



2012-06-13

Balancing Support and Challenge within the Mentoring Relationship

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Balancing Support and Challenge Within the Mentoring Relationship

Tiffanie J. Miley

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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August 2012

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ABSTRACT

Balancing Support and Challenge Within the Mentoring Relationship

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Mentoring is a common element of new teacher induction aimed at easing beginning teachers' entry into the profession and assisting beginning teacher growth and development. Previous research has shown that mentors are comfortable supporting beginning teachers but are reluctant to provide challenge—activities that will help beginning teachers improve their practice. For optimal growth to occur, mentors should balance support and challenge in their work with beginning teachers.

This descriptive study employed multiple cases to examine the relationship of two junior high school mentors with their mentees. The mentors in this study work in a school district with an established and highly supportive mentoring program. Each mentor has received extensive preparation and ongoing support for their mentoring efforts.

The purpose of this study was to examine how mentors balanced support and challenge in order to assist their mentees' growth. The relationships of two mentors, working with two beginning teachers each, were examined for elements of support and challenge as well as the ways in which the mentors and mentees positioned each other and were positioned.

The mentors in this study strongly favored challenge over support in their interactions with their mentees. Although there were many similarities among the mentoring activities and conversations with the beginning teachers, each mentor had her own mentoring style and adapted their mentoring to meet the needs of the individual beginning teachers with whom she worked. One might expect challenge to be critical or negative, but the challenge found in this study was more nuanced and complex. The nurturing challenge found in this study was paired with support in such a way that the beginning teachers were not overwhelmed by the feedback they received.

While the institutional expectations of mentors influenced how they positioned themselves in relation to the mentees, mentors also attempted to position mentees in a position of power within their own classrooms and with respect to their own development as beginning teachers. While at times both mentors and mentees resisted being in the position of dominance, for a majority of the interactions both parties accepted the institutional positions prescribed by the district program.

Keywords: mentoring, mentor relationship, support and challenge, positioning theory, new teacher induction, beginning teachers, junior high school

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Janet Young, my thesis committee chair, for her invaluable guidance throughout my work on this study. The hours of conversation, feedback, and insightful questioning have opened the world of scholarship to me and made this study possible. The members of my thesis committee, Dr. Sirpa Grierson and Dr. Erin Whiting, have encouraged me to deepen my thinking and refine my work in ways that I did not realize were possible. I am grateful for the support and challenge my committee provided throughout this process—they pushed me while never pushing too far.

I am grateful for the time, trust, and dedication of the participants in this study. Each of the participants already faced many responsibilities at their schools and happily agreed to participate although it added one more thing to each of their respective lists. I appreciate the honesty of the conversations that they shared with me and the trust they extended when they shared their mentoring and teaching experiences. I have learned much from listening to their conferences—both about teaching and mentoring.

I also want to express my gratitude to Rachel, Annette, and Kami. They have been encouraging and supportive every step of the way, whether it was acting as a sounding board to help me process my thoughts or simply reminding me that I could do this. Their kind reassurance made the task feel less daunting.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

It is well documented by researchers and well-known to teachers that the first few years of a teaching career are challenging. New teachers often feel overwhelmed by the daily responsibilities they face (Marable & Raimondi, 2007) and uncertain about how to proceed in these situations, which leads to anxiety, frustration, poor teaching, and teacher burn out (Helsing, 2007). Bullough and Draper (2004) found that beginning teachers also faced feelings of vulnerability, self-doubt, anxiety regarding standardized testing, frustration about student misbehavior, disappointment over poor student performance, and fear about parent and administrator opinions. The secondary education interns in their first year of teaching in Bullough and Draper's study were concerned about the quality of their curriculum, their ability to establish and maintain management of their classrooms, and the level of student engagement with their instruction. The difficulties discussed above relate to the high level of attrition among beginning teachers (Le Maistre & Paré, 2010).

Beginning in the 1980s, new teacher induction programs were created in school districts across the United States with hopes of reducing the attrition rates of beginning teachers, socializing beginning teachers into both the school and district cultures, and increasing beginning teachers' competence and satisfaction (Arends & Rigazio-DiGilio, 2000, July). Providing beginning teachers with a mentor as part of these programs has been the most common means for supporting new teachers as they develop during the induction period (e.g., Fletcher & Barrett, 2004; Fry, 2010; Killeavy, 2006; Lindgren, 2005; Nasser-Abu Alhija & Fresko, 2010; Rippon & Martin, 2003; Stanulis, Fallona, & Pearson, 2002; Strong & Baron, 2004; Tillman, 2005; Wood & Stanulis, 2009). In a survey study of teachers in New York state, Marable and Raimondi

(2007) found that mentors were the most significant source of support for beginning teachers. Various aspects of mentoring and mentoring programs have increasingly become a focus of research.

Mentoring New Teachers

The practice of partnering a novice teacher with a mentor—an experienced teacher prepared to provide various forms of assistance (e.g., Harrison, Dymoke, & Pell, 2006; Harrison, Lawson, & Wortley, 2005; Lindgren, 2005; Strong & Baron, 2004)—continues to be a critical part of induction efforts. There is considerable agreement that mentors need to balance practices that provide both *support* and *challenge* in order to maximize new teachers' professional growth during the induction years (e.g., Bullough, 2008; Hawkey, 1997; Schwille, 2008; Yusko & Feiman-Nemser, 2008). Elements of support in a mentoring relationship include both actions that provide the beginning teacher with a safe place where they can go to the mentor for help. Elements of challenge in a mentoring relationship include activities that encourage the beginning teacher to think differently and improve upon their practice (Certo, 2005b).

Although emotional support is of utmost importance, it alone will not achieve growth and competence in beginning teachers, for development requires both challenge and support (Bullough, 2008). There is general agreement that when beginning teachers are provided with both high levels of support and high levels of challenge, the beginning teacher will improve their teaching practice (Hawkey, 1997). Paradoxically, there are multiple studies that provide considerable evidence that mentors are reluctant to challenge new teachers, preferring to be supportive in their relationships (e.g., Bullough, Young, Hall, Draper, & Smith, 2008; Jones, 2001; Martin, 1997; Maynard, 2000; Young, Bullough, Draper, Smith, & Erickson, 2005). This mismatch between the type of assistance beginning teacher need and the type of mentoring

provided is concerning, as one of the purposes of the mentoring relationship is to help the beginning teacher improve on their practice.

Statement of the Problem

There is a call for research that examines how mentors use support and challenge to promote novice teachers' development (Hawkey, 1997). In order to help beginning teachers develop, mentors need to balance support and challenge. It is important to understand how mentors strike a balance between these two roles during the induction phase of teacher development, particularly in light of evidence that mentors are often more comfortable offering support than challenge.

Research addressing the balance of support and challenge has primarily been conducted in elementary settings (e.g., Certo, 2005a; Certo, 2005b). However, mentoring is likely to look different in a junior high setting than an elementary setting. For example, elementary teachers are generalists and teach all subject areas, whereas junior high teachers teach specific subjects. Although it is recommended that mentors and mentees teach in the same subject area, this is not always the case in secondary settings—the mentor may or may not teach in the same content area as the beginning teacher they are mentoring (Fry, 2010; Killeavy, 2006). The subject differentiation, along with teaching several different classes of young adolescents, places different demands on beginning junior high school teachers. Because the current study is set in a junior high, it will contribute to the knowledge base about mentoring in secondary settings.

Statement of the Purpose

Hawkey (1997) issued a call for qualitative studies that “examine how mentors use support and challenge to promote the development of student teachers...in terms of their professional teaching competence” (p. 332-333). Although Hawkey's call is directed at student

teachers, many researchers have noted the need for both support and challenge in mentoring beginning teachers (e.g., Bullough, 2005, 2008; Bullough et al., 2008; Harrison et al., 2005; John & Gilchrist, 1999; Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1998; Schwille, 2008; Yusko & Feiman-Nemser, 2008). In response to this call, the purpose of the present study was to examine the ways in which mentors balance support and challenge when working with beginning teachers in a junior high setting and to identify how mentors and mentees position themselves and each other within the mentoring relationship.

Research Questions

The research questions that will frame this study are

- How do mentors balance support and challenge within the mentoring relationship?
- How do mentors and mentees position themselves and each other within the mentoring relationship?

Limitations

This study took place in a school district with an established mentor program that prepared and supported mentors. The type of mentoring found in this district will not necessarily be found elsewhere where mentors are less prepared and supported in their roles. Due to the small number of participants in this study, the results cannot be generalized to broader populations but will provide insights into the balance of support and challenge within the mentor relationship at the junior high level.

Additionally, data will be a sampling of specific moments that occur in the mentor-mentee relationships of the participants in this study. The design sometimes required that I infer what occurred between those specific moments. This limitation is counterbalanced by email questionnaires that were retrospective of the mentoring activities.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

This review of literature will begin with a discussion of the theoretical frame for the current study, which includes developmental stages of beginning teachers, sociocultural theory, scaffolding, and positioning theory. The theoretical frame will be followed by a review of the new teacher induction and mentoring literature relating to the research questions.

Theoretical Frame

This study is primarily grounded in a view of teacher development framed by sociocultural theory, including Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development, and the metaphor of scaffolding within that zone. Since this study is focused on support and challenge within the mentor-mentee relationship, positioning theory (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) will be employed as a lens to both describe and analyze the dynamics of the mentoring relationship.

Teacher development theory. Teaching is a unique vocation that requires beginning teachers to take on full professional responsibilities at the very start of their career (Killeavy, 2006). Difficulties arise with this circumstance because teaching requires a significant amount of learning on the job (e.g., Feiman-Nemser, 1998, 2001a; Killeavy, 2006). Feiman-Nemser (2001a) writes that regardless of the quality of teacher preparation received, beginning teachers are not likely to know how to bring together their content knowledge and knowledge of their students in order to make decisions in particular situations. Elsewhere she explains that beginning teachers have two jobs—teaching and learning how to teach (Feiman-Nemser, 2001b).

Understandably, while learning as they teach, beginning teachers undergo developmental changes at the start of their teaching career. In order to better understand the necessity of mentoring, I will address the stages revealed in the research that new teachers go through at the

beginning of their teaching experience. Goddard and Foster (2001) report that as individuals start teaching, they are on one hand happy to be starting their career, but on the other hand anxious about their abilities to meet the expectations placed on them. Beginning teachers are unsure about classroom management and experience doubt. After this initial stage in their teaching experience, new teachers often describe feeling overwhelmed by all the different responsibilities they face. They have concerns about classroom management, student motivation, assessment, parent relationships, inadequate supplies, and student difficulties. In time, this “reality shock” (p. 360) that new teachers experience can lead to a sense of disillusionment as new teachers paradoxically blame their teacher preparation for leaving them unprepared for the actualities of teaching.

This reality shock is caused, in part, by the dissimilarity of situations teachers face in their pre-service preparation when compared to teaching independently. Le Maistre and Paré (2010) assert that classroom situations during pre-service tend to be “well-defined,” which explains the source of the reality shock that new teachers experience (p. 561). They further explain that beginning teachers may assume that situations they face in the classroom will be similarly well-defined, with distinct solutions. Once beginning teachers are teaching independently, they find it difficult to make the number of spontaneous decisions that are required to deal with unpredictable classroom situations. Similarly, Bullough et al. (2008) write of the “ill-structured, insistent, and emotionally-loaded problems” (p. 1848) that teachers confront. This “transition from support and dependence to sole responsibility and independence makes a large contribution to the reality shock they experience” (Le Maistre & Paré, 2010, p. 561).

In addition to the types of independent decisions beginning teachers need to make, their struggles include difficulties implementing the teaching strategies learned in their preservice preparation, developing a professional identity (McCormack, Gore, & Thomas, 2006), and establishing effective classroom management and discipline techniques (e.g., Bullough, 2005; Bullough et al., 2008; Tillman, 2005).

According to Goddard and Foster's (2001) final stage of new teacher development, some new teachers begin to reflect on their experiences and learn to balance the theories learned in pre-service preparation with the daily realities of teaching students. Unfortunately, Goddard and Foster's research also revealed that some new teachers remain fixed in a developmental stage characterized by disillusionment and do not progress into this final reflective stage due to their focus on surviving each day.

This brief overview of the stages beginning teachers encounter suggests that learning to teach is "extraordinarily complex" (Bullough & Draper, 2004, p. 286), "uncertain, and full of dilemmas" (Feiman-Nemser, 2001b, p. 1028). Not only are beginning teachers learning on the job, but their situations may feel very different than what they expected. New teacher induction programs, then, act as a bridge between pre-service learning to the daily action of teaching. Induction can move beginning teachers from a place of knowing about teaching to the daily practice of teaching students (Feiman-Nemser, 2001b).

Sociocultural theory. Lev Vygotsky suggested that "mental functioning of the individual is not simply derived from social interaction; rather, the specific structures and processes revealed by individuals can be traced to their interactions with others" (Palinscar, 2005, p. 290). As individuals participate in activities with others and then internalize the outcomes of working together, they gain new strategies and knowledge regarding the world

around them (Palinscar, 2005). Sociocultural theorists assert that interactions between two individuals, or intermental interaction, mediates the internal processing of actions, or intramental activities (e.g., Miller, 2011).

Development is facilitated by tools that are external to the individual. Psychological tools help individuals think (Miller, 2011), “direct the mind and behavior” (Daniels, 2008, p. 9), and are devices for “mastering mental processes” (p. 7). A few examples of these psychological tools include language, counting systems, diagrams, maps, writing (e.g., Daniels, 2008; Miller, 2011; Palinscar, 2005). For Vygotsky, language is the most important psychological tool because it frees individuals from their “immediate perceptual experience” and allows them to “represent the unseen, the past, and the future” (Miller, 2011, p. 182). This notion of tool-mediated development informs the current study of teacher development within the interactive mentor-teacher relationship.

Zone of proximal development. The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is another specific aspect of Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory that will frame this study. The difference between what can be performed independently and what can be successfully accomplished with the help of a more capable other is the ZPD (Daniels, 2008). Instruction, even the sort of instruction that occurs between mentors and mentees, is more productive when it takes place within the ZPD (Palinscar, 2005)—when it makes individuals stretch and learn concepts that are just beyond their reach. Vygotsky seems to say that instruction is most useful when it reaches beyond what individuals already know (Daniels, 2008).

The concept of the ZPD relates to the idea of providing challenge to beginning teachers, but not overwhelming them with too much challenge. Daloz (1999), Reiman, and Thies-Sprinthall (1998) suggest that when beginning teachers are not provided with enough challenge

they will not grow. Not providing any challenge could be seen as similar to continually giving a learner a task that they can already accomplish individually—the beginning teacher “may lack the capacity” to grow on their own (Daloz, 1999, p. 208). If the beginning teacher can already perform the task, then there is not growth to be had. The mentor, balancing support and challenge, can act as the more capable other who encourages development through the beginning teacher’s ZPD.

Scaffolding. Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) introduce the metaphor of scaffolding to describe the process in which a more knowledgeable other “enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts” (p. 90). Scaffolding consists of the more knowledgeable other “controlling” the parts of the task that are beyond the learner’s ability, which allows the learner to focus on the elements that he or she is capable of completing (p. 90). This support and assistance is later removed when the learner can accomplish the task independently (Anghileri, 2006). The idea behind scaffolding is that as the learner learns the task with support from a more knowledgeable other, he or she will also undergo a change in understanding so as to not need the same type of scaffolding in the future (Stone, 1998). Scaffolding may result in “development of task competence by the learner at a pace that would far outstrip his unassisted efforts” (Wood et al., 1976, p. 90).

In the context of mentoring, a mentor who scaffolds a beginning teacher’s experiences appropriately would help them to accomplish more than they would be able to without the assistance of the mentor. Additionally, scaffolding should enable beginning teachers to develop more quickly than they would without assistance. Specific elements of scaffolding that apply to the mentoring relationship include simplifying the task at hand, keeping the beginning teacher

focused on what they want to accomplish, and “responding to the learner’s emotional state” (Anghileri, 2006, p. 34).

Positioning theory. As an analytic lens in this study, positioning theory allows for greater understanding of the mentor-mentee relationship. Positioning is a dynamic alternative to the static concept of role (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). According to Harré and van Langenhove, in order to understand any interaction, one needs to understand the roles of the individuals involved, their previous conversations, and the dynamics of that specific interaction. The interaction cannot be understood by simply “referring to general rules and roles. Knowledge of the past and insight into the current conversation are necessary as well” (p. 6). For example, in order to fully understand a conversation between a mentor and a beginning teacher, one would need to understand the roles of both the mentor and the beginning teacher, have knowledge of their previous conversations, and have an awareness of the dynamics of the particular conversation they are currently having. The three features of interactions are: (a) moral positions of the individuals involved and the “rights and duties they have to say certain things,” (b) “conversational history,” and (c) what is being said (p. 6). But positions change; people employ different positions to deal with the situations they encounter.

When examining a conversation, for instance, a position serves as a metaphor that expresses a person’s moral and personal attributes. Positioning is thus a way of clarifying and articulating who an individual is and what they think. Harré and van Langenhove (1999) give several examples of the types of positions that are taken up in conversations: “powerful or powerless, confident or apologetic, dominant or submissive, definitive or tentative, authorized or unauthorized, and so on” (p. 17). An individual simultaneously positions and is positioned by

self and others. These positions can be determined by how others hear what is being said and the conversational moves that follow that hearing.

Harré and van Langenhove (1999) describe the structure of a conversation as “tri-polar,” consisting of (a) positions, (b) storylines, and (c) “relatively determinant speech-acts” (p. 18). In the context of this study, a speech-act was an individual utterance from either the mentor or the mentee during an observation conference. The three parts of this “mutually determining triad” (p. 18) affect each other (see Figure 1). A position can therefore be determined by the utterances or the storyline, just as a storyline can be determined by the position or the utterances in a conversation. Positioning theorists acknowledge a high degree of fluidity within the structure of any conversation. Thus in a conversation, the “social force of an action and the position of the actor and the interactors mutually determine one another” (p. 17). Essentially, in positioning oneself in a conversation, the speaker also positions the person with whom he or she is talking.

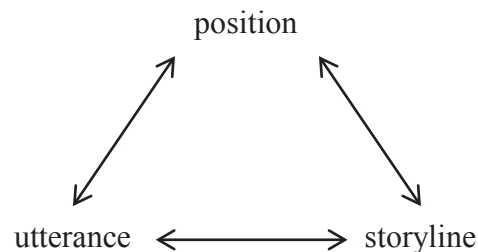


Figure 1. Mutually determining triad adapted from Harré and van Langenhove, 1999, p.18.

Modes of positioning. Several different modes of positioning (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) are pertinent to the current study. *First order positioning* occurs when one person says something in a conversation that positions another person, and that person continues the conversation in a way that does not challenge the way he or she has been positioned. In this way, positions of both individuals seem to be mutually accepted. By contrast, *second order positioning* occurs when a person says something that positions another person, but that person

continues the conversation in a way that pushes back against the position they were placed in by the first person.

Another mode of positioning pertinent to this study, *institutional positioning*, occurs when individuals are positioned a certain way because of their role with an institution—“when an institution wants to classify persons who are expected to function within that institution, performing a certain range of tasks” (p. 27). This position applies to mentors, who have certain expectations, duties, and rights simply because they serve in the role of mentor. In this mode, the institutional position of the mentor is apparent prior to any interactions with beginning teachers.

Types of social interactions. Researchers use positioning theory to examine “any sequence of happenings in which human beings engage which has some principle of unity” (as cited in Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p. 4). In this study, understanding the dynamics of these social interactions can provide insight into the mentoring relationship. Two types of social interactions are *formal* and *informal*. Formal interactions are not truly conversations even though people may be taking turns speaking, because “explicit rules determine the sequence of actions” (p. 5) within these formal interactions. Harré & van Langenhove (1999) suggest that a wedding ceremony is a common example of a formal interaction; certain individuals ask precisely scripted questions at certain times, and the questions have expected answers. The assumptions people make about formal episodes can have a “profound influence” (p. 5) on what they say and do. Within a wedding ceremony, the assumptions underlying the ceremony dictate how and when people answer the questions and the types of answers they will give. In contrast, the form and content of an informal episode is determined by (a) general conversational norms for the particular context, (b) the biographical backgrounds of the people involved, (c) the stories

people have to tell, and (d) what has been discussed in the past. An example of an informal interaction would be a group of friends meeting at a restaurant for dinner. The interaction that occurs between the friends is influenced by the type of restaurant, their prior relationships and interactions, and what they happen to discuss during the meal.

In the case of mentoring, an observation conference between a mentor and beginning teacher would exemplify a hybrid of formal and informal interactions. The conference is more structured than an unplanned conversation because there are certain questions that are discussed in a particular order, but there are no set answers, just as there are in a formal interaction. Like informal interactions, observation conferences are influenced by previous interactions between the mentor and mentee and the things they would like to discuss during the conference. The hybrid nature of mentoring conferences may constrain the types of positions given and taken up during the conference conversation.

During a conversation then, positions are fluid and can change based on changes in the content of the conversation and how one individual reacts to what another individual says. Positions change throughout a conversation, and all conversations involve “some sort of positioning” (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p. 29). An awareness of the positions of mentors and mentees within the relationship provides a framework for analyzing the mentoring relationship and how those positions relate to the elements of support and challenge provided by the mentors.

New Teacher Induction

Induction programs are a means of meeting the needs of beginning teachers, reducing attrition, and increasing the competence of beginning teachers. Practices of mentoring, including the mentoring relationship, mentor roles, characteristics of effective mentoring, and the

importance of support and challenge within the mentoring relationship as a means to improve the practice of beginning teachers will also be addressed.

Induction programs for beginning teachers. Some purposes of new teacher induction programs include providing assistance, guidance, and support to beginning teachers as they develop (Killeavy, 2006; Nasser-Abu Alhija & Fresko, 2010; Rippon & Martin, 2003); helping to socialize new teachers into the profession (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004; Fry, 2010; Killeavy, 2006; Nasser-Abu Alhija & Fresko, 2010; Rippon & Martin, 2003); helping beginning teachers adjust to the demands and challenges of their new careers (Bullough, 2008; Hawkey, 1997); and acting as a bridge or transition between pre-service experiences and in-service teaching. (Killeavy, 2006; Wood & Stanulis, 2009). These induction purposes address high rates of attrition among beginning teachers; but in the era of No Child Level Behind and increased teacher accountability, induction should “accomplish more than simply keeping teachers on the job” (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004, p. 322). In addition to the purposes of induction listed above, Wood and Stanulis (2009) add promoting of beginning teachers’ professional and personal well-being, increasing teaching competence, an increased student achievement through improved teacher performance as other important goals of new teacher induction.

In order to achieve the many purposes of new teacher induction, programs typically implement several components to support beginning teachers. These supportive elements include providing professional development opportunities geared toward the needs of beginning teachers, offering common planning time with other teachers of the same subject or grade, attending an orientation, reducing teaching load, and conducting structured observations of the beginning teacher’s teaching (Fry, 2010; Killeavy, 2006; Nasser-Abu Alhija & Fresko, 2010; Rippon & Martin, 2003; Wood & Stanulis, 2009). Fry (2010) also writes that the purpose of

these supportive induction elements is to help beginning teachers adjust to the demands of their profession, reduce attrition and “[promote] the success of beginning teachers” (p. 1165).

In addition to the induction elements detailed above and as previously stated, providing beginning teachers with a mentor is the most common means for supporting new teachers as they develop during the induction period (e.g., Fletcher & Barrett, 2004; Fry, 2010; Killeavy, 2006; Lindgren, 2005; Nasser-Abu Alhija & Fresko, 2010; Rippon & Martin, 2003; Stanulis et al., 2002; Strong & Baron, 2004; Tillman, 2005; Wood & Stanulis, 2009). The focus of this research study will be on the mentoring relationship and its associated practices, one aspect of induction.

Mentoring beginning teachers. Various researchers have defined a *mentor* as an experienced teacher who is partnered with a novice teacher to provide various forms of assistance (e.g., Harrison et al., 2006; Harrison et al., 2005; Lindgren, 2005; Strong & Baron, 2004). Typically, mentors help to socialize beginning teachers acting as guides to both the school and the profession (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004), provide emotional (Schwille, 2008) and technical support (Wang & Odell, 2002), and acting as advocates for beginning teachers (Achinstein, 2006). Perhaps most important for the purposes of this study, mentors also help beginning teachers learn the practice of teaching (Schwille, 2008).

The mentor-mentee relationship involves a subtle and complex interaction between mentor and mentee wherein the mentor needs to be aware of the mentee’s feelings and react accordingly (John & Gilchrist, 1999), especially in light of the vulnerability experienced by beginning teachers (e.g., Bullough, 2005; Bullough & Young, 2002). A good mentoring relationship is built on “openness and confidentiality” (Lindgren, 2005, p. 252).

Mentoring roles. Researchers have examined different types of mentoring and a variety of roles mentors take on as they work with beginning teachers. In a study of elementary school

mentors working with interns, mentors most frequently acted as (a) therapists, providing emotional support, (b) coaches, helping the interns improve their practice, and (c) protectors protecting interns from parents, administrators, and sometimes even the interns themselves (Bullough & Draper, 2004). In this particular study, mentors carried out these mentoring roles in response to mentee needs and perceived professional responsibilities. Although the terminology is different, another study suggests that the mentor has three somewhat similar roles: (a) providing personal support, (b) guiding professional growth, and (c) inducting the new teacher into the new environment (Harrison et al., 2005). Both studies posit the dual roles of supporting beginning teachers and promoting beginning teacher growth. This duality is echoed by Daloz (1999), who writes that mentors support, challenge, and provide vision for the beginning teachers with whom they work. Although the roles of supporter and challenger at first seem to be at odds with one another, when the end objective of the development and growth of a new teacher is kept in mind, it is clear that both of these roles are necessary.

In addition to these responsibilities, Young, Bullough, Draper, Smith, and Erickson (2005) found that mentors preferred certain approaches as a way of fulfilling their responsibilities to new teachers and a way of “being with or for them” (p. 173). They describe three general patterns, or interaction styles, of mentoring: responsive, interactive, and directive. A responsive mentor takes direction from the new teacher who sets the agenda. An interactive mentor jointly constructs the agenda with the new teacher; the agenda is modified based on the needs and desires of both the mentor and new teacher. Finally, a directive mentor sets the agenda, has clear expectations for the beginning teacher, and actively guides the beginning teacher to meet those expectations (p. 176).

Nature of effective mentoring. The induction years are a formative time for beginning teachers—years that influence the type of teachers they will become (Feiman-Nemser, 2001b). In order for mentoring to be effective, the mentor process needs to have a clearly stated purpose that meets the individual mentee’s needs in order to lead to development (Lindgren, 2005). Lindgren explains that a mentor should not solve beginning teachers’ problems for them, but should actively listen and encourage the beginning teacher to come to their own conclusions. Similarly, Feiman-Nemser (2001a) presents a profile of a well-respected and effective mentor; the mentor hoped to help beginning teachers “find their own way of doing things” without leading them to think that “anything goes” (p. 20). This same sentiment is expressed by Maynard (2000), who suggests that effective mentoring includes both effective feedback and help in the development of a “positive teacher identity” (p. 20). These ideas echo the dual role of the mentor providing support, but still focusing on beginning teacher development.

Mentoring should be an “educational invention” (Schwille, 2008, p. 160), the purpose of which is to promote a beginning teacher’s learning. The mentoring practices employed should meet the beginning teacher’s immediate needs, as well as help the beginning teacher learn to teach. This type of mentoring requires the mentor to both know the mentee as a learner and adjust their practices to the mentee’s individual needs. Additionally, Schwille writes that good mentoring requires mentors to attend “to the here and now while at the same time keeping an eye on the direction the learning is going” (p. 162).

Definitions of support. Throughout the literature, researchers discuss the concepts of support and challenge. Researchers describe support as nurturing and encouraging (Bullough, 2008), positive and patient, and characterized by a feeling of safety (Young et al., 2005). Additionally, Young et. al (2005) posit that support does not “challenge prior beliefs or make

way for the acquisition of new beliefs about teaching and learning” (p. 186). Daloz (1999) defines support as the “acts through which the mentor affirms the validity of the student’s present experience” and help the mentee feel understood (p. 206). He goes on to explain that support helps mentees feel “okay” where they are and “capable of moving ahead” (p. 209). Certo (2005b) adds that support offers “a safe place where the beginning teacher can contact the mentor for questions or fundamental trust” (p. 396). Supportive elements of mentoring may include listening, providing structure, expressing positive expectations, acting as an advocate, answering questions (Daloz, 1999), reassuring, sharing of instructional resources and materials, and building friendships (Certo, 2005b).

Definitions of challenge. Another mentor responsibility similar to that of guiding professional growth (Harrison et al., 2005) is that of helping beginning teachers develop their “professional and personal competence” (Tillman, 2005, p. 610). Young et al. (2005) write of the importance of establishing “a community centered on teacher growth, not merely on being supportive” (p. 185). Elsewhere in the literature, activities focused on new teacher growth are described as providing challenge to the new teacher (e.g. Certo, 2005a; Certo, 2005b; Hawkey, 1997).

Challenge is described in a variety of ways throughout the literature. A common description includes some variation of critique, including “thoughtful criticism” (Bullough & Young, 2002, p. 429), critical feedback (Young et al., 2005), and “pointed feedback” (Bullough & Young, 2002, p. 429). Reflection is also an aspect of challenge, described by Bullough et al. (2008) as reflective problem solving and Martin (1997) as critical feedback, analysis, and reflection. To challenge beginning teachers, mentors are encouraged to create conditions that enable mentees to “consistently reflect on their practice and act on their emerging insights”

(Bullough et al., 2008, p. 1856) as well as engage in “critical conversations about the practice and theory of teaching and learning” (Young et al., 2005, p. 185). Certo (2005b) writes that “any mentoring activity that challenges the protégés to think or act differently about the work of teaching” (p. 396). In challenging beginning teachers, mentors “raise questions about their students’ current worldviews and invite them to entertain alternatives to close the dissonance, accommodate their structures, think afresh” (Daloz, 1999, p. 217). Any activity that helps beginning teachers learn the practice of teaching and promote beginning teachers’ learning (Schwille, 2008) will be considered challenge for the purpose of this study. Challenging activities include giving the mentee tasks to complete, engaging the mentees in discussion, providing post-observation feedback, planning curriculum together, setting high standards for the mentees to meet, mentor modeling, and offering a plan for growth (Certo, 2005b; Daloz, 1999). Table 1 summarizes the various definitions of support and challenge found throughout the literature.

Several researchers (e.g., Bullough & Young, 2002; Bullough et al., 2008; Jones, 2001; Little, 1990; Martin, 1997; Maynard, 2000; Young et al., 2005) have found that mentors understand the importance of providing personal and emotional support to their new teachers, but are reluctant to provide critical feedback that will challenge new teachers to improve. For example, Bullough et al. (2008) found that mentors “appeared to assume that learning to teach was sufficiently challenging to mentees that their primary role as mentors should be to offer unqualified emotional support. Criticism was avoided” (p. 1856). Jones (2001) reports similar findings in a study comparing German and English mentors. Mentors from both countries feel that beginning teachers need constructive criticism in order to learn, but the English mentors “tend to propagate the importance of being supportive over being honest” (p. 81). Two studies,

one of student teachers (Maynard, 2000) and another of interns (Bullough & Young, 2002), reported similar findings, but added that mentees were desirous of more critical feedback. In both cases, mentors appear to be reluctant to provide constructive criticism.

Table 1

Definitions of Support and Challenge

Descriptions of Support and Challenge in the Literature	
Support	Challenge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurture and encouragement (Bullough et al., 2008) • “Unqualified emotional support” (Bullough et al., 2008, p. 1856) • Mentors are positive and patient (Young et al., 2005) • Characterized by a feeling of safety (Young et al., 2005) • Does not “challenge prior beliefs or make way for the acquisition of new beliefs about teaching and learning” (Young et al., 2005, p. 186) • “Providing a safe place where the beginning teacher can contact the mentor for questions or fundamental trust” (Certo, 2005b, p. 396) • “Acts through which the mentor affirms the validity of the student’s present experience” and helps the mentee feel understood, (Daloz, 1999, p. 206), “okay,” and “capable of moving ahead” (p. 209). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective problem solving (Bullough et al., 2008) • Criticism (Bullough et al., 2008) • Conditions that would enable mentees to “consistently reflect on their practice and act on their emerging insights” (Bullough et al., 2008, p. 1856). • “Thoughtful criticism” (Bullough & Young, 2002, p. 429) • “Pointed feedback” (Bullough & Young, 2002, p. 429) • Critical feedback, analysis, and reflection (Martin, 1997) • “Critical conversations about the practice and theory of teaching and learning” (Young et al., 2005, p. 185) • Critical feedback (Young et al., 2005) • “Challenge produces disequilibrium” (Bullough et al., 2008, p. 1848) so beginning teachers realize that the way they have been doing things may need to change. • “Any mentoring activity that challenges the protégés to think or act differently about the work of teaching” (Certo, 2005b, p. 396). • Mentors “raise questions about their students’ current worldviews and invite them to entertain alternatives to close the dissonance, accommodate their structures, think afresh” (Daloz, 1999, p. 217). • Mentors help beginning teachers learn the practice of teaching (Schwille, 2008). • “Educational intervention” (Schwille, 2008, p. 160), the purpose of which is to promote the beginning teacher’s learning. • Helping beginning teachers develop their “professional and personal competence” (Tillman, 2005, p. 610).

Traditionally, teaching has been an individualistic and autonomous endeavor where “teachers teach alone and get better only through their own individual trial and error” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000, p. 52). This element of school culture is changing, but perhaps it is

difficult for experienced teachers acting as mentors to step in and assert some influence on the traditionally individualistic experience of learning to teach.

Importance of support and challenge. Even though mentors are reluctant to criticize, there is wide agreement among researchers that simply supporting beginning teachers is not enough. Beginning teachers are learning to teach and need professional development as well. Mentoring can provide this professional development to help beginning teachers develop effective practices. In order to improve teaching quality, mentors need to take on the responsibility of helping their mentees to develop into effective teachers (Yusko & Feiman-Nemser, 2008). Similarly, Schwille (2008) writes that mentors who “thoughtfully and purposefully” (p. 164) work toward helping beginning teachers develop make a greater difference than mentors who merely give advice and provide emotional and technical support. When looking at mentoring as a professional development endeavor, it becomes clear that “development requires both challenge and support” (Bullough, 2008, p. 151).

Balance of support and challenge. Daloz (1999) specifically describes how varying amounts of support and challenge shape the development of a beginning teacher. If the mentor provides low support and low challenge, the mentee is likely to “stay pretty much as they are” (p. 208) and growth is not likely to occur.

If the beginning teacher experiences high levels of support combined with low levels of challenge, the mentee will feel confirmed and good about himself or herself, but will only grow if they possess the innate capacity and need to improve (Daloz, 1999). For example, if the mentor provides too much support in the form of sharing curriculum, it may prevent the beginning teacher from developing curriculum planning and preparation skills (Certo, 2005a). On the other hand, low support and high challenge “can drive the insecure student to retreat”

(Daloz, 1999, p. 208). Without the appropriate support, the challenged beginning teacher will feel overwhelmed and stressed (Certo, 2005a).

Optimal learning takes place in an environment with “an appropriate mix” of support and challenge (Daloz, 1999, p. 208). The specific mix necessary for development depends both on the mentor and individual needs to the beginning teacher. Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall (1998) also explain this phenomenon:

Too much support or too much challenge essentially creates a condition of no growth...

This does not mean that support is unnecessary and we can simply challenge and confront a person to induce growth. Too much challenge is just as miseducative as too much support. Creating expectations that may be far more complex than the current preferred stage of problem solving may have the same behavioral outcome as too little support.

The person will simply withdraw psychologically into the safe haven of the current stage of growth. (p.77)

Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall (1998) refer to the necessary combination of support and challenge as a “balancing act” (p. 78) for the mentor. Not only is it important to balance support and challenge, but some researchers (e.g., Certo, 2005a; Harrison et al., 2006; John & Gilchrist, 1999) suggest that support should be established before challenge is introduced; they write of building confidence and competence before issuing challenge.

It is clear that both support and challenge will lead to increased development in beginning teachers, so mentors must learn the delicate balance between support and challenge, as it is “the most difficult and the most necessary” (Bullough, 2005, p. 34) element in mentor development.

Summary

As new teachers begin their teaching careers, they undergo developmental changes and learn to be a teacher from the act of teaching. By participating in activities with a mentor who is more knowledgeable, beginning teachers' development can be accelerated by the scaffolding provided by their mentors. Positioning theory provides the lens to analyze and understand the dynamic nature of the mentor-mentee relationship.

Mentoring is a vital element in new teacher induction programs that attempts to ease the entry of beginning teachers into the profession, while helping to improve their teaching practices. Within the mentor-mentee relationship, mentors have the capacity to aid in the development of beginning teacher competencies by providing both support and challenge. Balancing the level of support and challenge enables mentors to promote beginning teacher development more than emotional and technical support alone.

Chapter 3

Methods

This descriptive study employed multiple cases to examine how mentors in junior high school settings balance support and challenge in order to assist their mentees' growth. The study focused on the practice of two mentors, each working with two beginning teachers. The unique aspect of this particular case study is that it is somewhat of an ideal case due to the amount of institutionalized support provided to mentoring within the district. A case study design allowed me to explore and describe the balance of support and challenge provided by the mentors as well as the positions taken up within the mentoring relationship.

Context

This research study was conducted in two junior high schools within a school district that serves 29,000 students in a rural and suburban area of the western United States. In 2003, the district created a district-wide mentor preparation and support program to prepare mentors, in accordance with Entry Years Enhancement (EYE). EYE is a state-mandated program intended to support all beginning teachers; one of the EYE requirements is for all beginning educators work with a trained mentor for three years (Alder, 2011). The district mentor program serves all beginning teachers from kindergarten through twelfth grade. One full-time and one part-time mentor specialist facilitate the district mentor program. Prospective mentors apply for the position of mentor and are chosen by principals and the district mentor specialists. Mentors are compensated with a yearly base stipend for their service and additional compensation for each beginning teacher they work with.

All new mentors attend two days of paid in-service during the summer before their first mentoring year and half a day of follow up in-service during the school year. Mentors with one

or more years of mentoring experience in the district attend one day of paid in-service each summer; they also have the option of attending the new mentor training again each summer. All mentors also attend paid monthly meetings after school to receive additional in-service and support from the district mentor specialists.

In this district, each mentor is assigned to work with up to six new teachers. Beginning teachers are assigned to mentors who work in the same building. If there are more than six beginning teachers in any one school, additional mentors are selected. In the case of multiple mentors working in one building at the secondary level, mentors and beginning teachers are paired up according to content area.

The district mentoring model is one of cognitive coaching (Costa & Garmston, 1994). The purpose of cognitive coaching is to help teachers improve in the way that they want to. Cognitive coaching is a nonjudgmental process structured around a planning conference, an observation, and a reflective conference. There are three goals of cognitive coaching: (a) establishing and maintaining trust, (b) facilitating mutual learning, and (c) moving toward a situation where individuals act both autonomously and interdependently with the group. Building trust is fundamental to achieving the second two goals of cognitive coaching; “trust is not an end in itself, but a prerequisite for success in the coaching relationship” (Costa & Garmston, 1994, p. 3). Through the process of cognitive coaching, a coach uses questioning strategies to “enhance another person’s perceptions, decisions, and intellectual functions. Changing these inner thought processes is a prerequisite to improving overt behaviors that, in turn, enhance student learning” (Costa & Garmston, 1994, p. 2). In the context of this study, mentors act as coaches who ask reflective questions of their mentees, which cause the beginning

teachers to change the way they think about their practice, which leads to a change in these “overt instructional behaviors” (p. 6), which then leads to increased student learning.

During the annual summer in-service, mentors are trained in cognitive coaching. Mentors are required to complete four formal observation cycles per year with each first-year teacher. A formal observation cycle consists of a pre-conference, a classroom observation, and a post-conference. The purpose of the pre-conference prior to the observation is to discover (a) the objective for the lesson being observed, (b) the teacher actions to be performed, (c) the student actions, (d) the assessment of the objective, and (e) the type of data the mentee would like the mentor to collect during the observation. Depending on the particular beginning new teacher, the mentor may leave the direction of the observation up to the mentee, or sometimes the mentor chooses the focus of the observation.

After each formal observation, the mentor and the mentee meet again for a post-conference. During this post-observation conference, the mentor facilitates another reflective conversation with the beginning teacher, including, but not limited to the following questions: (a) What went well in today's lesson? (b) What did you do, as the teacher, to achieve that outcome? (c) What would you do the same in the future? (d) How could this lesson be improved? (d) What will you do differently in the future? (e) What do you notice in the observation data?

In each building, mentors hold seven meetings throughout the school year to address issues including, but not limited to, professional development, school culture, curriculum development, socialization, enculturation, and classroom management with the beginning teachers they mentor. In addition to the monthly meetings, mentors are also responsible to introduce beginning teachers to members of the school community, observe beginning teachers’

classes, guide beginning teachers in the development of an electronic portfolio, and assist the beginning teachers in navigating the state requirements to receive a level II license.

The district provides substitute teachers for one day each school year so beginning teachers can participate in professional development activities planned by the mentors in their building. Ideally, this day of professional development should be planned by mentors to meet the specific needs of the beginning teachers with whom they work.

Participants

Two district mentor specialists, who personally know each mentor in the district, recommended mentor participants. I asked the district mentor specialists to recommend three junior high mentors whom they felt were effective. I also asked district mentor specialists to recommend mentors whom they thought would be receptive to participating in this study and who would be reliable enough to participate for the entirety of the study. The district mentor specialists provided the names of three mentors that fit both criteria. Not only is the district mentor program operating under somewhat ideal conditions, but the mentors who were chosen to participate have proven in the past to be quality mentors. The three mentors I approached regarding this study readily agreed to participate. However, during data collection, one of the mentors withdrew from the study, leaving two participating mentors.

Although the district mentor program serves all K-12 beginning teachers, issues in an elementary classroom differ from those in secondary classrooms. In order to achieve the greatest similarity of issues, all the participants taught in the junior high setting.

This study examined the practices and relationships of two junior high mentors working with two beginning teachers each. Thus, there were four cases, each mentor-mentee pair constituting a case. I studied each mentor's practice as they worked individually with two

different mentees in order to see how the mentors customized their interactions and practice depending on the two beginning teachers' circumstances and needs. Examining two different mentors allowed me to explore the variance and patterns among the mentors' practice.

The mentors participating in this study worked at two different junior high schools within the same district. In this district, students in seventh, eighth, and ninth grades attend the junior high. The two junior high schools are in the same city and within one mile of each other. All names of district, school, and persons are pseudonyms.

Bonnie. Bonnie is a teacher at Summer Springs Junior High School who had taught for 12 years and mentored for five years. During the study she mentored six beginning teachers in their first three years and five interns in their first year of teaching. Due to the number of interns Bonnie mentored, she taught only three of seven class periods a day. Summer Springs Junior High School serves 1285 students, 36.3% of whom receive free and reduced lunch. Of the 1285 students, 84.6% are White and 10.7% are Hispanic, with 1.9% considered Limited English Proficient (LEP). The remaining 4.7% of the student body is comprised of Asian, Black, American Indian, Multi-Race, and Pacific Islander students.

Bonnie mentored two first-year teachers—Kate and Natalie. Kate did not teach the same subject area as Bonnie. Natalie taught the same subject as Bonnie, but a different grade level.

Diane. Diane was a teacher at Mountainside Junior High School who had taught for 15 years and mentored for seven years. During the study she mentored four beginning teachers and taught a full schedule of classes. Mountainside Junior High School serves 1189 students, 26.9% of whom receive free and reduced lunch. Of the 1189 students, 92.3% are White and 5.6% are Hispanic, with 1.3% considered Limited English Proficient (LEP). The remaining 2.1% of the

student body is comprised of Asian, Black, American Indian, Multi-Race, and Pacific Islander students.

During the year of the study, Diane mentored an intern, a third-year teacher, and two fourth-year teachers. I asked the two newest teachers to participate in the study, and they both agreed. Steven was a first-year teacher who did not teach the same subject as Diane. Steven was participating in a year-long internship in lieu of student teaching, which meant that he was teaching a full-day for the entire school year in his own classroom. Ben was a third-year teacher who did not teach the same subject as Diane. Table 2 contains a summary of information about the participants.

Table 2

Mentor and Mentee Information

	Mentors			
	Bonnie		Diane	
Age	33		61	
Years of Teaching	12		15	
Grade(s) Taught	9		8 and 9	
Number of Mentees	11*		4	
Years of Mentoring	5		7	
	Mentees		Mentees	
	Kate	Natalie	Steven	Ben
Age	39	30	25	36
Years of Teaching	1	1	1	3
Grade(s) Taught	8	7 and 8	8 and 9	8 and 9
Same Subject as Mentor?	No	Yes	No	No

Note. *Due to the number of beginning teachers Bonnie mentored, she taught three of seven class periods.

Data Sources

There were two primary data sources in this study. First, the mentors provided digital recordings of pre- and post-observation conferences held between the mentors and their mentees for three coaching cycles. These digital recordings were transcribed for analysis. The transcriptions of the conferences represented in-the-moment interactions between the mentors and mentees, and were used to address each of the research questions for this study.

The second source of data was generated through the use of email questionnaires completed by mentors and their mentees about each mentoring cycle. The questionnaires contained three open-ended questions each. Mentors submitted their email questionnaires after the recorded pre-observation conference. They responded to the following questions:

- What recent mentoring activities have you participated in to support your mentees?
- What recent mentoring activities have you participated in to encourage your mentees to improve?
- What did you hope to accomplish during the pre-conference?

Mentees submitted their email questionnaires after the recorded post-observation conference.

They responded to the following questions:

- What did you and your mentor discuss in your post-conference?
- Outside of observation conferences, how has your mentor supported you?
- Outside of observation conferences, how was your mentor helped you to improve?

The retrospective email questionnaires were used to address the first research question in this study regarding the balance of support and challenge. Since the analysis of positioning was

dependent on the interactions of the mentor and mentee, the email questionnaires were not well-suited to answering the research question regarding positioning.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection commenced at the beginning of the 2011 school year and continued through January 2012. I provided each mentor with a digital recorder and asked them to record one pre- and post-observation conference each month during the first semester of the school year. Since mentors are required by the district to complete four observation cycles for first year teachers, I asked the mentors to record the first three pre- and post-conferences they conducted. Within the school district, mentors are encouraged to observe beginning teachers as early in the year as possible in order to provide assistance early in the year that mentees will be able to implement throughout the school year. Diane only needed to complete two observation cycles with Ben since he is a third-year teacher, but both Diane and Ben agreed to participate in a third observation for the purposes of this study.

After completing each pre-observation conference, the mentors notified me, and I sent them an email questionnaire. I waited one to two days to allow time for the observation and post-conference to take place and then sent the mentees their questionnaire. After the mentors and mentees responded to the email questionnaires I saved their responses in a word processing document on a password-protected computer. After both the pre- and post-observation conferences were completed each month, I uploaded the recordings to a password-protected computer. Each conference was then transcribed.

In summary, I collected three rounds of data. Each round of data included a transcript of the pre-observation conference, an email questionnaire from the mentor, a transcript of the post-

observation conference, and an email questionnaire from the mentee. Data collection commenced with round one in September and was completed with round three in January.

Data Analysis

The two research questions required two different approaches. To address the balance of support and challenge within the mentoring relationship, I examined the nature and frequency of instances of support and challenge during each round of mentoring. To address the positioning of mentors and mentees within the mentoring relationships, I considered the ways in which the mentors and mentees positioned themselves and one another during the pre- and post-conferences in all three rounds of mentoring.

Balance of support and challenge. Data for the first round of analysis consisted of transcripts from one pre- and post-observation conference and one email questionnaire from each mentor and mentee. Since the conference transcripts contained conversations between mentor and mentee, each speaking turn by either mentor or mentee was designated as a single text unit. Using the elements of support and challenge identified in the review of literature (Certo, 2005a; Daloz, 1999), I created a wide variety of a priori sub-categories for both support and challenge. Table 3 contains a list of the a priori and emergent categories of support and challenge.

Initially, I read through the first round of data, using the a priori categories of support and challenge. I tracked the frequency of each of the elements of support and challenge and tallied the total support and challenge instances for each conversation unit. When a mentor employed two different types of support or challenge within the same text unit, that conversation unit was coded for each category, thus providing two examples of support or challenge.

I used the first round of coded data to refine my coding categories, constructing clearer definitions for each sub-category of support and challenge, and selecting exemplars of each

category from the data. During this round of data analysis, I collapsed “raising questions” and “initiating discussion” into a single category and added “offered suggestions” as an emergent sub-category of challenge. After establishing the definitions and finding corresponding examples I re-read all of the round one data and re-coded where necessary to ensure consistency.

Table 3

A Priori and Emergent Categories of Support and Challenge

Support	Challenge
Providing a safe place	Raising questions and initiating discussion**
Listening	Giving tasks
Providing structure	Providing observation feedback
Expressing positive expectations*	Planning curriculum together
Acting as an advocate for the mentee	Setting standards
Answering questions	Modeling
Reassuring the mentee	Offering a plan for growth*
Sharing resources and materials	Offering suggestions***
Building friendship	

Note. *Did not appear in the data. **Combined during data analysis. ***Emerged during analysis.

After coding the first round of data in this manner I collected a representative sample of each data source, including transcripts from both mentors and all four mentees, from the second round of data. In order to address the reliability of my coding, I enlisted the district mentor specialist as a second rater, using my codes, definitions, and exemplars to code the sampling of data. When comparing the codes for support and challenge, 71% of our codes were in agreement. After this first check of inter-rater reliability, I refined the support and challenge sub-categories collapsing some of the sub-categories. With the refined definitions, the district mentor specialist and I coded 91% of the data the same way.

Using the refined support and challenge sub-category definitions, I recoded the first round of data to ensure that the analysis was consistent. I then analyzed the remaining second

and third rounds of data in the same manner, tracking the frequency of support, challenge, and each of the individual sub-categories.

Using frequency counts, I determined the percentage of support, challenge, and the individual sub-categories when compared to the total coded data. Based on these percentages I created a series of bar graphs to graphically represent the relationship between challenge and support (see Appendix B for bar graphs). These graphs allowed me to describe the balance of challenge and support across the entire data set, within the individual conferences, among the two mentors, and between the two mentees working with each mentor.

Positioning within the mentoring relationship. Data analysis to address the second research question about positioning within the mentoring relationships required a somewhat different sort of analysis. Rather than a speaking turn, as was used as the unit of analysis for the question regarding support and challenge, the unit of analysis for this research question was an “episode” (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p. 4), a section of the conversation in the conference transcripts that had a “principle of unity” (p. 4). When a mentor or mentee changed the subject or moved on to a new conversational topic, it signaled the beginning of a new unit of analysis in the form of a new episode.

Beginning with the first round of conferences transcripts, I read and re-read each episode, searching for evidence of the positions projected and taken up by the mentor and mentee within the conversation. I examined the types of questions the mentors asked, how the questions were asked, and how the mentees responded to the questions. I began coding with a priori codes proposed by Harré and van Langenhove (1999). They write of several types of positions that are taken up by individuals within their interactions with one another: “powerful or powerless, confident or apologetic, dominant or submissive, definitive or tentative, authorized or

unauthorized” (p. 17). I coded each unit of analysis using these paired descriptions of positions as a priori categories.

As the analysis proceeded, four additional pairs of positions emerged from the data: mentor as inquirer with mentee as knower, mentor as teacher with mentee as learner, mentee as director and mentor as helper, mentor as assertive with mentee as tentative and both mentor and mentee as colleagues. These positions were more “natural” to the context than those proposed by Harré and van Langenhove (1999) in their general discussion of positioning. Not only were these positions natural to the conversation, but they illustrated the ways in which “actor[s] and interactors mutually determine each other” (p. 17). When a mentor positioned herself as teacher for instance, she positioned the mentee as learner. Table 4 contains a list of a priori and emergent positioning categories.

Table 4

A Priori and Emergent Positioning Categories

A Priori Complementary Pairs	Emergent Complementary Pairs
powerful and powerless*	inquirer and knower
confident and apologetic*	teacher and learner
dominant and submissive**	director and helper
definitive and tentative*	colleagues
authorized and unauthorized*	

Note. *Did not appear in the data. **As analysis progressed, this category was renamed as *assertive and tentative*.

The analysis of the second and third rounds of data proceeded in a similar manner, using the complete set of coding categories. Across the entire set of transcripts, including both pre- and post-observation conferences between mentors and mentees, several of the initial a priori codes did not appear: powerful/powerless, confident/apologetic, definitive/tentative, and authorized/unauthorized.

Once the conference data were coded, I searched for patterns in the ways in which each mentor and mentee positioned self and other during their conversations. I used frequency counts to identify prominent positions. In addition to examining the data for ways in which mentors and mentees positioned self and other, I identified instances when mentors and mentees shifted positions within the conference conversations.

Chapter 4

Findings

In this multi-case study of junior high mentors, I examined the mentoring relationship to discover and describe how mentors support and challenge their mentees in order to promote beginning teacher development. As a means of better understanding the relationships between the mentors and the beginning teachers they were working with, I employed positioning theory as an analytic lens to examine the data.

The findings of this study will be organized according to the research questions that framed this study, which were (a) How do mentors balance support and challenge within the mentoring relationship? (b) How do mentors and mentees position themselves and each other within the mentoring relationship?

Balance of Support and Challenge within the Mentoring Relationship

Overall, mentors favored challenge over support in their interactions with the beginning teachers with whom they worked. In the context of this study, challenge has been defined as any mentor action that raises questions regarding how the mentee currently thinks about teaching (Daloz, 1999), promotes the learning of beginning teachers (Schwille, 2008), or challenges the mentee to think or act differently (Certo, 2005b). Across the entire data set, which included both pre- and post-observation conference transcripts as well as email questionnaires, 31% of coded data represented support, while 69% represented challenge. The mentors' clear propensity to challenge the novice teachers was evident in both observation conferences and mentoring activities as reports in the email questionnaires.

Balance within pre- and post-conferences. When only the observation conferences were considered, there was still a clear prominence of challenge over support. In conversations

before and after the mentors observed the mentee's class, 30% of statements and questions represented support, whereas 70% of their talk represented challenge in this in-the-moment data.

Support. Of the nine types of support used to code the data, the only two categories that did not appear in the data were *providing structure* and *expressing positive expectations*. Most of the supportive talk during pre- and post-observation conferences consisted of the mentors *reassuring the mentees*. When reassuring the mentees, mentors alleviated mentee concerns, gave approval for mentee plans, and boosted the mentees' confidence. For example, during a pre-conference, Kate explained to her mentor, Bonnie, that her eighth-grade students were stressed about an upcoming test. Kate decided to call the assessment a "quiz" rather than a "test" so the students wouldn't be as concerned about it. In response to this change, Bonnie reassured Kate that she had made a good decision. "Lower the anxiety level, that's a smart idea... Smart adjustment to the quiz" (B-K pre-conference 1). In her response to Kate's story, Bonnie confirmed Kate's decision to change the name of the assessment in order to relieve the students' stress.

Another example of reassurance during a post-conference occurred when Kate commented that classroom management during the observed lesson went better than she had expected. Bonnie reassured her that the instruction also went well by saying, "It's a great content lesson, too. You got a lot of good heavy ideas there that are great skills. I mean, thinking through things, from a perspective of opportunity cost, is an awesome life skill" (B-K post-conference 2). In Bonnie's brief comment about the content of Kate's lesson, she provided reassurance about several different things—the "heavy" or deep ideas Kate encouraged her students to think about, the practicality of the skills Kate taught, the critical thinking she included in her lesson plan, and her effective classroom management as evidenced by the word

“too.” It is evident that during the observation Bonnie recognized many effective things going on in Kate’s classroom, and in a few brief sentences during their post-conference she articulated several different strengths that would not only reassure Kate, but encourage her to continue with those effective practices. These types of reassurances occurred throughout all the conferences with mentors showing mentees that things were going well in their classrooms.

Challenge. While a majority of the supportive moves made by mentors were to reassure and encourage the mentees, the ways in which they challenged mentees were more complex. Whereas previous researchers have not found challenging elements such as critical feedback (Martin, 1997; Young et al., 2005) or “thoughtful criticism” (Bullough & Young, 2002, p. 429), in this study there was an abundance of challenge that raised questions (Daloz, 1999), promoted the learning (Schwille, 2008), and challenged the mentee to think or act differently (Certo, 2005b). Of the eight types of challenge used to code the data, the only a priori category that did not appear in the conferences was *offering a plan for growth*. The three most common types of challenge present throughout the conferences were (a) raising questions and initiating discussion, (b) making suggestions, and (c) offering observation feedback. Throughout the conference data, raising questions and initiating discussion occurred twice as often as the other two most common types of challenge combined.

Raising questions and initiating discussion. Instances of raising questions and initiating discussion were particularly prominent during pre-conferences, probably because prior to their observations, the mentors typically gathered information about the class they were preparing to observe. Both mentors, Bonnie and Diane, started out each pre-conference by asking the mentees what the objective for their lesson was going to be. In one pre-conference, after Natalie explained the objective she would be covering and the flow of the lesson Bonnie was going to

observe, Bonnie asked her, “And so how will you know at the end of the period that they have accomplished your objective—that they have an idea of the setting? What will be your way to account for that?” (B-N pre-conference 1). By asking Natalie to articulate how she would know that her students had learned, Bonnie was challenging Natalie in significant ways. These questions encouraged Natalie to think more deeply than merely planning out the teacher actions of the lesson. In order to answer the question, Natalie’s focus needed to shift from what she was teaching to what the students were learning and how they were going to demonstrate that learning. For a beginning teacher, this is a complex and difficult question to answer and implement in the classroom.

Just as in the pre-conferences, *raising questions and initiating discussion* was the most common form of challenge in post-conferences. Most of the questions in the post-conferences caused mentees to reflect on how the lesson went. For example, Bonnie asked Kate, “Okay, so as far as this lesson, when you teach it again next year, what will you keep? Will you change anything at all?” (B-K post-conference 2). This question not only encouraged Kate to evaluate the effectiveness that particular lesson, but it also required Kate to think about the future and how she could apply the effective practices, strategies, and skills to this lesson, and other lessons, in the future. Additionally, if Kate were to learn how to reflect on her practice during these observation conferences with Bonnie, she would be able to employ that skill independently in order to improve her future teaching.

Another example of the type of question raised in a post-conference comes from Diane and Steven. Diane observed a class where Steven’s students took a test and received instant feedback on how they did. She asked Steven, “How do you think that affects their learning?” (D-S post-conference 3). By asking this question, Diane challenged Steven to consider the

impact of his assessment strategy on his students. If Steven recognized that this was an effective way to increase student learning, he could internalize the practice and implement it in other ways—thereby moving his practice forward.

Making suggestions. In addition to raising questions, mentors often made suggestions concerning what the mentee had planned for a lesson or how a lesson could be improved. Some suggestions were very practical, as in the following example. As Steven explained his plans for the final weeks before Christmas break, he mentioned that he wanted to test his students on the material before they left for the break. Diane said, “And you know, that’s good to keep them occupied right up to the end. If you think, ‘Oh, it’s party time, we have two and a half days. Let’s not worry...’ the kids will just take that lead, and it’s party time. So, that’s very good to do a test right at the end. Keep them focused, because, like I say, you’ll pay for it.” (D-S pre-conference 3). As an experienced teacher, Diane understood the dynamics of a junior high school classroom leading up to Christmas Break and shared her knowledge with Steven, who had not yet experienced the energy of junior high students looking forward to the prospect of two weeks out of school. Although Diane’s suggestion was not likely to impact the specific lesson she was going to observe, on the practical level it would help Steven maintain an effective classroom environment in the coming weeks. On a more global level, Diane’s advice helped Steven to understand the rhythm of a junior high school year.

Other mentor suggestions were based on classroom management issues. For example, Kate expressed concern over a couple of students who were reading during class rather than paying attention to what was going on around them. She appreciated that her students were reading, but also wanted them to attend to her instruction. Bonnie said, “That’s a good social cue too, you know. Praise them for what they’re doing, ‘Super!’ and then correct it. ‘That’s great

what you're doing, but not right now.' Instead of just getting up and like, 'Hey! Put your books away!' They like that, praise first is a good thing" (B-K pre-conference 1). In her suggestion, Bonnie gave Kate an effective and positive way to deal with the specific issue at hand, but she also helped Kate to see a principle of classroom management that could be applied in many different situations. By labeling the strategy as a "social cue," Bonnie provided Kate with the vocabulary to remember the strategy and opened up the possibility of referring back to the principle in a future conversation.

In the post-conferences, mentors also made suggestions regarding ways to improve the lesson they had observed. During one post-conference, Diane and Ben were discussing the participation of the same few students during a class discussion. Diane suggested rather than calling on the first students who raised their hands, Ben could wait longer for student responses, thereby increasing the number of students participating. She said, "Just let them think because sometimes the students are just pondering. So add that wait time and I think that discussion would improve" (D-B post-conference 1). In giving this suggestion, Diane also encouraged Ben to view the situation from the perspective of his students. By attending to student thinking, Ben would be able to better plan lessons and discussions that engaged a larger number of his students. As with other suggestions, Diane's recommendation could be applied to many different contexts within the classroom.

Offering observation feedback. Another prominent type of challenge employed by mentors was that of *offering feedback after an observation*. Although mentors only provided it during post-conferences, this feedback occurred as frequently as the suggestions offered during both pre- and post-conferences. As part of each pre-conference, the mentee was invited to specify the type of data he or she wanted the mentor to collect during the observation. Some of

the observation feedback, then, was based on notes the mentor took or data they collected during the observation. Referring to her observation notes, Diane talked with Ben about the level of student engagement during his lesson. She said, “The only time [the percent of students engaged] went below the high of 98% to 100% is right here with bell work, where the students, about 6 or 8, I think... forgot to pick up their work” (D-B post-conference 1). This feedback was based on data she collected during the observation. By pointing out how high the student engagement was throughout the lesson and then noting the one time engagement dropped, it is likely that Diane hoped Ben would make the necessary adjustments to his procedures to maintain the high level of student engagement throughout the entirety of the lesson.

The feedback offered by mentors was usually quite specific, and they often referred back to the pre-conference conversation when giving their feedback. For example, in a later post-conference, Diane referred back to Ben’s concerns from the pre-conference regarding his class when she said, “And [the students] were risking when they’d share. That was impressive. Um, you praised at the end that they—their behavior was good. So I think with your concerns, reminding them then praising—it worked... At some point every single student participated” (D-B post-conference 2). Not only did Diane provide specific feedback, but her feedback was based on the concerns Ben had expressed earlier regarding his class. By following Ben’s lead and attending to what he was worried about, she encouraged him to think about and evaluate his practice. His reflection on his own practice from the pre-conference was validated in the post-conference, and Diane helped him to see that the strategy he employed was effective and could be used again in the future.

On the other hand, the mentors' feedback sometimes consisted of a summary of the data collected during the observation along with the mentor's thoughts concerning the lesson. For example, when talking with Kate, Bonnie said,

You had a lot of really great things. The bell rang and you started class right away. You gave them that attention signal. You stopped, you waited for them. You had a lot of good positive reinforcement, you know, "Thank you for raising your hand." You, a few times during the lesson, gave them the response signal of raising your hand so they knew to raise theirs also. (B-K post-conference 1)

It is clear from this excerpt of their conversation that Bonnie and Kate had previously talked about different classroom management techniques and had a common vocabulary to discuss these issues. In summarizing the effective management moves Kate made during the lesson, Bonnie named several strategies that Kate would be able to use in the future, thus reinforcing what Kate was currently doing and encouraging her to continue.

During the conferences, it was not uncommon for mentors to refer back to previous conversations they had had with the mentees. As Bonnie was closing a post-conference with Natalie, she said,

And I noticed, um, just the breakdown of your lesson, like kind of that gradual release of, you know, you gave them little snippets of instruction, kind of that 'chunk-and-chew' idea where you gave them a little bit, had them go to work, brought it back, gave them a little more, had them try it out. So it was a great kind of staging for them as far as controlling that like we talked about. Kind of the control of how the lesson flowed. (B-N post-conference 3)

Through this feedback Bonnie not only reinforced a lesson structure she felt was effective, but she also reminded Natalie of something that had talked about in the past.

At other times, the observation feedback was based on what stood out to the mentor. When discussing how Natalie was able to quickly regain the students' attention after a transition, Bonnie said, "I think in your tone [of voice], your tone is very business. It's very pleasant: it's firm and it's business, which is great. Like you have a very nice balance there when you talk to them" (B-N post-conference 1). Diane had a similar exchange with Steven when discussing a test he gave to his class. She said, "I noticed when you had humorous answers, like ridiculous answers, the kids pick up on that, and I think that that helped the ones that seemed lost, like, 'Oh, I'm not getting this. Everybody else is laughing'" (D-S post-conference 3). Both of these examples illustrate a strategy that the mentor found effective in the mentees' practice. In mentioning these effective practices, both mentors seemed to imply that the the mentees should continue using them.

Balance within mentoring activities. In addition to the in-the-moment conversational data collected during the pre- and post-observation conferences, mentors and mentees reported recent mentoring activities in the monthly email questionnaire. When compared with the conferences, the written responses from both mentors and mentees contained a wider variety in the types of support and challenge provided in mentoring activities. Yet just as in the conferences, mentors still heavily favored challenge over support in the mentoring activities they provided.

In the email questionnaires, the mentors and mentees reported the same types of support and challenge as previously described in conferences. In addition to those types of support and

challenge, they also included the supportive elements of *answering questions* and *advocating for the mentee*, as well as the challenging element of *planning curriculum together* (see Table 3).

Typical mentoring activities included providing help with classroom management or difficult students, giving advice, helping with school events like parent-teacher conferences, encouraging mentees, stopping by mentees' classrooms to check on them, sharing resources with mentees, and giving pep talks for encouragement. There was considerable overlap in the activities reported by mentors and mentees, but mentees reported more supportive activities than did mentors.

Differences in the Use of Support and Challenge

When examining the entire data set for both mentors, challenge was again more prominent than support in the interactions of both mentors with their respective mentees. Interestingly, Bonnie and Diane provided support and challenge in similar amounts, but in different ways.

Mentor differences. When compared with Diane's conversations, Bonnie gave more suggestions and did a significant amount of verbal modeling during her conferences with both mentees. For example, during a post-conference, Kate mentioned that a student had been defiant and disrespectful toward her when she attempted to get him back to work. Bonnie did not simply make a suggestion; she verbally modeled how the conversation could have gone. Citing Kate's typical language pattern, "Come have a seat, thank you," Bonnie modeled an alternative, "Even if you reversed how you say that to him, like, 'Thank you for putting that away. Now please come and have a seat.' Cause if you praise the one first and then correct it, you know, like, 'Oh, thank you for doing that. Now come sit down.' That sometimes helps kids who have attitudes be like, 'Oh,' cause they can't get too ticked cause you just said something good to them, right?"

(B-K post-conference 3). This type of verbal modeling showed up in nearly every one of Bonnie's conferences with her mentees and gave them the specific language and tone to use in their own classrooms.

In contrast, Diane provided her mentees with more observation feedback and raised more questions about their practice as illustrated in the previous account of challenge. A majority of Diane's interactions with her mentees during pre-conferences consisted of questions. She asked them many different questions about the lesson she was about to observe and about how things were going in their teaching. During post-conferences she provided them very specific feedback about the level of students' on-task behavior as well as specific things the teachers could do to increase student engagement.

Mentee differences. Over the course of the study and throughout both data sources, it was evident that the mentors customized their mentoring to meet the needs of each mentee. Whereas Bonnie adapted her mentoring to the different personalities of the mentees she worked with, Diane mentored one first- and one third-year teacher, and adapted her mentoring to meet each teacher's developmental needs.

Bonnie. Bonnie provided slightly more support to Kate as compared to Natalie. More specifically, Bonnie supported Kate in the form of reassurance and listening, as provided challenge in the form of modeling. These actions were not as prevalent in her mentoring of Natalie. This is not to say that Natalie did not experience those types of support and challenge from Bonnie, but Kate experienced them more often.

In one set of their email questionnaires, both Bonnie and Kate acknowledged similar needs. Bonnie stated that Kate was "anxious" about being observed, and Kate wrote that her own "confidence [was] shaken" (B-K questionnaire 1) since she was a first-year teacher. Yet

Kate also expressed her confidence in Bonnie's constancy as mentor. She wrote, "Anytime I have a question, [Bonnie] is there with suggestions, comments, general support. I know I can go to her without any fear of being seen as a failure" (B-K questionnaire 1). It is interesting to note that although Bonnie provided more than twice as much challenge as support, she provided this challenge in such a way that Kate still felt safe going to her with concerns. This pattern of reassurance was typical of the ways in which Bonnie interacted with Kate. After her second observation, Kate wrote, "Bonnie always has a list of positive things to tell me about my lesson" (B-K questionnaire 2).

It is clear from Kate's email responses that Bonnie knew Kate and was aware of her needs. Near the end of the semester, Kate wrote, "She knows from observations my strengths and weaknesses and offers support based off those." (B-K questionnaire 3). Bonnie actively reassured Kate throughout the semester to alleviate her anxiety and build her confidence. These mentoring interactions between Bonnie and Kate seem to be due to Kate's increased need of confirmation and reassurance.

In the case of Natalie, Bonnie provided challenge by giving tasks to perform and planning curriculum with her. Natalie wrote of suggestions from Bonnie more as if they were tasks Bonnie had asked her to complete. In her final email questionnaire, Bonnie wrote of her second mentee, "[Natalie] is never planned out enough to get anywhere, and resists my efforts to help her plan ahead. She nods her head and seems to be with you, but then you realize that you lost her... She is easily overwhelmed with information" (B-N questionnaire 3). With another mentee Bonnie may have been able to make suggestions in order to move the mentee's practice forward, but seems to have needed to be more explicit with Natalie. Natalie didn't seem to mind this direction. At the beginning of the school year she wrote, "She [Bonnie] willingly gives

advice when I seek it, but allows me to be my own teacher and run my classroom how I like to” (B-N questionnaire 1). Although Bonnie offered suggestions, it seems Natalie did not feel she had imposed her ideas.

Since Bonnie and Natalie taught the same subject, there was more opportunity for curriculum planning, not only in individual settings, but also during department collaboration, time set aside for professional learning communities. Interestingly, although planning curriculum together is listed as a challenging activity in the literature, both Bonnie and Natalie reported it as a supportive activity. Collaborative curriculum planning qualifies as a challenging activity since it aids in beginning teacher development and helps improve the practice of beginning teachers, but both mentors and mentees view it as supportive, likely due to the nurturing and helpful aspects of the act.

Diane. Diane provided slightly more support to Steven than to Ben. In Steven’s case, not only did Diane provide more support, but she also provided a wider variety of supportive activities. She listened to Steven, built a friendship with him, shared resources and materials, and advocated for him. As an intern, Steven did not have any student teaching experience. He was new to the school and brand new to teaching. Diane invited Steven and his wife to her home for Sunday dinner, encouraged him to take better care of himself and not work so hard, talked with teachers in Steven’s content area about curriculum, and encouraged him to attend a professional conference with a substitute paid for by the school.

Diane’s concern for Steven’s welfare was evident from the very beginning of the year. In her first email questionnaire, she wrote,

He has all of his students involved and participating in every class period. He is like the Pied Piper and they practically worship him. He is constantly performing and teaching

with so much energy, that I can see that it is taking its toll on him. He knows this is an issue, but he can't seem to let up. Isn't this a weird problem? I just worry that we might lose him to teaching because of the drain it is taking on him. (D-S questionnaire 1)

Steven clearly felt supported by Diane. In his first email questionnaire, he wrote, "She has stopped by countless times to give verbal support and answer questions. She has also given great advice about parent-teacher conferences and how to help difficult students. She has been a huge resource for great teaching ideas" (D-S questionnaire 1). Since Diane did not teach the same subject as Steven, she contacted another mentor who did teach in his subject area to observe his class to give him content-specific feedback. When discussing this possibility with Steven during an observation conference, Diane said, "Just let her see what she thinks. And to tell you the truth, I kind of want to brag about you because I think she's just going to be impressed" (D-S post-conference 2). There was a wide variety of support, but Diane also challenged Steven throughout the semester. In their observation conferences, nearly all of Diane's interactions with Steven dealt with raising questions and discussing the lesson.

In her interactions with her second mentee, Ben, Diane supported him by answering questions and reassuring him in the form of complimenting his practice during observation conferences. Keeping in mind that Ben was a third-year teacher at the time of the study, Diane's interactions with him were different than they were with Steven, who was a first-year intern. It is clear from the data that Diane respected Ben as a teacher and felt he was performing quite well. During each post-conference Diane was always positive in her interactions with Ben, and rarely offered suggestions. In providing feedback to Ben during post-conferences, Diane said, "The transitions did seem quite smooth... [The students] stayed on task pretty much the entire time" (D-B post-conference 1) and "There are no disruptions, no acting out. Everyone seems to

be on task. Your organization, I think, is what leads to this... You relate the lessons to their lives so it's pertinent of this goal" (D-B post-conference 3). Her positive feedback was not only based on the data she collected during the observation, but also her opinions of what Ben was doing well. It was clear from their conference conversations that Diane and Ben had a comfortable and collegial relationship. In one post-conference, Diane said, "I didn't notice one student call out the whole time, so to me, it was like, 'Oh, if that was your issue, this was a miracle' [laughter from both]" (D-B post-conference 2). In this instance, Diane provided the observation feedback that Ben requested, but also complimented his classroom management skills.

Throughout the study, Diane challenged Ben by giving minor suggestions on two occasions and giving him tasks to complete in order to obtain a level II license. Ben was a third-year teacher, and it appears that Diane adapted her mentoring to meet the needs of a more experienced teacher who was further along the developmental continuum and who would naturally need less guidance than Steven, who had no teaching experience at the beginning of the study.

For these two mentors, the acts of challenge were consistently more frequent than acts of support in their interactions with their mentees. Yet each mentee's expression of feeling supported by their mentor suggests that the balance the mentors struck was appropriate for each mentee's developmental level and needs. Further, both mentors drew on a variety of actions in their mentoring, balancing their approach with each of the beginning teachers with whom they worked.

Positioning within the Mentoring Relationship

This section will report findings for the second research question of this study: How do mentors and mentees position themselves and each other within the mentoring relationship? To address this question, I examined each of the four cases independently, then looked for patterns across all of the individual mentor-mentee relationships: Bonnie-Kate, Bonnie-Natalie, Diane-Ben, and Diane-Steven. All of the data analyzed for positioning came from a single data set—that of the observation conferences. The structure of the conferences was a hybrid of Harré & van Langenhove's (1999) *formal* and *informal* episodes. Similar to a formal episode, with its specific rules that determine the sequence of events, during observation each conference mentors would ask certain questions in a certain sequence. Within that structure, however, mentors and mentees addressed various topics surrounding the mentor's observations or other topics of interest to either the mentor or the mentee. This open conversational structure is more representative of an informal episode where the form and content is determined by the stories people have to tell and what has been discussed in the past. The consistent pattern and structure of the conferences constrained the conversation somewhat and placed some limitations on the potential positions the mentor and mentee could take up. An examination of conference data revealed that the hybrid nature of the interactions during the conferences initially determined the positions of the mentor and mentee. Since the mentor led the conference, a vast majority of the time she initially positioned herself and the mentee; the mentor was also in the position of dominance for a majority of the conferences. Both mentors and mentees seemed receptive to these positions a majority of the time.

Within the context of mentoring, the mentors were institutionally positioned (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) as the more knowledgeable other, expert to the mentees' position as

novice. Due to the purpose of the mentoring relationship—the mentor’s role in assisting the mentee and helping to accelerate his or her development—the mentor was positioned as dominant with the mentee as dependent. This does not imply that the mentee was powerless and the mentor was overpowering, just that these relative positions were to be expected in an expert-novice relationship.

First order positioning. In analyzing the data, “complementary pair[s]” (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p. 18) of positions were identified. Mentors and mentees positioned and were positioned in relation to each other, and both parties seemed to mutually agree upon position. This type of first order positioning (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999), where both participants accept their positions and carry on with the conversation, was evident through most of the observation conferences. The most prominent complementary pair found in the conference data was the position of *mentor as inquirer with mentee as knower*. Nearly every conference began with the mentor positioning herself as inquirer, asking questions about what the mentee was planning or how the lesson went. As the inquirer, the mentor was in a position of power, but in this position the mentor expected the mentee to be the knower because the mentee was more familiar with his or her classes, students, and lesson plans than was the mentor. This position could be considered an institutional position due to the model of mentoring employed by the district. The mentors consistently accepted this institutional position and the mentees followed suit.

Although the mentors were in a dominant position, it was a position of shared power. They consistently sought to share that position of power with the mentees by asking questions and probing responses. Mentors never explicitly told the mentees what to do. Rather, the mentors asked questions and helped the mentees think through and reflect on situations. Yet the

mentee still had the final say in how their lesson would be taught—the ultimate position of power within each classroom.

Near the end of each pre-conference, the mentors consistently asked the mentees what type of data they would like collected during the observation. This question positioned the mentee as the knower with respect to their own needs. The mentees were expected to identify their own concerns about their practice and then ask their mentor to collect data to address these concerns. By positioning the mentees as knower, the mentors conferred some of the power on them to make their own decisions for their classes, direct the mentoring session, set the topic of discussion, and most importantly, their own development and growth.

The second most prominent complementary pair was that of *mentor as teacher with mentee as learner*. The mentor positioned herself and was positioned by the mentee as teacher, when she gave advice, explained things, provided observation feedback, and gave the mentee ideas. For example, after observing Natalie’s seventh-grade class, Bonnie provided the following feedback.

You were walking around and monitoring, and you didn’t stay too long with any group, I noticed, which was great. It got you around to a lot of different groups, and I heard you asking and clarifying questions, like, “Well, what did you mean by that? How can you be more specific with that? Why don’t you put your desk over so you can be more a part of this group, Sam?” You know, like, “Let’s make it look like...” So I noticed that’s one thing with my kids is if they will put their desk together, they do such a better job working together. Like you had a great group right up here in this middle section. They were just like on... I was like, “Wow, what a good group.” (B-N post-conference 3)

In this segment of the post-conference, Bonnie related the moves she saw Natalie make that effectively managed the class and facilitated the group work. In effect, she was evaluating Natalie's performance just as a teacher evaluates a student's work. Bonnie also gave the implicit suggestion that students should move their desks together when working in groups. It seems that Bonnie's intent was to point out what Natalie did well, then provide a suggestion so that Natalie could learn from her own actions and apply that learning to future classroom situations.

Other paired positions included *mentee as talker with mentor as supportive listener*, *mentor as assertive with mentee as tentative*, and *mentee as director with mentor as helper*. These complementary pairs of positions occurred less frequently than the two previously discussed pairs of positions.

Through the conferences, mentees expressed concerns, worries, or frustrations they were having. When the mentee began talking about these things, they positioned the *mentors as supportive listeners*. One example of this position was seen in a pre-conference for a lesson that Kate was going to teach her eighth graders. In her pre-conference with Bonnie, Kate expressed her worries about understanding the content of the lesson well enough to teach her class effectively.

It's a new concept for me, even, economics is. Yes, I did take it, but it hates me. So just being able to, um, explain it to them and, uh, [other teacher] did the worksheet and [other teacher] put together a Power Point, and I did a lesson plan, so, of course I was a day late and a dollar short getting the lesson plan, but anyway, so we have this all set together to go on for a conference, but just understanding in my mind, even though the breakdown of the, of the worksheet vs. the Power Point is fabulous. So, but it's just being able to

explain it to them cause there's 30 plus kids in the class and they're all over the spectrum.

(B-K pre-conference 2)

Bonnie responded to Kate's concerns by listening quietly and then reassuring her that the lesson would go well. Bonnie said, "The nice thing is that it'll be your third time teaching it that day, so at least you'll be able to work out the bugs a little earlier in the day and by the time you get to your big class, 'Okay, whew'" (B-K pre-conference 2). Bonnie listened while Kate expressed her concerns and worries about the lesson and accepted the position of supportive listener.

The position of *mentee as director of the observation with mentor as helper* came up when the mentor, by asking the mentee the data they would like to see collected during the observation, positioned the mentee as the one who was in control and themselves as the assistant. A typical example of this position is seen in a pre-conference with Steven when Diane asked, "Okay, while I'm there observing, what do you want me to look for? Is there any data you want me to collect?" (D-S pre-conference 1). Steven took up the position of director and answered,

I think the only thing that will be useful at this stage of reviewing is: Are the students actually speaking Spanish? Because they'll be tested on their ability to speak Spanish, so I will try to make it very clear that it is advantageous to them to work hard now to be ready to be ready for the oral test. Some of them will try to cruise and just sit around and pretend like they're doing something, and that's the thing that I want to find out. If there's a way to design an activity, if it's engaging enough that students will be interested in doing it. Maybe look to see how many kids are just cruising by and how many are speaking English.

In giving Diane an observational focus, Steven reflected on his class and asked Diane to collect data that specifically addressed a concern he had regarding his students' engagement with the

subject matter and how that engagement would affect their performance on the assessment. Throughout her pre-conferences Diane was consistent in making these types of queries, and Steven consistently engaged in first order positioning by acting as director of Diane's observations of his class. Another example of this complementary pair occurred during a pre-conference with Natalie, when Bonnie referred to herself as "another set of eyes in [the] classroom" (B-N pre-conference 2). The language Bonnie used in this comment signaled a shift of power to Natalie. By using a metaphor, Bonnie implied that she was not a whole person, but just a "set of eyes" gathering the data that Natalie wanted to see.

By positioning mentees as directors of the observation, it seems that the mentors were attempting to create a sense of ownership in the mentee—the mentors positioned the mentees as directors of their own learning and development as teachers. The position of director/helper was seen only during pre-conferences because in post-conferences the data had been collected and was presented to the mentee.

Shifts in first order positioning. Mentors almost always started out pre-conferences as the *inquirer*, positioning the mentees as *knowers*. The hybrid nature of the conferences, with their set sequence of questions, helped to create this default set of positions, which was accepted by both the mentor and mentee. Each pre-conference started with a variation on the question, "What is the objective for your lesson?" and worked through a predictable sequence including questions about the teacher actions during the lesson, how the mentees were going to assess the students' learning, and concluding with a question regarding the type of data the mentees would like collected during the observation.

In several instances, particularly in the cases of Diane talking with both Ben and Steven, the mentor and mentee remained positioned as inquirer and knower for the duration of the

conference with little change. Diane briefly positioned her mentees as directors in order to ascertain the data they wanted to see after the observation, and on two occasions she positioned herself as teacher with her mentee as listener to give a brief piece of advice. Other than those infrequent instances, Diane remained primarily as the inquirer for the duration of each pre-conference.

These shifts in position are better understood when analyzed with Harré and van Langenhove's (1999) concept of the "mutually determining triad" (p. 18) in mind. As discussed in chapter two, the structure of a conversation shifts based (a) the positions of the participants, (b) the storylines within the conversation, and (c) the utterances of each participant. Diane consistently enacted an institutionally established storyline by asking the mentee about the lesson they were preparing to teach. Within this storyline, the beginning teacher explained the flow of the lesson and the teacher and student actions they anticipated. At the point when Diane asked what they would like her to watch for in the lesson, the storyline pivoted—the control of the conference shifted to the mentee. The mentee was then in a position to shape the storyline of the conversation due to the open-ended nature of Diane's question. Whatever concerns they had about their teaching or classes then influenced the positions of both the beginning teacher and their mentor. In changing the storyline of the conference, the positions shifted from mentor as inquirer with mentee as knower to mentee as director with mentor as helper.

The storylines of Bonnie and her mentees tended to be more fluid. Bonnie also began each pre-conference as inquirer with Kate and Natalie as knowers, but over the course of each conference she shifted positions numerous times depending on how the conversations progressed. Bonnie returned to the paired position of inquirer and knower throughout each conference. She positioned herself and the mentees in this way twice as much as any other

paired position over the course of the study. The positions she and her mentees enacted included *mentor as teacher with mentee as learner*, *mentor as assertive with mentee as tentative*, *mentor as helper with mentee as director*, *mentor as supportive listener with mentee as talker*, and *colleagues*.

During post-conferences, both mentors favored the complementary pair of *inquirer and knower* over other positions. Diane strongly favored positioning herself as inquirer and her mentees as knowers in the post-conferences. She asked questions concerning how the mentees felt the lesson went and what they noticed in the data she collected. Diane also asked questions concerning student learning, as seen in the following question from a post-conference with Steven: “So as far as preparation for the test. How effective, of course you won’t know until after the test, but from your observations, how well prepared do you feel that they are?” (D-S post-conference 1). She also asked both general and specific questions regarding instruction. In a pre-conference with Ben, Diane asked, “What’s going well with your instruction?” (D-B post-conference 2), and in another pre-conference she asked, “How did you feel like the transitions went?” (D-B post-conference 1).

In positioning her mentees as knowers, Diane encouraged them to deconstruct their lessons as to what went well, and where there was room for improvement. By asking reflective questions, Diane caused her mentees to think through their lessons and come up with their own ideas for moving forward. In creating a reflective storyline, Diane positioned her mentees as knowers, a position they took up throughout each conference. During post-conferences, the only other complementary pair employed by Diane was that of *teacher and learner*. This position was only used three times over the course of all the conferences, when Diane changed the storyline where mentees reflected tone where the mentor provided observation feedback. Prior

to giving her feedback, Diane always asked the mentees their impressions of the data before giving her opinions and ideas.

Like Diane, Bonnie spent more time enacting the institutional position of *inquirer* than other positions during her post-conferences with Kate and Natalie. Bonnie's questions were similar to those asked by Diane. Additionally, she employed the teacher/learner, supportive listener/talker, and assertive/tentative positions in post-conferences. Similar to the pattern of her pre-conferences, Bonnie began each post-conference in the institutional inquirer position and shifted to different positions throughout each conference depending on the storylines they enacted. The complementary pairs were not static over the course of a conference—they shifted in patterned ways from one pair to another. Shifting from one complementary pair to another was only evidenced in Bonnie's data.

Two specific shifts in positioning stood out in Bonnie's conferences with her mentees, (a) from mentor as inquirer with mentee as knower to mentor as teacher with mentee as learner and (b) mentor as inquirer with mentee as knower to mentor as assertive with mentee as tentative. The circumstances of these shifts in positioning will be discussed next.

Inquirer and knower to teacher and learner in pre-conferences. One of the most common shifts in positioning throughout the conferences was from mentor as inquirer with mentee as knower to mentor as teacher with mentee as learner. It seems that there were primarily two storylines in when this shift in positioning occurred. The first storyline that precipitated a shift from inquirer to teacher typically occurred when mentors asked mentees about the lesson to be observed and the mentee did not appear to have a solid idea of what or how they were going to teach a concept. When the lack of a clear lesson plan became apparent, the explication of the lesson storyline could not be maintained, in which case the mentor tended

to position the mentee as learner by asking a series of questions that helped the mentee plan out the lesson. One example of this shift in position occurred during a pre-conference about an editing lesson Natalie was going to teach.

After listening to Natalie explain the objective of the upcoming lesson, that students would edit a piece of writing, Bonnie asked several questions to get more details about the lesson. She asked,

So as far as your modeling, what do you think that's going to look like? I mean I know you're not finalized, and that's fine, but kind of where you're thinking right now, what do you imagine that's going to look like? Is it going to be a paragraph, is it going to be a full paper, are they going to have a checklist they're going to be using to look at it? (B-N pre-conference 3)

Natalie responded, pausing throughout her answer, indicating that a breakdown in the storyline had occurred and made it clear she was still thinking through the lesson. Natalie said,

Yes, there will be a checklist, yes. And um, I would like to show, um, I would like to show, um, um, a paragraph with individuals and then showing them multiple paragraphs so they can show the distinction in paragraphs, and then focus on just one paragraph to see the individual, um, mark, like um, editing, or the more specific editing within a paragraph. (B-N pre-conference 3)

After Natalie's hesitant answer, Bonnie repositioned herself as teacher and guided Natalie as the learner through the rest of the lesson plan with a series of questions. Bonnie asked, "Okay, so will you have already edited it, or will they be kind of helping you edit it?" followed by, "As far as their checklist, are they just going to be checking things off, like 'yep, I changed that on my paper' or are they going to have other things they're supposed to do with it?" and ending with,

“So are you looking more at revision/content type stuff or are you looking at just kind of editing fine details?” (B-N pre-conference 3).

By asking specific questions, Bonnie was able to help Natalie flesh out the basic lesson plan she brought to the pre-conference. Bonnie’s questions also acted as prompts to help Natalie know the types of things she needed to include in her instruction. As the expert in the situation, Bonnie knew that the lesson Natalie had planned would not be sufficient, so she repositioned herself as teacher to help Natalie, as learner, develop a better lesson.

Inquirer and knower to teacher and learner in post-conferences. A second instance of a shifting storyline typically happened when a mentor provided observation feedback. For example, in a conference with Steven, Diane began by asking, “You were testing their listening. It had two parts, and how do you think it went?” This utterance positioned Diane as inquirer with Steven as knower. Steven responded, “Most kids do very well. Um, the thing that I’m happy about is that um, it’s getting easier for them to listen and to understand, which is the whole goal of having these quizzes.” After listening to his impression of how things went during the test, Diane changed the storyline to one of instruction when she said, “Okay, you look at this T-Chart. What I’ve noticed, once they settle down coming from lunch, uh, I noticed the procedures, the students were focused, they got right down to it, were mostly quiet” (D-S post-conference 3). She then proceeded to give Steven some more specifics concerning what she saw while observing his class. The position shifted from Steven as knower about his class and how the lesson went when Diane positioned herself as teacher and pointed out other specific things that occurred during the lesson. In providing her interpretations of what she saw, Diane pointed out the effective elements of the lesson that she wanted Steven to internalize and implement in

the future. Her specific mention of class procedures and students working was likely intended to point out that these are things Steven should continue doing in his teaching.

Another example that typified a shift toward an instructional storyline occurred in a post-conference between Bonnie and Natalie. Natalie previously asked Bonnie to watch for the clarity of her directions throughout the lesson. After positioning Natalie as knower by inquiring about Natalie's general impressions of how the lesson went with her seventh-grade class, Bonnie asked, "How do you feel like your directions went today?" Natalie responded as knower to Bonnie's question by articulating the strengths and weaknesses she saw in her directions, and then Bonnie repositioned herself as teacher when she said,

You stepped out each activity and didn't give too many directions at once. You... gave an amount of directions just for that moment, and that was great, and then moved to the next step. I know one place they got confused was then you had them pick their roles in their groups. Some of them just started. They were like, "Okay, we picked our roles and we started." So maybe clarify like, "Okay, you have 30 seconds to pick your roles, and then we're going to have some more instructions." So do that and bring back so they know what the next step is. So I thought, "Wow, some of these kids are really on top of it. They were just moving right in."

When Bonnie provided the detailed feedback and offered a suggestion for future lessons, she positioned herself as teacher and Natalie as learner. It is clear that Natalie took up the position of learner because she listened to the feedback and suggestions and then responded with, "Okay," and later, "Yeah, I like that" (B-N post-conference 2). In this way, Natalie was receptive not only to her position as learner, but also to the suggestions Bonnie provided as teacher.

This pattern of the mentee engaging in first order positioning and taking up the position of learner and agreeing with the suggestions offered by the mentor as teacher was evident throughout the interactions of both mentors with their mentees. In some conferences, the mentees even spoke of taking notes, as students do, when the mentor shared ideas with them while in the teacher and learner pair. It is clear that the mentees respected the mentors and wanted to hear the suggestions the mentors offered.

Second order positioning. Although both mentors and mentees accepted their mutually agreed upon positions a majority of the time, there were a few instances, 9% of the coded positioning data, when the mentor attempted to position the mentee in particular ways, but the position was not taken up by that mentee. These instances of second order positioning occurred when the mentor and mentee were attempting to convey different storylines within the same conversation, which disrupted the otherwise smooth flow of the conference.

Mentee resistance to positioning. A shift in position that occurred several times over the course of the conferences was from mentor as inquirer with mentee as knower to mentor as assertive with mentee as tentative. This shift occurred when the mentor attempted to enact a reflective storyline wherein she asked the mentee to reflect on the observed lesson and the mentee either could not or would not acknowledge what went well during the lesson.

An example of this repositioning occurred during a post-conference when Bonnie asked Kate how she felt about classroom management in the class Bonnie had observed. Kate was happy with the way students had behaved and responded to Bonnie's question, "Oh my gosh [laughter]. I mean they're always chatty. There were a lot [of students] missing today, but they were, um, nothing like all the little side conversations everywhere" (B-K post-conference 2). Although the students were still "chatty," Kate apparently felt that the students were more well-

behaved than was typical. Her response did not go along with Bonnie's storyline for reflection in that it did not entirely answer Bonnie's question. Kate seems to imply that things were better than normal during the class Bonnie had observed.

Bonnie followed up that response with another question, "So what do you think made that difference today?" This second question about management sustained the reflection storyline and was more assertive and direct than the first question. Kate responded that the students were scared because a student was removed from class by an administrator the previous day. Bonnie laughed good-naturedly at Kate's idea, but then said, "That might have had some impact yesterday... What else do you think about the lesson? Did you have anything in place that you think kind of helped their behavior?"

With this third repetition of the same question, Bonnie became more assertive, and her use of the word "yesterday" implied that she disagreed with Kate's opinion regarding the improved student behavior. In response to Bonnie's question, Kate said, "I think it was just that. I didn't have anything in place in the lesson that kind of outlined... So it wasn't anything that I had in the lesson, I don't think." Bonnie's repeated questions signal a gradual shift from mentor as inquirer to a more assertive position. She seemed to want Kate to claim responsibility or notice the classroom management techniques that made the lesson a success, but Kate either did not see what she did that made the lesson work or did not agree with Bonnie's subtle insistence that the student behavior was a result of her own actions. When Kate explicitly stated that she did not believe she had impacted student behavior, Bonnie reiterated, "Was there anything about you as far as your execution of the lesson that you feel like any moves you were making as a teacher that you think helped it?" Bonnie refused Kate's answers, and repositioned herself as assertive. Bonnie and Kate were going in separate directions in this conversation—Bonnie's

storyline was one of reflection and mentee ownership, but Kate's storyline was that of placing the causes of student behavior outside of herself. These two divergent storylines made it impossible for the mentor and mentee to continue in the positions of inquirer and knower. This shift in position becomes evident when Bonnie refused to accept Kate's ideas about management, therefore removing Kate from the position of knower. Finally, after Bonnie's fourth question about her management, Kate acknowledged the data Bonnie had collected, noting that she had moved all over the room during the lesson. Bonnie readily agreed with Kate's appraisal and gave some examples of movement and proximity to students. After that discussion, Kate acquiesced, "So I think that's what really helped." She did not come to that conclusion on her own, but submitted to Bonnie's idea that she made the difference in student behavior.

An underlying layer of positioning evident in this exchange between Bonnie and Kate is Bonnie's attempt to position Kate as the person of power in her classroom. When asked what made a positive difference in the students' behavior, Kate repeatedly located the cause outside of herself—whether it was because students were absent, an administrator visited the room the precious day, or because they just happened to be good that day. This is an example of second order positioning (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999)—Kate pushed back against Bonnie positioning her as the person of power in her classroom. When observing, Bonnie took notes on Kate's management moves that she felt were effective during the lesson, and at the end of this section of the conference Kate agreed. It seems as though Bonnie wanted Kate to see the impact that her actions would have on her students, therefore, empowering her to make a difference in her classroom. Kate did not appear to accept that position of power or Bonnie's storyline until her mentor became more assertive, thus placing her in the tentative position.

Another occurrence of second order positioning occurred when a mentor, primarily in the position of dominance, attempted to turn the power over to the mentee. This was most evident when, during each pre-conference, mentors asked the mentees what kind of data the mentee would like the mentor to collect during the observation. From the phrasing of the question it was clear that the mentor wanted the mentee to decide on the focus of the observation. For example, Diane asked Steven, “Tomorrow, when I come, what data would you like me to take?” (D-S pre-conference 3) and Bonnie asked Kate, “What specifically... I know fourth period is your biggest class, your trickiest class, what specifically do you want me looking for? What is making you craziest?” (B-K pre-conference 1).

Each of these utterances positioned the mentee as the director of the observation and the mentor as helper. The mentors wanted the mentees to think about what was going on in their classes and choose an observational focus that would provide data to help the mentees improve their practice. Sometimes the mentees took up this new position and identified something specific for the mentor to observe—whether it was classroom management, clarity of instructions, or student engagement. At other times the mentees were reluctant to dictate what he or she wanted the mentor to look for. This was the case with Diane and Ben in the following exchange.

Diane asked, “All right, what do you want me to do [observe for]? Because I’ve got these papers for data gathering” (D-B pre-conference 1). Ben, reluctant to take the lead, did not give Diane a specific focus, but said, “Anything I can use.” Diane then gave him several options of data collection forms and types of things she could observe, but Ben refused to take up the position of director. He said, “Probably whichever one allows you to be more, I guess, use your skills as a mentor and to be observant... things that you could be maybe a little more critical on.”

It appears that rather than taking control of the observation and deciding what he wanted Diane to watch for, Ben deferred to Diane's judgment as a mentor about what he needed, thereby rejecting the more powerful position of director.

Mentor resistance to positioning. Another instance of second order positioning occurred with between Bonnie and Kate. Kate taught a semester-long class from August to the middle of January, and Bonnie was preparing to do an observation in January just before the end of the first semester. They had previously spoken about things that Kate wanted to change in her classroom before getting new students at the beginning of the second semester. When Bonnie asked what Kate wanted her to watch for during the observation, Kate replied,

What I want you to look for is just how I can change [classroom management,] because I am nervous to start next week. Like I know so many things that I did wrong this term, these first two terms that I don't even know if I know how to change it. (B-K pre-conference 3)

Kate doubted her ability to make the changes she felt were necessary to be effective as a classroom teacher. These insecurities made it difficult for her to take up the position of dominance Bonnie offered her. In both of these examples, the mentee engaged in second order positioning and pushed the position of director back to the mentor to decide on the observational focus.

The instances of mentees participating in second order positioning and rejecting the power offered by a director/helper position illustrate an underlying power issue within the mentoring conferences. At different times, both the mentors and mentees rejected being in a position of dominance. Due to the mentor's experience, and merely as a consequence of having the role of mentor, it is implicitly understood that there is a power differential between the

mentor and the mentee—the mentor is institutionally positioned as the expert with the mentee positioned as the novice. But one of the mentors seemed to want to reject that dominance. During a post-conference, Bonnie asked questions to encourage Kate to reflect on what went well during her lesson. Kate good-naturedly responded, “I feel like nothing when well today. Maybe because I knew you were in here,” followed by a chuckle. Bonnie quickly replied, “Don’t worry about me! Don’t worry!” (B-K post-conference 1). Although Bonnie went on to mention several things that went well during the lesson, Kate could not identify her successes.

From these comments, and based on other conference conversations and email questionnaires, Kate’s lack of confidence became apparent. A recurring storyline put forth by Kate throughout the conferences is one of tentativeness. She questioned herself, her performance, and her abilities. It also seems that Bonnie did not like the idea that as the expert, her presence caused Kate to feel more insecure. Paradoxically, Kate wrote repeatedly through the semester that she felt very supported by Bonnie and could go to Bonnie “without any fear of being seen as a failure” (B-K questionnaire 1). Although the position of dominance was at times rejected by both parties, they seemed to have a positive and productive working relationship.

Another example of the rejection of dominance showed up during analysis when the position of colleagues became apparent in the data. When compared to Diane, Bonnie positioned herself as the more dominant individual in the conference much more often. Bonnie began each conference as inquirer with her mentee as knower, a position of partially shared dominance. Throughout the conferences she also employed the complementary pairs of mentor as teacher with mentee as learner and mentor as assertive with mentee as tentative, which positioned her with greater dominance in relation to her mentees. But at the end of nearly every conference,

Bonnie would position herself and the mentee as colleagues, which had the least power discrepancy of all positions.

At the end of one post-conference, Bonnie and Kate discussed a future informal observation when Kate mentioned that it was difficult to quiet her students down when the announcements came on over the school intercom. Bonnie said, “There’s point in the year where you’re like, ‘Really? Six minutes on announcements? Can we shut anything down here? Put it on the TV in the foyer? Anything’” (B-K post-conference 2). Bonnie mirrored Kate’s slight annoyance with the school announcements, thereby putting them on common ground. In doing this, Bonnie removed herself from the position of dominance and positioned herself as Kate’s colleague, facing the same issues. Kate responded by saying, “I am so glad he said this is the last day we’re making this announcement about soccer, whatever.” By agreeing, Kate took up the position of colleague, which removed Bonnie from the position of dominance.

At the end of their next pre-conference, Kate expressed her concern over management when she said, “Management is definitely my downfall in teaching” (B-K pre-conference 3). Once again, Bonnie wanted Kate to see that she wasn’t the only person who had that struggle. Bonnie said,

That’s everybody’s hardest thing from year to year. It changes every year. It’s a hard game, but I think, you know, you just need a few semesters under your belt to go, ‘This works for me, this is me. This doesn’t.’ I’ve been stealing management this long, and I like this, I like this, I like this, and I don’t like this. It’s a trial and error game. (B-K pre-conference 3)

By saying that she “steals” classroom management techniques and tries them out, Bonnie positions herself as Kate’s colleague. In both cases, Kate expressed some reservations about her

management and Bonnie reassured her by explaining that all teachers feel this way. In this way, Bonnie is establishing common ground and positioning herself as Kate's colleague, rather than in a position of dominance.

Throughout this chapter Bonnie was featured more prominently than Diane as findings were discussed. This is due to the wider variety of mentoring practices employed by Bonnie. In the analysis of support and challenge, both Diane and Bonnie reassured their mentees, provided their mentees with observation feedback, and raised questions and initiated discussion. In addition to those three types of support and challenge, Bonnie also challenged her mentees by modeling and offering suggestions. These types of challenge were not used by Diane.

In the positioning analysis, both Diane and Bonnie positioned themselves as inquirer, teacher, supportive listener, and helper throughout their conferences with their mentees. In addition to those three positions, Bonnie also positioned herself or was positioned by her mentees as assertive and colleague. These positions were not present in Diane's data.

In summary, mentors and mentees were positioned in complementary pairs throughout the study. The most common position found in the data is that of mentor as inquirer with mentee as knower, which seemed natural due to the hybrid nature of the observation conferences and their format of the mentors posing questions and the mentees responding to the questions posed. Although the inquirer and knower pair was the dominant pair observed in the data, mentors would also reposition themselves and the mentees throughout individual conferences for a variety of reasons. A vast majority of the positioning throughout the study was first order positioning, with infrequent pushback and reluctance to accept the way one was positioned.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The findings of this study shed new light on the construct of challenge within the mentoring relationship. The mentors in this study provided different types of challenge than have been discussed in previous literature, which led to a redefinition of the concept of challenge within mentoring. Not only did mentors provide qualitatively different challenge, but they also adapted their mentoring to meet the needs of each mentee and balanced support and challenge within each individual relationship. The positions mentors and mentees took up throughout their interactions enabled the mentors challenge the mentees in both subtle and significant ways. Implications for induction leaders, mentors, and administrators will be discussed, as well as suggestions for further research.

Redefining Challenge within the Mentoring Relationship

Throughout the literature (e.g., Bullough & Young, 2002; Bullough et al., 2008; Jones, 2001; Little, 1990; Martin, 1997; Maynard, 2000; Young et al., 2005), it is evident that mentors are comfortable in the role of supporter, but are reluctant to provide feedback that challenges beginning teachers to improve. The findings of this study stand in stark contrast to this previous literature. Throughout the current study, in both mentoring activities and observation conferences, there was a clear prominence of challenge over support in mentor interactions with their respective mentees. In the previous literature, the challenge described frequently involved an element of criticism, whether it was critical feedback (Martin, 1997; Young et al., 2005), critical conversations (Martin, 1997; Young et al., 2005), or “thoughtful criticism” (Bullough & Young, 2002). By definition, criticism involves judgment and evaluation. One would almost

expect a contentious element to the traditional understanding of challenge, but that type of challenge was not present in this study.

The challenge present in this study seems to be more in line with the idea of challenge as a means to help beginning teachers learn the practice of teaching and promote beginning teacher learning (Schwille, 2008). A straightforward critique also helps beginning teachers improve their practice, but the negativity that could be present in a traditional critique was not found in this study. The mentoring activities examined in this study encouraged mentees to “think or act differently about the work of teaching” (Certo, 2005b, p. 396) and raised questions about beginning teachers’ “worldviews and invite[s] them to entertain alternatives to close the dissonance, accommodate their structures, and think afresh” (Daloz, 1999, p. 217). Although mentors did not explicitly point out flaws in their mentees’ practice, they did raise thought-provoking questions, provided feedback in the form of data gathered during observations, and gave suggestions directed at improving the mentees’ practice. Although these are subtle forms of critique, they still seemed to be powerful in fostering challenge with the end goal of improved teacher performance as the motivation.

Not only is there a quantitative difference in the challenge found in this study, but a qualitative difference as well. The type of challenge provided by the mentors in this study could be termed *nurturing challenge*, as it was not aggressive or confrontational. Table 5 summarizes the various definitions of support and challenge found in the literature, including descriptions of challenge that were and were not found in this study. The mentors seemed to know when to support and when to challenge to best meet the needs of the beginning teachers with whom they were working. Daloz (1999) posits that in a situation where both support and challenge are low, the mentee is unlikely to change, but if support is increased there is potential for growth if the

mentee is internally motivated. In a scenario with high challenge and low support, Daloz writes that an “insecure” (p. 208) teacher will retreat. Echoing this idea, Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall (1998) write that the individual will “simply withdraw psychologically into the safe haven of the current stage of growth” (p. 78).

Table 5

Comparison of Definitions of Challenge in the Literature and in this Study

Descriptions of Challenge in the Literature	Descriptions of Challenge Found in this Study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective problem solving (Bullough et al., 2008) • Criticism (Bullough et al., 2008) • Conditions that would enable mentees to “consistently reflect on their practice and act on their emerging insights” (Bullough et al., 2008, p. 1856). • “Thoughtful criticism” (Bullough & Young, 2002, p. 429) • “Pointed feedback” (Bullough & Young, 2002, p. 429) • Critical feedback, analysis, and reflection (Martin, 1997) • Critical feedback (Young et al., 2005) • “Critical conversations about the practice and theory of teaching and learning” (Young et al., 2005, p. 185) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Any mentoring activity that challenges the protégés to think or act differently about the work of teaching” (Certo, 2005b, p. 396). • Mentors “raise questions about their students’ current worldviews and invite them to entertain alternatives to close the dissonance, accommodate their structures, think afresh” (Daloz, 1999, p. 217). • Mentors help beginning teachers learn the practice of teaching (Schwille, 2008). • “Educational intervention” (Schwille, 2008, p. 160), the purpose of which is to promote the beginning teacher’s learning. • Helping beginning teachers develop their “professional and personal competence” (Tillman, 2005, p. 610).

With the high level of challenge displayed by the mentors in this study, one may expect the mentees to feel overwhelmed and retreat or withdraw as the literature suggests. But growth can occur with an “appropriate mix” of challenge and support (Daloz, 1999, p. 208), and Bonnie and Diane seemed to achieve this balance. In this study, it seems as though support and challenge were two sides of the same coin and were employed almost simultaneously. During their conferences, mentors switched back and forth from support to challenge throughout each conversation. The ways in which Bonnie and Diane challenged their mentees were not aggressive or confrontational. They were not judgmental in their language or actions. The

challenge they provided was more reflective in nature—they asked the mentee questions about their practice that required the mentees to articulate their own strengths and what was going well, so those actions could be replicated in the future. Rather than pointing out what was going wrong, the mentors focused on what was going right and worked toward helping the mentees recognize and continue those practices. The challenge was couched in a kind and encouraging relationship, which made it so the mentees were not compelled to withdraw or retreat.

It is possible that the nurturing challenge displayed by the mentors may be due in part to the preparation the mentors received in cognitive coaching. The nonjudgmental stance of cognitive coaching removes the evaluative responsibility from the mentor's role, which may enable the mentors in this district to challenge in more subtle and nuanced ways. Cognitive coaching encourages reflection on the part of the individual being coached rather than direction on the part of the coach. Throughout the study, mentees were able to reflect and come to their own conclusions, but when they were unsure of how to resolve a situation, the mentors provided them with numerous suggestions rather than one single “correct” way to proceed. By giving the mentees choice through multiple options, the mentors still allowed for mentee decision-making and ownership.

It is important to note that this study took place in a district with an established mentor program that included elements of both training and ongoing support for mentors. The mentor program included many formal elements that made the institutional rights, expectations, and responsibilities of the mentors clear to all. Mentors were expected to use cognitive coaching as a means to help their mentees reflect on and improve their practice. Mentoring activities were tracked by the district in a monthly log submitted by mentors. In this way, the mentors were also supported and challenged throughout the year.

Interpreting Adaptive Mentoring as Evidence of Balance

Analysis revealed that both mentors who participated in this study followed the same basic format in their pre- and post-observation conferences and engaged in similar mentoring activities. Yet within that structure they customized their mentoring to meet the needs of the beginning teachers with whom they worked. This adaptive mentoring speaks to the relational nature of mentoring. Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall (1998) propose that the most effective ratio of support to challenge differs depending on the teacher. Some teachers “require massive support with small amounts of challenge. Others may thrive with an equal balance and still others may require more challenge than support” (p. 78). The junior high mentors in this study knew their mentees well and tailored their mentoring to both the mentees’ personalities and developmental stage.

The personalities of Kate and Natalie differed enough that Bonnie had different approaches when working with them. Kate was anxious about her performance and often lacked confidence regarding her teaching abilities. Natalie was a free spirit who often showed up to pre-conferences without a lesson plan. One needed more encouragement, and the other needed more direction. Bonnie saw these differences and adapted her mentoring to address it. Bonnie was not only motivated to help Kate and Natalie improve, but she also wanted them to have positive experiences in their first year of teaching. The ways in which she personalized her mentoring helped her mentees feel safe coming to her with concerns, even though she consistently challenged them over the course of their participation in the study.

While both of the teachers Diane mentored were considered beginning teachers, only one of them, Steven, was in his first year of teaching. Ben was a third-year teacher, but was required by the state EYE guidelines to continue working with a mentor. Diane’s practice with these two

beginning teachers differed greatly. With Steven she was more supportive, helping him to learn the school culture and system, advocating for him, and calling in help from other faculty members whom she felt could assist him in ways she could not. Yet Diane also asked him challenging questions and gave suggestions to aid in his development.

As an established member of the school community, Ben did not need the support and acculturation that Steven did. Rather, Ben needed help navigating the bureaucracy of renewing his teaching license, and Diane provided the needed assistance. Additionally, since Ben had been teaching for three years, the types of challenge he needed to continue in his development were more subtle than those she provided Steven. Not only did both mentors adjust their mentoring to each individual mentee, but they also made on-the-spot adjustments within individual conferences in order to provide the feedback and direction that the mentees needed.

Although it was not within the scope of this study, it is interesting to note that both of Bonnie's mentees were women and both of Diane's mentees were men. One has to wonder how the gender norms and expectations impacted the mentoring decisions Diane made with her mentees. Another demographic detail to note is the difference in age between Bonnie and her mentees. Bonnie was six years younger than Kate, and only three years older than Natalie. We do not typically think of the expert in a situation as younger than the novice, or close to the novice's age. One also has to wonder what role, if any, age played in Bonnie's positioning of Kate as colleague.

Explaining Positioning with the Mentoring Relationship

The institutional positioning brought about by the district expectations placed on the mentors to fulfill certain tasks in certain ways provided the initial storyline for the relationships they formed with their mentees. The model of cognitive coaching positioned mentors as those

who would aid in beginning teacher development and encourage reflective practices. This institutional position affected the conference conversations the mentors and mentees had over the course of the study. The hybrid nature of the conferences, following a relatively formal style of interaction, positioned the mentors as the ones guiding the conversation, but in each pre-conference there was a pivot point where the storyline changed and the conference became more informal. When the mentors asked the mentees what type of data they would like to see collected during the observation and the mentee continued with that storyline, the mentees were then positioned to own their practice and development. At this shift, the mentee could discuss any concerns they had or improvements they wanted to make in their practice. This storyline of ownership was enacted throughout the study on multiple occasions.

The idea of ownership is manifest in how the mentor sought to position the mentee as a teacher. Although mentors positioned and were positioned by mentees, a more interesting finding is how mentors attempted to position their mentees in positions of power in their classrooms—outside of the mentor-mentee relationship. The mentors did not impose their own ideas or directly tell the mentee what they must do. In asking how the mentee impacted the environment in their classrooms, the mentors implied that the mentee had the power to affect change. The mentors seemed to want the mentee to recognize the power they had in the classroom to determine what and how their students were learning. The reflective nature of the observation questions and the ways in which the mentors continually asked what the mentee found effective in their own practice seems to imply that the point of the mentor model employed by the district is to empower beginning teachers. Had the mentors positioned themselves in a purely supportive role, they would not have been able to position the mentee as the powerful force in their classroom.

At times when the mentees did not take up the position power, accepting the turn of events and moving on with the position of director, the mentors actually became more assertive, reverting to the role of teacher in their interactions with the mentees. In this position as teacher, the mentor took up an instructional storyline so the mentee would recognize the point the mentor was trying to make. Especially in light of the seeming discomfort with the position of dominance, this is an interesting choice that the mentors made. They seemed to value the learning of the mentee over the comfort they felt in a position of less dominance.

When examining the dynamics of the mentor-mentee relationship, it is helpful to think both of Harré and van Langenhove’s mutually determining triad (1999) and the concepts of support and challenge (see Figure 2) and how they interact. Not only were the positions, utterances, and storylines mediated by the other elements in the triad, but support and challenge was also mediated by the different elements of the triad. Some positions taken up by the mentor were inherently supportive or challenging, and these positions were determined by the utterances, storyline, or possibly both.

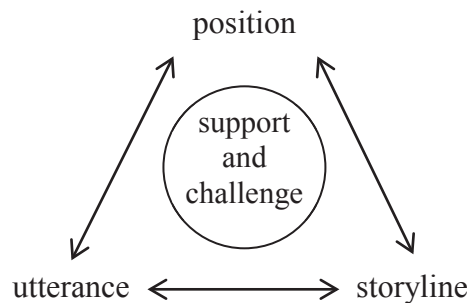


Figure 2. Interaction of support and challenge with mutually determining triad adapted from Harré and van Langenhove, 1999, p. 18.

At times, when Bonnie realized she was in the position of dominance, she rejected it in favor of a position with a smaller power differential. But it is from the position of dominance that she was able to challenge her mentees to a greater degree. Perhaps the hesitancy to

challenge previously found in the literature is more a hesitancy to be in the position of dominance. In order for mentors to challenge their mentees to improve their practice, mentors need to be willing to position themselves as the expert, and sometimes ask difficult about the mentee's performance. The role of mentor is traditionally thought of as one who helps, guides, and supports, but in order to provide challenge to beginning teachers, mentors need to come to terms with the idea that they need to be more assertive in their mentoring. The connotation implied with terms such as *position of dominance* may be a stumbling block that inhibits mentors from acting in ways that could challenge mentees, which could in turn lead to increased beginning teacher development. The consolation for this discomfort is the idea that in challenging beginning teachers to improve their practice, mentors are providing nurturing challenge—they can be helpful as they guide beginning teachers to a place where they will more effective teachers.

Implications

Mentors in this study were prepared to employ a particular model of mentoring and received ongoing support from district specialists as they enacted their role as mentors. There are several calls in the literature for mentors to be given adequate training and support. Valencic and Vogrinc (2007) write that “it is not enough merely to inform mentors about their tasks—they must be trained to perform successfully in their roles” (p. 375). In addition to the training necessary for effective mentoring to take place, mentors also need to be supported in their role as mentors. Valencic and Vogrinc compare the level of support offered to mentor to the level of supported offered to teachers. The implication is that mentoring will be more effective with significant training and support.

In a study of beginning teachers, Bullough et al. (2008) found that mentors were reluctant to provide critical feedback to intern teachers. The researchers presented a vision for effective mentoring, wherein schools and districts re-envision mentoring and make the commitments necessary to support mentors in their learning and create conditions that enable mentors to have a significant impact on the practice of beginning teachers. Without this institutional commitment, mentoring that challenges beginning teachers to improve is not likely to occur.

The district where this study took place established a formalized mentor program in 2003 that both prepared and supported mentors in how they interacted with beginning teachers. The mentors were prepared for their role at the outset and then participated in monthly support meetings and annual in-servicing. Evidence of mentor training can be seen in the similarities between the mentor practices within the current study. Although there was variation in the personal mentoring style of each mentor, each mentor provided their mentees with similar mentoring activities. The conference structure used by both mentors allowed them to ask challenging questions that made the mentees explain and move forward in their practice. In a study of two mentors working with pre-service teachers, the mentors were not told “how to fulfill their responsibility and mentoring took idiosyncratic forms” (Martin, 1997, pp. 194-195). One has to wonder if the similarity in mentoring practices found in this study would be present in contexts where the same attention to mentor preparation and support is not present.

This study has implications for induction leaders, mentors working with beginning teachers, and administrators. Induction leaders are tasked with the responsibilities of meeting the needs of beginning teachers, reducing attrition, and increasing the competence of beginning teachers. Mentoring is a key component of fulfilling these responsibilities, and mentor programs that prepare and support mentors to work productively with beginning teachers have a greater

likelihood of achieving the aims of new teacher induction. The findings in this study present promising evidence that mentors in a junior high setting—even those who mentor new teachers who teach subjects different from their own—can provide new teachers appropriate levels of support and challenge within a mentoring relationship.

Although mentors are not in a position to affect the types of policy change that induction leaders are capable of accomplishing, they are the individuals who work with beginning teachers on a regular basis. Not only do mentors need to be prepared in a ways that provide them with the skills to interact with beginning teachers in both supportive and challenging ways, they also need to have an understanding of their institutional role as mentors and the expectations, duties, and rights associated with that role. If mentors are willing to consider their position in the storyline of teacher improvement and embrace that position as a means of facilitating growth in beginning teachers, then they will be able to provide both the support and challenge necessary to encourage and facilitate beginning teacher growth.

Both district and school administrators are in a position to advocate for and enable the creation a programs to provide effective mentoring for beginning teachers. School administrators in particular can impact the experience of beginning teachers in their buildings by choosing effective teachers with dispositions toward mentoring and providing the institutional support necessary to both support and challenge beginning teachers. In one study (Brooks, 2000), the single most important cost of mentoring was that of time. Effective mentoring required more time that mentors were allocated. Although data about the time mentors and mentees spent together was not collected in the current study, it is clear that Bonnie and Diane spent enough time with their mentees to know them well and understand their individual needs.

Administrators need to be aware of the time investment necessary to make mentoring an effective practice.

Each of these groups has the capacity to positively impact not on the development of beginning teachers, but also the type of experience beginning teachers have at the very start of their teaching careers. Daloz (1999) writes that the development of beginning teachers is hindered by either too much support or too much challenge, and development is enhanced by and “appropriate mix” (p. 208) of the two. Induction leaders, mentors, and administrators can ensure that this mix is present in the induction of beginning teachers.

Future Research

Other studies researching support and challenge within the mentoring relationship should be conducted in settings with established, formalized mentor programs and informal mentor programs to look for correlation with mentor preparation and the ability of mentors to provide challenge to beginning teachers.

Additionally, a study of the impact of these challenging practices would help to determine whether the mentees take up the challenge offered and improve their practice. Although there was a clear prominence of challenge in the present study, the effect of that challenge is unknown. Identifying the types of support and challenge that lead to increased beginning teacher competence could help to alleviate some of the reality shock beginning teachers face.

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Appendix A

Personal Statement

I have been a junior high school teacher in the district where this study took place for 13 years. In addition to teaching in this district, I have also mentored beginning teachers for the past nine years. Each year I mentor two to four teachers in their first three years of teaching and a first-year intern from the local university. During the year of the study I mentored an intern, a first-year teacher, and a second-year teacher, all of whom teach in the same content area as me.

During my first year of teaching, I was an intern at my current school, but I did not receive much mentoring, as it was prior to the creation of the current district mentoring program. During those first few years I learned through a lot of trial and error. I also became friends with other teachers in the building and would go to them for advice and help. Those informal mentors made a world of difference to me during the first few years of my teaching career. The difficulties I encountered as a beginning teacher were, and still are, a majority motivation for my mentoring.

Each year I attend the same mentor preparation and support meetings as described in chapter three of this study, so I am not completely an outside observer. I teach at a different junior high school than both mentors who participated in this study, but there are many similarities between the context of my teaching and mentoring and theirs.

I believe that effective mentoring can ease beginning teachers' entry into the profession and has the potential to positively affect the learning and experiences of the students in those beginning teachers' classes. As I started reading the literature on mentoring to decide on a topic for my thesis, I became more and more interested in the lack of apparent challenge provided by mentors to their mentees. In part, this interest was spurred by the difficulties I had providing

critical feedback to the beginning teachers I worked with. I would often see ways those beginning teachers could improve their practice, but I was reluctant to provide that challenge and preferred being supportive. Some of my reluctance stemmed from my hesitance to be perceived as a know-it-all or someone who was overstepping my bounds by telling other adults what they should be doing. Additionally, I wondered if the cognitive coaching model in place in our district was challenging or merely supportive.

Appendix B

Data Reduction Charts

Analysis of Support and Challenge

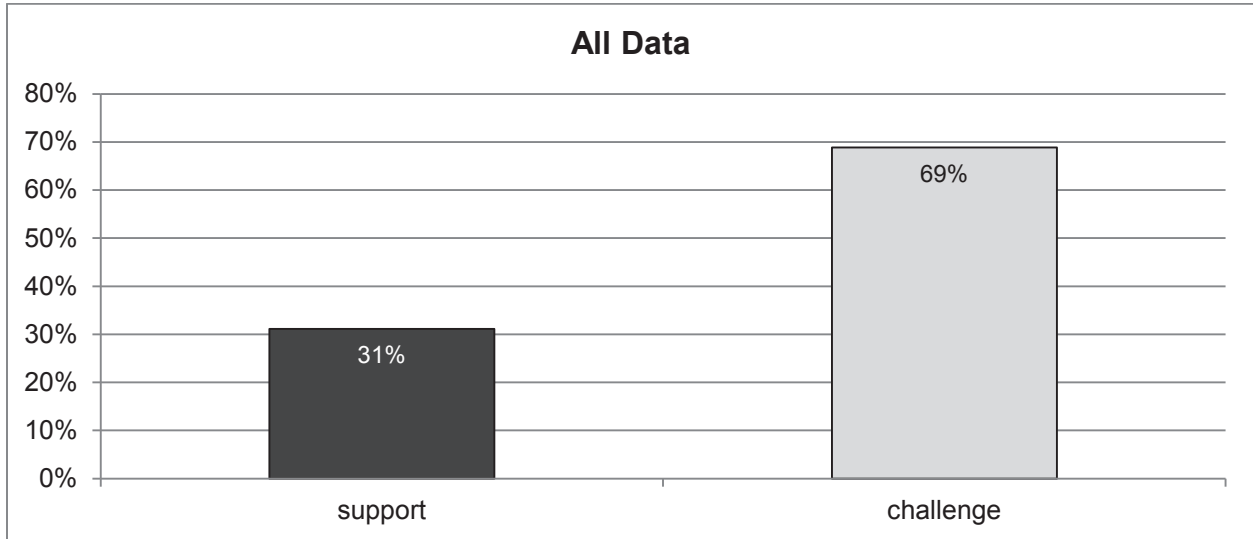


Figure B1. Support and challenge as a percentage of the total coded data.

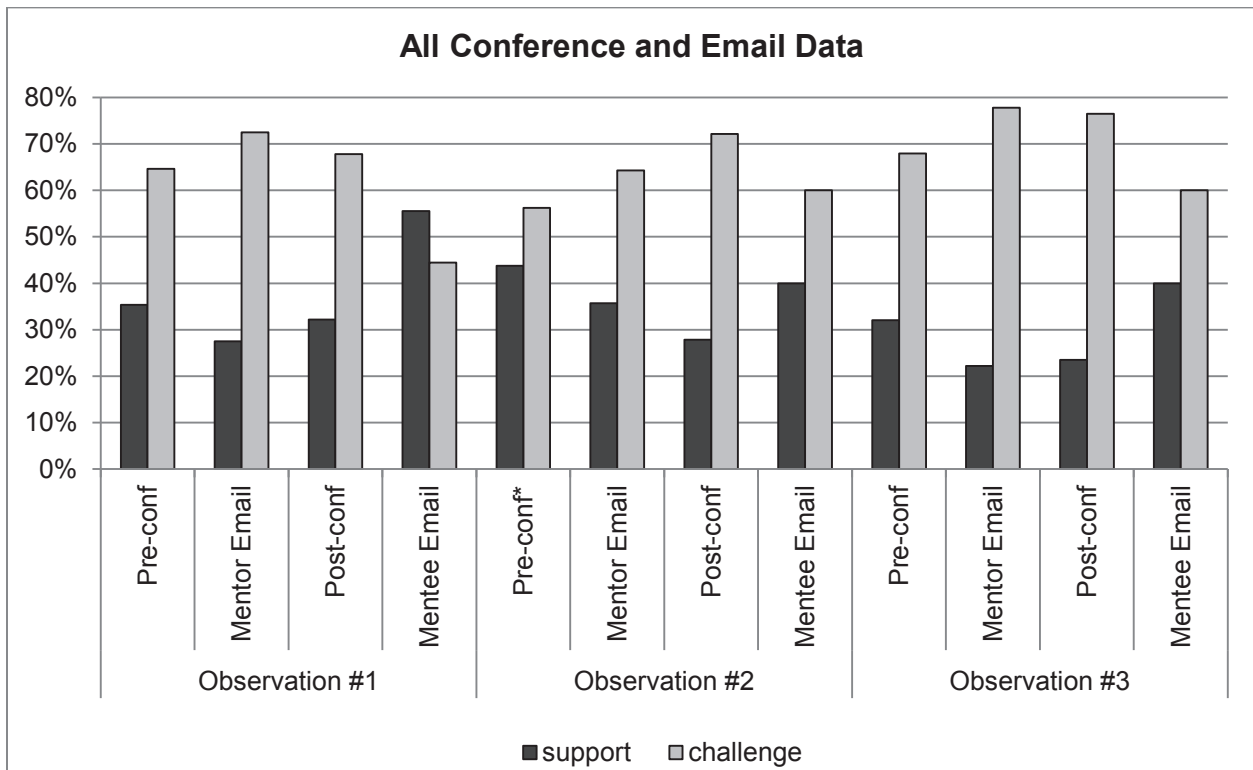


Figure B2. Percentage of support and challenge broken down by data type.

*Technical difficulties. No conference data for Diane and Ben.

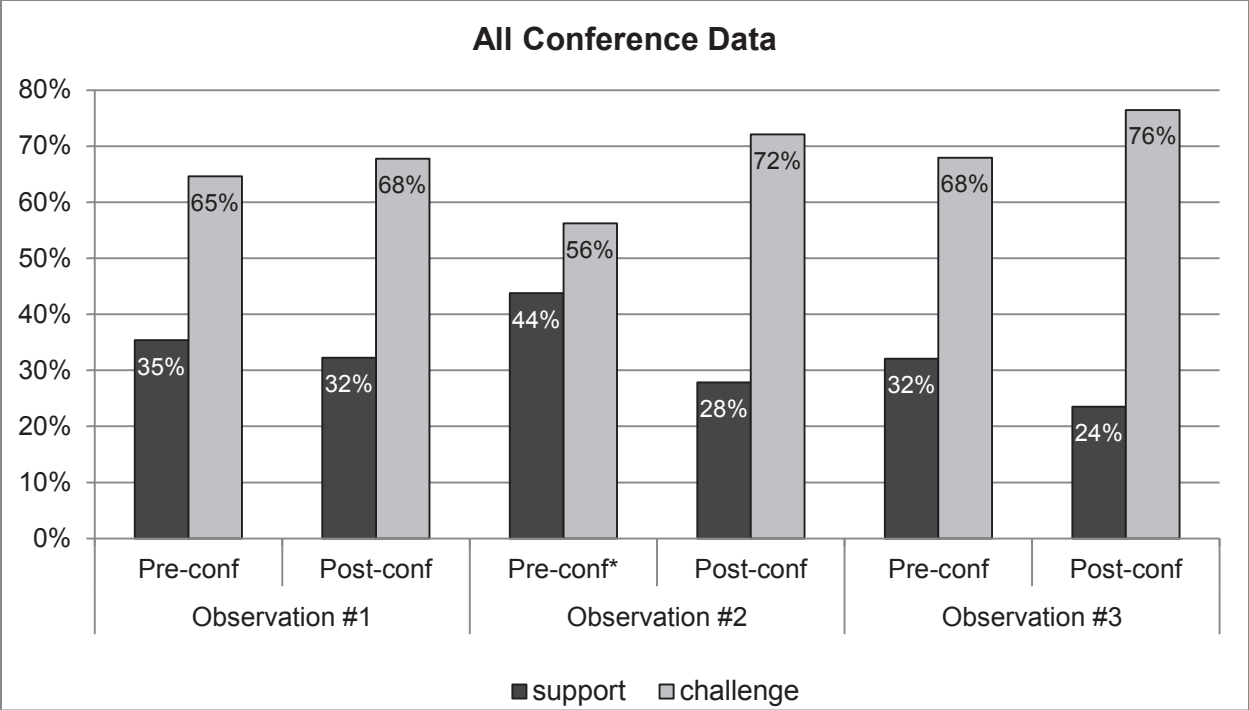


Figure B3. Percentage of support and challenge broken down by conference.
 *Technical difficulties. No conference data for Diane and Ben.

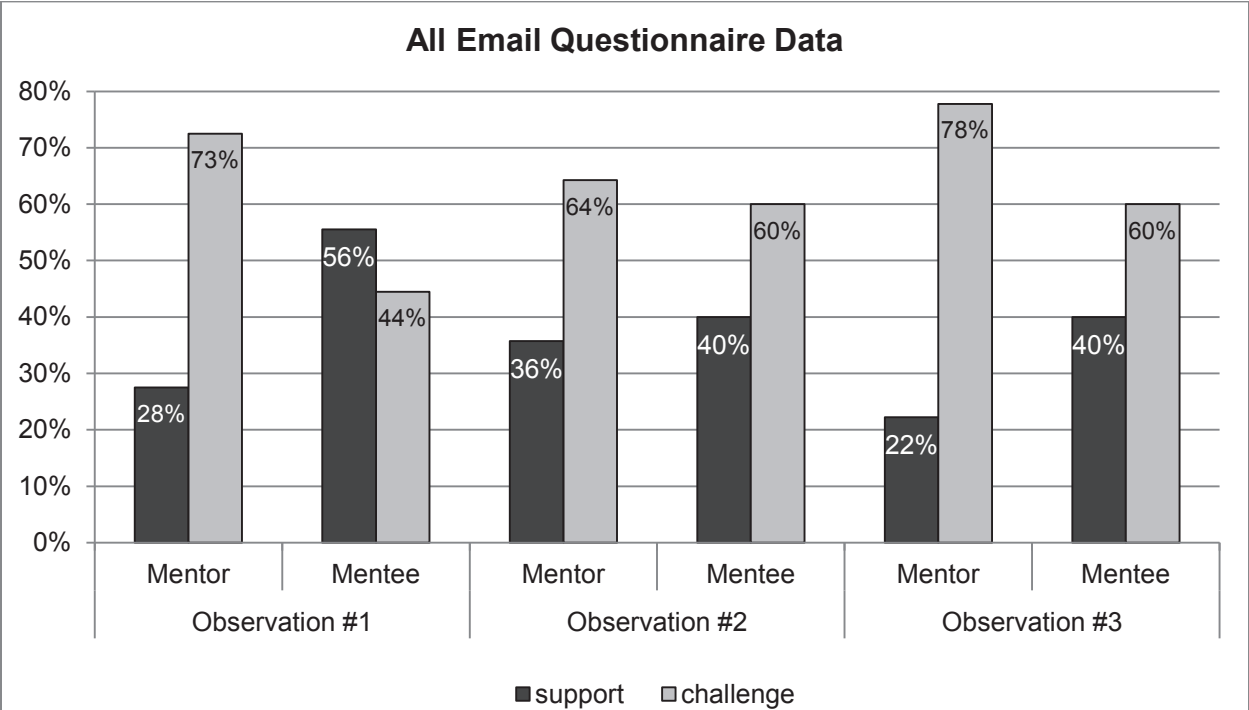


Figure B4. Percentage of support and challenge as reported in email questionnaires from mentors and mentees.

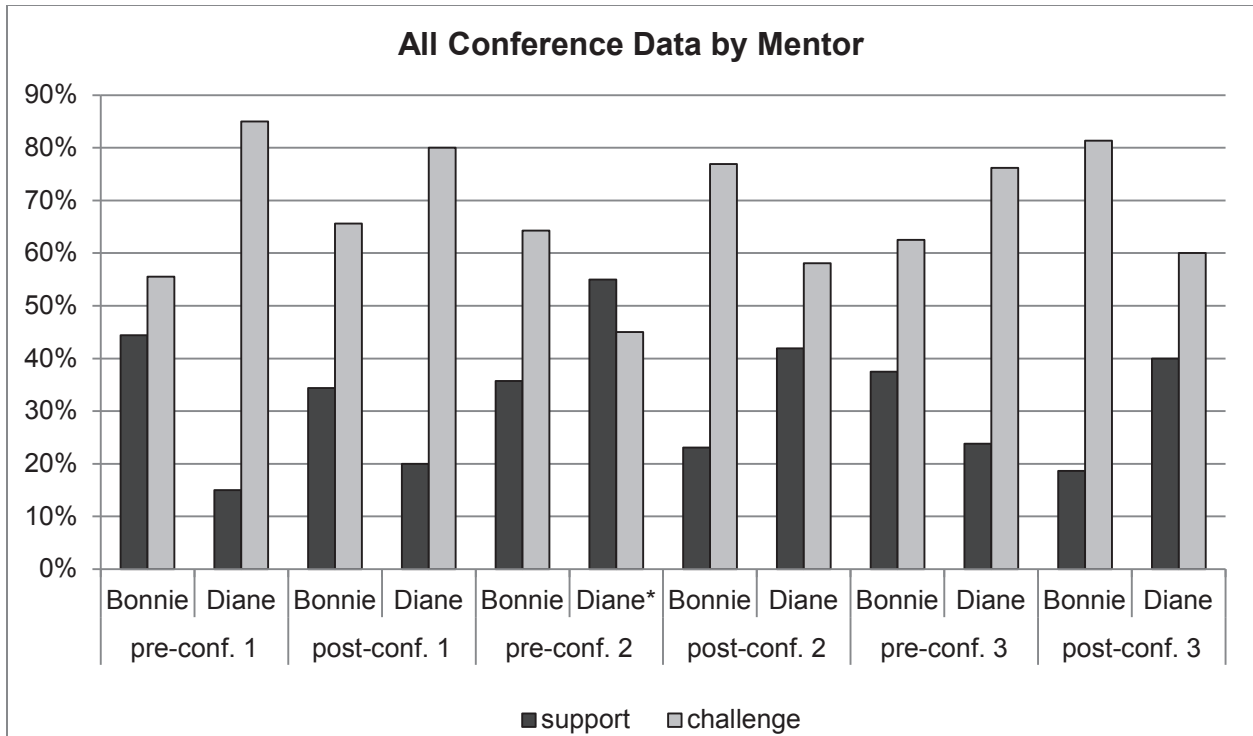


Figure B5. Percentage of support and challenge in each conference broken down by mentor.
 *Technical difficulties. No conference data for Diane and Ben.

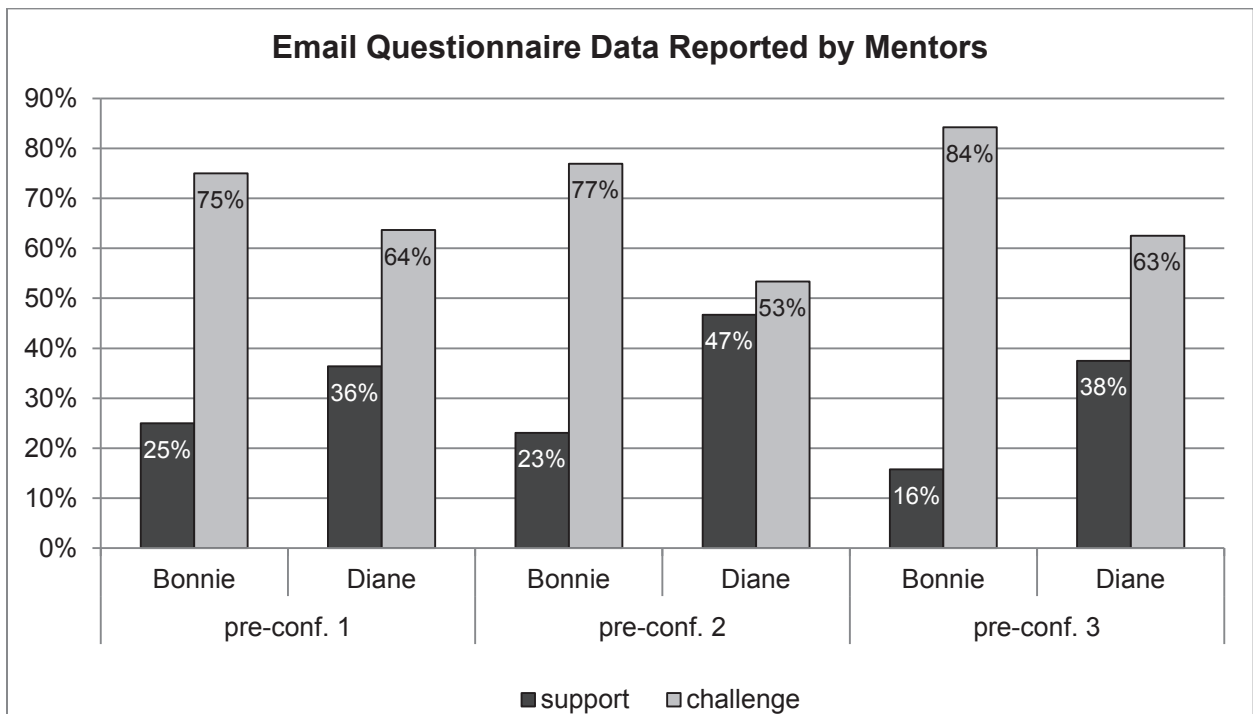


Figure B6. Percentage of support and challenge as reported in email questionnaires from mentors.

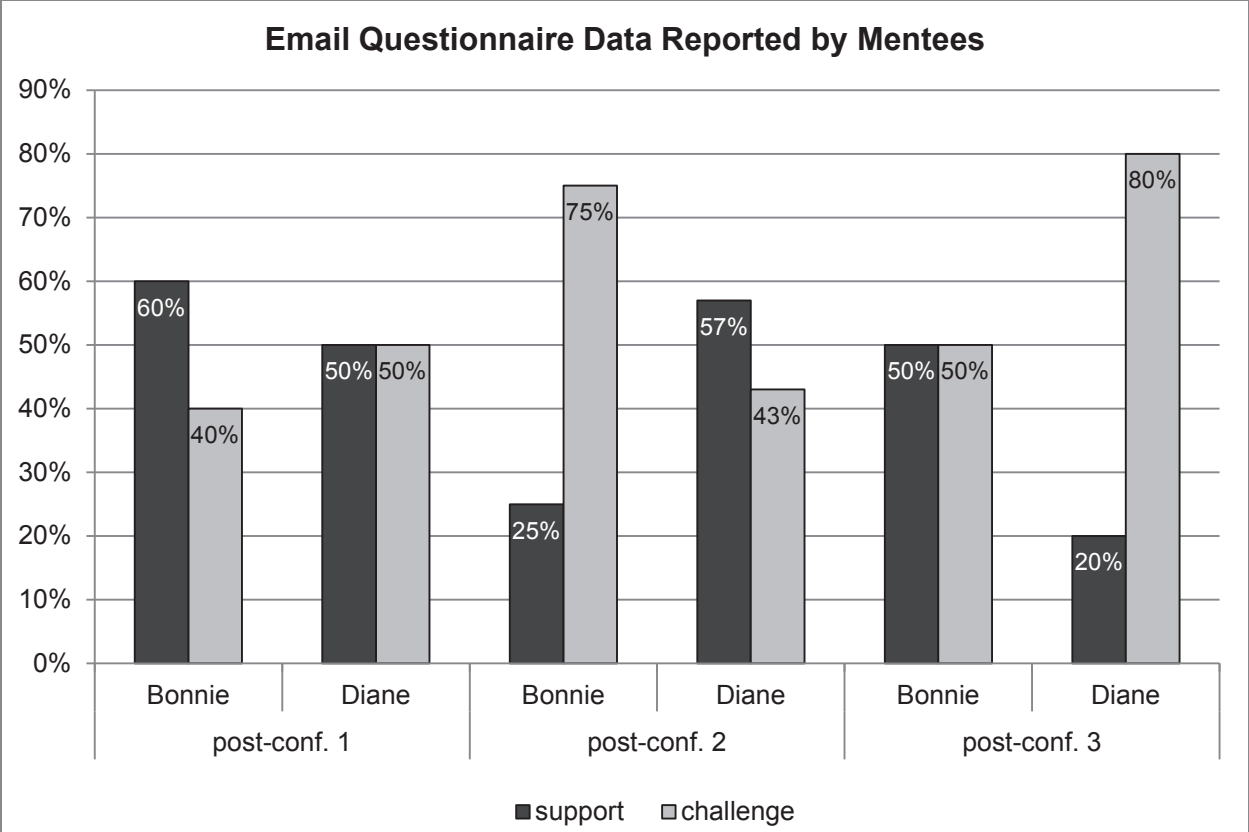


Figure B7. Percentage of support and challenge as reported in email questionnaires from mentees.

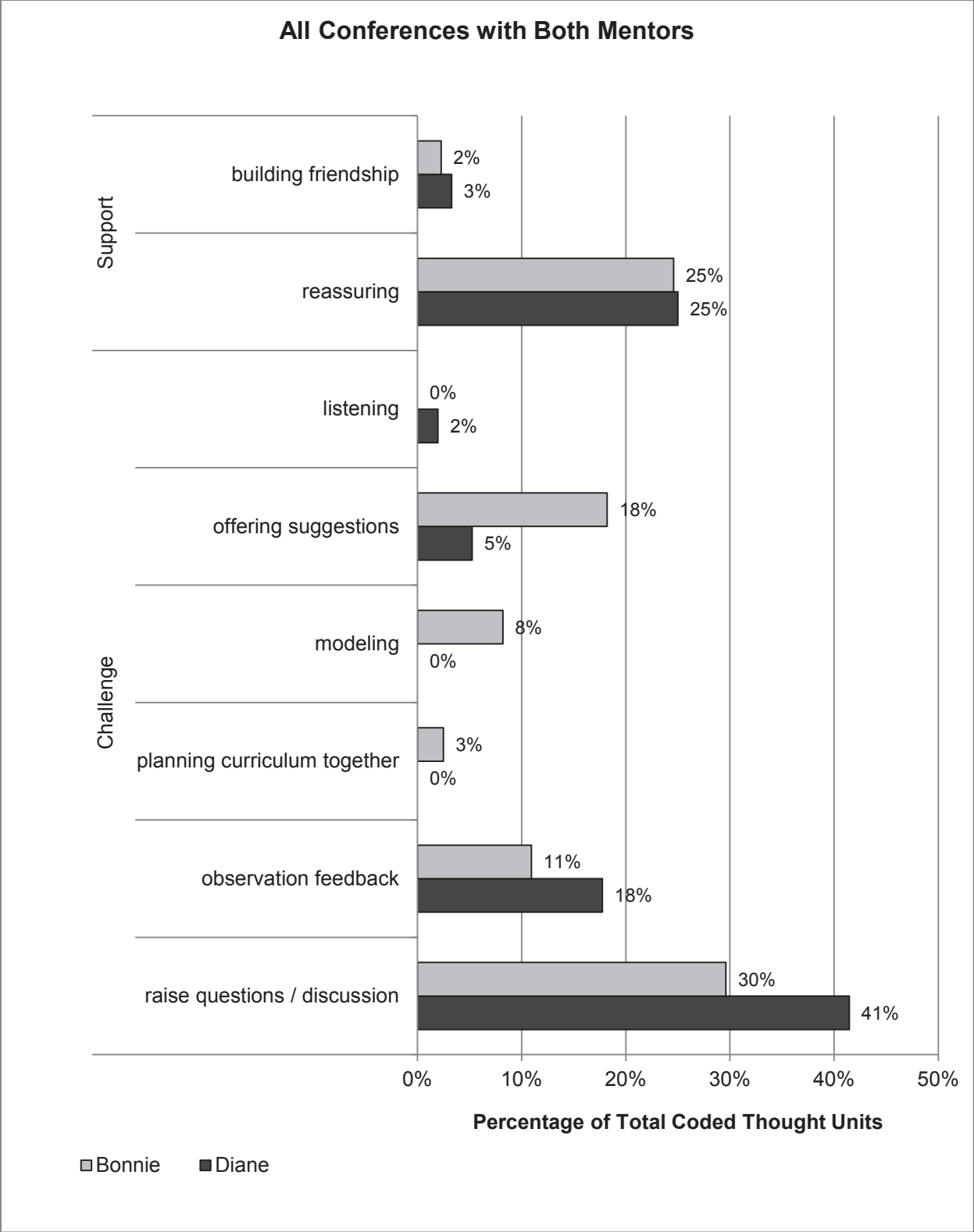


Figure B8. Percentage of types of support and challenge provided by both mentors throughout all conferences.

Types of Support and Challenge Provided by Mentors as Reported in Email Questionnaires

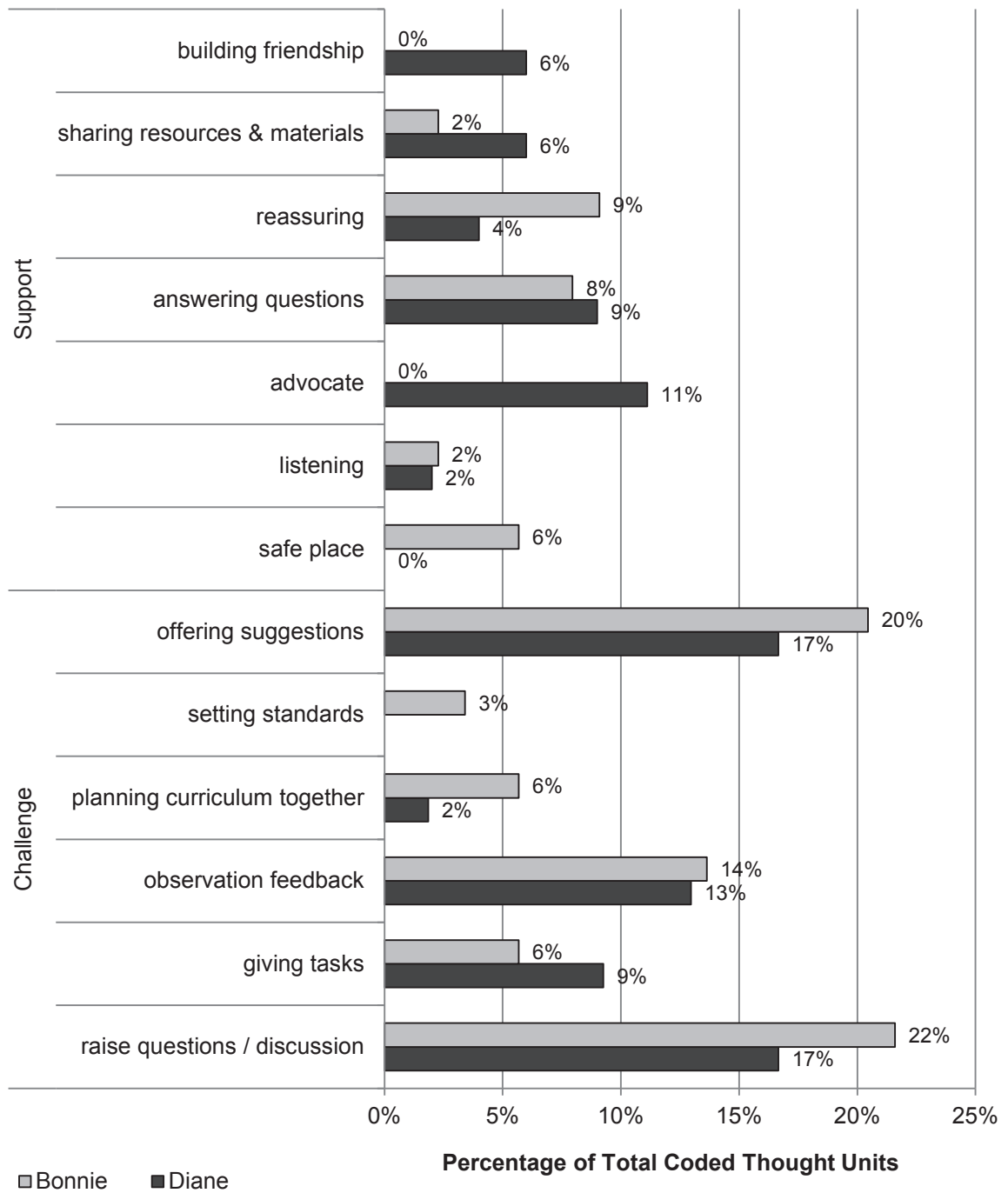


Figure B9. Percentage of types of support and challenge provided by both mentors as reported in email questionnaires from mentors and mentees.

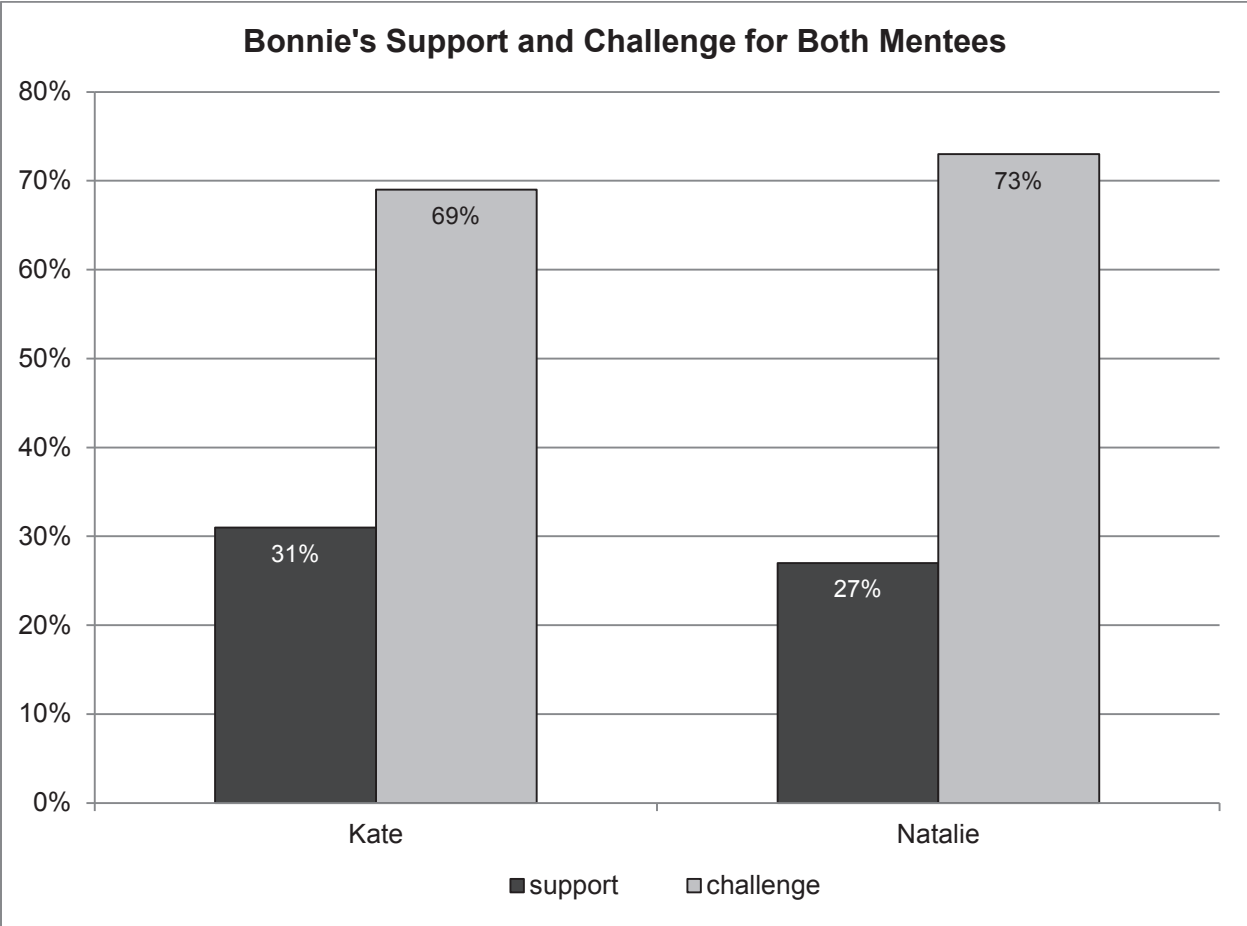


Figure B10. Percentage of support and challenge provided by Bonnie to both mentees in conferences and reported in email questionnaires.

Types of Challenge and Support in Bonnie's Conferences

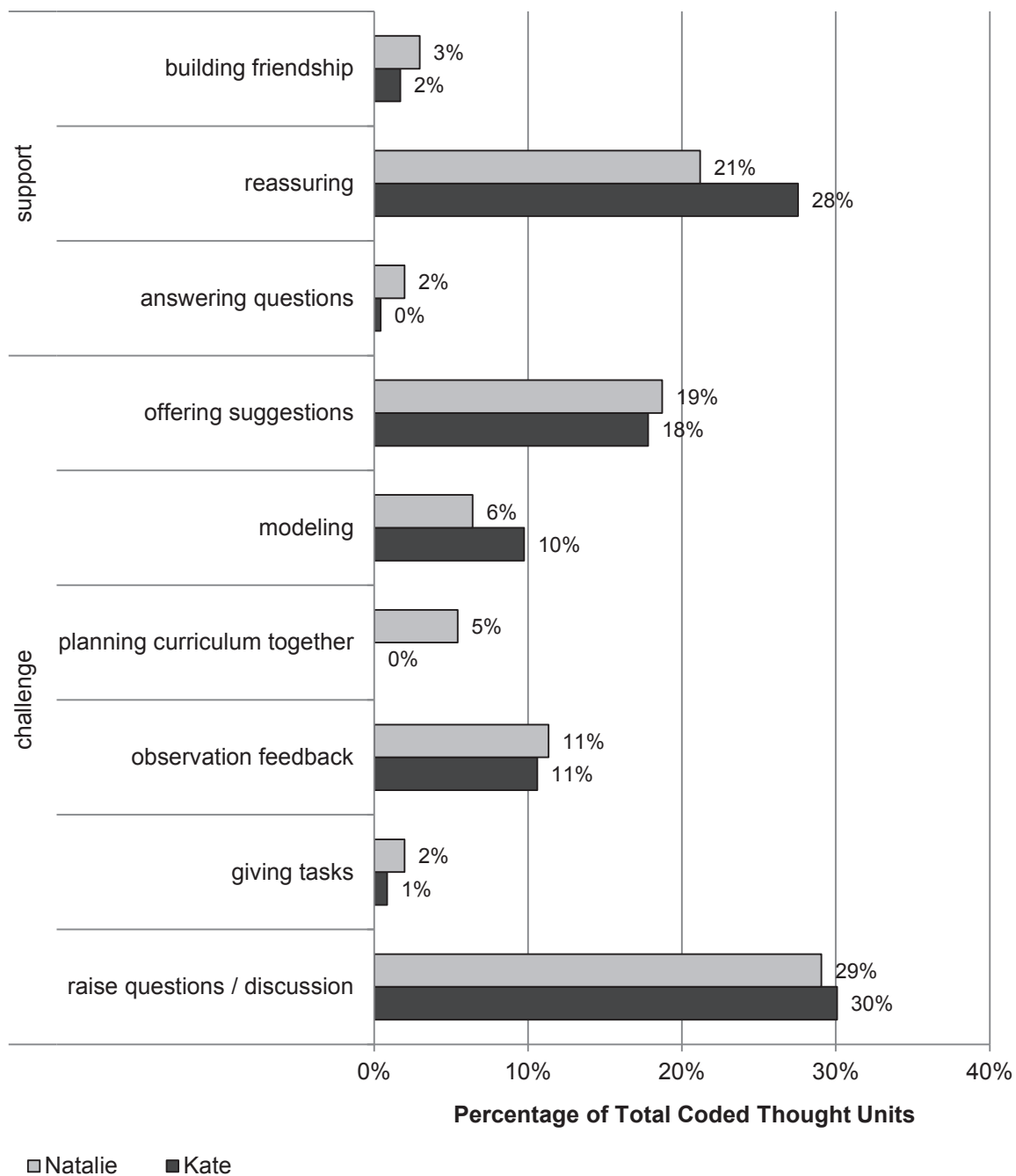


Figure B11. Percentage of types of support and challenge provided by Bonnie to both mentees throughout all conferences.

Types of Support and Challenge Provided by Bonnie as Reported in Email Questionnaires

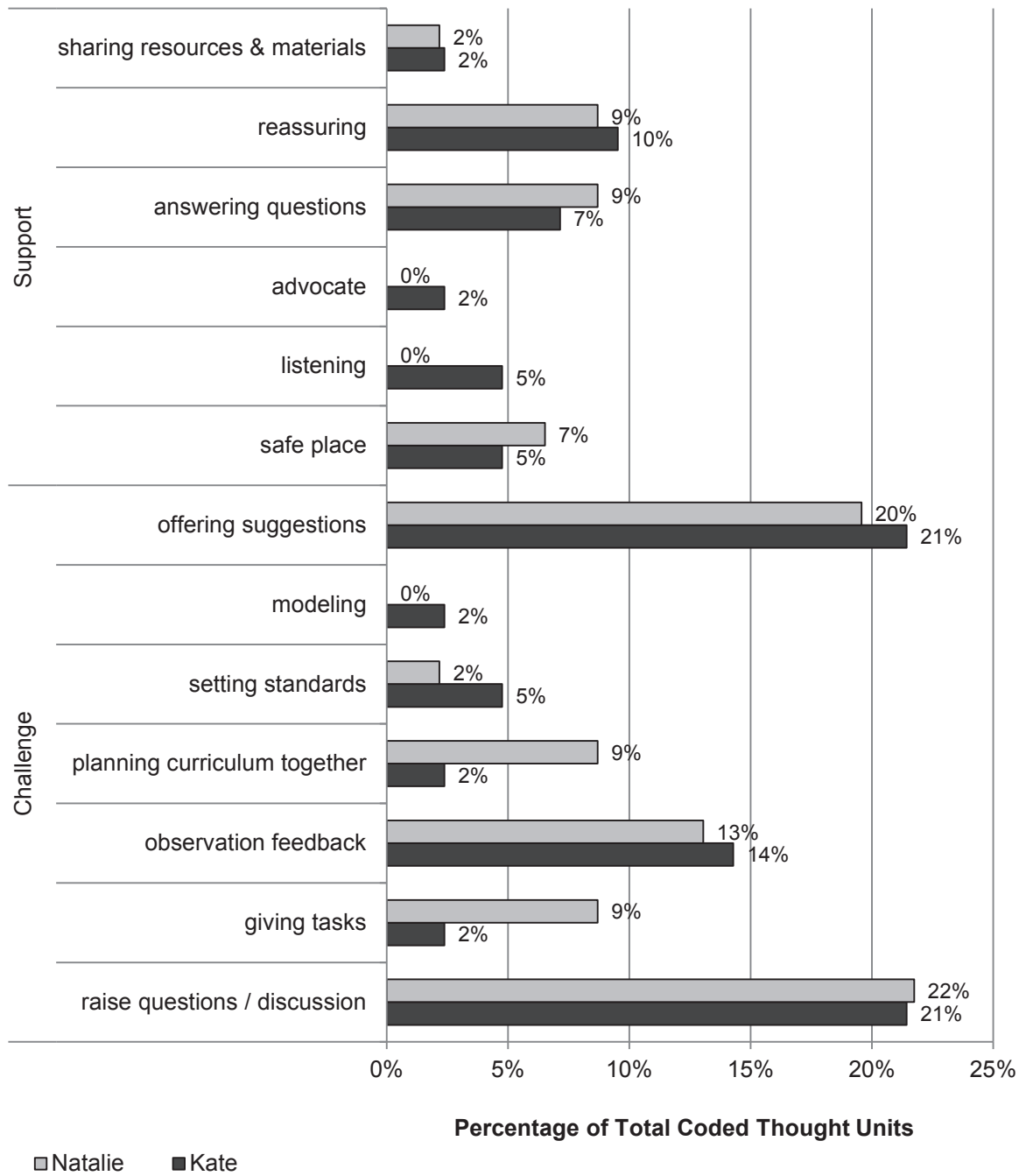


Figure B12. Percentage of types of support and challenge provided by Bonnie to both mentees as reported in email questionnaires from mentor and mentees.

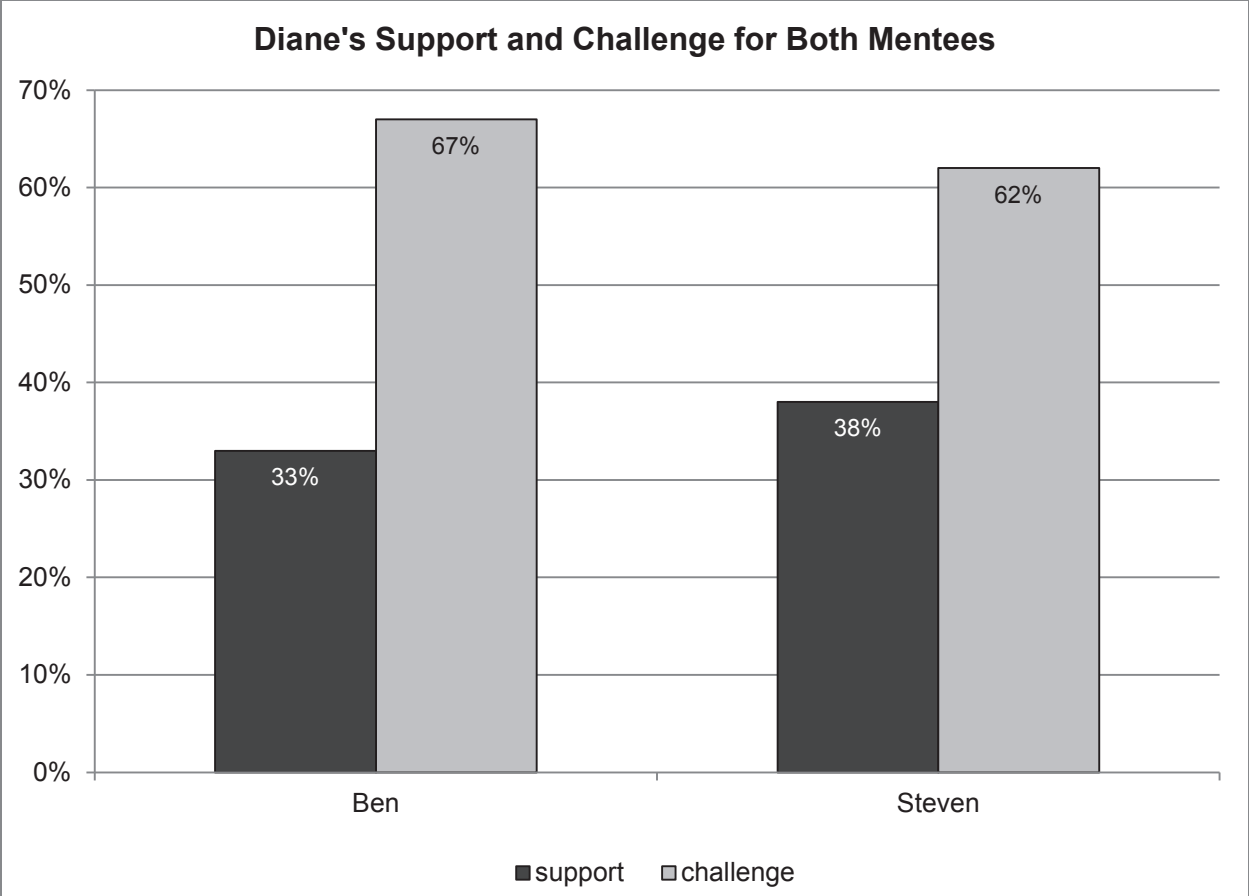


Figure B13. Percentage of support and challenge provided by Diane to both mentees in conferences and reported in email questionnaires.

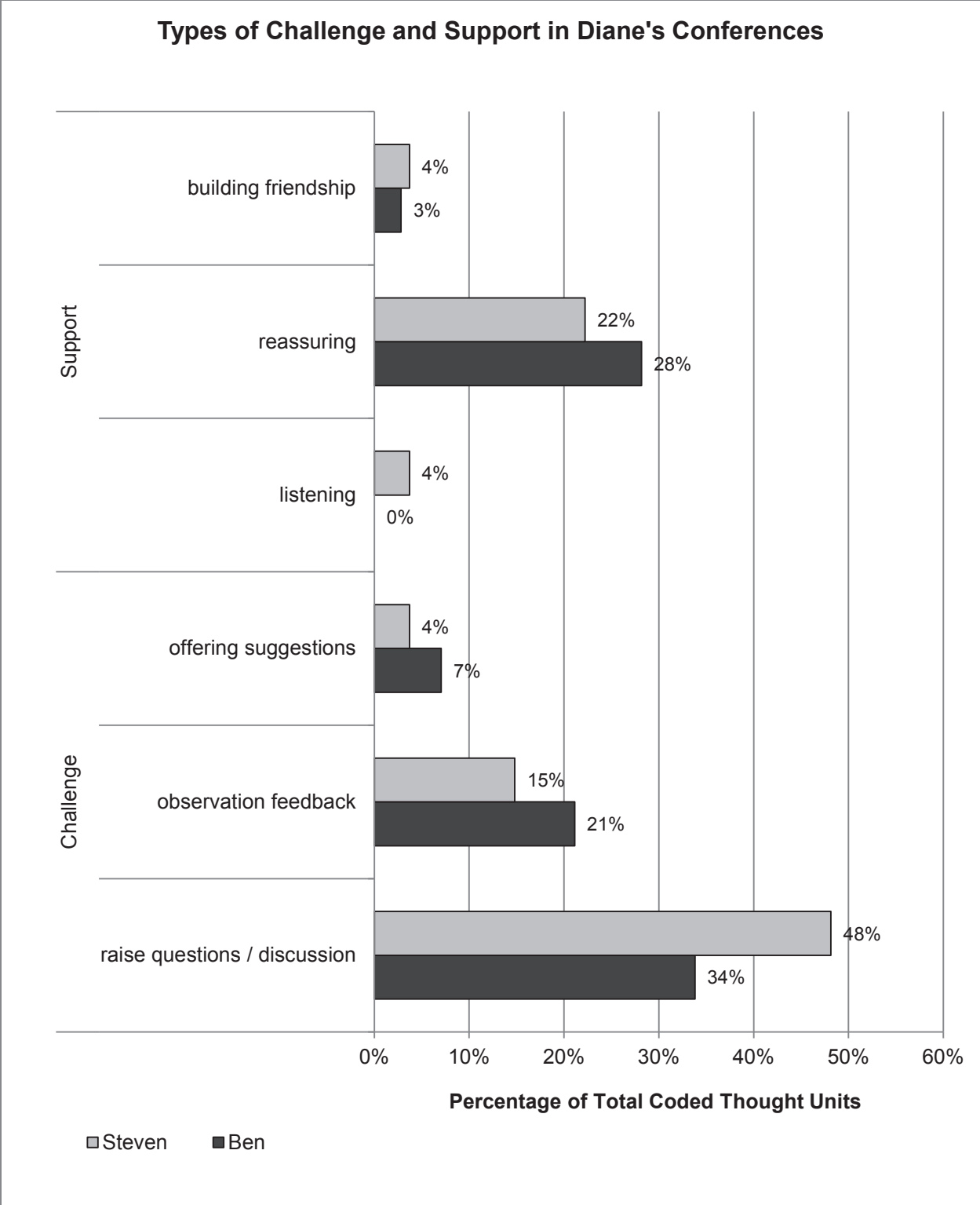


Figure B14. Percentage of types of support and challenge provided by Diane to both mentees throughout all conferences.

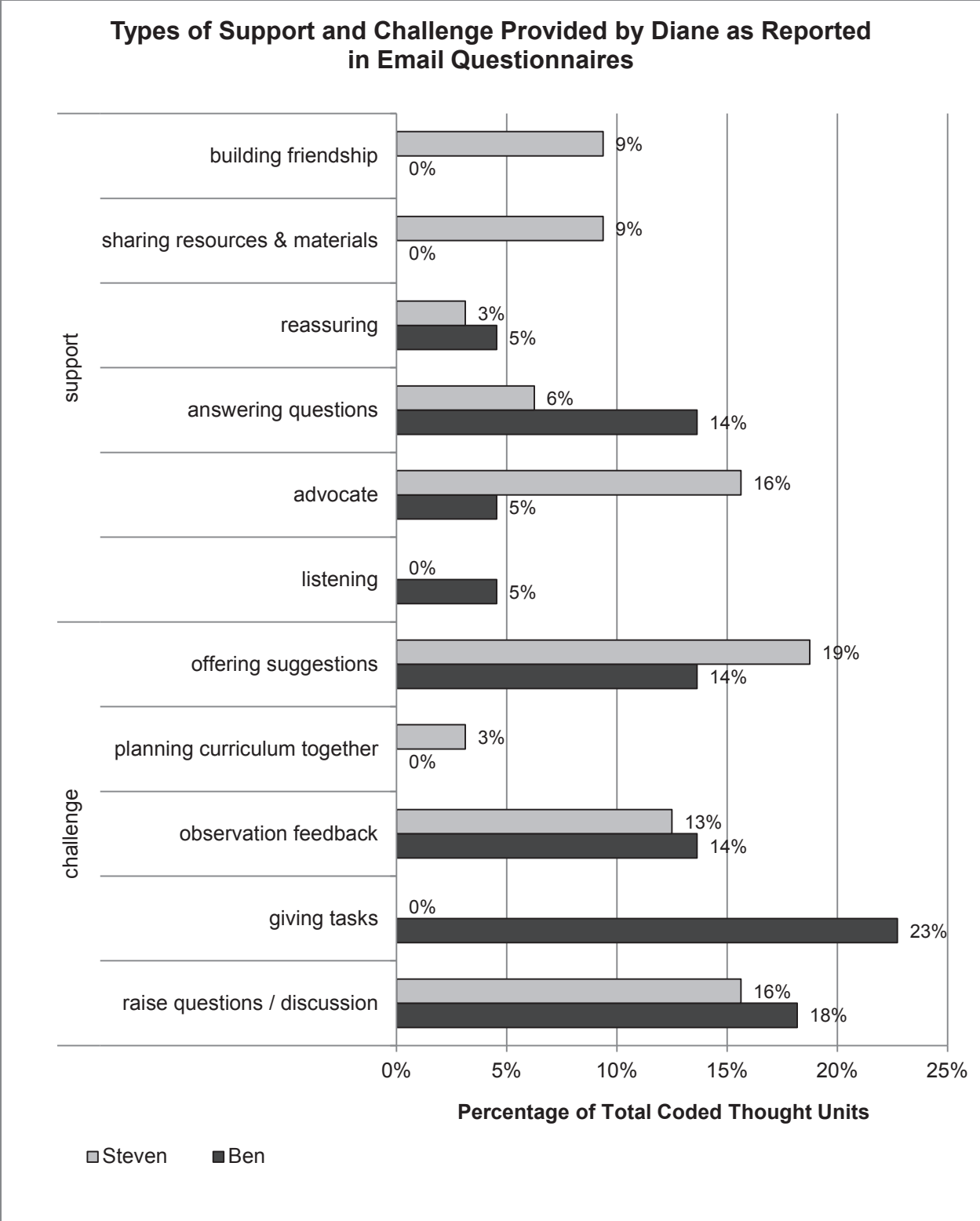


Figure B15. Percentage of types of support and challenge provided by Diane to both mentees as reported in email questionnaires from mentor and mentees.

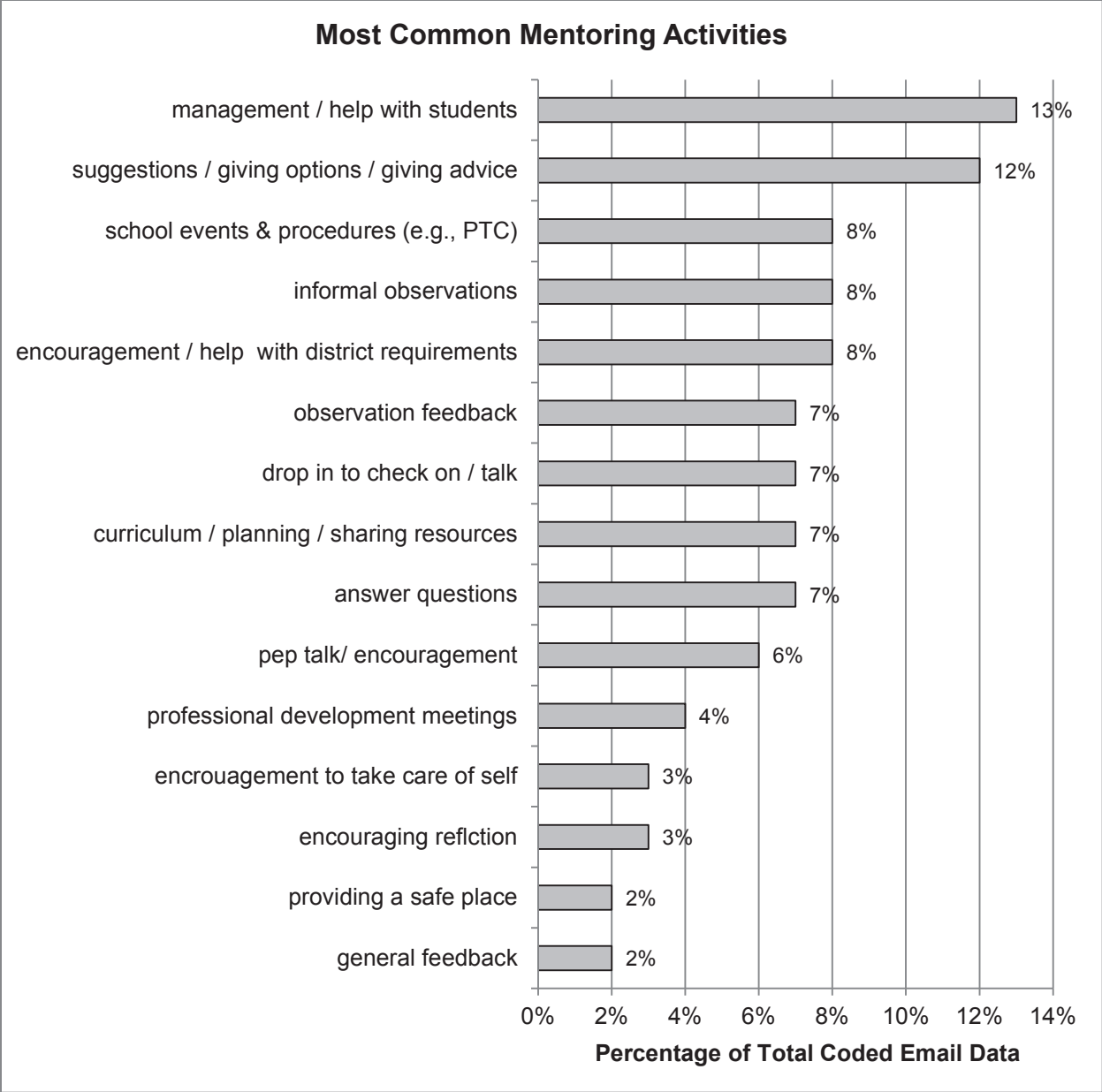


Figure B16. Most common mentoring activities as reported in email questionnaires by mentors and mentees.

Positioning Analysis

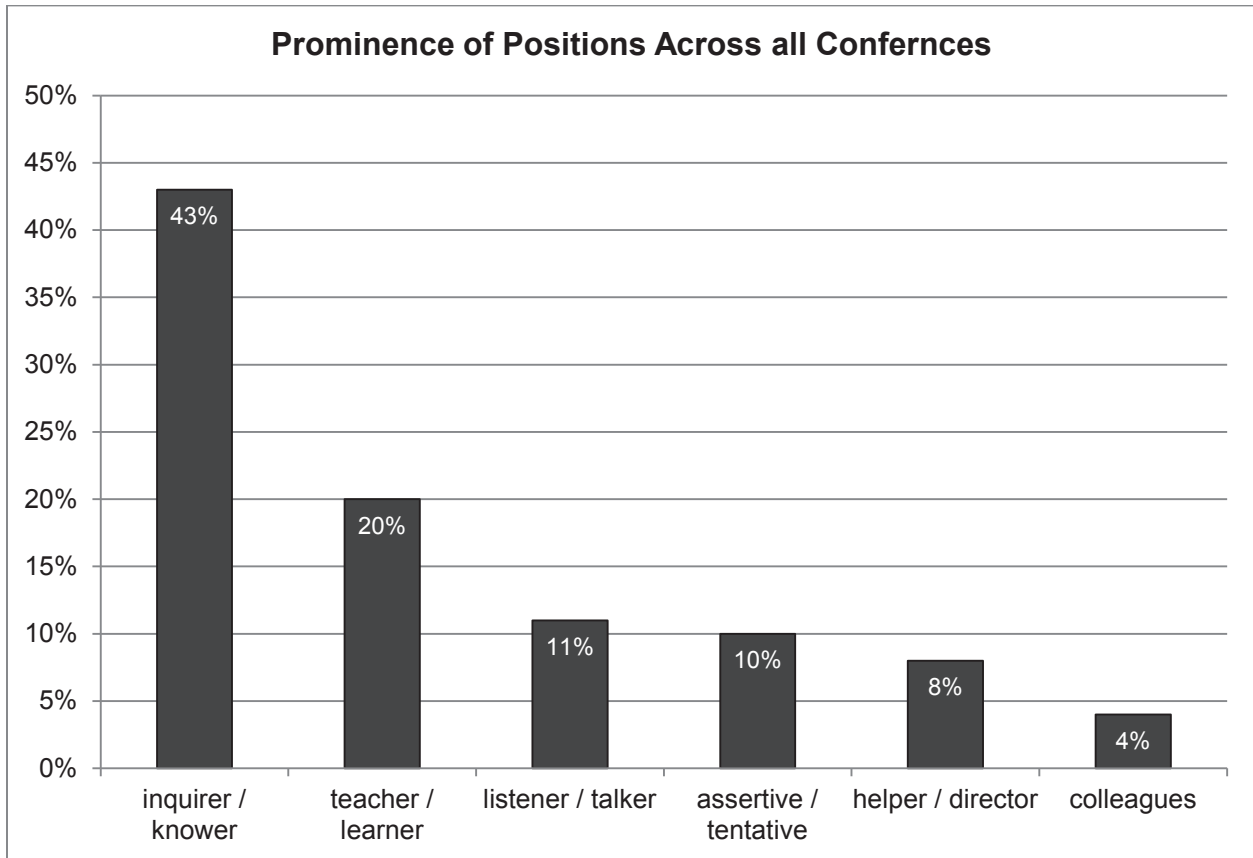


Figure B17. Prominence of complementary pairs of positions across all conferences with all participants.

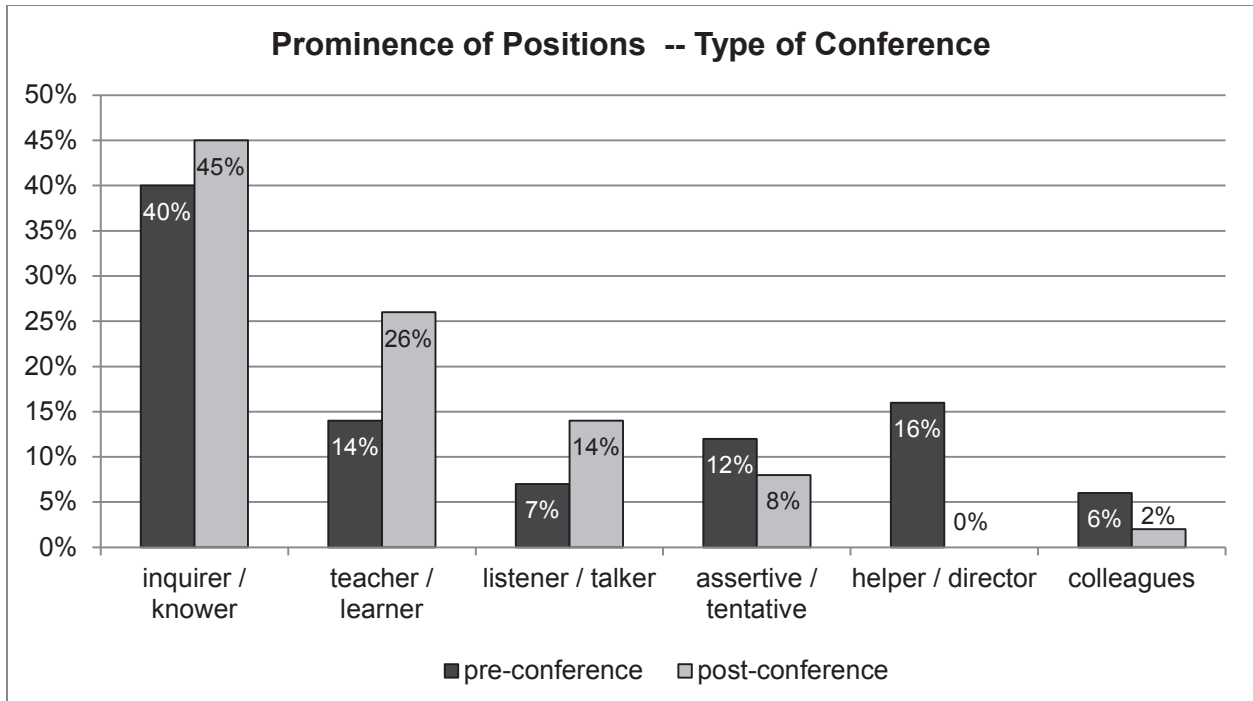


Figure B18. Prominence of complementary pairs of positions across all conferences with all participants broken down by type of conference.

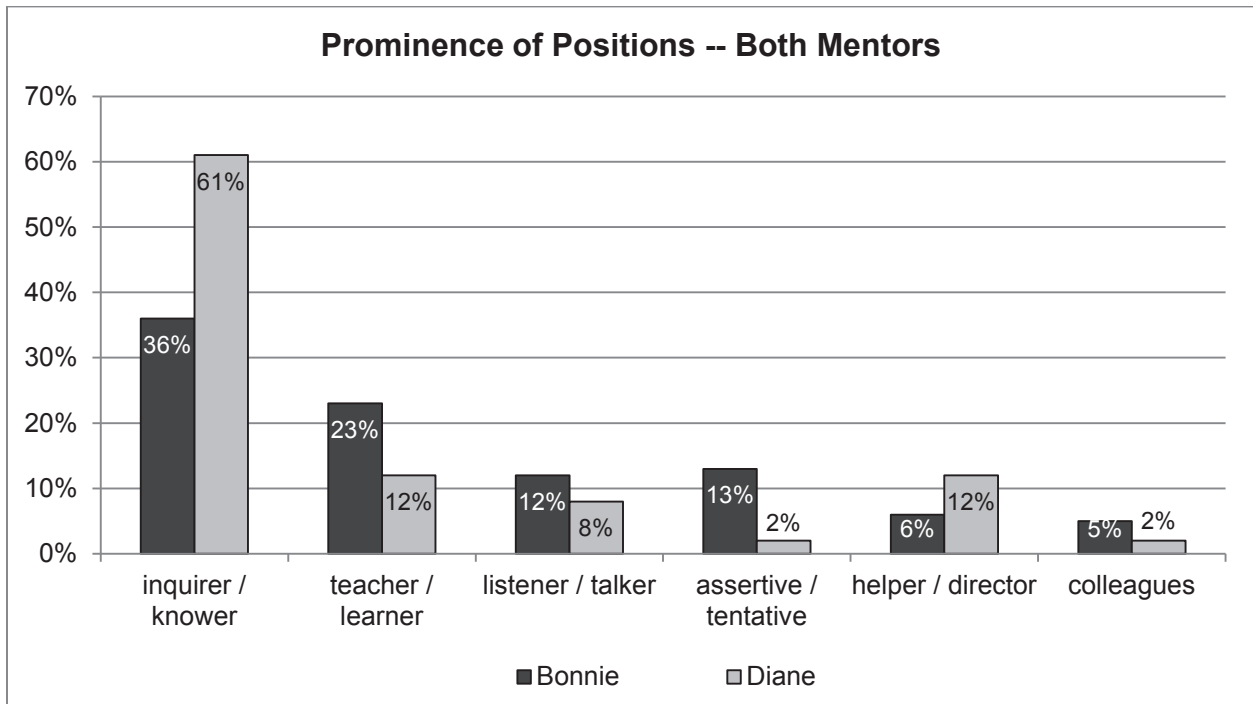


Figure B19. Mentor comparison of the prominence of complementary pairs of positions across all conferences.

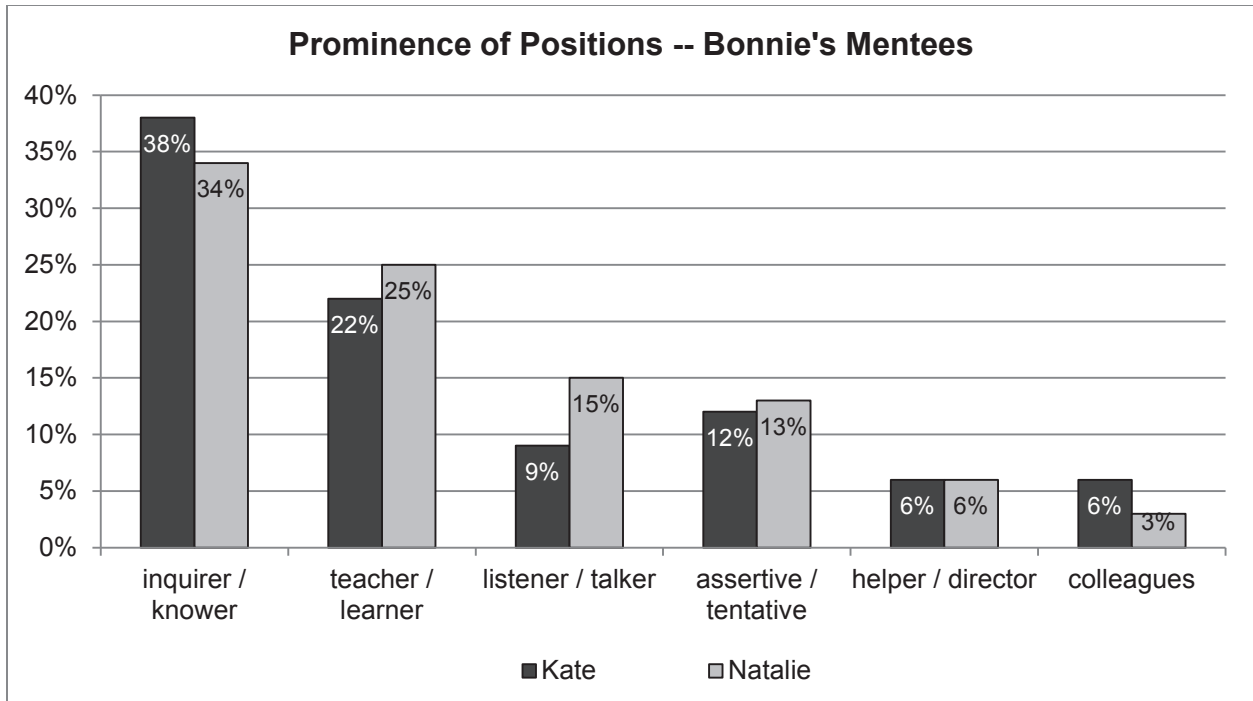


Figure B20. Comparison of the prominence of complementary pairs of positions across all conferences between Bonnie's mentees.

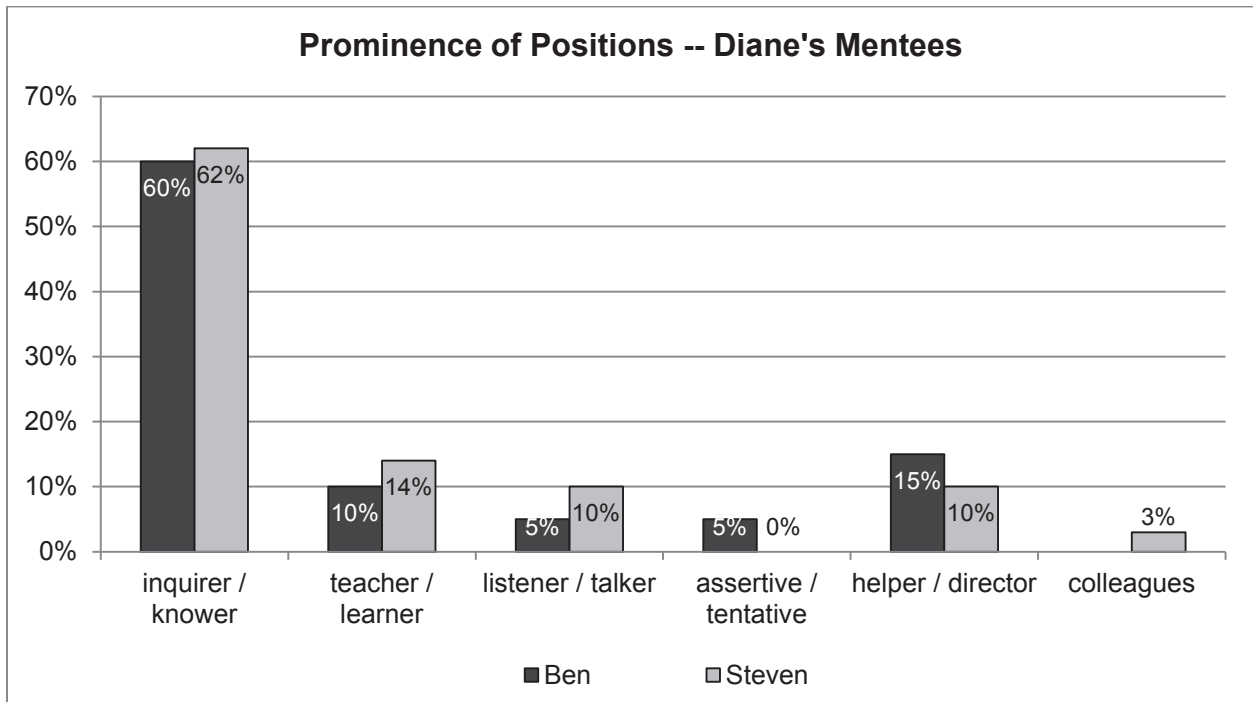


Figure B21. Comparison of the prominence of complementary pairs of positions across all conferences between Diane's mentees.

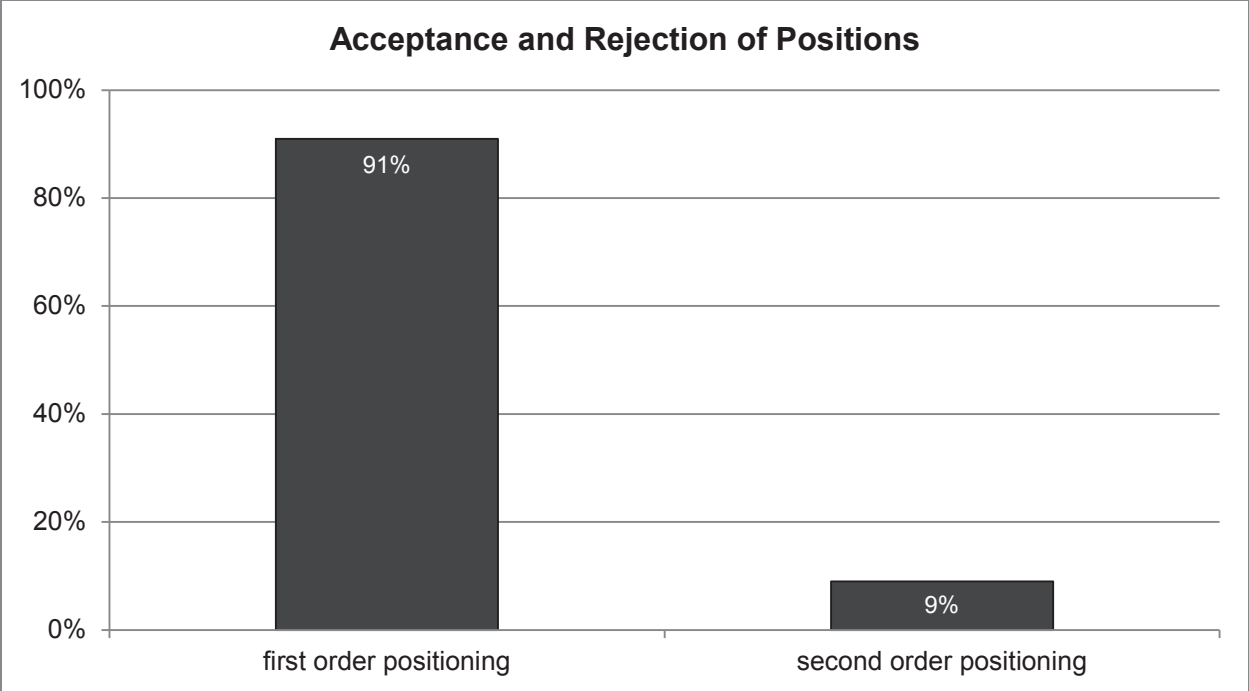


Figure B22. Comparison of how often mentees engaged in first and second order positioning.

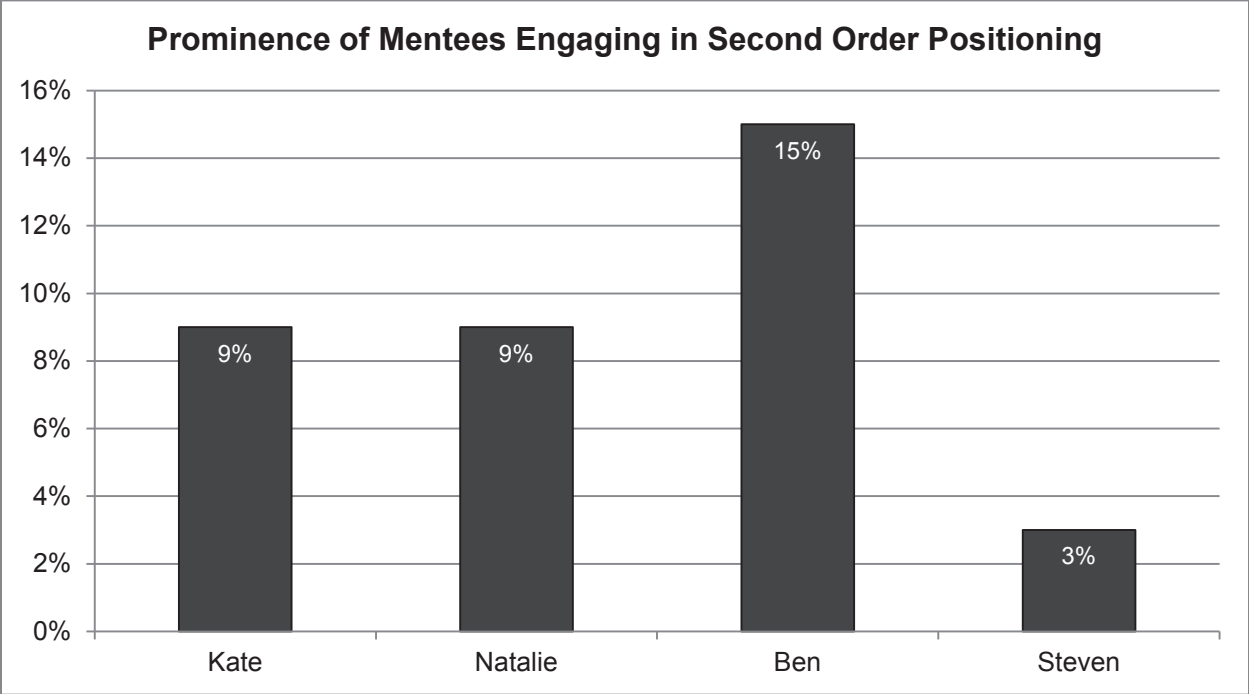


Figure B23. Comparison of how often the mentees engaged in second order positioning.