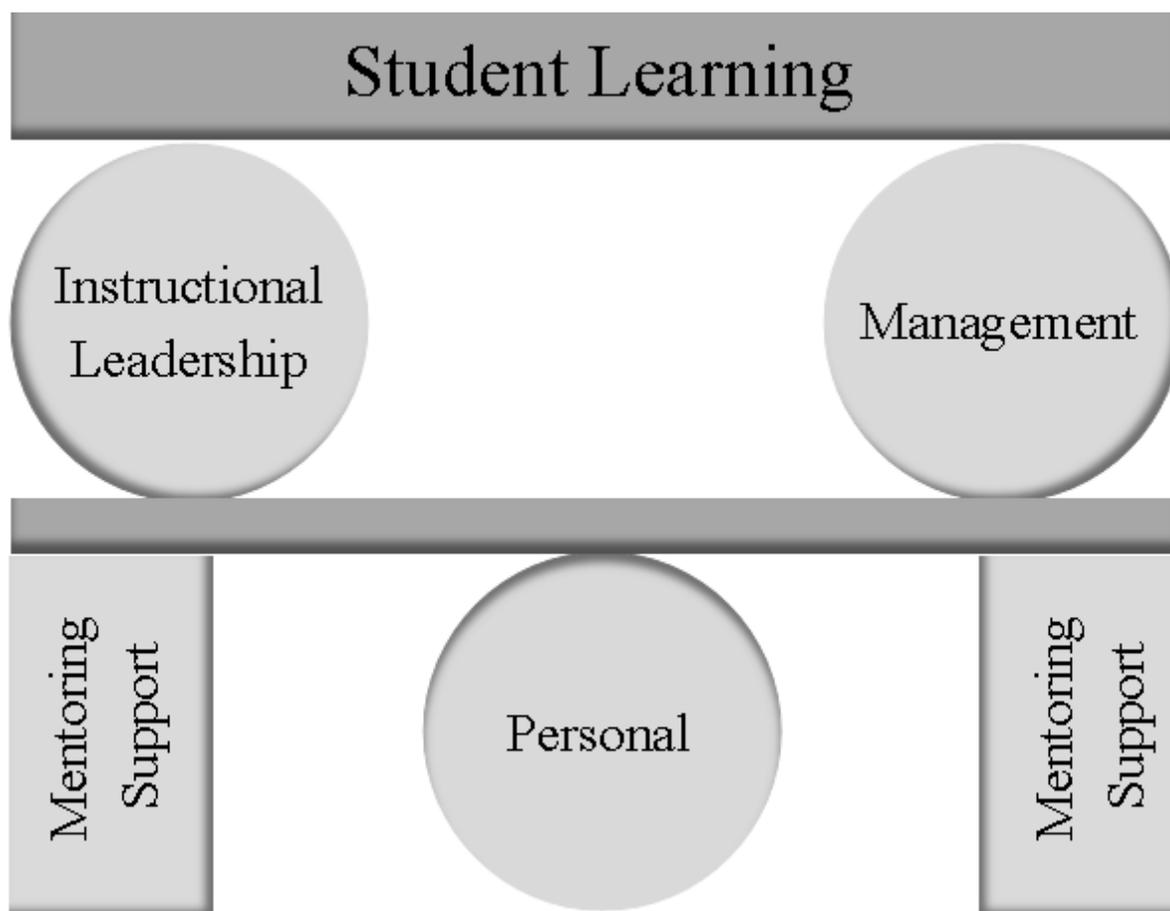
The reluctance of principals to formalize a mentoring program for fear of losing informal

supports and networks was articulated by participants. Mentors can help new principals develop

a network of professional relationships to assist in limiting the isolation of the position (Dukess,

2001; James-Ward, 2012; O'Mahoney, 2003; Ortiz, 2002). While supporting a new principal in

the areas of instructional leadership, management, and personal, a mentor can, and should, assist the novice principal to network and build informal mentoring relationships. It is essential for principals to establish a support structure that continues after the formal mentoring support is removed. The informal networks take the place of mentoring in balancing the principal needs (Figure 8).

Figure 8

Informal Supports Balance the Responsibilities of the Principalship after Formal Mentoring
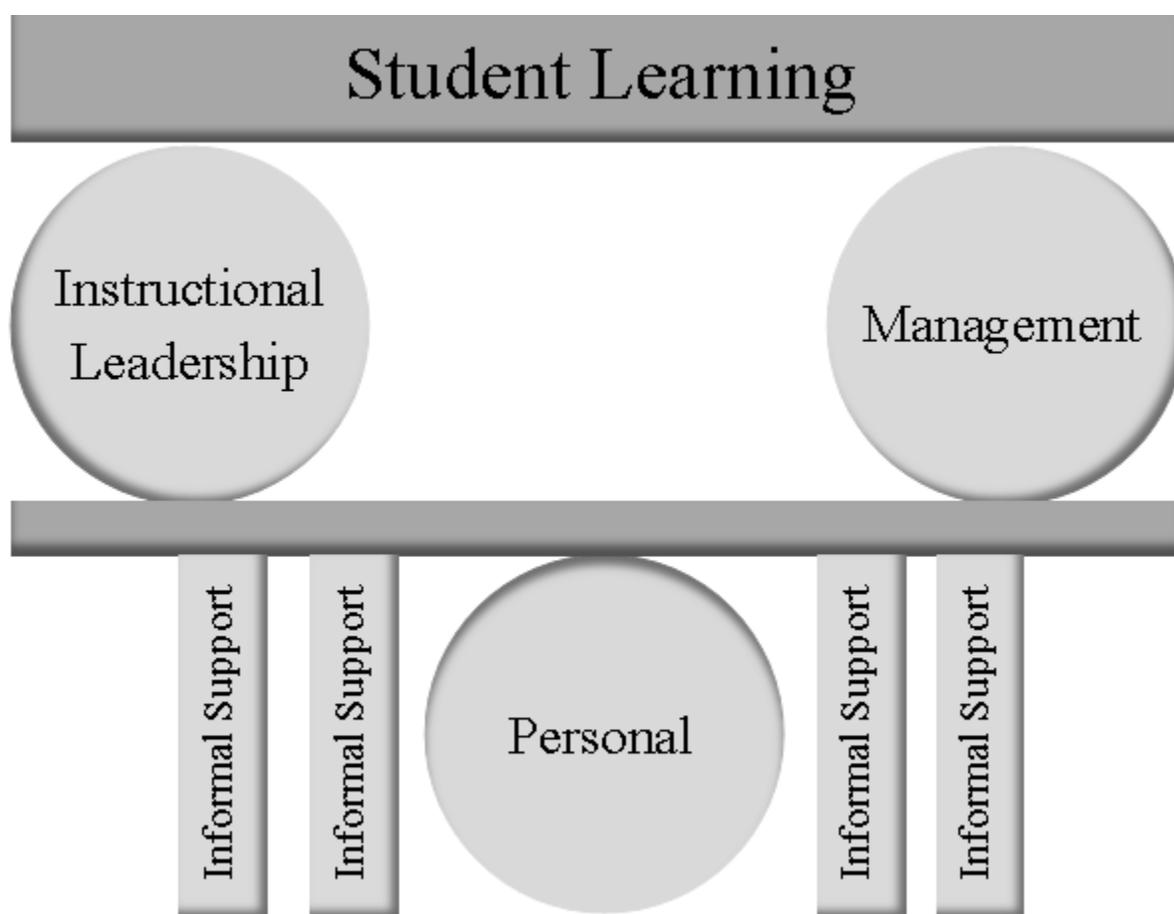
The barriers to implementation disrupt the balance of the three areas of mentoring and cause stress, because support and guidance may not be provided. The barrier of allocating resources can be narrowed to this conclusion: if principal mentoring is a priority, then resources

will be allocated to it. The level of importance should manifest in the level of priority assigned. Districts have tight budgets, but principals are leaders who have a strong impact on the success of a school and, ultimately, on the success of students. Effective school principals are essential for student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005). Developing strong principal leaders necessitates an investment in principal mentoring (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

For success in a formalized program, new principals need to work with a neutral and non-evaluative mentor (James-Ward, 2012). In this research, the participants often discussed a district administrator working as the mentor, yet in the same conversation, described not wanting to seem incompetent with an evaluator, therefore going somewhere else for answers. Principals suggested another principal or a person hired specifically for mentoring as the appropriate choice for a formal mentor. This would not diminish reliance on district administrators in certain areas, but established a chain of questioning to reduce overt dependence on a district administrator.

Small school districts that hire few or no new principals each year find it difficult to structure a formal mentoring program. They are concerned that a formalized program may not meet the unique needs of the new principals, and formalizing a process may take away from the informal collegiality among principals. The error in such reasoning is that new principals, by default, will struggle with transitioning into the role and seek out informal mentors; they do not know what questions to ask, and reinvent solutions that could be learned from others. The role of the informal mentor is important, but a formal mentor through a structured mentoring system will help expedite the learning. The formal mentor will assist the mentee in gaining experience, and discussing potential scenarios while providing professional and emotional support.

Building upon the results of this research, the perceived benefits and importance of formal mentoring outweigh the challenges and barriers. District administrators in semi-rural

districts who want to support and retain new principals should formalize a process to ensure new principals have mentoring support in the areas of instructional leadership and management, as well as personal support. New principals, especially in smaller districts, need an understanding of the district, a guide for the general responsibilities of the principalship, and support through the overwhelming responsibilities of the job. To formalize the process, districts can: (a) determine a team to structure a program, (b) build upon the three areas of need (instructional leadership, management, and personal) with opportunities for gaining experiences and reflecting, (c) brainstorm with administrators regarding district-specific needs while organizing the areas for mentoring needed, (d) provide ideas for scheduling and minimum requirements for meetings, (e) decide how mentors will be chosen, trained, and compensated, and (f) compile the process into a shared document that can be edited by an individual mentoring team, or by the district as policies and procedures change. At a very early stage in the mentoring process, providing and organizing information for the personal, instructional leadership, and management areas will help schools have a better start with a new principal; this was a benefit described by many participants. District-specific information was identified as important to all incoming principals, whether new or experienced. To individualize the process, the mentor and mentee could identify the areas of need by using the district list as a starting point. This process would alleviate the problem experienced by the first year principals in this study: the mentors and others are willing to help, but they must ask the questions, and they do not know the questions that need to be asked. Ms. West efficiently described why mentoring is beneficial when she said, "Strengthening principals strengthens the system."

Recommendations for Further Research

Continued research on the best ways to support principals is necessary. Support for both new and experienced principals invites further study. Informal supportive relationships were important to the participants in this study. The reluctance to move to a formalized mentoring process, may lead to an extension of this research: the impact of implementing a formal process on existing informal collegiality.

With a growing job market (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014), many small districts struggle to hire and retain quality principals. Due to size, and often location, semi-rural and rural districts have unique challenges in recruiting candidates for positions. The districts in this study were small and semi-rural, but did not represent the most rural districts in the state. This research could be extended to examine rural districts, the smallest of districts where a first year principal may hold additional administrative roles, such as Director of Federal Programs or Director of Special Services. Additional challenges and solutions to supporting new principals may be discovered by studying districts in which a few administrators have greater responsibility despite small student bodies. There may be very limited support for a new principal in a small district simply because of the lack of personnel for mentoring. Establishing ways to support principals regardless of the district size is important and needed.

There is evidence of a correlation between principal leadership and student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005), and the accountability for student learning and achievement is shouldered by principals and the teachers they supervise (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001; Marzano et al., 2005; Seashore Louis et al., 2010). Determining the specific ways in which new principal mentoring supports student learning would help increase student achievement. A study comparing student

achievement in schools with and without a mentored new principal could add to the professional literature of both mentoring and student achievement.

Financially investing in training and mentoring principals is a challenge perceived by principals and district administrators for small districts in Idaho. A plan for the preparation and development of principals must include financial support (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). In a study in Washington, Lochmiller (2014) used fixed administrative overhead and stipends to determine the cost for coaching principals. With fixed stipends of $1,625, $3,250, or $5,000 per coached principal, the cost per pupil was $4.01 to $12.92 (Lochmiller, 2014). Since retention is perceived by principals and district administrators as a benefit of mentoring, further research can be conducted to determine the cost benefit of formally mentoring a new principal versus the cost of hiring and training a new principal every year or couple of years. The monetary and time costs involved with hiring and integrating a principal into a small school district and not retaining the principal can be compared to those costs over time with mentoring and retention. This research would look different for rural and urban areas, but would provide needed information to fill gaps in research and expand the understanding of the phenomena of training and retention. It would also be beneficial to districts as they analyze budgets.

The impact of *Project Leadership* was brought out in many of the interviews in this study as a way to network and reduce the isolation of the principalship. The cost was noted as a potential deterrent for participation. Examining the long-range effects of matriculating through the program, and ways to expand the impact of the program to more administrators, may be effective in determining if this process is a beneficial supplement to mentoring.

Implications for Professional Practice

The semi-rural Idaho school districts that participated in this research have administrators with strong skills and important ideas. Building upon the expertise of administrators is a way to use the intellectual capacity of the district to ensure progress. Using the experience of strong administrators, as well as administrators who may struggle, will yield the necessary information for building a program of support for new principals. The participants in this study described wanting a somewhat "canned" formal mentoring program, but one that is individualized. The conclusion seemed to be that time to formulate a program is not a priority with such a low number of new principals and the informal support they develop.

Principals should use this study to advocate for more support for both new and experienced principals. Mentoring has benefits that extend beyond just the new principal (Allen et al., 2004; Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Daresh, 2004, Daresh & Playko, 1993; Dukess, 2001; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Yirci & Kocabas, 2010), and ongoing professional development is a desired outcome of mentoring (Bottoms & Schmitt-Davis, 2010; Cook, 2014; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Parylo et al., 2012; Simieou et al., 2010). Principals should encourage district leaders to allocate resources for supporting a mentoring process and its accompanying training.

Using the three spheres of areas for mentoring (personal, instructional leadership, and management), and the areas of experiential learning (concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation) (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005; D. A. Kolb, 1984; McLeod, 2013; Turesky & Gallagher, 2011), districts can build a structure of mentoring to meet both new principal and district needs. The principal participants in this study revealed that being, and feeling, supported by the school district is crucial. Supporting new principals through mentoring is a way to help not only the new principal, but also, the mentor,

district, school, and ultimately to support student learning. District administrators can use this research to promote the benefits of mentoring new principals and encourage officials to consider financially supporting the process.

Even without funding support from the State, there are changes that can be made in small districts. Financial costs may be low, but there is an investment of time to implement a mentoring program. Principals in this study described the benefits of feeling supported by district administrators. Mentored principals demonstrate more satisfaction and loyalty to districts when they are mentored (Daresh, 2004). Another benefit of mentoring is increased retention of staff (Ehrich et al., 2001). Small districts may better retain principals if they are mentored and feel supported.

Finally, principals have a complex job with a huge range of responsibilities (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008), and new principals are held to the same expectations as experienced principals. In addition to the daily management and instructional leadership activities, they need to manage the personal aspects of the job. Although accountability for student learning is one of many aspects of the position (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Seashore Louis et al., 2010), it is of utmost importance. This study demonstrated a structure for supporting new principals in the areas of instructional leadership, management, and personal. Mentoring provides a strong structure to ensure that the three areas are reinforced and balanced, leading to thriving principal leadership that supports extraordinary student learning and achievement.

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Appendix A

Permission to Use Graph

NORTHWEST
NAZARENE
UNIVERSITY

Elisa Saffle <esaffle@nnu.edu>

Permission to use your work
2 messages

Elisa Saffle <esaffle@nnu.edu>   Sat, Oct 11, 2014 at 6:36 PM
To: sfarkas@thefdrgroup.com

Dear Mr. Farkas -

My name is Elisa Saffle and I am a school principal and a doctoral student at Northwest Nazarene University in Nampa, Idaho. I am studying principal mentoring for my dissertation research. As part of my literature review, I am including information from your work with Public Agenda and The Wallace Foundation, *Rolling up their sleeves: Superintendents and principals talk about what's needed to fix public schools* (Farkas, Johnson, & Duffett, 2003).

I would like to include one of the graphs from this work. The pie chart about principal preparation on page 39, *Everything I Needed to Know (I Didn't Learn in Graduate School),* presents an amazing (and accurate for my experiences) visual to enhance my review of literature.

If it is acceptable to include this graphic, please respond with your permission. If I need to contact Public Agenda, The Wallace Foundation, or your co-authors, please let me know and I will make those contacts.

I appreciate your help with this and look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,
Elisa Saffle

Steve Farkas <sfarkas27@yahoo.com>   Sat, Oct 11, 2014 at 8:55 PM
To: Elisa Saffle <esaffle@nnu.edu>

Hi Elisa,
I see no reason whatsoever for permission to be denied. Please use whatever is helpful to you. Good luck and let me know if you need anything else.
Best, Steve

Sent from my iPad
[Quoted text hidden]

Appendix B

Permission to Use Graph

NORTHWEST
NAZARENE
UNIVERSITY

Elisa Saffle <esaffle@nnu.edu>

Permission to use your work

2 messages

Elisa Saffle <esaffle@nnu.edu>   Sat, Oct 11, 2014 at 6:55 PM
To: clochmil@indiana.edu

Dear Dr. Lochmiller -

My name is Elisa Saffle and I am a school principal and a doctoral student at Northwest Nazarene University in
Nampa, Idaho. I am studying principal mentoring for my dissertation research. As part of my literature review, I
am including information from your work, *What would it cost to coach every new principal?* (Lochmiller, 2014).

I would like to include a summary table from a few of your tables in this work. The summary chart would include
the estimated average total cost for each of the three stipend amounts in the elementary, secondary, and high-
poverty areas. If acceptable, below is what the summary (cited, of course) would look like in my literature
review:

Level or type of school	Estimated average total cost (estimated average cost per student) based on $1,625 stipend	Estimated average total cost (estimated average cost per student) based on $3,250 stipend	Estimated average total cost (estimated average cost per student) based on $5,000 stipend
Elementary	$274,625 ($4.01)	$549,250 ($8.02)	$845,000 ($12.35)
Secondary	$153,075 ($2.63)	$306,150 ($5.27)	$471,000 ($8.11)
High-Poverty	$143,975 ($4.20)	$287,950 ($8.40)	$443,000 ($12.92)

If it is acceptable to include this summary table, please respond with your permission.

Thank you for considering allowing me to include this in my literature review. I appreciate your help with this and
look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,
Elisa Saffle

Lochmiller, Chad Richard <clochmil@indiana.edu>   Mon, Oct 13, 2014 at 6:20 AM
To: Elisa Saffle <esaffle@nnu.edu>

Dear, Ms. Saffle –

Thank you for your email. Yes, please feel free to use the table as you've indicated below.

In addition, you might want to check with EPAA to make sure there are no special permissions that are
required from the journal.

Best to you on your research! Please send a copy of your final dissertation when it's complete, I'd love to
read it.

Chad

Chad Lochmiller, Ph.D.

Assistant Research Scientist

Indiana University | School of Education

Center for Evaluation & Education Policy (CEEP)
1900 East Tenth Street

Bloomington, IN 47406

Direct Line: (812) 856-0895

Email: clochmil@indiana.edu

Appendix C

NIH "Protecting Human Research Participants" Certificate

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Elisa Saffle** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 06/08/2014

Certification Number: 1483146

Appendix D

Human Research Review Committee Approval

Full approval: March 24, 2015   Protocol: #232015

NORTHWEST
NAZARENE
UNIVERSITY   Elisa Saffle <esaffle@nnu.edu>

HRRC updated

Heidi Curtis <hlcurtis@nnu.edu>   Tue, Mar 24, 2015 at 12:39 PM
To: Elisa Saffle <esaffle@nnu.edu>
Cc: Cathy Beals <cbeals@nnu.edu>

Thanks! You did great. Full approval!

Heidi Curtis, Ed. D.
Assistant Professor of Education
Director of Doctoral Programs in Educational Leadership
Northwest Nazarene University
(208) 467-8250
(208) 250-6341

NORTHWEST
NAZARENE
UNIVERSITY   Elisa Saffle <esaffle@nnu.edu>

Saffle--HRRC 232015

Heidi Curtis <hlcurtis@nnu.edu>   Wed, Mar 11, 2015 at 11:10 AM
To: Elisa Saffle <esaffle@nnu.edu>, Cathy Beals <cbeals@nnu.edu>, HRRC HRRC <hrrc@nnu.edu>

Dear Elisa,

The HRRC has reviewed your protocol: Protocol #232015 - A Mixed Methods Study Investigating Administrator
Perceptions on the Need, Benefits, Challenges, and Areas for Principal Mentoring. You received a "Conditional
Approval". Please make the corrections/changes listed below. You can access your protocol at
https://nnu.submittable.com/submit. There you will see a drop box titled "Dashboard." In the drop list will be an
option titled "My Submissions." Here you will find your protocol.

Here are the necessary changes, additions, and edits.

1) In 5b--I think you could give additional protection to the participants by giving them pseudonyms. You
mention it below in another question and mention giving the district pseudonyms. Is this your plan for the
participants themselves? And, if so, please add a sentence to that effect in 5b.

Once all of these corrections/changes have been made, please resubmit the protocol (by clicking the "mark as
done and closed for editing" button) and send an email to me (hlcurtis@nnu.edu), your research adviser and the
HRRC (hrrc@nnu.edu) letting us know that the protocol has been edited and resubmitted.

Good luck. If the HRRC doesn't receive an edited protocol within 3 months, this protocol will be closed out. If
you need an extension just contact the HRRC (hrrc@nnu.edu) and your adviser.

If you have any questions, let me know.

Heidi Curtis, Ed. D.
Assistant Professor of Education
Director of Doctoral Programs in Educational Leadership
Northwest Nazarene University
(208) 467-8250
(208) 250-6341

Appendix E

Request Permission to Contact Administrators

September 25, 2014

Superintendent Name
Superintendent, School District
Address

RE: Research Proposal Site Access for Elisa Saffle

Dear Superintendent Name:

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study in School District. I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program at Northwest Nazarene University and am in the process of conducting research for my dissertation. The focus of my research is principal mentoring.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceived level of need for a formal principal mentoring program, as well as the perceived benefits and challenges of implementing a formal principal mentoring program. This research will evaluate the capacity of [this state's] public schools to implement a formal principal mentoring program.

I am seeking permission to conduct part of my research in your school district by surveying and/or interviewing school and district-level administrators. My research will be conducted in multiple school districts throughout State. The authorization dates for the research study are July 2015 to April 2016.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. I will follow up with a telephone call next week and, at that time, I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have. Additionally, you may contact me by email at esaffle@nnu.edu .

If you agree, please submit to me a signed letter of permission on your institution's letterhead acknowledging your consent and permission for me to conduct this study in your school district. I have attached a permission letter template to assist in the process.

Respectfully,

Elisa S. Saffle

Elisa S. Saffle

Enclosure

Appendix F

Permissions to Contact Administrators

District A
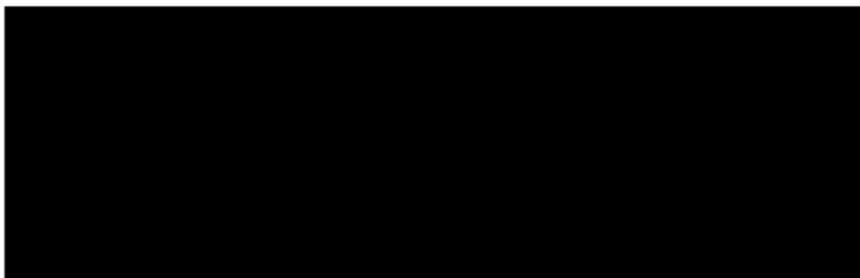
From the Office of the Superintendent

October 13, 2014

Northwest Nazarene University
Attention: HRRC Committee
Helstrom Business Center 1st floor
623 S University Boulevard
Nampa, Idaho 83686

RE: Research Proposal Site Access for Elisa Saffle

Dear HRRC Members:

This letter is to inform the HRRC that the Administration at ███████████████ has reviewed the proposed dissertation research plan including subjects, proposed data and collection procedures, and purpose of study. Mrs. Saffle has permission to conduct her research with school and district administrators in the ████████ School District. The authorization dates for this research study are July 2015 to April 2016.

Sincerely,

District B

███
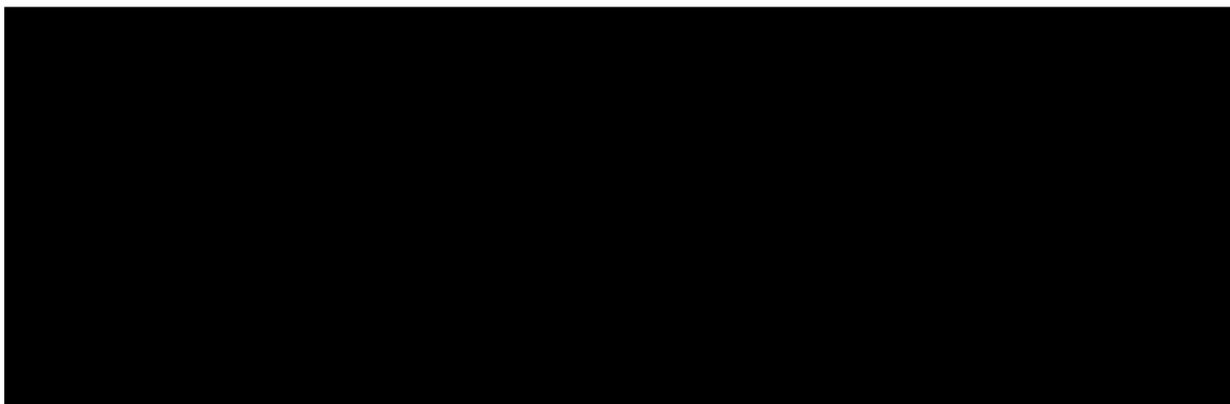
October 1, 2014

Northwest Nazarene University
Attention: HRRC Committee
Helstrom Business Center 1ˢᵗ floor
623 S University Boulevard
Nampa, Idaho 83686

RE: Research Proposal Site Access for Elisa Saffle

Dear HRRC Members:

This letter is to inform the HRRC that the Administration at █████████████████████████ has reviewed the proposed dissertation research plan including subjects, proposed data and collection procedures, and purpose of study. Mrs. Saffle has permission to conduct her research with school and district administrators in the ██████ School District. The authorization dates for this research study are July 2015 to April 2016.

Sincerely,

████████████████

Superintendent

████████████████████

District C
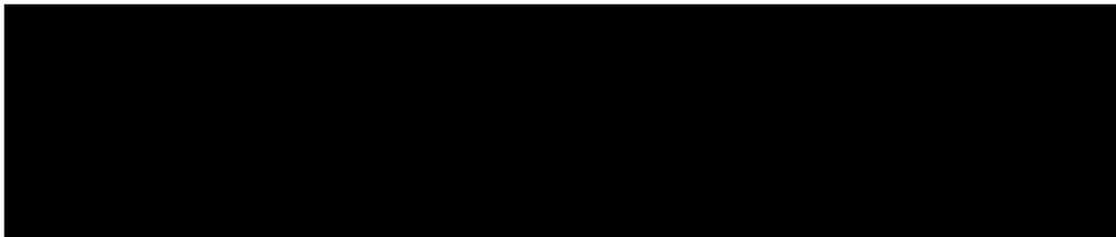
███

September 25, 2014

Northwest Nazarene University
Attention: HRRC Committee
Helstrom Business Center 1st floor
623 S University Boulevard
Nampa, Idaho 83686

RE: Research Proposal Site Access for Elisa Saffle

Dear HRRC Members:

This letter is to inform the HRRC that the Administration at ████████████████████ has reviewed the proposed dissertation research plan including subjects, proposed data and collection procedures, and purpose of study. Mrs. Saffle has permission to conduct her research with school and district administrators in the ██████████████. The authorization dates for this research study are July 2015 to April 2016.

████████████████████████
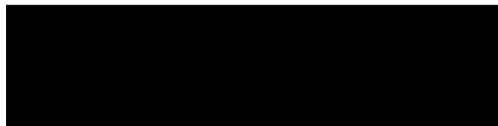
District D

████████████████████████████████████
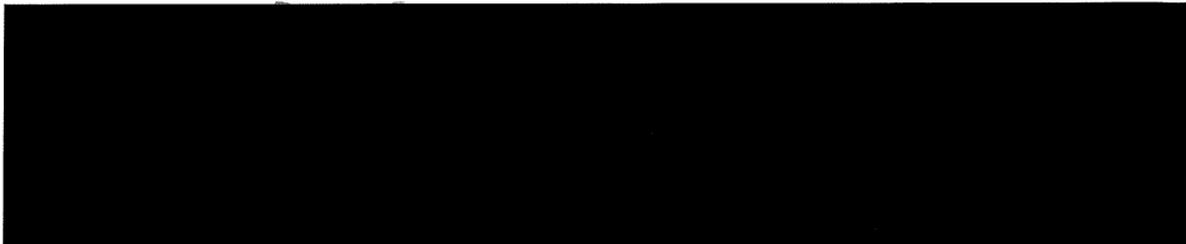
October 14, 2014

Northwest Nazarene University
Attention: HRRC Committee
Helstrom Business Center 1st floor
623 S University Boulevard
Nampa, Idaho 83686

RE: Research Proposal Site Access for Elisa Saffle

Dear HRRC Members:

This letter is to inform the HRRC that the Administration at ████████ ████ ██ has reviewed the proposed dissertation research plan including subjects, proposed data and collection procedures, and purpose of study. Mrs. Saffle has permission to conduct her research with school and district administrators in the ████████ ████ ██. The authorization dates for this research study are July 2015 to April 2016.

████████████████

District E
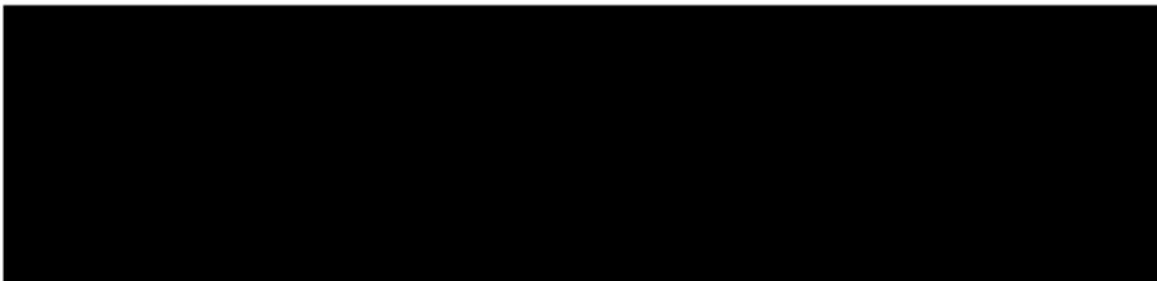
September 26, 2014

Northwest Nazarene University
Attention: HRRC Committee
Helstrom Business Center 1st
623 S University Boulevard
Nampa, Idaho 83686

RE: Research Proposal Site Access for Elisa Saffle

Dear HRRC Members:

This letter is to inform the HRRC that the Administration at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ has reviewed the proposed dissertation research plan including subjects, proposed data and collection procedures, and purpose of study. Mrs. Saffle has permission to conduct her research with school and district administrators in the ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮. The authorization dates for this research study are July 2015 to April 2016.

Sincerely,

Superintendent of Schools

District F
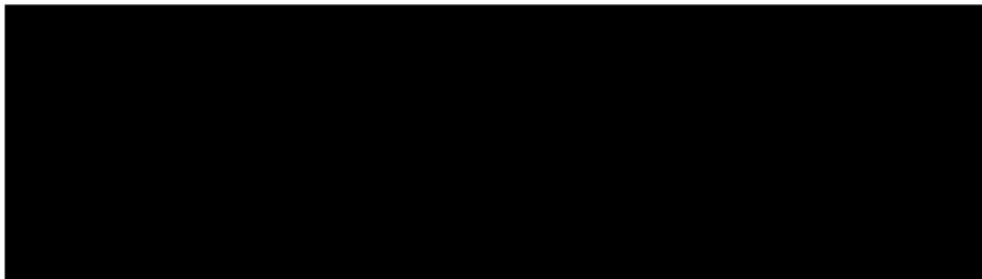
███████████████████████████████████

September 25, 2014

Northwest Nazarene University
Attention: HRRC Committee
Helstrom Business Center 1st floor
623 S University Boulevard
Nampa, Idaho 83686

RE: Research Proposal Site Access for Elisa Saffle

Dear HRRC Members:

This letter is to inform the HRRC that the Administration at ████████████████ has reviewed the proposed dissertation research plan including subjects, proposed data and collection procedures, and purpose of study. Mrs. Saffle has permission to conduct her research with school and district administrators in the ████████████. The authorization dates for this research study are July 2015 to April 2016.

████████████████
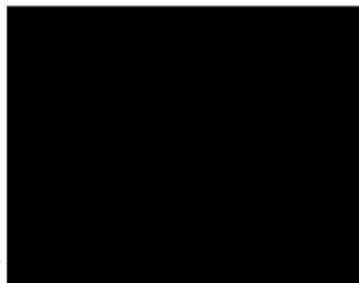
District G
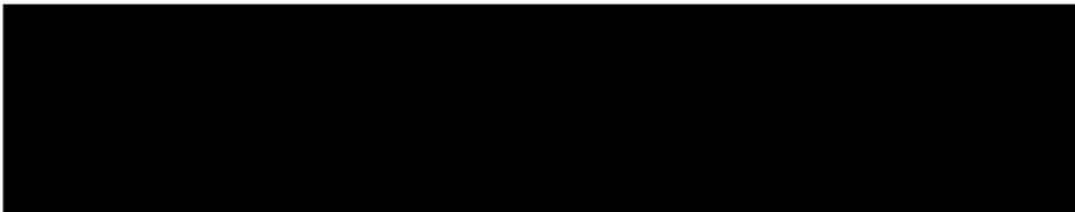
September 25, 2014

Northwest Nazarene University

Attention: HRRC Committee

Helstrom Business Center 1st floor

623 S University Boulevard

Nampa, Idaho 83686

RE: Research Proposal Site Access for Elisa Saffle

Dear HRRC Members:

This letter is to inform the HRRC that the Administration at ██████████ has reviewed the proposed dissertation research plan including subjects, proposed data and collection procedures, and purpose of study. Mrs. Saffle has permission to conduct her research with school and district administrators in the ██████████. The authorization dates for this research study are July 2015 to April 2016.

Superintendent

Appendix G

Email Introduction for Electronic Notice for Principals and District Administrators

Dear District [name] Principal –

My name is Elisa Saffle and as a principal and doctoral student, I am interested in the topic of principal mentoring. I am pursuing my PhD through Northwest Nazarene University and would like your help. [Superintendent] gave me permission to contact you as a principal of a school in District [name].

I am seeking 8 – 10 principal volunteers willing to be individually interviewed for my study on perceptions surrounding principal mentoring. I am looking for volunteers from multiple school districts and varying levels of experience. Below is a link to volunteer; you will be asked a few demographic questions to ensure you fit the necessary criteria for the study.

Please click this link to volunteer: [link]

Thank you in advance for helping me gather data about your perceptions. I look forward to increasing the understanding of the needs of principals and providing district leaders with information to guide principal mentoring.

Sincerely,
Elisa Saffle
Principal, Hillview Elementary, Bonneville District #93
PhD Candidate, Northwest Nazarene University

Dear Superintendent / District Administrator –

My name is Elisa Saffle and as a principal and doctoral student, I am interested in the topic of principal mentoring. I am pursuing my PhD through Northwest Nazarene University and would like your help. [Name of Superintendent] gave me permission to contact you as a supervisor of principals in [District]. I am seeking 3 – 4 district administrator volunteers willing to be interviewed for my study on perceptions surrounding principal mentoring. I am looking for volunteers from multiple school districts and with varying levels of experience. Below is a link to volunteer; you will be asked a few demographic questions to ensure you fit the necessary criteria for the study.

Thank you in advance for helping me gather data about your perceptions. I look forward to increasing the understanding of the needs of principals and providing district leaders with information to guide principal mentoring.

Sincerely,

Elisa Saffle

Appendix H

Electronic Notice - Principals

Electronic Notice - Principals

Q1 I am willing to be contacted by Elisa Saffle (the researcher) to be interviewed as part of the study on principals' perceptions of principal mentoring. If selected, I understand that I will be given an informed consent to sign stating that my information will be kept confidential, I may choose to not participate, and my responses may be used for this and future research.
○ Yes (1)
○ No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

Q2 To be considered for participation, the following criteria must be met: Be a current head principal of a traditional public school that is NOT an alternative, online, or specialized school;   AND Hold a current Certificate with a School Principal Endorsement.   I meet both criteria for this study.
○ Yes (1)
○ No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

Answer If I am willing to be contacted by Elisa Saffle (the researcher) to be interviewed as part of the st... No Is Selected Or To be considered for participation, the following criteria must be met:- be a current head principal of a public school that is NOT an alternative, online, or specialized school; AND- hold a curren... No Is Selected

QX Thank you for your time, unfortunately you do not meet the qualifications for this study.

If Thank you for your time, un... Is Displayed, Then Skip To End of Survey

Q3 First and Last Name

Q4 Preferred email address for contact about this research:

Q5 Preferred phone number for contact about this research:

Q6 School District

Q7 Level of School
○ Elementary (1)
○ Middle/Jr. High (2)
○ High School (3)

Q0 4 quick questions left:

Q8 How many years have you served as a school principal (please do not include years as an assistant principal but include the 2015-2016 school year in your count)?
○ 1 (1)
○ 2 (2)
○ 3 - 5 (3)
○ > 5 (4)

Q9 How many years have you been employed (in any capacity) in your current district (include the 2015-2016 school year in your count)?
○ ≤ 3 (1)
○ ≥ 4 (2)

Q10 What position did you hold just prior to your first head principal position?
○ Teacher (1)
○ Assistant Principal (2)
○ Other (please list) (3) _____

Q11 Does your current school district have a formal mentoring program for new principals (for the purpose of this research, new principal refers to principals in their first two years in the position but the mentoring may occur for just part of this time)?
○ Yes (1)
○ No (2)
○ I am not sure (3)

Q12 Thank you for volunteering to participate in this research. You will be contacted by Elisa Saffle to schedule an interview or to let you know if your demographic has been filled.

Appendix I

Electronic Notice – District Administrators

Q1 I am willing to be contacted by Elisa Saffle (the researcher) to be interviewed as part of the study on administrators' perceptions of principal mentoring. If selected, I understand that I will be given an informed consent to sign stating that my information will be kept confidential, my responses may be used for this and future research, and I may choose to not participate.

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

Q2 To be considered for participation, the following criteria must be met:

- Be a current school district administrator who supervises principals,
- Hold a current Certificate with a School Principal AND/OR School Superintendent Endorsement, AND
- Not be a part-time district employee or concurrently working as a school principal.

I meet all the criteria for this study.

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

Answer If I am willing to be contacted by Elisa Saffle (the researcher) to be interviewed as part of the st... No Is Selected Or To be considered for participation, the following criteria must be met: Be a current school district administrator who supervises principals, Hold a current Idaho Certificate with a School Princ... No Is Selected

QX Thank you for your time, unfortunately you do not meet the qualifications for this study.

If Thank you for your time, un... Is Displayed, Then Skip To End of Survey

Q3 First and Last Name

Q4 Preferred email address for contact about this research:

Q5 Preferred phone number for contact about this research:

Q6 School District Number

Q7 Job Title

- ○ Superintendent (1)
- ○ Deputy/Assistant Superintendent (2)
- ○ Other (please list) (3) _____

Q0 3 quick questions left:

Q8 How many years have you served as a district administrator supervising principals (please include the 2015-2016 school year in your count)?
- ○ ≤ 2 (1)
- ○ ≥ 3 (2)

Q9 How many years have you been employed (in any capacity) in your current district (include the 2015-2016 school year in your count)?
- ○ ≤ 2 (1)
- ○ ≥ 3 (2)

Q10 Does your current school district have a formal mentoring program for new principals (for the purpose of this research, new principal refers to principals in their first two years in the position but the mentoring may occur for just part of this time, and formal principal mentoring refers to a district/regional/state program where a mentor is assigned to a principal and there is a structure for what should be accomplished throughout the mentoring process)?
- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)
- ○ I am not sure (3)

Q11 Thank you for volunteering to participate in this research. You will be contacted by Elisa Saffle to schedule an interview or to let you know if your demographic has been filled.

Appendix J

Content Validity for Principal Interview Questions

Question #	Resondents										Mean	Count of 3s	Count of 4s	Count of 3s & 4s	CVI Score
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					
1	4	4	4	3	2	4	3	3	4	4	3.5	3	6	9	0.9
2	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	3.9	1	9	10	1.0
3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3.9	1	9	10	1.0
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	3.8	2	8	10	1.0
5	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	3.7	3	7	10	1.0
6	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	3	4	4	3.7	1	8	9	0.9
7	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	3.9	1	9	10	1.0
8	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	3.8	2	8	10	1.0
9	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	3.8	2	8	10	1.0
10	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	3	3	4	3.6	2	7	9	0.9
11	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	4	3.7	3	7	10	1.0

	When consulting with three to five experts, all of the experts need to agree for an item to establish content validity (Lynn, 1986; Polit & Beck, 2006). Furthermore, there should be at least 78% agreement among the experts if there are six to ten consulted (Polit & Beck, 2006).
Each respondent analyzed each question in relation to the research questions and ranked the question as:	
	1 = not relevant
	2 = may be relevant with revisions / unable to assess relevance
	3 = relevant but could use minor alteration
	4 = very relevant
1	Describe your experiences adjusting to the role of principal and the involvement of a formal principal mentoring program, or ways you found help or support.
2	In your current school district, what supports are in place for new principals?
3	What level of importance do you think mentoring holds for new principals?
4	How do you see new principals being supported (formally and/or informally) as they transition into the role?
5	How did you learn what you needed to know (How are you learning what you need to know)? What key factors contribute, or contributed, to your effectiveness as a school principal?
6	Why do you think that often principals are not formally mentored?
7	What are the benefits of principal mentoring?
8	What are the challenges of principal mentoring?
9	If principal mentoring is important and not happening, why is it not happening (barriers) and what could be done to correct this?
10	If mentoring is important, what areas of focus should be addressed? If your school district implemented a new principal mentoring program, what areas do you think would be a necessary part of the program? For
11	Do you think your district benefits, or would benefit, from a formal principal mentoring program? Why or why not? If not, what avenues of support, if any, should be available?

Appendix K

Interview Protocol - Principals

Make sure consent is reviewed and signed.

Purpose: The purpose of this interview is to gather data related to principal perceptions surrounding principal mentoring.

General information about research.

For the purpose of this research, new principal refers to principals in their first two years in the position. Formal principal mentoring refers to a district/regional/state program where a mentor is assigned to a principal and there is a structure for what should be accomplished throughout the mentoring process. Informal principal mentoring refers to a relationship between or among professionals where there is support, help, and/or guidance.

Date and Time of Interview:

Place of Interview:

School Level: Elem / Mid / HS

Participant Years as Principal:

Positions Prior to Principal:

Gender:

Intro: This interview is with [name] who is a principal at [elem/mid/hs] and has been a principal for [x] years. [Name] has been with his/her school district for [y] years and in the current position for [z] years.

Start by telling me about your career path so far.

1. **Describe your experiences adjusting to the role of principal.**

    a. Involvement of a formal principal mentoring program, or ways you found help or support?

    b. What were your biggest challenges or surprises when you became a principal?

    c. How long were the supports in place?

2. **In your current school district, what supports are in place for new principals?**

    a. **What supports are in place for you, or do you access, outside your district (region/state)?**

    b. Does your current school district have a formal principal mentoring program?
    c. If yes, will you explain the mentoring process your district follows (who gets mentoring, who mentors – what training, length, frequency, mandatory)?
        i.   What are the areas of focus for the program?
        ii. How do you see it helping/not helping new principals?
        iii. Does the program seem successful to you?

3. **What level of importance do you think mentoring holds for new principals?**

4. **How do you see new principals being supported (formally and/or informally) as they transition into the role?**

5. **Education emphasizes the need for mentoring teachers, in your opinion, why do you think that often principals are not formally mentored?**

6. **How did you learn what you needed to know (How are you learning what you need to know)?**
    *What key factors contribute, or contributed, to your effectiveness as a school principal? (reflecting)

    a. **How do past experiences influence how you run your school and make decisions?**
    b. **How often, or in what situations, do you find yourself reflecting on what you have experienced and how does this affect your daily work?**

7. **If there is (were) formal principal mentoring in place, what do you think are (would be) the <u>benefits</u> of principal mentoring?**

    a. Mentor? Mentee? District? School?

8. **If there is (were) formal principal mentoring in place, what do you think are (would be) the <u>challenges</u> of principal mentoring?**

    a. Mentor? Mentee? District? School?

9. **If principal mentoring is important and not happening, why is it not happening (barriers) <u>and what could be done to correct this</u>?**

10. **If mentoring is important, what areas of focus should be addressed?**

    If your school district implemented a new principal mentoring program, what areas do you think would be a necessary part of the program?

    For those same areas, is ongoing training or support needed for all principals?

    a. *Do you think new principals are coming to the position competent in the areas of management (schedules, finances, running meetings), accountability (to parents, students, state), data analysis (test scores, teacher evaluations, walk-through data), personnel decisions (hiring, firing, mentoring, counseling out), and instructional leadership (curriculum, assessment, professional development)? How much support is needed?

    b. *What do you think ranks as the top two or three needs for new principals? Experienced principals?

    c. If not important, why and how should new principals learn the position?

11. **Do you think your district benefits, or would benefit, from a formal principal mentoring program? Why or why not?**

    If not, what avenues of support, if any, should be available?

12. **Is there anything else to add, or that you thought of, that may be significant for this research?**

Appendix L

Content Validity for District Administrator Interview Questions

Question #	Resondents					Mean	Count of 3s	Count of 4s	Count of 3s & 4s	CVI Score		
	1	2	3	4	5							
1	4	4	3	4	4	3.8	1	4	5	1.0		
2	3	4	3	3	3	3.2	4	1	5	1.0		
3	4	4	3	3	4	3.6	2	3	5	1.0		
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	5	5	1.0		
5	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	5	5	1.0		
6	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	5	5	1.0		
7	4	4	4	3	3	3.6	2	3	5	1.0		
8	4	4	3	4	4	3.8	1	4	5	1.0		
9	3	4	4	4	3	3.6	2	3	5	1.0		
10	3	4	4	4	3	3.6	2	3	5	1.0		
11	4	4	4	4	3	3.8	1	4	5	1.0		

When consulting with three to five experts, all of the experts need to agree for an item to establish content validity (Lynn, 1986; Polit & Beck, 2006). Furthermore, there should be at least 78% agreement among the experts if there are six to ten consulted (Polit & Beck, 2006).

Each respondent analyzed each question in relation to the research questions and ranked the question as:

1 = not relevant

2 = may be relevant with revisions / unable to assess relevance

3 = relevant but could use minor alteration

4 = very relevant

1	In your school district, what supports are in place for new principals?
2	When you have applicants for principal positions, what background and/or preparation do you find makes for the easiest transition into the position? Do you feel new principal applicants are fully prepared for the challenges of a principal position?
3	Education emphasizes the need for mentoring teachers, in your opinion, why do you think that often principals are not formally mentored?
4	If there is (were) formal principal mentoring in place, what do you think are (would be) the benefits of principal mentoring (for the mentee, mentor, school, district)?
5	If there is (were) formal principal mentoring in place, what do you think are (would be) the challenges of principal mentoring (for the mentee, mentor, school, district)?
6	If principal mentoring is important and not happening, why is it not happening (barriers) and what could be done to correct this?
7	Is principal mentoring part of your district professional development plan, why/why not? How does your district determine areas of need for mentoring or professional development support for principals?
8	If your school district implemented a new principal mentoring program, what areas do you think would be a necessary part of the program?
9	What level of importance do you think mentoring holds for new principals? Do you think your district benefits, or would benefit, from a formal principal mentoring program? Why or why not?
10	What are your thoughts as to who holds the responsibility for training effective principals? What level of support do you believe should be offered for new principals?
11	What needs to happen in your district to increase the support for new principals? Principals new to your district? Experienced principals?

Appendix M

Interview Protocol – District Administrators

Make sure consent is reviewed and signed.

Purpose: The purpose of this interview is to gather data related to principal perceptions surrounding principal mentoring.

General information about research.

For the purpose of this research, new principal refers to principals in their first two years in the position. Formal principal mentoring refers to a district/regional/state program where a mentor is assigned to a principal and there is a structure for what should be accomplished throughout the mentoring process. Informal principal mentoring refers to a relationship between or among professionals where there is support, help, and/or guidance.

Date and Time of Interview:

Place of Interview:

District Administrator Title:

District Size:

Number of schools – HS _____   Mid/Jr _____   Elem _____

Gender:

Intro: This interview is with [name] who is a district administrator for [district] and has been in this position for [x] years and with his/her school district for [y] years.

Start by telling me about your current position and your role working with principals.

1. **In your school district, what supports are in place for new principals?**

   a. **If mentoring: How is the program structured and what is the focus?**
      i. Who gets mentored? How are mentors chosen? Is it voluntary?
      ii. Training? Stipend? Frequency of interaction/length?
      iii. How do you see it helping/not helping new principals?
      iv. Does the program seem successful to you?

   b. **What supports are in place, or do your principals access, outside your district (region/state)?**

   c. **How do you see new principals being informally supported as they transition into the role?**

2. **When you have applicants for principal positions, what background and/or preparation do you find makes for the easiest transition into the position? Do you feel new principal applicants are fully prepared for the challenges of a principal position? What skills are present or lacking for them to be prepared?**

3. **Education emphasizes the need for mentoring teachers, in your opinion, why do you think that often principals are not formally mentored?**

4. **If there is (were) formal principal mentoring in place, what do you think are (would be) the <u>benefits</u> of principal mentoring?**

   a. Mentor? Mentee? District? School?

5. **If there is (were) formal principal mentoring in place, what do you think are (would be) the <u>challenges</u> of principal mentoring?**

   a. Mentor? Mentee? District? School?

6. **If principal mentoring is important and not happening, why is it not happening (barriers) <u>and what could be done to correct this</u>?**

7. **How does your district determine areas of need for mentoring or professional development support for principals? Is principal mentoring part of your district professional development plan, why/why not?**

8. **If your school district implemented a new principal mentoring program, what areas do you think would be a necessary part of the program?**

    For those same areas, is ongoing training or support needed for all principals?

    a. What do you think ranks as the top two or three needs for new principals? Experienced principals?

    b. How do you see principals "learning" the job?

9. **What level of importance do you think mentoring holds for new principals? Do you think your district benefits, or would benefit, from a formal principal mentoring program? Why or why not?**

    If not, what avenues of support, if any, should be available?

10. **What are your thoughts as to who holds the responsibility for training effective principals? What level of support do you believe should be offered for new principals?**

11. **What needs to happen in your district to increase the support for new principals? Principals new to your district? Experienced principals?**

12. **Is there anything else to add, or that you thought of, that may be significant for this research?**

Appendix N

Informed Consent

By signing this form, I authorize Elisa S. Saffle a doctoral student in the Graduate Education Department at Northwest Nazarene University, Nampa, Idaho, and/or any designated research assistants to gather information from me on the topic of my perceptions regarding principal mentoring. I understand the information gathered may be used for this or future research studies.

I understand the general purpose of the study is to investigate the following areas of principal perceptions: the level of need for formal principal mentoring programs, the benefits and challenges of implementing a formal principal mentoring program, and the areas where principals mentoring support is needed. I understand that I will be asked to answer interview questions and the time of my involvement will be approximately 45 – 75 minutes. I may also be contacted for follow-up questions if clarification or additional information is sought.

I am aware that I have the right to not answer any questions that I choose.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate or discontinue my participation at any time without any penalty.

I understand that if, after my participation, I experience any undue anxiety or have questions about the research or my rights as a participant that may have been provoked by the experience, Elisa S. Saffle will be available for consultation and may be contacted at esaffle@nnu.edu. Additionally, I may contact the faculty advisor for this research, Dr. Heidi Curtis, at hlcurtis@nnu.edu.

Confidentiality of research results will be maintained by the researcher. My individual results will not be released, but may be viewed by my research advisor, Dr. Heidi Curtis.

There will be no direct benefits to me from participating in the study, but the potential benefits of the study are increasing the understanding of the needs of principals and providing district leaders with information to guide principal mentoring. The potential risks are minimal as individual data will be kept confidential.

*Print Name*_____

*Sign Name*_____ *Date*_____

Initial if you allow your interview to be audiotaped: _____*Audiotaping*

Initial if you allow direct quotes from you to be used: _____*Direct Quotes*

Researcher: Elisa S. Saffle
Researcher Signature _____*Date*_____

Appendix O

Confidentiality Form

TRANSCRIPTIONIST NAME will serve as a research associate for the study entitled *A Qualitative Study Investigating Administrator Perceptions on the Need, Benefits, Challenges, and Areas for Principal Mentoring*. All information and data gathered from the interviews will remain confidential. The window of data collection for this study will be September 21, 2015 – May 6, 2016. The role of the research associate is to transcribe qualitative interviews.

Thank you,
Elisa Saffle

First and Last Name   Date

Signature

Appendix P

Member Checking Email

Hello –

I hope this email finds you well. Thank you for your participation in the study entitled *A Qualitative Study Investigating Administrator Perceptions on the Need, Benefits, Challenges, and Areas for Principal Mentoring.* I interviewed 12 building principals and 4 district-level administrators for this research, and I want to share the themes that emerged from the interviews. Please let me know if these accurately depicted our conversation. If you have any suggestions or questions, please let me know by Friday, March 4, 2016.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceived benefits, challenges, and need for formal principal mentoring programs. This research was structured to analyze current views of principal mentoring and to assess the potential of mentoring in developing and enhancing leadership skills for principals.

The research questions guiding this study were:

1. How do principals and district leaders perceive the benefits and challenges of principal mentoring programs?
2. What are the perceptions of principals and district administrators as they relate to implementing a formal principal mentoring program?

There were many themes that emerged from the interviews in which you participated. Overall, administrators think it is important to support new principals. After reading, re-reading, and coding the transcripts, the results showed two main themes each for the perceived benefits, challenges, and barriers. Three main areas of focus were found as necessary for a principal mentoring program.

Themes for Research Question One

Perceived Benefits	*Perceived Challenges*
1. Help for the mentee (guidance, collaborative learning, support)	1. Mismatch between mentee and mentor
2. Retention of principals	2. Time and scheduling for mentoring

Perceived Benefits

Help provided to a new principal is invaluable and includes the guidance, collaborative learning, and support. Guidance encompasses all aspects of leadership; it includes the opportunity to have assistance from an experienced administrator who can answer questions, provide direction, and help with confidential situations; help also includes learning collaboratively with another administrator. Support is demonstrated by having an assigned mentor who the mentee knows will listen, check-in, and, most importantly, be there to assist with the isolation and overwhelming nature of the position. The retention of principals is a byproduct of good, collegial relationships

formed, in part, through mentoring. Being part of a mentoring program helps connect principals to their district and build trust so principals want to stay.

Perceived Challenges

A mismatch between mentor and mentee could derail the entire formal mentoring process. There were concerns surrounding the incompatibility of the mentoring match if an overbearing mentor did not recognize the capabilities of the new principal. Overall, the principal participants shared a wider range of potential stumbling blocks than did the district administrators. From the principal interviews, an additional theme emerged: the challenge of time and scheduling for the mentee-mentor pair. Every principal has an enormous job and adding another responsibility take creative scheduling and potential issues with an already full plate of responsibilities.

Themes for Research Question Two
Perceived Barriers

1. Mentoring principals is not a priority
   - Lack of new principals
   - Those not in the position do not see the need
   - Limited resources
2. Organization of the program
   - How to structure and proceed?
   - Will individualization work in small districts?

Perceived Barriers

In relation to all the other needs of a district, the level of priority for principal mentoring is low. The low priority manifested in three areas: the few number of new principals hired each year, the assumption by outsiders that new principals do not need formal mentoring support, and the lack of allocated resources. Determining how to organize and structure a program that meets the individual needs of new principals is an obstacle for districts. Having a pre-made program was enticing, but meeting the specific needs of the district was more important.

Areas of Mentoring

The data results from the areas for principal mentoring fit into three main categories of needs: (1) personal, (2) district, and (3) principalship. The personal category includes those areas that support personal management and wellbeing. The district category describes the range of district-specific information and structures to follow for full integration into a school district. The category of principalship refers to the requirements of the position and the responsibilities that may need extra guidance. When describing the areas of need, it was important that the areas all supported student learning and achievement. The areas of mentoring are foundational pillars supporting student learning.

Areas of Mentoring

Student Learning		
Personal	**District**	**Principalship**
• Time management • Support • Emotional support • Organization • Managing stress • Professional ethics • Determining individual needs • Scheduling and prioritizing	• District procedures, culture, climate • Finances • Teacher and staff evaluation • Personnel issues, hiring, firing • District curriculum	•Communication with stakeholders •Instructional leadership •Relationships with all stakeholders •Law and legal issues •Balance managing and instructional •Dealing with difficult people •Supporting teachers •Dealing with difficult behaviors •Interpreting and using data •School management •Dealing with parents •Staff development

If you do not see any of your thoughts or experiences reflected here, or you would like to comment further, please respond to this email or contact me at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Thank you again for participating in my dissertation study. It would not have been possible without you.

Elisa Saffle

Doctoral Student

Northwest Nazarene University

esaffle@nnu.edu