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Becoming a Teacher Educator: A Self-Study of Learning and Discovery as a Mentor Teacher

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BECOMING A TEACHER EDUCATOR:

A SELF-STUDY OF LEARNING AND DISCOVERY AS A MENTOR TEACHER

by

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Of a thesis submitted by

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This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Julie A. Castro in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

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ABSTRACT

BECOMING A TEACHER EDUCATOR:

A SELF-STUDY OF LEARNING AND DISCOVERY AS A MENTOR TEACHER

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The purpose of this study was to examine what I encountered as I moved from the role of a classroom teacher into the role of a mentor teacher of student teachers. As I traveled down the path of becoming a mentor, I learned about mentoring roles, discovered my vulnerabilities, and found a community of support. The improvements and understanding I gained through engaging in this study demonstrate that self-study can be beneficial for both mentor teachers and teacher educators to inform and increase knowledge in the field of mentoring.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Teacher educators play an important role in the development and growth of

student teachers (Goldsberry, 1998; Wang & Odell, 2002). Student teachers need a

mentor that can guide and instruct them in learning how to teach (Goldsberry, 1998;

Jonson, 2002; Wang & Odell, 2002). Every year, multiple classroom teachers are given

the new responsibility of mentoring student teachers (Bullough, 2005a; Goldsberry, 1998;

Gratch, 1998; Orland-Barak, 2005).

Statement of Problem

Although a teacher educator has been typically described as an experienced

teacher working at the college level instructing or supervising prospective teachers,

recently this definition has changed to include all educators who work with prospective

teachers (Bullough, 2005a). Researchers have found that educators discover instructing

teachers is quite different from working with children; it requires a shift in their thinking

and a change of identity as an educator (Bullough, 2005a; Goldsberry, 1998; Gratch,

1998). This shift from being solely a classroom teacher to being a teacher educator is a

phenomenon that lacks description in teacher education literature. Orland-Barak (2005)

explains that teacher educators need to know more about, "the nature of the passage from

teaching to mentoring" (p. 365).

To uncover more about the passage from teaching to mentoring, educators can

look at the shift classroom teachers make in their work as they become mentors of new

teachers. A teacher who works with student teachers, an individual in his or her final

semester of teacher training who is engaging in practice teaching, or other preservice

teacher is given the title of mentor teacher by the university that assigns the student

teachers. A mentor teacher is a guide that takes time to reflect with the student teacher

and give feedback to help the student teacher grow (Gold, 1996; Goldsberry, 1998).

Mentor teachers also develop a relationship of trust and communication between

themselves and their student teachers (Gratch, 1998; Stanulis & Russell, 2000). In

contrast, not all teachers who work with student teachers are considered mentors. The

term cooperating teacher has been used for many years to describe teachers working with

student teachers. A cooperating teacher is a classroom teacher assigned to work with a

student teacher, but generally such teachers only provide a space for the student teacher

to practice teaching (Koerner, 1992). Too often student teachers are assigned a teacher

that operates as a cooperating teacher instead of as a mentor teacher; therefore student

teachers do not receive the support they need.

Many teacher educators desire an expansion of the role of cooperating teacher to

one that would be characterized as a mentor teacher (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Stanulis &

Russell, 2000). A mentor is different from a cooperating teacher in that he or she will

work side-by-side with the student teacher to assure optimal growth. To help teachers

become mentors instead of cooperating teachers, many teachers are being given

preparation for their increased roles and responsibilities through support groups and

classes on learning to mentor (Gold, 1996). Some roles that mentors have include helping

beginning teachers explore teaching practices and discover underlying teaching principles

(Goldsberry, 1998; Jonson, 2002; Wang & Odell, 2002), while other responsibilities may

include being a source of emotional and psychological support (Glenn, 2006) or being the

novice's friend and supporter (Goldsberry, 1998). When the teacher views him or herself

as a mentor instead of a cooperating teacher he or she has begun to make the shift from teacher to teacher educator.

In order to understand the shift a teacher makes in becoming a teacher educator a mentor teacher's inside view of this experience needs to be described. In fact, little information is available about the mentor's view when guiding a student teacher (Koerner, 1992). Being able to read about an inside view of mentoring holds the potential to help beginning mentor teachers gain new images about what it means to mentor.

New mentor teachers may find it difficult to mentor because the only models they have are their past images and memories of how they were mentored (Hawkey, 1998), which may be inefficient or even harmful. For example, an image of a past mentor may include a teacher simply giving the student teacher a set of lessons to teach with no support on how to enact the lessons. These images do not give new mentors an helpful guide in which to follow, instead new mentors would benefit from being given an inside view into the process of becoming a mentor.

Many studies give teacher educators an outside view of what mentoring looks like (e.g., Bullough, 2005a; Glenn, 2006; Gratch, 1998; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Marsh, 2002; Orland-Barak, 2005; Stanulis & Russell, 2000). On the other hand, retrospective self-studies describe the shift from teaching to mentoring, but they do so by reflecting on remembered past experiences when they were a teacher, in comparison to their current experience as a teacher educator (e.g., Kitchen, 2005; Zeichner, 2005). Yet, few self-studies describe a classroom teacher studying his or her experience of becoming a mentor of student teachers. If teacher educators expect teachers to simply change from

cooperating teachers to mentor teachers, teachers and teacher educators need to know what is involved in making this shift.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine what I encountered as I moved from the role of a classroom teacher into the role of a mentor teacher of student teachers. This study provides an insider's view into the process of becoming a mentor. The reason for using a self-study was to examine my practices as I shifted from being a teacher to a mentor teacher and to understand what this repositioning looks like. The findings in this study hold the potential to help other teachers understand what they may encounter as they embark on the journey from being a teacher to a teacher educator as they become mentor teachers. In addition, the results of this study will influence my own practice as I mentor preservice teachers in the future. Furthermore, the results may aid teacher education researchers who want to better understand mentoring in order to gain new insights and be able to think in new ways about it, which can improve mentoring and our understanding of it.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following questions: How did I experience becoming a mentor of student teachers? What did this becoming look like? What informed my mentoring? What practices did I enact as a mentor?

Definition of Terms

Mentor Teacher

A mentor teacher is an experienced teacher who helps guide a new teacher and introduces them to the complexity of teaching (Goldsberry, 1998). This role includes

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working side-by-side with the beginning teacher and helping him or her with any

questions or problems he or she may have. A mentor teacher usually continues with his or

her role as a classroom teacher during the time that he or she is mentoring the beginning

teacher.

Teacher Educator

Typically a teacher educator is an experienced teacher working at the college

level teaching methods courses or supervising perspective and student teachers (Wilson,

2006). However, a mentor teacher helping a student teacher or beginning teacher in his or

her classroom can also be called a teacher educator because he or she is also assisting in

the growth of these new teachers (Bullough, 2005a). For the purposes of this paper, a

teacher educator will refer to any educator working with a new teacher.

Student Teaching

Student teaching generally takes place at the end of the course work for

preservice teachers. These prospective teachers have completed all of the required classes

at the college level and now focus full time on their experience in the classroom. The

student teacher is paired with an experienced teacher or mentor teacher who guides him

or her through the routines of the classroom, and eventually hands over the control to the

student teacher to teach all day (Emans, 1983).

Self-Study

"Self-study is the study of one's self, one's actions, one's ideas, as well as the 'not

self'" (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998, p. 236). Self-study allows individuals to examine

their private experiences as a vehicle to offer insight into public issues (Bullough &

Pinnegar, 2001). Many times self-study begins because teachers "experience a problem

or have a concern within the classroom that causes a moral dilemma" (Hamilton &

Pinnegar, 1998, p. 238). The problem or concern being studied is often named a living

contradiction (Whitehead, 1993).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following review of literature describes the history of student teaching. Then, it provides multiple perspectives on mentoring in education, including the roles a mentor takes, information on mentor preparation, and mentor and protégé relationships. Finally, it presents a discussion of self-study, including research on mentoring from the mentor's perspective.

History of Student Teaching

Beginning in the Middle Ages, student teaching was known as an apprenticeship. An apprenticeship was a lengthy process where men and women became teachers by observing and serving under a master teacher. During this time there were records of various groups providing teacher training or practice teaching experiences. The Jesuits were one group that organized the concept of teacher training and put new teachers under the supervision of master teachers, which gave the new teachers opportunities to practice teaching. In 1642 Frederick II began teacher training schools where students had to teach lessons while the instructor watched. Afterwards, the instructor would comment on how the lesson went. This practice of giving lessons in front of an instructor was common in parts of Europe during the second half of the seventeenth century. In 1685 Jean Baptiste de la Salle established the first laboratory school where teachers could practice teaching. Many others would follow his example and open laboratory schools to help prepare their teachers for teaching in Europe. Because of this he is know as "The Father of Student Teaching" (Johnson, 1968, p. 9).

In the United States during colonial times, student teaching began as it did in Europe with new teachers learning how to teach during an apprenticeship with an experienced teacher. It was not until 1823 that Reverend Samuel Hall established the first private normal school in Concord, Vermont. Normal schools were used for preparing students who wanted to become teachers. Following Reverend Samuel's example came a period of many years where student teachers learned how to teach in model or laboratory schools that were modeled after the concept of the normal school (Johnson, 1968).

In the early 1900's, normal schools evolved into state teachers colleges because the demand for teachers was steadily increasing (Johnson, 1968). Most of these colleges used an on-campus laboratory school or the local High School as their site for practice teaching. An important contribution to student teaching came in 1920 when The Association for Student Teaching was established. This association played an important role in the development of student teaching in the United States (Johnson, 1968). By the 1950s most colleges began to offer off-campus sites for student teaching because educators believed it provided the student teachers with more real-life experiences. As public schools became sites for student teaching, regular classroom teachers became *cooperating teachers* and were now responsible for preparing student teachers (Emans, 1983).

The influx of student teachers in the public schools led to the need for experienced teachers to take student teachers into their classrooms to assist these novice teachers in learning how to teach. These experienced teachers have become known as mentor teachers; they help guide the inexperienced student teacher to become an independent teacher (Gold, 1996). Most mentor teachers are chosen because they are

considered expert or master teachers. However, just because a teacher may be excellent in teaching children does not mean that he or she will be excellent in teaching or mentoring adults (Goldsberry, 1998). With the increase of mentor teachers in education, there has come an influx of research considering various perspectives and knowledge on mentoring. The following section will discuss these perspectives including the origin and beginnings of mentoring.

Perspectives on Mentoring

The origin of the word mentor is in Homer's poem, *The Odyssey*. In the poem Odysseus entrusts the care of his son, Telemachus, to a friend named Mentor. Mentor teaches and shapes the boy, and they form a strong relationship. Mentor's task was to give wisdom to Telemachus who acts as a protégé and learns from him. The relationship they form was one of mutual respect and rewarding hard work. The following example illustrates that mentoring is a well-built relationship between an older and younger individual where the mentor is responsible to assist in the development of the protégé (Gold, 1996). During the 1980s, mentoring became a focus in education because of the benefits mentoring was having in the business field, and the movement to professionalize teaching. Mentoring programs since then have been expanded throughout the educational field to help guide beginning teachers. Presently, there are varying mentoring programs and differing definitions of the roles of mentor teachers, which have led to some confusion concerning mentoring in education (Gold, 1996).

A great deal of research has been conducted on mentoring from an outsider's perspective, research that is not obtained from the mentor's perspective. Research about

mentoring from an outsider's perspective fall under three general categories: (a) roles and models of mentoring, (b) mentor preparation, and (c) mentor/protégé relationships.

Roles of a Mentor Teacher

Educators lack a universal definition of mentoring, therefore the roles and models assumed by mentors vary (Gold, 1996). Little (1990) illustrated this variety in her critical review of the research on mentoring. She found that mentor teachers have many roles including: "teacher, sponsor, role model, confidant, and more" (p. 299). The variety of roles a mentor may choose to enact can influence how a mentor teacher serves his or her protégé (Glenn, 2006; Gratch, 1998).

Teacher educators use a variety of ways to describe the role of a teacher mentor (Little, 1990). One role of a mentor is to act as a guide within a caring relationship (Stanulis & Russell, 2000). Some teacher educators suggest that a mentor acts as a facilitator rather than an authority figure while advising the beginning teacher to help him or her explore the teaching practice and discover underlying principles of teaching (Goldsberry, 1998; Jonson, 2002; Wang & Odell, 2002). Others have found that the mentor acts as the novice's friend and supporter (Goldsberry, 1998). These descriptions show educators that there is confusion in the defining of mentoring roles. This confusion also influences how mentor teachers' conceive their role.

Mentor teachers envision their roles in many different ways. For instance, many mentor teachers see mentoring as a source of emotional and psychological support (Glenn, 2006). On the other hand, some mentors explain their role as that of a coach, helping the beginning teacher with the curriculum and instruction rather than focusing on personal needs (Gasner, 1993, as cited in Gold, 1996). In the past many mentors saw their

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role as being one to dispense knowledge to a passive novice. Now numerous mentors see their role as one of co-creating knowledge with the novice (Whitehead & Fitzgerald, 2007). As illustrated above mentors perceive their roles in many ways and thus enact their mentoring differently.

Mentoring models can be used to explain how mentors choose to enact their role while they mentor. First, the mentor can take on the model of being responsive (Young, Bullough, Draper, Smith, & Erickson, 2005) or humanistic (Wang & Odell, 2002) with his or her novice. A responsive mentor responds to the questions his or her novice asks and wants to know about. The novice leads the discussion and decides what he or she wants to learn from the mentor. The responsive mentor supports and responds to the novice's needs (Young et. al., 2005). A humanistic mentor also listens to his or her novice while acting like a counselor, friend, and good listener who helps build the novice's confidence. Humanistic mentors are to offer personal, emotional, and psychological support and not to be judgmental (Wang & Odell, 2002). Thus, this model of mentoring can be summarized as a mentor interacting with a novice as a supporter and responsive listener.

Next, a mentor can follow a directive (Young et al., 2005) or situated apprentice model (Wang & Odell, 2002) of mentoring. A directive model includes a mentor that leads the discussion and gives instructions and knowledge to the novice. A directive mentor directly models how correct teaching should be done while the novice observes (Young et. al, 2005). The situated apprentice mentoring model consists of the mentor assisting the novice in learning the practical skills of teaching such as; sharing knowledge and resources, suggesting the answers to problems, and directly modeling lessons (Wang

& Odell, 2002). Therefore, the model of mentoring discussed here includes the mentor directly modeling and giving information to the novice.

Another model of mentoring is the interactive model (Young et al., 2005) or the critical constructivist model (Wang & Odell, 2002). When a mentor is interactive, both mentor and novice discuss mutual concerns and work together to solve these concerns. Often the mentor and novice will see each other as friends, as well as colleagues (Young et al., 2005). Mentors following the critical constructivist model are to be agents of change and help guide novice teachers to learn to question existing knowledge and collaborate together to learn new skills (Wang & Odell, 2002). This model includes the mentor and novice collaborating and inquiring together to gain new knowledge and ability in teaching.

Knowledge about Mentor Preparation

Many researchers believe that mentoring is not a skill that comes naturally to experienced teachers as they take on the new responsibility of mentoring, therefore preparation is essential (Thies-Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1987). Indeed, mentor teachers do not automatically develop mentoring practices that help overcome the main problems novices have in learning to teach (Wang & Odell, 2002). Wolfe (1992), in her chapter on designing preparation programs for mentors, argued that mentoring includes new responsibilities outside the ones teachers use to teach. She asserted that a complete preparation program should contain the following components: "(a) adult development, (b) interpersonal skills, (c) coaching and modeling, (d) non-evaluative styles of supervision, (e) needs of beginning teachers, and (f) the mentoring process" (pp. 104-105). Furthermore, Wolfe (1992) emphasized the need for support and encouragement

from other colleagues in mentor roles. Discussions from ongoing dialogue groups that include collaborative reflection on mentoring can help support mentors (Mullinix, 2002). In addition, mentor development can be supported through workshops addressing leadership styles, time management, how to balance teaching and mentoring responsibilities, and sharing current research that mentors can apply to their work (Mullinix, 2002).

Additionally, mentoring and supervision do not receive enough attention and resources. As a result, new mentors receive little preparation (Reiman & Theis-Sprinthall, 1998). Bullough (2005a), in his research on one teacher's experience of being and becoming a mentor, illustrated this phenomenon clearly by explaining that too often a teacher is assigned to be a mentor and only meets a few times on the college campus to discuss his or her role. He asserted that this lack of preparation does little to advance mentoring practices. He found as he studied a mentor that she not only needed to develop skills, she also needed to see herself as a mentor and separate her mentoring self from her teaching self. Thus, preparation would help teachers make the change from only teaching to also being a teacher educator. Recently, a few studies have begun to show the beneficial nature of mentor preparation. Giebelhaus and Bowman (2002) conducted a study with 29 student teachers and 29 mentor teachers. The mentor teachers were randomly assigned to two groups, one with preparation and one without. The researchers concluded that the mentor teachers prepared in the principles of mentoring had a more positive impact on preservice teacher development than those with no preparation. The prepared mentor teachers were also more effective in working with the preservice teachers. Furthermore, in a study completed by Stanulis and Russell (2000), the

researchers found that a support group for mentor teachers was beneficial because it led to discussions among mentors on questions they had. The researchers also discovered that teachers often go through a painful process as they learn about themselves as mentors. Therefore, mentors need to examine their beliefs and reflect along with their preservice teachers. These researchers believe that mentoring will be more beneficial when it is mutual and all participants work together as equals in sharing ideas and practices.

In contrast, not all teacher educators believe that mentors need to be trained or prepared (Wildman et al., 1992). Wildman and colleagues argued that formal mentor preparation programs are not always beneficial because mentor teachers should not be constrained by a preconceived role. Experienced teachers already have excellent helping strategies and can develop individual mentoring roles that meet the needs of their novices. Furthermore, Goldsberry (1998) emphasized that only a few studies have been conducted to show the benefits of preparing mentors. Additionally, in her review of research considering the mentor phenomenon, Little (1990) found that the early programs for training mentors spurred a lot of debate. Some educators felt that mentors needed support for their new role, while others felt that successful teachers would do fine on their own the first year. In the mid 1980's, when the state of California started a mentoring program, nearly forty percent of the districts gave no support to the mentors after they were assigned. Little (1990) also found that mentors were rarely chosen on the basis of their experience with mentoring in other areas before mentoring beginning teachers. New mentor teachers can learn a great deal from studying other mentor/protégé relationships, which may make the transfer to becoming a teacher educator easier.

Mentor and Protégé Relationships

Trust and communication are vital in mentoring student teachers (Stanulis & Russell, 2000). Stanulis and Russell studied two student teacher/mentor teacher pairs. The mentors and novices tried to make sense of their roles through communicating often and gaining mutual trust. The researchers also found that mentoring should include both participants in supporting, directing, and instructing at appropriate times, thus forming a strong relationship.

Mentor teachers often mentor in a style similar to the way they were mentored during their teacher training, which can influence their beliefs and the type of relationship they have with their student teachers (Hawkey, 1998). Hawkey, in a study of two mentors and student teachers, found that the mentors and student teachers had different views and were slightly mismatched, which helped both groups to stretch their beliefs and grow. As a result of confronting each other's beliefs and differences, respect increased, and the resulting mentoring relationship became stronger. The strong relationship built between the mentors and student teachers helped the student teachers learn about teaching.

In student teacher and mentor relationships, support for student teachers should be considerable (Beck, Freese, & Kosnik, 2004). Beck, Freese, and Kosnick (2004) found that the mentor teacher plays an especially important role in the student teacher's development. First, the mentor teacher should be friendly and offer support. Next, the mentor and student teacher should have a collaborative relationship where the mentor treats the student teacher as an equal. Finally, the mentor teacher needs to give enough insightful feedback to the student teacher.

Self-Study of Mentoring

Self-study is a methodology that allows teachers the opportunity to study their practice from their own point of view in order to understand and improve it (Samaras & Freese, 2006). Self-study is valuable in the field of mentoring because the process of becoming a mentor is a complicated one filled with issues of identity formation (Bullough, 2005a) and struggles while learning one's new responsibilities (Freese, 2006). Using self-study to learn about mentoring will give other teachers an inside view or a mentor's perspective into the transition from being a teacher to a teacher educator.

Likewise, utilizing self-study can result in increased benefits to the researcher as this methodology can lead him or her to become more skillful in mentoring (Austin & Senese, 2004). Self-study assists the researcher in enlarging his or her private understanding of self as a mentor and teacher educator (Kitchen, 2005). As understanding increases, the individual also becomes more cognizant of the actions he or she takes (Samaras & Freese, 2006). Furthermore, the researcher can become an improved teacher educator because he or she will be able to see where the challenges occur in his or her mentoring and work to find solutions and new ways to overcome these challenges (Freese, 2006; Hamilton & Pinnegar, 2000). By studying his or her professional experiences, and then making them public, an individual can become a better teacher educator (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Freese, 2006; Kitchen, 2005).

Research on Mentoring from the Mentor's Perspective

Researchers have started to conduct self-studies on their mentoring relationships with beginning or student teachers. However, these studies generally include the

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researcher as a college professor examining how he or she mentors his or her college students (e.g., Freese, 2006; Loughran & Berry, 2005; Marsh, 2002; Orland-Barak & Yinton, 2005). A few retrospective self-studies of educators describing their transition from classroom teacher, to a mentor teacher, to a teacher educator at the college level have also been conducted (Kitchen, 2005; Zeichner, 2005). However, these retrospective studies do not provide detail about the experience of being a mentor while still being a classroom teacher because they usually begin after the transition from public school based teacher educator to university based teacher educator has already been made. Few self-studies have been conducted by a classroom teacher in the schools on the transformation from being a teacher to a teacher educator as a mentor teacher.

Self-studies written from the mentor's perspective can be beneficial to the field of education by providing insights into mentoring. First, these studies can give ideas to educators on how to improve as mentors. Second, self-studies can give new mentor teachers valuable views into how they may experience being a mentor for the first time. Third, self-studies can inform new mentor teachers of difficulties they may encounter as they begin this new responsibility.

Self-studies show teachers how to improve their practice as mentors. Loughran and Berry (2005) described a way mentor teachers can improve in a collaborative self-study they conducted with their student teachers. These researchers learned the importance of explicitly modeling new concepts to their student teachers to help them learn. They found that real modeling included letting one's own pedagogical thoughts and actions be critiqued, as well as helping student teachers to actually see into their teacher educator's practice, not just observe the things their teacher educator does well. Also,

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Zeichner (2005) found in a self-study he conducted on his mentoring practices that modeling helped his student teachers to see why he followed certain practices, and how to apply these practices when they needed to make their own decisions during teaching. Furthermore, Loughran and Berry (2005) concluded in their self-study that teacher educators need to be constantly developing new insights into teaching about teaching to improve their mentoring practices.

Many self-studies give valuable insights to mentor teachers concerning how they may experience being a mentor for the first time. In a reflective self-study on his experience of moving from a teacher to mentor teacher to teacher educator, Kitchen (2005) described briefly his experience of learning to mentor. He found that he went from being a passive to an active mentor teacher as he gained more knowledge on mentoring. He reflected on how, during his first year mentoring, the student teacher would simply observe him and then teach lessons. After that year he changed and began treating his student teachers as colleagues by sharing experiences and knowledge with them in order to make learning to teach more meaningful. He considered himself a relational teacher educator who helped bridge practice with theory for the student teachers.

As novice mentors begin to work with preservice teachers they will encounter many new experiences and often feel like amateurs themselves. Orland-Barak and Yinton (2005), reporting on a self-study, found that when mentors acted as experts and reasoned as novices they had success because reasoning like a novice enabled the mentors to give the feedback and help the novices needed. Therefore, mentors need to learn to think through how to best help novices before stepping in. Orland-Barak (2005) also argues

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that mentor preparation programs should expose mentors to cases that are unknown to them as teachers so that they will be able to handle them when they become mentors.

Finally, self-studies can inform new mentor teachers of the difficulties they may encounter. Many mentor teachers may have limited preparation or support and feel at a loss when it comes to helping preservice teachers (Ziechner, 2005). Also, mentor teachers may find it difficult to be sensitive to the differing experiences and emotions preservice teachers have as they shift from being a student into being a teacher. Freese (2006) conducted a collaborative self-study including herself as a teacher educator and one of her preservice teachers. She was able to overcome the challenge of understanding the preservice teacher she was mentoring by learning about the preservice teacher's perspective through their collaborations. This helped to reframe her thinking about her role as a teacher educator and also understand the difficulties preservice teachers have. Freese, explained clearly in her narrative what teacher educators can do: "We need to explore our preservice teachers' thinking and 'give reason' to their actions, since the preservice teachers' knowledge or view of teaching may be quite different from the mentor's or supervisor's views of teaching and learning" (p.116). The challenge of differing views and beliefs is further illustrated through a challenging self-study of a researcher as a college professor mentoring two first year teachers (Marsh, 2002). Marsh had a good relationship with one teacher, and a strained relationship with the other. The strained relationship came about because the teacher educator and beginning teacher had different ideologies and beliefs. Marsh concluded that mentoring would be more successful when both parties try to work through their differing ideologies.

Another complicated issue that self-studies have helped bring to light is the formation of an additional identity by taking on the new role of mentoring. Orland-Barak (2005) found that inexperienced mentor teachers struggle to define their new identity as a mentor teacher. Trying to balance the differing roles of teaching and mentoring can be a difficult process as each can pull mentors in opposite directions (Bullough, 2005a). A new mentor will often want to stay true to being a teacher, but also support his or her student teacher. When learning how to mentor, inexperienced mentors have to learn a second language of teaching, which includes knowing what to say to the novice and when to say it (Orland-Barak, 2005). Orland-Barak (2005) concluded that learning to mentor is a "highly conscious and gradual process of reorganizing the communicative competencies that the novice mentor holds as a teacher to make sense of the new context of mentoring" (p. 356).

Although there is research regarding mentoring, few studies have explored how practicing teachers transition to the new role of being a mentor teacher. Orland-Barak (2005) believes that future research on mentoring needs to include study of, "the nature of the passage from teaching to mentoring" (p. 365). The passage or journey from teaching to mentoring is what this current self-study describes. This self-study provides readers an inside view into mentoring. Creating it helped me improve my practice as a mentor teacher. My hope is that this self-study will contribute to the research concerning mentoring. The purpose of this study was to explicitly describe my experience as I shifted from only being a teacher of children to also being a teacher of preservice teachers. The nature of self-study suggests a narrative format, therefore the remainder of this study will be written largely in a narrative way. I chose a narrative voice to provide the reader with

a picture into my process of becoming a teacher educator and answer the questions that guided my study: How did I experience becoming a mentor of student teachers? What did this becoming look like? What informed my mentoring? What practices did I enact as a mentor?

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Introduction

As my self-study report will be largely narrative, such studies do not easily

conform to traditional research formats. In narrative research, the participants and their

relationships and history are of critical importance. Therefore, in this thesis, my

introduction to the participants and the study's context include details and descriptions of

emotions to give the reader a complete picture of my perspective in the study. I will begin

by providing the background of my relationship with my student teacher, and the history

of what brought me to study mentoring. Then, I will continue with an explanation of

personal teaching metaphors and living contradictions and how I considered each in my

self-study. Next, I will explain my data sources and how I analyzed the data. Finally, I

will conclude with a discussion of the limitations of this self-study.

Context and Participants

Lao Tzu said, "A good traveler has no fixed plans, and is not intent on arriving"

(Lao Tzu Quotes, 2007). To me, excellent teacher mentoring is not a destination, but an

ongoing process. I know that I will always be able to improve my practice as a mentor

teacher; therefore I will never *arrive* in my knowledge of mentoring. Also, as a traveler

on a journey I can expect others to travel with me, in this case my student teacher. Each

new student teacher will bring with him or her new challenges and triumphs. To have no

fixed plans means that I am a flexible mentor teacher that will assess the student teacher's

needs and then decide what to work on. Choosing to explore my teaching metaphor of

traveler on a journey helped me to understand myself better as I conducted this self-study.

The day Sally left is still imprinted in my mind. It was late afternoon, and I was sitting in my classroom thinking about how strange it was to have my students all to myself again and to have my student teacher, Sally, gone. We had worked together since before the school year had started, and my sixth grade students and I had become accustomed to her presence. We were all going to miss her. Sally was a person that brought energy to any room she entered. She was not a tall person. In fact, she was fairly normal looking, of average height with brown hair and brown eyes. However, you could hear her passion and spirit when she spoke. She was humorous and still serious when she needed to be, and always took the time to get things done well. Sally loved to ask questions and discuss educational issues with me. I believe that is why we got along well, because I also love to learn and talk about my learning, consequently we were similar in that aspect. However, I am not as energetic as Sally, thus we were also dissimilar. As we worked together we brought great balance to the classroom.

I remember the day I was informed I would be getting a student teacher. The school facilitator in charge of mentoring the preservice teachers at my school came into my classroom to talk with me. She then surprised me by explaining that my student teacher would begin the next day. The next day! Usually, student teachers did not start their experience until the second week of school, as the university schedule was different from the public-school schedule. However, Sally had decided to be part of an early start program, which gave her the opportunity to start attending our school for the several days of professional development meetings and classroom set-up time. I remember thinking,

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"Oh no! I am not ready for her to come yet! My room still needs to be better organized (it was fine) and I need to make her a packet explaining the schedule and routines (this was not necessary as she would catch on)." I wanted to have everything perfect for her when she came which was impossible because she was coming the next day. I was also unsure what to do for her those first few days.

I recall feeling nervous about Sally beginning early but eventually being grateful for the early start we had because it gave me the rare opportunity to get to know her and begin to build a relationship together before the students came. Already, on the second day of collaborating together I wrote in my reflective journal about the rewards of mentoring that week, "[I have appreciated] getting to spend real quality time with my student teacher before school starts and form a positive, trusting relationship with her" (Reflective Journal, 8/17/07). Then I reflected how in the past, most student teachers sit in the back and observe that first day and have little time to talk with the mentor teacher. Having time to work with Sally before the students came allowed me to answer her questions while explaining how I structured the first week of school. Certainly, this unique start for Sally and me was beneficial throughout my process of becoming. Being able to build a good relationship early on gave me more time to explore who I was becoming as a mentor and offer more assistance to Sally because we communicated well and trusted one another.

I enjoyed working with Sally from the very beginning because Sally and I had an open, honest relationship that helped us to collaborate together well. We had similar backgrounds and common standards for teaching. In a thank-you card given to me at the end of our experience Sally wrote, "From the very first day-you made me feel

comfortable and that I had something to contribute" (10/03/07). This response illustrates the close, trusting relationship we had with one another.

However, having Sally begin her student teaching early made it so I was the only mentor in my building the entire time I mentored Sally. I often felt separated and alone as a mentor because there was no one else to talk with about my mentoring. Furthermore, our school facilitator who mentored the interns in our school was so busy helping the two interns that she rarely came to visit with me or watch Sally teach. Because of this I felt a great burden because I was the only one who gave Sally feedback besides her university supervisor who only came three times.

My school includes a small student body and close faculty that work together well. We are located in a Mountain West State with a city population of about 90,000 residents. Because thirty-eight percent of the students receive free or reduced lunch and the ELL population makes up about twenty percent of the students, we are designated a Title 1 school. Therefore, many parents come to the school unable to speak English and are often in need of a translator. Beside myself, only one other teacher in our school speaks Spanish. Needless to say, I am often asked to assist parents in the office, especially during the beginning of the school year.

In addition, my school participates in a partnership with the local university and consistently receives student teachers and novice teachers who decide to complete a one-year internship. Thus, the school, being connected to the university, has provided me with multiple opportunities to be assigned as a mentor teacher to work with preservice teachers. But only when I became Sally's mentor did I begin to realize that in my work

guiding other preservice teachers I was acting as their mentor, it was not just an assignment for me.

As I reflected back on my past experiences with mentoring I began with remembering my first year teaching as an intern teacher. As an intern teacher I was the full-time teacher in the classroom but only received half salary because I continued to receive college credit and did not yet have a teaching license. Because I was still a student at the university I was provided with access to multiple support systems. I had a university mentor who observed me and gave assistance. Also, all the interns in the district met for monthly meetings with the university supervisor to discuss our teaching and ask questions. In addition, I was assigned a mentor at my school in my grade level. It was expected that she would explain to me how to organize the grade-level curriculum and give assistance when needed.

The mentoring I received from the mentor at my school was limited and strained. Even though she taught the same grade level as I and had a great deal of knowledge, she had never mentored an intern before (Wildman et al., 1992). At the beginning of the year, she gave me all of her units for teaching science and social studies and told me that I could copy or use whatever I wanted. However, that was the end of the conversation and she did not offer her time to explain how to use her resources or why she used them. Basically, I was on my own that year.

During my internship I participated in a research study with the university in which I responded to weekly e-mail prompts. What I wrote for this research study about my mentoring relationships was very illuminating. I would often leave blanks about what my mentor did to help me that week because I could not identify anything that she had

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done. Or, I would answer the questions and tell about the Vice-Principal in the school because he mentored me more than my assigned mentor did. At the end of the school year I had to reply to a final e-mail. In one part I wrote, "Sometimes I would like to talk to her [my mentor] more to just get ideas and she likes to just tell me how to do things quickly" (Final reflection, 5/10/2003). What I expected to receive from my mentor and what she did were two different things.

I felt disappointed that I did not have a mentor I could trust and collaborate with that first year. In fact, if anything, the experience left me with the desire to become the opposite type of mentor when I would be given the chance to mentor in the future. Luckily, in my second year teaching I transferred schools and the other teacher on my grade level became a natural mentor to me. She was not assigned to be my mentor but chose to mentor me because she wanted to. We collaborated daily and she explained to me what she used to teach and why. Then she let me use what I wanted from her resources, but was not offended if I taught a lesson using other tools. Through her example, she showed me the kind of mentor I wanted to be.

Following my second year teaching I had three opportunities to mentor preservice teachers in their experience in the schools prior to student teaching. I made an effort to model but also let them be independent as they tried out new lessons in front of my students. When I had my first student teacher, before Sally, I realized that it took a great deal more time and effort than I thought to mentor the way I envisioned myself mentoring. Some methods worked but others did not. I found myself wondering what being a mentor actually meant. Thus, my desire to study my mentoring and learn more about the topic of mentoring began.

Even though I received little preparation on how to mentor student teachers I am considered a mentor teacher because I am assigned to mentor preservice teachers. As a result of this contradiction (Whitehead, 1993) between my perception of myself as not knowing how to mentor and the university labeling me a mentor, I became interested in what I already know and do as a mentor. I used personal teaching metaphors and the concept of living contradictions (Whitehead, 1993) to build additional background into my mentoring experience and guide my self-study.

Exploring Personal Teaching Metaphors

I chose to use metaphors in this self-study because metaphors help teachers explore who they are as educators (Bullough & Stokes, 1994). Metaphors may also be useful as tools for deliberate reflection about what it means to teach and also to critically examine educators' views of teaching (Carter, 1990). Identifying my teaching metaphor and examining it allowed me to dig deep into what I believe and who I am as a teacher. It also gave me knowledge about where I can change or improve myself. Bullough and Gitlin (2001) state, "The metaphors we use to make sense of our practice and of who we are as teachers have a profound effect on practice" (p. 64). I believe that beginning the process of self-study through the surfacing and explication of a metaphor not only guided my self-study but also had an effect on my mentoring practices.

Learning to Mentor as a Traveler on a Journey

The metaphor that best captured my beliefs and actions as a teacher was that of a traveler on a journey. I first used the metaphor for my teaching practice when I wrote a paper on my personal teaching metaphor for a master's class on classroom as culture and knowledge systems. Because this course occurred early in my program I was able to

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more fully develop my metaphor and relate it to mentoring. The metaphor of a traveler on a journey captured the fact that I see learning to mentor as a journey of becoming. As a traveler on a journey I am constantly on the move as a mentor teacher, I do not let myself stand still and thus end my own learning. I want to continually improve myself by going to classes and learning how to be a better teacher and therefore a better mentor teacher.

Using the metaphor of mentor teacher as a traveler on a journey with each preservice teacher I mentor helped me to make sense of what it looks like when becoming a mentor teacher (Bullough & Stokes, 1994). I become more of a mentor as I learn new things with each preservice teacher with whom I work. I believe that I travel with each new teacher as they become a teacher and I become a mentor. We work together to overcome each challenge that comes our way such as management problems or lesson pacing. As we reflect and collaborate on how to solve each problem we come up with solutions and thus succeed together. As travelers together, we add new knowledge to our backpacks, and discard the things that do not work (Whelan, 1999).

Living Contradiction

Along with the use of metaphors, discovering living contradictions bring to the surface many thoughts and beliefs about teaching (Whitehead, 1993). As I reflected on my main reasons for doing a self-study on my becoming a mentor, I uncovered many of my frustrations with how I experienced mentoring my first student teacher. My main challenge while mentoring her was an issue of identity. It was hard for me to let go of my class and let her take charge. I did not know how to be a teacher and mentor teacher at the same time. This was a contradiction to me. I struggled with knowing how to provide adequate support and let go of my class, but still be the teacher. Another contradiction

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mentioned earlier was my perception of myself as not knowing how to mentor and the University labeling me a mentor. This experience set the stage for what I reflected on when I studied myself as a mentor with Sally in this study. Using this experience helped me to know what I was specifically inquiring into (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007) as I conduct this self-study.

<div align="center">*Framework of Studying Myself*</div>

When I began this study I was in the middle of completing a master's degree in teacher education. I also was involved in a mathematics endorsement offered through our state. I had the opportunity to engage in multiple lesson studies and improve my mathematical knowledge through the courses I took in the endorsement program. Furthermore, a class for my master's degree was very beneficial for me. In this class the topics of mentoring and supervision were studied and discussed, which provided me with a great amount of useful information while I was engaged in mentoring Sally. All of these sources of knowledge had an influence on my mentoring and my experiences with Sally throughout this journey. I also decided to systematically collect data during this study so as to portray a complete picture of what occurred each week.

Data Sources

To understand my becoming, I utilized multiple data sources to capture what occurred as I studied myself. The study included three phases of data collection and analysis. Phase one included an inquiry into experiences that shaped my beliefs and actions as a mentor teacher. Phase two was the studying of my mentoring as I mentored. Phase three included analyzing the data and explaining the journey that I made with

mentoring. I also attended to trustworthiness in all three phases through the use of multiple data sets, and carefully documenting my research procedures.

During this self-study I actively collected and analyzed my data simultaneously, by including periodic reviews of my data throughout the study. This allowed me to be aware of the main themes that emerged as I conducted the study. Actively collecting and analyzing also helped guide my thinking as I realized where my struggles were and studied those. During data collection and analysis I addressed issues of trustworthiness through using a variety of data sources to ensure a more complete understanding of what I was studying. Also, as my study developed I continually attended to and carefully documented the procedures I was using, thus addressing the issue of trustworthiness and validity (Feldman, 2003; Freeman, 2007). I began my study by engaging in reflective writing.

Reflective writing. I used reflective writing to explain (a) how I was mentored as a beginning teacher, and (b) how I experienced mentoring my first student teacher. The importance of explaining the background and history of the particular self-study and why the researcher cares about the issue he or she is studying is vital in self-studies (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007; Loughran, 2007). I did this through the reflective writing I interwove throughout my story. Reflective writing helped explain my background as I elaborated on my journey to becoming a mentor teacher and why I was interested in the topic of mentoring. First, I reflected on my beginnings as a teacher and how I was mentored. I used data from a research study that I participated in on mentoring my first year teaching to analyze my experience of being mentored. Then I summarized my experiences the years following my first year until I began this current

self-study. Second, I reflected on my first experience of having a student teacher. Finally, I connected my experiences being mentored to how I was mentoring Sally to try to understand how my personal experiences effected how I mentored Sally. All of these reflections set the stage for my self-study on becoming a mentor teacher and helped illustrate what that becoming looked like.

Reflective notes. Reflective notes were written on a regular basis to collect data. These notes included reflections on what happened each day including; meetings for mentor teachers, planning sessions with the student teacher, debriefing sessions after a lesson observation, and other situations related to mentoring. Also, the notes helped me capture my feelings and impressions of what happened in the moment or later the same day. I wrote these notes on a daily basis at the end of each work-day and at times during the day so as not to forget an important thought. I regularly took fifteen minutes at the end of each day to write these notes in an open-ended format without the aid of prompts.

Artifacts. Artifacts, as written or visual documents, are one valuable source of data (Polkinghorne, 2005) . In this study I kept copies of the formative evaluation forms I completed when I observed my student teacher, along with the summative university evaluation forms. These artifacts were helpful because I could reflect on the comments I wrote in them. Other documents I kept were notes I wrote to my student teacher, lesson plans we discussed, and diagrams or other documents that helped give guidance. Artifacts allowed me to evaluate if my comments were including more depth of thought and if my becoming a mentor was illustrated in what I wrote in those documents.

Journaling. Journaling is a form of data collection used in many self-studies to increase knowledge of beliefs, values, and practices in teacher education (Billings &

Kowalski, 2006). I used journaling as a form of data collection and data analysis. I wrote in this journal every Friday. The open-ended journaling was divided into three parts (see Appendix A); the first being objective and describing what happened, the second being responsive and describing why it happened, and the third being a description of my feelings about the incident. I also analyzed what I wrote in my journals multiple times during the study to look for recurring themes and ideas.

First, I allowed my journaling to be open-ended. It was useful for the journaling to be open-ended because then I was not being directed to respond to any prompt and I could write whatever was most pressing upon my mind at the moment. Writing open-ended responses helped me to see what issues were affecting me most on my journey to becoming a mentor. Every Friday for thirty minutes I reflected on anything not mentioned in my reflective notes, or added to my notes from the week. This time was used to just write and get down everything that occurred during the week with mentoring, and to reflect on understandings that are emerging. I also wrote about remembering past experiences and how those experiences connected to what I was learning now.

Second, I took fifteen minutes every Friday to respond to specific, directed prompts in my journaling (see Appendix B). These prompts were important because they helped me to stay consistent in what I was writing about each week, thus allowing me to see how I developed as time went on. The questions that guided the reflective journal writing each week were as follows: (a) what have I learned about myself as a mentor? (b) what did I do well this week as a mentor? (c) what could I have done better? (d) what was the hardest part of mentoring this week? (e) what was the most rewarding?

Last, I analyzed what happened each week and tried to make sense of it. I looked for events that influenced my journey of becoming a mentor. I asked, "How am I experiencing that?" I used the constant comparison method (Johnson & Christensen, 2004) during the data analysis time of journaling, which helped me to be consistent in reviewing the data and developing a theory. This helped me to be able to pull out the most important data to use, and helped me to conclude what data I needed to collect more of.

I showed honesty and trustworthiness during journaling in this self-study by not leaving out the things that were hard to talk about; such as times when I felt I was not helping my student teacher improve, or when I made mistakes in how I mentored. I had a trusted colleague that had been a mentor teacher for many years, act as a critical friend and read over my journals and let me know if I was being honest enough (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). I met with my critical friend multiple times while I was mentoring my student teacher, to discuss my journey and share what I was experiencing. This trusted colleague helped me to see beyond and not become limited in my analysis (Freeman et al., 2007).

Student teacher interviews. Once a week I had another teacher, different from my critical friend, conduct a fifteen-minute interview with my student teacher. The purpose of this interview was for the student teacher to talk about the week and explain what she believed were the critical incidents or moments of learning due to my mentoring (see Appendix C for sample questions). The responses to these interviews were not read by myself until the student teacher had completed her experience and received her evaluation so as not to influence her grade (see Appendix D).

Data Analysis

I applied the constant comparison method (Johnson & Christensen, 2004) to continually analyze the data as I collected them. As I analyzed my data I looked for common themes that repeatedly appeared through the reflective notes, artifacts, and journaling. Collecting data at a variety of times allowed for data triangulation. I also identified critical incidents from my journal. Critical incidents were vital moments in the process of becoming. Critical incidents in this self-study were the turning points in my process of becoming a mentor, such as when I realized that I needed to change, improve, or continue to do what I was doing.

Data analysis was ongoing throughout the study. My weekly journaling was a form of data analysis as I reviewed my reflective notes and artifacts for the week to reflect on the most critical incidents. At the end of my study, as I read through the data multiple times, I found seven consistent themes: (a) feelings, (b) support, (c) roles, (d) relationships, (e) challenges, (f) victories, and (g) what informed my mentoring. Using the seven themes, I constructed a chart for each week of my study including all of the themes on one chart. Thus, I organized the data according to theme and time. Therefore, as I initially began to write up my results section, I told my story in chronological order from the beginning weeks to the end with a great deal of details disconnected from each other. Through reflection and multiple readings I realized that I needed to make connections and integrate my critical incidents to create a more compelling, thought-provoking story that readers could connect to. I began to think of larger themes that I could use under which multiple incidents would fit. I reviewed the most important stories in my journey to see how they could fit together and came to the three themes in my

results section. These themes were learning my role, feeling vulnerable, and finding a community.

I enhanced the trustworthiness of this study through the use of member checking by including my student teacher in the analysis of the data. She read drafts of the findings to let me know if I was portraying events correctly, or if I had left out anything important. In addition to member checks, each week my student teacher was interviewed about the critical incidents she experienced and brought in her account of what happened in the mentoring relationship (Freeman et al., 2007). I read and reread the data multiple times. I coded and organized my data until I had exhaustive categories for all of the relevant cases in the data. I was then able to make assertions for action and understanding in mentoring. I was able to show that this study is trustworthy by explaining how what I learned may affect future mentoring practices (Loughran, 2007)

Limitations

The limitations in this self-study of my becoming a mentor teacher were few. The length of this study was a limitation because I was only be able to study the process of my becoming a mentor for a few months, due to the nature of student teaching that is mandated by the state for teacher certification. Also, self-study has perceived limitations, but these limitations can also be seen as strengths. As using self-study provided deep insights into the experience of myself, it will not be applicable to all contexts. My personal context will not relate to all teachers who are making the shift to teacher educator through becoming a mentor teacher. However, studying only myself brings depth and richness to the process of becoming a teacher educator that only comes through self-study methodology.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The results answered each of the four research questions for this self-study: (a) how did I experience becoming a mentor of student teachers? (b) what did this becoming look like? (c) what informed my mentoring? and (d) what practices did I enact as a mentor? The first section of the results, finding my role, addresses questions one, two, and four. The second section, feeling vulnerable, addresses questions one and two. The third section, finding a community, addresses question three. What follows is a discussion of the results documenting my journey, illuminating the bumps in the road, and explaining how fellow travelers and other tools helped me along the way.

Learning my Role

Learning my role as a mentor took most of my journey to accomplish, as it was a complicated endeavor and there were many avenues to consider. When I began mentoring Sally I was often surprised with where our conversations went and what she wanted to focus on in our discussions. For example, our dialogue about classroom management strategies started the first week of school and continued throughout our time together. Sally talked with me after school that first week about how she noticed the way I handled setting routines and expectations with the students and how I managed them. That first week of school she even talked about management in her interview. She wrote,

> The first thing I thought about to speak of was the event when Ms. Castro had to
> take the kids back outside to line them up again because they came into the room
> really rowdy. That was significant for me because I saw what patience really
> looked like and what training your students really looked like. There was no

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frustration in her voice, she just realized that they did it completely wrong and

they needed to fix it and they learned much better than if she had would have

approached it in any other direction I think. (Student Teacher Interview, 9/04/07)

I did not plan to model this specifically for Sally, and it surprised me to see how much it

affected her. At that point I comprehended that she watched everything I did, therefore I

needed to remember to model best practices for her.

One day a few weeks into my journey, Sally taught the entire morning without me

in the classroom. At lunch I asked her how it went because I wanted to know if I could

help in any way. She responded to my question by explaining how a group of students

had been off task. I, thinking that she wanted a solution to this problem, decided to help

her by telling her how she should talk to that group of students after lunch and explain to

them what she expected about staying on task and showing respect. I thought that this

was my responsibility as a mentor, to help her solve her problems. As I continued to tell

her what to do I became aware that this was not what she needed to hear from me because

she said, "I don't want you to think the class was out of control because they weren't"

(Reflective Notes, 10/17/07). When she said that I realized I had incorrectly assumed that

she needed to hear advice when all she really needed was a listening ear. I then had to

assure her that I completely trusted her judgment and teaching decisions and knew that

she had good control of the class. Furthermore, I continued to convey to her how I always

wanted her to be honest with me so we could grow and learn together. During this period

of my becoming I recognized that I still had a lot to learn about mentoring and "[it] made

me realize that I just barely saved a situation where she could have lost her trust in me.

This made me reflect on how precarious the relationship is between the mentor and

protégé" (Reflective Notes, 10/17/07). After this experience I felt unsure as a mentor because I had not responded to the situation well.

As I reflected on my past experiences, I became conscious that I had acted in a way similar to my own mentor. I recalled a time when my mentor took a directive role with me when I was an intern teacher. In December of my intern year, my mentor pulled me into her room to talk with me. She said that she had been not doing enough to mentor me and that I needed to come to her more often with my questions. As I thought about this I realized that I did not know what I did not know, nor how to ask the right questions. Therefore, I rarely went to her with questions. I wanted her to come to me and share with me what she thought I should know. Then as our conversation continued, instead of collaborating with me about how to teach a particular subject or work on my teaching methods, she proceeded to tell me how to manage my class better, which was really about managing students the way she did. I did not agree with her because I thought the way she managed students was very harsh and too firm. As I listened to her I felt defensive as she criticized my style of management. I finally found my voice and told her that I was doing just fine and did not want to come across as a dictator in the classroom. She responded, "Well, if you cannot be strict enough maybe you should not be a teacher." Needless to say, this exchange did not strengthen my relationship with my mentor, and instead of going to her more often after that, I tried to become completely independent and use other resources to answer the questions I had about teaching. By analyzing this story, I was able to make sense of my role as a mentor to Sally. After that time I moved away from being a directive mentor to something that worked better for me.

I wanted to be an interactive and responsive mentor as I helped guide Sally through the first few weeks of teaching, but instead I acted in a directive way (Young et al., 2005), just as my mentor had during my intern year. I told Sally how I would solve her problem with the students that had been off task. Likewise, my mentor told me what to do my first year teaching, and I did not respond well to her method. I do not know why I decided to use the same method with Sally. I think that I was just so excited to have a chance to help her that I forgot to listen and think about my response before talking and telling her what to do.

The previous incident stands out to me because I felt I made a judgment call when really I should have just listened to Sally. Being a mentor put a huge responsibility on my shoulders, as I felt accountable for Sally's success and failures. If she was struggling in an area, I wanted to help her, but I had to realize that she needed to learn to help herself; she could not always rely on me. Often, because of the lack of preparation given to me in mentoring, I felt a sense of ambivalence. Should I give assistance now, or should I let Sally figure it out for herself? This was a constant struggle throughout the journey. I asked myself, "Should I provide Sally with an answer or let her work through it on her own?" "What did I believe a good mentor would do?" This was a challenge because I was only just beginning to form my own role and identity as a mentor. I also wanted to keep our relationship strong, so I had to be careful how I said things. I made an effort after this incident to be a better listener and not make the same move again.

As I mentored Sally, my own definition of mentoring emerged. I wanted to follow the image I had of mentoring, which was that a mentor collaborated and worked together with the mentee as a guide in a caring relationship (Young et al., 2005; Stanulis &

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Russell, 2000). On the other hand, my own mentor had taken a very distant approach, hardly interacting with me, and when she did talk to me she used a very directive approach, telling me how she would do something (Young et al., 2005). It seemed very easy and natural to tell someone how to do something, and I wanted to break away from that, especially after the management incident because I saw that it was not what Sally needed from me. In the classroom management situation she needed interaction and collaboration with me, but first and foremost, a listening ear. This incident helped me realize I could not choose just one role to enact because Sally needed me to act in multiple roles; sometimes modeling or directing, sometimes answering her questions or responding, and sometimes collaborating or interacting with her (Young et al., 2005). I soon learned that I had to adapt my role to what she needed that day.

Throughout the study, I most often took on the interactive mentoring model because Sally was responsive when I took on this role and seemed to benefit from it (Young et al., 2005). She talked in several of her interviews about our time spent in collaboration. Her words were,

> She has made me an integral part of her plans. I wasn't an inconvenience or just
> someone she needed to entertain, she included me in the instruction for everyday
> and told me what I could be doing. I was busy the whole day. She explained to me
> the reasons we were doing things so that I was better able to assist the kids, and
> treated me almost as if I was co-teaching with her not just a student teacher, so
> that anything I said was just as applicable as anything she said, as far as taking
> care of the kids needs, etc. (Student Teacher Interview, 9/24/07)

Yet, Sally also needed a directive approach at times. I acted as a directive mentor when giving her direct feedback on her teaching. I was also directive as I modeled a teaching method or management method that I thought she should see (Young et al., 2005). Sally responded in one interview,

> Right away she was giving me feedback on what was good and really paying attention to everything I could do and she was just more interested in me learning the things I needed to learn than she was in her being inconvenienced or not, so I really appreciated that. (Student Teaching Interview, 9/24/07)

As I struggled to find my role, I found our conversations continued to focus around classroom management. As the weeks progressed Sally continued to ask me questions about how to improve her management skills. I constantly looked for new ways to help her with this topic. I wanted to be able to enact the model of coach that I had read about in my mentoring class rather than telling her in a directive way how to solve her problems with management. I decided to use a tool found early on in my master's degree when I read an article about ways to tap into teacher thinking through using concept mapping (See Meijer, Zanting, & Verloop, 2002).

We began the activity by independently constructing a map or web expressing our knowledge of classroom management (See Appendix E). We then shared our maps and discussed them. Making a map helped us to organize our ideas and thoughts, and allowed us to engage in a deeper conversation than if I had lectured, or even engaged in a discussion without the maps.

Analysis of the maps revealed that because my audience was specifically Sally and not another colleague, I wrote down what I knew she needed to see. I went into more

detail in the areas that I thought would help her, such as using specific praise, reviewing the expectations regularly, and keeping the pacing up during her lessons. As I looked at Sally's concept map I saw that it had a great deal of information about classroom management in general, so it was also a good starting point for us to discuss what would work with our specific class of students.

Using a concept map gave me an avenue to discuss classroom management in a positive way using coaching, instead of telling Sally what to do in a directive way (Young et al., 2005). I was beginning to accomplish my desire to move from being a directive mentor to more of a coach. I appreciated how using the concept map aided me in coaching Sally to improved classroom management. I wrote, "What else was surprising was how easily using a tool such as a concept map helped her [Sally] and I engage in a conversation about best practices in classroom management" (Discussion Board, 9/25/07). Using a concept map was a simple way to help me make my thinking explicit. I explained, "I liked it because it helped me to get out a lot of my knowledge and thinking that I have a hard time expressing or remembering to express" (Reflective Notes, 9/25/07). Concept mapping also helped me to coach Sally instead of just telling her how to fix her problems. The concept map gave me a tool whereby we could co-create our knowledge about classroom management (Whitehead & Fitzgerald, 2007). I gained an additional effective mentoring tool that I could use in future situations. Sally also reflected on the concept mapping activity. She wrote:

> One day we sat down and talked about everything we could do with classroom management. And that is one area that I felt like I just barely have the kids under control by like threads. And it was really cool for me just to see everything I

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could do and everything I was doing. And I don't know if she did that because she

knew I was frustrated with my classroom management or if just because that is

something everyone struggles with. So I really appreciated that this week.

(Student Teacher Interview, 9/27/07)

Using a concept map helped me to act in the role of coach by showing instead of telling

Sally how to fix her problems. Thus, I was just beginning to find the path that best fit my

journey as I moved from being directive to coaching, and from teacher to mentor.

Feeling Vulnerable

As I traveled the path of becoming, there were stumbling blocks that brought

vulnerable feelings. In classroom management I felt confident in my abilities, but I often

felt vulnerable when I helped Sally teach science. I felt I lacked expertise and knowledge

in this content area. This lack of expertise led me to experience the *imposter phenomenon*

(Clance, 1985, as cited in Casey & Claunch, 2005), a feeling of, "Oh no, what if Sally

figures out that I do not really know what I am doing?" For the past five years, I have not

taught science, so this year I had to review the sixth grade core objectives. When Sally

chose to teach a science unit for a university requirement, she often came to me with

questions. I felt inadequate because I did not have many answers to give her. I was

expected to act as the more expert mentor yet I was unsure how to teach some of the

objectives in her science unit effectively. I had hoped that she would choose mathematics

because of my knowledge in that subject. As a result of my involvement in the

mathematics endorsement program I had many new ideas to share with her. Ultimately,

teaching science became a positive experience. As Sally brought lesson ideas to share

with me, I helped her modify them to fit the learning style of sixth grade students. I wrote:

> I am also learning from her [Sally], because she has found a new way to teach heat that I have not used before. For example, she is going to demonstrate convection using food coloring dye to show different layers of water when it is at different temperatures. That is one thing I love about mentoring, I love learning new things from my student teachers. (Reflective Notes, 8/28/07)

Even though it was not comfortable for me to feel at a loss as a mentor, being in this position was valuable to me because it forced me to, "seek new paradigms, new knowledge, and new understandings" (Casey & Claunch, 2005, p. 103). I also now have some science and technology lessons to use in the future with my class because of the time Sally and I spent constructing them (Whitehead & Fitzgerald, 2007).

A second type of vulnerability was feeling nervous when Sally was observed by her supervisor for the first time. Sally chose to teach a science lesson, and I wondered if the science lesson we had planned together would be what the supervisor expected to see. I was also nervous for how Sally would manage the class because I knew that she was worried about this. I wrote about my feelings later that day,

> It is funny to me how nervous I felt today for her. I never imagined that it would affect me so much, but I have invested a lot of time and effort to make sure she does well, so I was hoping that she would. It almost felt like I am the one being observed because the [supervisor] can measure her success partly on how well I am doing as a mentor. (Reflective Notes, 9/5/07)

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I was put in a vulnerable position because I might be judged as an incompetent mentor if Sally failed teaching her science lesson. The supervisor might wonder what I was teaching Sally. This type of vulnerability was consistent with mentors farther along in their development not connecting their success to the success of their protégé (Casey & Claunch, 2005). I reminded myself that I had done my best to prepare Sally and now it was up to her to present the lesson well. Soon after I felt the pressure leave my shoulders and instead felt positive anticipation. I anticipated the lesson being presented almost as much as if I was teaching it myself because I had spent so much time reviewing it with her. I became excited because this was Sally's chance to show the supervisor everything she had learned about teaching so far. Also, it helped me to see if my mentoring was making a difference in her growth and teaching ability. It allowed me to see if my role was assisting Sally or if I needed to re-evaluate my practice.

Feeling nervous was only one of the vulnerable emotions I experienced. The lack of time was stressful. In fact, analysis of the data identified lack of time as one of my greatest stumbling blocks. I like things to go perfectly, even when I know they cannot. An event occurred when Sally taught her first heat lesson for her science unit. Before she began the unit, we could not collaborate about the lesson because I was called to the office to translate for parents. It was hard for me to leave Sally because I wanted to see what she had planned for science that day and offer her my suggestions, but by the time I came back school had begun. Later that day as I observed the lesson on conductors and insulators several things alarmed me. Sally had done a good job of showing pictures and having the students write down definitions, but I could tell that many students did not understand the difference between the two concepts she was trying to teach. At this point

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I felt a great responsibility for the learning of my students. I was their teacher and the students were not understanding an important science concept that they needed to master. I decided that I needed to honestly talk with Sally about how we could fix this problem. While the students were making a list of conductors and insulators I asked Sally whether she thought of bringing in an example for the students to touch and see or if she was going to have them do an experiment to help the students understand the terms better. Fortunately, Sally was open to the suggestions I gave her that day. However, I still felt vulnerable as I had to tell Sally that I thought the lesson was not working and needed to be fixed. I would have preferred to help her adjust the lesson before she taught it.

Upon reflection, I found that I was not the only one responsible for Sally's success and failures as a teacher. Sally also had the responsibility to prepare well for the lessons she taught. My reflective journal reveals I was often too hard on myself as I mentored Sally. I pondered in my journal how I wanted to always show Sally where the students would have difficulties and questions so her lessons would be successful. However, this ideal was in contradiction to my belief of what mentoring really was, to act as a coach and collaborate together as Sally developed into a self-coach and became able to fix her own mistakes (Goldsberry, 1998; Jonson, 2002; Wang & Odell, 2002). If she became too dependent on me then she would never learn how to be a reflective, problem-solving teacher on her own. More time would have made me feel more satisfied in the amount of assistance I could give Sally, but I now realized that no amount of time would have ever been enough to teach her everything that I wanted to.

Science was not the only area in which I felt vulnerable. My feeling of inadequacy continued as I found it extremely difficult to juggle both mentoring and

teaching because I did not have enough time to do both. Once again, time became a considerable obstruction in the path, as I wanted to both teach and mentor flawlessly. At this point in the journey Sally was teaching more often and I was either modeling teaching techniques or giving daily feedback. But after giving feedback and collaborating with Sally after school, I found myself staying longer hours to plan for the next day. How was I supposed to give daily feedback and still plan my own lessons? I found it impossible. I was also worried about Sally's science unit and spent additional time I did not have to find resources for her. Often, a mentor is released from regular teaching or given a reduced load. That was not the case for me. In addition, from the very first week mentoring I had to leave Sally alone to attend meetings with the principal or provide Spanish translation for parents registering their children in the school. That reduced the time I might have used during the school day to mentor Sally or plan my own teaching. To compensate for this lack of time I found myself trying to plan my own lessons while talking from across the room with Sally about what she needed. Needless to say, this tactic was not very successful. I wrote,

> It is very difficult to be a good teacher and a good mentor at the same time because of the time it takes. Sometimes I will act as a mentor for Sally for a half hour and then realize that I still have to plan a lesson for tomorrow. (Reflective Journal, 9/24/07)

My reflective journal also reveled that I could not dedicate all of my energy to mentoring because my first responsibility was and is to be a teacher to my class of sixth graders. I wrote about this early into the mentoring journey.

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A few times I wanted to plan more with my student teacher but I could barely

keep up with what I needed to do to be a good teacher the first week for my class,

and that is my first responsibility to be the best teacher that I can. (Reflective

Journal, 9/24/07)

I often felt the contradiction between wanting to be the mentor I envisioned myself

becoming, and struggling to stay the teacher that I needed to be for my class the first

weeks of school (Bullough, 2005a). All of these feelings left me feeling vulnerable and

unsure if I was doing enough as a mentor.

My data showed that I felt multiple types of vulnerabilities as I became a mentor.

I experienced isolation, lack of time, feelings of being an imposter, and reflections on

myself to examine if I was being the mentor I wanted to become. I often felt that I needed

to do more as a mentor, help Sally more with science, give more assistance in classroom

management, or write more notes during observations. I had been given a huge

responsibility being assigned a mentor. Because of this feeling of responsibility I had the

desire to attend mentor preparation meetings to improve my mentoring but there was only

one meeting offered. I also wanted to talk to other mentors in my school and form an

informal mentor group (Wolfe, 1992), but I was the only teacher mentoring at the time.

Furthermore, I had a desire to discuss Sally's development in her teaching with her

university supervisor, but the supervisor was so busy I hardly had time to give her a quick

report on how things were going before she had to leave. All of these factors left me

feeling very isolated; "Sometimes I feel like I am on this journey alone. I wish I had a

network of friends or an ongoing support group of other mentors and teacher educators so

I could bounce ideas off them" (Reflective Notes, 9/17/07). Even with these impediments

in my path, I continued to develop as a teacher educator and became aware that I needed to find fellow travelers to be able to progress on my journey.

Finding a Community

In my desire to become a coach, I looked for additional support. I continued to learn from Sally, but it was not the same as traveling with a friend or a group of mentors. Luckily, I was able to find a community through a mentoring and supervision class I was enrolled in for my master's degree. Reading literature and books on mentoring, and especially the discussion board became a very beneficial informal support group during my journey.

The discussion board initially began as an assignment for the mentoring and supervision class. The discussion board was a blog-type tool where I could type and upload my thoughts, experiences, or questions on mentoring for the other classmates to read and respond to. The discussion board soon became a great tool for me. I explained,

> I have received invaluable responses to my postings that have caused me to reflect even more, and improve my mentoring practice. Also, I have received answers to my questions in a personal way, because I know that the people responding to my experiences have been mentors and have valuable insights to share with me. I have loved learning from the other people in the class.
> (Reflective Journal, 9/18/07)

It was beneficial to read what the other people in the class wrote back to me because it helped me to see that others had gone through the same challenges that I was now experiencing. I now had a personal, informal support group to listen to my stories or challenges and offer me advice or empathize with me (Mullinix, 2002; Wolfe, 1992).

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Some of these people were experienced school-based teacher educators and therefore had great insights for me. After reading the discussion board every week I felt energized because the responses there continued to push me to investigate my practices.

The first story I posted on the discussion board was the incident where I tried to tell Sally how to manage the class. I explained what happened in my posting and asked for suggestions on what I could have done differently. Many of the responses were similar as they explained the importance of listening and then asking the mentee if he or she wanted suggestions on how to fix the problem. One colleague explained that often all a mentee wants is a listening ear, not a lecture. These responses helped me to better understand what had happened that day and consider how I could respond differently in future conversations.

The discussion board helped me to get it right. One challenge that I was able to resolve was my inability to focus during my observations of Sally teaching. When I watched Sally teach I would find my mind wandering from what she was doing to how my students were behaving and I would often give several students a bad look if they were not paying attention to Sally. This was not the type of focus I wanted to have as I took notes on her lesson, but I was at a loss at what to do. I was conflicted between being a mentor and a teacher. I acted as a teacher as I watched for how my students behaved, but I was interested in entirely being a mentor and moving away from teaching. I tried to completely become a mentor as Sally and I met to set goals previous to her lessons, but they were not the focus of the narrative I wrote during observations. I desperately wrote about this challenge in my posting on the discussion board that week. The invaluable

responses back helped me to make changes to my practice that worked. One colleague responded,

> I have found it helpful to have the items I am looking for in an observation written in large, bold print at the top of my sheet. That way I am constantly reminded to focus in on and watch for those items. (Discussion Board, 9/23/07)

Another colleague reminded me about the importance of using the rubric from the university, "I think once you use the rubric instrument, you tend to focus on the teacher a little more because you understand the indicators and what you're looking for" (Discussion Board, 9/25/07). Because of these responses I chose to make the suggested changes to my mentoring the following week. My focus did improve in my observations and my ability to coach developed as I decided with Sally which goals from her rubric to work on. The goals we set together were the only teaching behaviors I looked for as I took notes. Indeed, participating in the discussion board informed my mentoring in many positive ways and helped me to find new ways to improve my mentoring.

Along with the discussion board, my mentoring class gave me another community in which to participate and find support. The discussions in the class informed my mentoring practice in many ways by causing me to reflect, allowing me to pose questions, and providing me with time to discuss with other teacher educators their thoughts on mentoring. I wrote about the class one afternoon,

> During my mentoring class we talked about "choice points" in a unit of study or a lesson. This made me think of my student teacher and how having her pick out the choice points in each of her lessons may help her with her pacing problems. It was an "Aha moment." (Reflective Journal, 9/21/07)

Using the choice points idea was helpful as Sally and I worked together to plan which science lessons had to be taught before she finished her experience with me. We were able to eliminate activities that may have been fun, but would not teach the concepts as well. Working together to choose the choice points helped Sally to improve her pacing because the lesson were more focused on the important concepts of heat, light, and sound for her unit.

The mentoring class allowed me to discuss my feelings and vulnerabilities and better understand the mentoring roles I enacted. Having a class where I could pose questions about mentoring was a great benefit to me. As I made realizations during class it helped me feel like more of a teacher educator and less vulnerable because I was learning skills that I could use when mentoring Sally the next day. Because of this I gained confidence in my ability to mentor. The class compelled me to read and think more about mentoring research on a weekly basis. Thus, the mentoring class was a great advantage to me. The colleagues in my class became a community of friends to me as I developed and grew as a teacher educator.

A new challenge came as I realized that it was necessary to leave behind the teacher role and focus solely on mentoring. This required a shift in my place in the classroom community. Becoming *just* a mentor was not easy for me; it was another one of my vulnerabilities. Teachers are often the "stars of their own show" and the students depend only on them. Now I was losing that part of my identity as I let Sally become the lead teacher (Orland-Barak, 2005). I missed the students coming to me with questions and needs. Now they were going to Sally and learning from her. Sally was now in the teacher role and I was not. It was difficult for me to leave my class in the hands of my

student teacher even when I trusted her and knew she would do well. I had to understand that the only way I could now touch the lives of my students was through the mentoring I gave to Sally.

Because of the trust we had formed in my mentoring class I brought up the topic of becoming *just* a mentor that I was struggling with. I trusted my friends in this class to give me honest feedback and multiple viewpoints. We discussed this concept and how as new mentors or teacher educators one may have to tie his or her hands behind the back and not touch the kids. I reflected on this notion in my journal that day,

> This conversation affected me because that is what I have to do. I have to glue myself to my chair in the back of the room to not butt into the lesson, or get up and help kids when really I am just annoying the student teacher. It is very hard for me to leave my teacher role to the side while my student teacher takes over this role for a while. (Reflective Notes, 10/5/07)

I recorded this struggle in my reflective notes. The problem began as I found I could not sit still and watch everything that was going on around me as I observed Sally teach. I decided to go around the room and offer assistance to students when they began to work independently. However, this just confused the students because they did not know whether to come to Sally or me with their questions. After finding that the students got out of their seats to talk to me, I decided to just leave the classroom. That day I took a student with me to tutor one-on-one so that I would not be tempted to go back and try to take over the class again.

It was hard for me to leave the classroom in Sally's control because I felt that I was contradicting myself about what a mentor should be doing, always offering

assistance. However, the best assistance I could offer in that point in the experience was to leave for short periods of time so Sally could be the lead teacher. Then we would debrief during lunch and after school about how her day went. Yet I missed being in the class for small parts of the day or presenting the lessons myself. I truly felt lost, losing a role that I had been doing for years, being a teacher.

I often talked with the colleagues in my class about the frustrations I encountered with only being a mentor. I told them how many other faculty members in the school felt that I had extra time on my hands to help with other projects. Besides translating Spanish for parents, I was also asked to go to meetings before or after school and during lunch. Faculty would also expect me to be able to help with extra projects. Little did they know that I needed my lunch periods and before and after school to give Sally feedback on her teaching, and collaborate with her about her lessons. I did not check out once I began to only mentor. I felt like things became even busier as Sally came to me with additional questions because she was teaching for the entire day for the first time. My classmates were able to sympathize with me and give me confidence that I could get everything done that I needed to.

Even with the support from colleagues in my class, I still made mistakes. I found it difficult not to take over when Sally and I were sharing the teaching day. One afternoon was especially confusing because Sally had to leave an hour early to go to a student teacher meeting. Before she left, I started to take over the class when I should have let her continue teaching, and when the bell rang for afternoon recess I dismissed the students. When Sally left to go to her meeting I remembered that she had wanted to talk to the class during the beginning of recess because of their behavior that morning. She was

going to keep the class in for a few minutes. I had ruined her planned consequence for bad behavior. I reflected about this incident in my journal for the week,

> I felt so bad after I realized what I had done. I talked to her [Sally] about it the next day and apologized. She acted like it was fine and she talked to the class about it before recess when she came back. Things like this happen when I try to take over and I had no reason to. The rest of the week I tried really hard not to interrupt her teaching and do things that she should be doing. (Reflective Journal, 9/14/07)

I was not happy with what happened when I did not ignore the urge to get up and take over. I was a little shocked that Sally was not more frustrated with me, but she never showed it. I learned my lesson after that day, and constantly reminded myself that Sally was the teacher now, and the only way she would get better at teaching was if I let her do it all and not take over. It was a hard lesson for me to learn.

Having a community led me to become more of a coach and encouraged me to seek out literature and books on coaching. Because of reading the literature on mentoring I found the concept mapping tool that was a great instrument for coaching. In addition, I found a book that aided me in enacting a coaching role called *Cognitive Coaching* (Costa & Garmston, 1994), which was given to me by a friend in my school. I found myself referring to this book as I traveled from being a directive mentor to a coaching mentor. As we talked in class about holding pre and post conferences with the protégé I made a goal to improve the conferences Sally and I had. I found that in *Cognitive Coaching* there was a list of inquiry-based questions I could employ in our conferences. After reviewing the book I wrote,

Page 32 in this book includes a list of inquiry-based questions. I believe that

these questions hold the potential to help our conferencing conversations to be

deeper and more meaningful. I know that they have helped me to think about how

I talk with my student teacher and if I am consulting too much or really trying to

coach, like this book promotes. (Reflective Notes, 9/18/07)

I found these questions and others from the book to be helpful as I led deeper

conversations with Sally and helped her to see the results of her teaching decisions and

how to continue improving her teaching. One question I posed to Sally during a post

conference was, "Did the students achieve the objective that you wanted them to

achieve?" (Reflective Notes, 10/3/07). Asking this question and others during the post-

conference helped us to stay focused and allowed Sally to reflect on the student learning.

I also saw a change in myself as I began to feel more confident in the role of coach and

questioner and became more efficient in posing the best questions for each conference.

Literature and books continued to teach me and extend my community. I was

reading in a book when I had an "aha" moment. I learned that I did not always have to

lead the discussions or talk first during post conferences with a protégé; coaching was

more about guiding and questioning. I tried this during my next conference with Sally,

and I wrote what happened on the discussion board, so I could share my learning with my

fellow travelers. I recounted this experience in my journal,

During the post-conference I resisted the urge to start the conversation and tell

Sally everything I saw and thought. Instead I told Sally that I wanted her to go

first so I could hear what she thought about the lesson. I am so glad I did this

because Sally ended up bringing up things that I would not have thought to talk

about . . . [I] saw her reflections as being right on and valuable, and if I had

talked first, she might have been intimidated or not thought they were important.

(Reflective Journal, 9/21/07)

The responses I received to that posting were helpful as my colleagues wrote about how they led their conferences with a protégé. Reading these responses once again gave me additional insights into my role as a mentor and coach. Because of the fellow travelers that supported me throughout the journey, I was able to make meaningful changes that helped me move even further to a coaching role, manage my vulnerabilities and stumbling blocks, and continue down the most constructive path that allowed me to become the mentor I envisioned myself becoming.

Summary

The last day Sally and I worked together was difficult for me. I did not want the journey to end and reflected that day on how I was, "just starting to get the hang of things" (Reflective Notes, 10/3/07). As I finally sat back after school was over, I allowed myself to write down my feelings. I wrote how at the beginning of the experience it was hard for me to share my class with Sally, and now I was having a hard time taking it back without having Sally to travel with. I candidly expressed my thoughts that last day,

I feel like a part of me is being taken away. Sally and I have become such a

team that I know for a while I am going to look around and expect her to be there.

I love mentoring because of the opportunity it gives me to collaborate with a

colleague about teaching and student learning. I am definitely going to miss those

daily conversations. This journey has been exciting, tiring, intellectually

engaging, and even humorous at times. I can honestly say that Sally and I have

laughed together, struggled together, and learned together as we have

traveled on this journey. At times there were bumps in the road and other times

peaks of triumph. Overall, I feel like it was truly a collaborative effort. (Reflective

Notes, 10/3/07)

Eight weeks is not long enough to become a teacher and it was definitely not long

enough for me to understand myself as a mentor. I wanted additional time to travel on my

journey with Sally to assist her more, and to help me learn more about mentoring and

becoming a teacher educator. First, I wish that I had been given more time to work with

Sally. Mentoring a student teacher for only eight weeks limited our time to engage in

reflective conversations about her teaching. Also, Sally was just beginning to find her

rhythm and pacing while teaching in my class when she had to leave. Additionally, I was

continually learning each day how to strengthen our relationship of trust and open

communication (Gratch, 1998; Stanulis & Russell, 2000) and would have liked more time

to further improve our communication. I saw that as our communication evolved and

improved so did our conferences. Second, more time would have given me deeper

insights into what becoming a teacher educator really entailed and how to enact a

mentoring role that enabled Sally to improve (Wang & Odell, 2002; Young et al., 2005).

By the last few weeks I was only beginning to evolve from constantly feeling vulnerable

to feeling confident that I was getting it right (Bullough, 2005a; Bullough, 2005b;

Bullough & Draper, 2004; Orland-Barak; 2005).

Throughout this journey it took me time to find my role, understand my feelings

of vulnerability, and learn from the community I found myself in. Each of these aspects

helped me to become a better mentor. As I examined and tried out multiple roles I found

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that all roles were necessary, but for me coaching helped me to feel the most like a

mentor. When I considered my vulnerabilities and feelings, I found I developed my

ability to mentor more fully. Once I found that I in fact did have a community of support

I realized that I did not have to wrestle with my questions about mentoring alone. As I

continue to accept mentoring assignments in the future I find that I am now traveling

down a path in the right direction and am equipped with the tools I need to mentor

successfully and overcome the challenges that will surely come with each new protégé.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Engaging in this self-study helped me to improve my mentoring and understand my role as a mentor (Freese, 2006; Hamilton & Pinnegar, 2000; Samaras & Freese, 2006). In addition, employing self-study helped me to become a more reflective mentor and to comprehend what it meant to be a teacher educator. The process was not always easy, and many times I felt alone in my inquiry. I eventually had to accept that learning to teach teachers is often an unarticulated private struggle (Loughran & Berry, 2005).

My desire has been that this self-study might illuminate some of the concerns other new mentors may face when they begin to mentor a student teacher (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). As I considered my journey with Sally I discovered new insights that I will take with me into future mentoring assignments. I believe others can learn and benefit from my story as well. I also found that using a self-study helped to answer the questions in my study by bringing to light what the experience of becoming a mentor looked like, showing what informed my mentoring, and illuminating the practices I enacted.

Through reflection on my most critical incidents when becoming a mentor I found that I had two types of stories, competing and conflicting stories. In a competing story the participant tries to enact two roles, both of which are important, that each take a great deal of effort. In a conflicting story, the participant is trying to enact two very different roles, which in turn brings tension. Using self-study methodology helped me to confront the challenges from my competing and conflicting stories, which in turn brought growth and learning.

Competing and Conflicting Stories

Being a mentor teacher and classroom teacher simultaneously brought about a competing story. It was difficult for me to understand the competing roles teaching and mentoring. As I worked to meet the needs of my students and student teacher, they both competed for my time and attention. As told in the results section, I had to plan lessons for my students and assist my student teacher as she planned her lessons. It was not easy for me to act in both roles, but I did my best. I was able to confront this challenge and make the competing stories work side by side. Teacher educators and mentor teachers can learn from this story that new mentors will need to learn to balance both roles to be successful as a mentor teacher.

While I tried to balance the competing roles of teaching and mentoring, I found support in my mentoring class and the discussion board to be vital to my success. They both helped me to find my way on the path as I traveled down it. The class helped me to review and discuss what I had been reading and gain additional insights to what I could be doing as a mentor. It also helped answer many of my questions I had about how to lead conferences and stay focused during observations. The discussion board was a tool that gave me timely feedback on my critical stories and challenges I shared. I made some of my greatest gains by reading and reflecting on how my colleagues responded to my postings. For me, having access to a close group of colleagues that I trusted was essential to be able to share difficult challenges and weaknesses publicly. When a trusted group has formed, the use of a tool, similar to the discussion board, could bring great benefits to new mentors. Perhaps researchers should look into the benefits of discussion boards and

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whether mentors feel support through the use of this tool. Researchers might study whether the use of discussion boards could facilitate improved mentoring.

When Sally began teaching the entire day, I had a conflicting story to confront, being only a mentor. Being just a mentor made me feel vulnerable because I still wanted what was best for my students and would often interfere with Sally's lessons or intentions. It was when I ruined the recess consequence when Sally had to go to her student teaching meeting, that I realized I needed to stop trying to be the teacher and only be the mentor. It was a challenge, but I learned to teach my students through mentoring and coaching Sally. I decided to step firmly on a particular path, just a mentor, unsure of where it would lead me or even how to walk it. This was a sizeable obstacle for me and certainly is for other new mentors (Orland-Barak, 2005). It was a challenging conflict letting go of my class, which led me to feel vulnerable. It felt unusual for me to not be in front of my class teaching. I was now on a path of complete mentoring, yet I still needed guidance. I found myself looking for the community of support that I eventually found to be so vital to my success. New mentors can learn from and connect to my story as they too confront the challenge of only mentoring. Teacher educators that prepare mentors or study mentoring should focus more attention on the phenomenon of becoming just a mentor and how to support mentors as they make this difficult adjustment when becoming a mentor for the first time.

As I committed myself to being only a mentor, I had a new challenge, enacting a mentoring role when there was no clear role definition offered to me. Enacting an effective role is a challenge for most mentors (Wang & Odell, 2002). I struggled to find my role during most of my journey with Sally. Often, I found myself investigating a side

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path in my travels, or new mentoring role, to see if it might work with sally. Also, mentoring Sally required that I performed multiple roles (Young et al., 2005), not just employ one role. Perhaps if teacher educators that study mentoring dedicated more time to exploring and defining mentoring roles together with beginning mentors, then new mentors might be able to better realize their task.

While I learned about mentoring roles I experienced a conflicting story that self-study helped me to confront. This story represents a dark section of my path, when I was confused and had to pause while I confronted where I was really headed with the role I was enacting. In this story I told Sally how to fix her classroom management problems and acted in the same role my mentor had acted with me. This was a conflict for me because I wanted to be a different type of mentor than my mentor had been, yet I had still acted in a similar, directive role. This was an immense conflict for me, and helped me realize that I needed to make a change from taking a directive role most of the time, to only being directive when necessary. It was only through confronting my action that day with Sally and connecting it to my past experiences being mentored, that I was able to realize my role was not effective. I then made a change and started down a new path. Also, the literature about mentoring roles and my community of support helped me to see that I could act in a different role. They helped me realize that it took time and was often challenging for mentors to enact a successful role. Those who support mentors need to assist them in confronting their enacted roles or stories before those roles can be rethought or the stories rewritten.

As I rethought my role as a mentor I had to confront two competing roles, being directive and coaching. Both roles were necessary, but I found myself moving from being

a directive mentor to a coaching mentor as I learned more about mentoring roles. This often entailed taking the more difficult path as I had to learn and read literature about coaching and inquiry-based questions, but it also meant improved mentoring for Sally. Educators have found that the roles a mentor chooses to enact can influence how a mentor teacher serves his or her protégé (Glenn, 2006; Gratch, 1998). If teacher educators are to aid mentors in becoming teacher educators themselves, perhaps more assistance should given to mentors in learning coaching and critical questioning skills (Casey & Claunch, 2005; Wang & Odell, 2002; Wolfe, 1992). If this assistance is not offered, new mentors may continue to mentor just as they were mentored.

Because I learned more about mentoring roles and how I could be doing even more to assist Sally, I often experienced feelings of vulnerability or uneasiness as I considered my actions and the path I was traveling on (Bullough, 2005b; Bullough & Draper, 2004). Understanding one's feelings as a mentor can be a daunting task (Bullough & Draper, 2004). While mentoring Sally I often felt nervous, stressed, and vulnerable. Engaging in a self-study helped me to confront these feelings, to find what was causing them, and to consider what I could do to manage my vulnerabilities. Often mentors are not given the tools or time to evaluate their discouraging feelings (Bullough & Draper, 2004). In fact, they may not even be aware that these feelings are part of their mentoring experiences. Feelings of vulnerability often come when mentors experience challenges in mentoring. Many mentors will experience the challenges I had such as limited time and the desire to maintain a strong relationship amid the need to be honest with the protégé when lessons are not going right (Hawkey, 1998; Stanulis & Russell, 2000).

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When I found a community, or fellow travelers on my path that helped me examine my challenges, I was better able to confront my feelings. I found that support was vital for me (Wolfe, 1992). I encountered many new experiences where I often felt like an amateur (Orland-Barak & Yinton, 2005). I continually needed to have the companionship of more experienced others as I traveled. Some fellow mentors may have traveled much longer than others and can offer support and encouragement when novice mentors find themselves surrounded by new and unknown terrain. Perhaps as multiple teachers in different levels of becoming study their becoming and make connections with other teachers, a community of learners and knowers will form and mentoring will improve. While it may not be reasonable to expect all mentors to engage in self-study to help them make sense of and manage their vulnerabilities, using other self-reflective tools like journals may be useful. Furthermore, beginning mentors should be equipped with tools to help them in their travels as they begin to mentor, such as literature on mentoring and/or preparation courses to assist them with understanding what being a mentor entails. Perhaps if mentors regularly kept reflective journals and read literature on mentoring they would gain useful tools to help them better understand their feelings.

Conclusion

Although there continues to be multiple teacher educators and researchers studying mentoring, self-study of mentoring can be a productive avenue to gain new information and innovative insights into mentoring. Using self-study methods provides deep insights into the feelings and experiences of mentor teachers that are not easily achieved in other types of research. While I studied my journey of becoming, I was able to confront my challenges and study how to resolve those challenges. Because of the time

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I spent reflecting and thinking about my mentoring I was able to accomplish and reach new heights that I would not have achieved otherwise. I know that I am a better, more thoughtful mentor and teacher educator because of the process I went through during this self-study. If educators desire to learn more about the mentors themselves and how to help them improve then self-study is the greatest way to accomplish this goal.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Triple Entry Form

What happened?	Why did it happen?	How do I feel about what happened?

Appendix B

Questions to Guide Reflective Journal

1. What have I learned about myself as a mentor?

2. What did I do well this week as a mentor?

3. What could I have done better?

4. What was the hardest part of mentoring this week?

5. What was the most rewarding?

Appendix C

Sample Interview Questions or Prompts

1) Please describe the important or critical incidents that happened this week with

relation to being mentored. What happened? Why did it happen? How did you

feel about it?

2) What did your mentor do? What role did your mentor take? Why do you think she did

what she did?

Appendix D

Brigham Young University
Consent to Act as a Research Subject: Student Teacher
<u>Becoming a teacher educator: A self-study of learning and discovery as a mentor teacher</u>

<u>Introduction:</u> You are being asked to participate in a research study. You have been chosen for this study because I have been assigned to be your mentor teacher. This study is designed to examine the experience of myself becoming a mentor of a student teacher. This research will be conducted by Julie Castro, Public School Teacher and Master's Degree student and will be supervised by Roni Jo Draper, Associate Professor in Teacher Education in the David O. McKay School of Education.

<u>Procedure:</u> This research includes the following activities:
  1. You will be interviewed for fifteen minutes each week. During this time you will explain the critical or important incidents of the week.
  2. You will share artifacts such as lesson plans or notes written during mentor teacher/student teacher planning sessions, which will be photocopied.
  3. Your mentor teacher will be using personal reflective notes to illustrate what she is learning therefore notes will be created after mentor conferences to capture a description of the interactions.
Data collection from the study will only be used for research purposes. The procedures you will engage in are primarily activities that you will naturally do as you student teach, such as reflecting on you're learning and participating in mentoring conferences with your mentor teacher.

<u>Risks and Discomforts:</u> The risks in this study will be minimal. You may feel slight discomfort about sharing your feelings. However, the data will only be used for research purposes. Only pseudonyms will be used in reports of the research. Your responses to the interviews will not be read until after grades are posted as not to affect your grade.

<u>Benefits:</u> There are only limited direct benefits to you for participating in this study. You may, however, appreciate the extra and improved mentoring provided as a result of this research. The data collected in this study may provide insight into the thinking of mentor teachers and could lead to further research, which could bring about improvement in mentoring student teachers in the field of education.

<u>Confidentiality:</u> Strict confidentiality will be maintained when reporting findings from this study. No individual identifying information will be disclosed. When direct quotes are used in reports and publications pseudonyms will be used. Where possible, all identifying references will be removed and replaced by pseudonyms. All data collected in this research study will be stored in a secure, locked area, and access will only be given to individuals associated with this study.

page 1 of 2 _____ initials

Compensation: You will not be compensated for your participation in this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate and the right to withdraw later without any adverse effect on your grade of future relations with Brigham Young University.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the research, you may contact Julie Castro at (801) 372-5156, reyeslaw22@yahoo.com, or Dr. Roni Jo Draper at 422-4960, roni_jo_draper@byu.edu.

Questions about Rights as a Research Participant: If you have questions you do not feel comfortable asking the researcher, you may contact Dr. Renea Beckstrand, Chair of the Institutional Review Board, 422 SWKT, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602; phone (801) 422-3873, renea_beckstrand@byu.edu.

_____   _____
Research Participant   Date

APPENDIX E

Concept Mapping Documents

Classroom Management (mind map)

Sally — mentee

Rewards
- Table Points
- Individual Pts
- "gold stars"
- recess/pe
- early releases

negative reinforcement
- insult
- highlight bad
- Yelling

Punishments
- lose recess
- lose p.e.
- pull cards
- "frogs"
- call parents

intervention
- Yelling
- proximity
- move children
- Contracts
- soft names
- positive praise
- heads down
- lights

Prevention
- make kids & you
- Set expectations
  - review
  - mes
  - individual work
  - group work
- Class quiet then instruct
  - lower voice
- start strict
- preparation
  - proximity
  - different techniques
  - lessons
  - days
  - weeks
  - fast finishers

Positive reinforcement
- Parent a week
- Call parents
- "gold stars"
- Compliment good
- be happy

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Set up Contracts with student

Have a signal (this year frogs) to let students know they need to stop the behavior

Set high, and clear expectations with the students.
- Review them regularly!
- Set them up for each lesson if needed

Make the kids love you so they'll do anything for you ☺

Intervention

Smile + tell the class how good they are — be specific, cleaning up quickly, etc.

Prevention

Set up a Conference with the student and parents

Do quiet rewards for students so that others will want to behave to gain your praise

Classroom Management

Engaging Lessons

Keep the pacing up so students don't get bored which leads to management problems!

Use a variety of techniques, have the students moving and talking at appropriate levels

Julie - mentor

9/25/01

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