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THE RELATIONSHIP OF MENTORING TO TEACHER RETENTION AS PERCEIVED BY CURRENT PRACTITIONERS IN SOUTH MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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THE RELATIONSHIP OF MENTORING TO TEACHER RETENTION

AS PERCEIVED BY CURRENT PRACTITIONERS IN

SOUTH MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by

Linda Jean Lewis Smith

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Studies Office
of The University of Southern Mississippi
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2007

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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP OF MENTORING TO TEACHER RETENTION
AS PERCEIVED BY CURRENT PRACTITIONERS IN
SOUTH MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by

Linda Jean Lewis Smith

December 2007

Teacher retention to the profession continues to be a challenge for school administrators as efforts are made to identify the factors that contribute to teachers leaving or remaining in the teaching profession. One factor that appears to have a positive effect on keeping teachers in the profession is mentoring. The activities that provide the support new teachers need to keep them in education include mentoring behaviors.

The purpose of this study was to gather data to determine whether current teacher practitioners perceive peer mentoring as a factor in retaining teachers in the profession in south Mississippi public schools and whether the gender of the mentor has an effect. A questionnaire, developed by this researcher, posed questions that revealed demographic data, perceptions of the mentoring experience, perceptions of how mentoring aided the respondent, and responses regarding the mentor/protégé relationship.

Data were collected from seven hundred fifty-one teachers who responded to the questionnaire. These teachers were current practitioners in south Mississippi schools.
who elected to participate after superintendent and principal approval. The researcher-created Teacher Mentoring and Retention Questionnaire included demographic questions for all respondents and sections for those who were formally mentored and those who were informally mentored. Teachers who had not been mentored during their teaching career responded only to the first eleven demographic questions.

Statistical significance was found between the mentoring perceptions of those who were formally mentored and those who were informally mentored. One finding that implies a need for additional research is those who were informally mentored rated the perceptions of the mentoring experience higher than those who were formally mentored indicating that the success of mentoring, in the eyes of the protégé, may be more due to relationship than the program itself. Additionally, statistical significance was found in the mentoring perceptions of those who had same gender mentors and those who had opposite gender mentors. The relationship between the mentor and the protégé and the factors that aid in the success of the protégé should continue to be examined in order to identify the importance of the relationship over a specific program.
DEDICATION

It is my wish to dedicate this work to three wonderful men. Carlton David Lewis, my dad, who died of cancer in 1998, was the first in his family not only to go to college but to finish college. He gave me the “finish what you start” speech on more than one occasion, and I have heard his voice in the hours I was ready to give it all up. My dad inspired me to dream big and to give every effort to attain my goals. Marshall Augustus Smith, Jr., became my father-in-law in 1984 but was always there to give “fatherly” advice, particularly sensitively after my own dad had died. No one on the planet could have been prouder of me after the loss of my dad. He, too, lost a battle with cancer in 2005, but he encouraged me, prodded me, and praised me in this endeavor through his final days. Finally, to Mason Sands Smith, my husband, I dedicate this work of my mind and hands. Your diligence in providing me opportunity to do what had to be done made it all possible. I thank you, I love you, and I dedicate this to you and our fathers.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to those who inspired this writer to continue educational pursuits after fifteen years of teaching: Dr. Hank Bounds, Mark McLeod, Dr. Roy Brookshire, Susan Adam, and Dr. Robert Walker. Each provided encouragement over the past ten years as choices were made that led to this point in time.

Thank you to Dr. Thelma Roberson for her counsel in the initial stages of this doctoral process and her guidance throughout the development of this document. Special thanks are extended to Dr. Mike Ward for his encouragement, supervision of the latter portions of development of the dissertation, and expressions of faith in the writer of this document. Also, thank you Dr. David E. Lee for demonstrating how to leave good behind and aspire to greatness and to Dr. J. T. Johnson who provided pragmatic supervision and guidance in the development of the research instrument as well as the data analysis.

Most of this writer’s adult life has been spent in Mississippi where the accomplishments of Dr. Aubrey Lucas at The University of Southern Mississippi have long been admired. Thank you, Dr. Lucas, for serving on this dissertation committee and providing your insight and perspective in the development of this document.

Many thanks are extended to my family who has endured outings and activities without their wife or mother. Thank you Marika, my beautiful and brilliant daughter, for listening as your mom lamented working fulltime while working on this project, and granting grace when I could not take you shopping as often as you wished. For Mase, my stalwart son, thank you for helping me at home and with chauffeuring tasks for more than a year. Michael, my accomplished son, thank you for making your mom laugh, and for
telling and doing silly voices. Thank you Ann Smith (Ma) for helping with meals for our family and keeping your daughter-in-law focused on what is really important. You are a jewel of a woman. Thank you Mom and Mimi for your encouragement and gentle prodding for completion of this project.

Finally, Mason, thank you for your enduring patience, gracious assistance, unrelenting support, and unconditional love. Thank you for keeping things going and being encouraging when things got particularly tough for the family. This accomplishment is shared with you and our family.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Mentoring has been found to be an effective method of training workers in business, in preparing novice students to become practicing attorneys, and in assisting the development of teachers as professionals. This chapter provides an introduction to a study that was conducted in the spring of 2007 and introduces the research questions and hypotheses associated with that study. The project dealt with the perceptions of teachers employed in participating districts who elected to contribute their perspectives by completing a questionnaire developed by the author of this document. This information was gathered to gain information on the influence of mentoring upon teacher retention in the teaching profession.

Twenty-first century public schools in the United States face challenges associated with accountability and the No Child Left Behind Act (115 Stat. 1425 Public Law 107–110—Jan. 8, 2002); it is essential that highly qualified teachers entering the profession be provided with the necessary emotional, professional, and practical support to retain them to the field. Brown (2003) reported results of a National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) study that revealed 6% of all teachers leave the profession within the first year and up to 20% leave within 3 years. Other studies have indicated as many as 50% of all new teachers leave the profession within the first 3 years (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Voke, 2002). These figures compel professional educators to examine the reasons for this level of attrition and to consider what can be done to retain capable new teachers to America’s classrooms.
Mentoring has been suggested as a possible solution to retaining teachers. Ganser (2002) indicated that mentor programs are intended to help beginning teachers survive their first year in the classroom. These new teachers bring with them the sum of their life-experiences to the classroom, a level of knowledge of their content area, and a measure of commitment to the success of their students. Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall (1998) mentioned that “it is important to ascertain the prior knowledge and teaching assumptions of a teacher you are supervising” (p. 240). Thus, the mentoring experience can be enhanced when the mentor considers the specific strengths and weaknesses of a protégé early in the mentoring process. Likewise, peer coaching (or mentoring) provides the support for transferring skills learned by the teacher to the classroom (Gottesman, 2000). New teachers bring skills and preconceptions with them to the profession, and the trained mentor is positioned to provide support for the protégé that focuses on student achievement (Ganser, 2002).

School systems in the United States have become increasingly aware that teachers who are new to the profession are more likely to stay in the profession if they have had intensive mentoring (Trubowitz, 2004). Consequently, if teachers are more likely to remain in the profession after a mentoring experience, school administrators would be wise to implement such a program. Mentoring programs have been studied in numerous states including Ohio, California, Texas, and Georgia where results consistently indicate that beginning teachers may be more inclined to continue teaching if they have an opportunity to work with a peer mentor (Inman & Marlow, 2004; Mutchler, 2000; Tetzlaff & Wagstaff, 1999; West, 2002).
Multiple mentoring models are in place all across the United States. In California, the Conejo Valley Unified School District Mentor Model is based on four phases of teacher experience during the first year of teaching: anticipation, survival, disillusionment, and rejuvenation. Teachers are assigned mentors who guide them through each phase of the first year of teaching with the introduction of specific information through each phase. This program concludes with a reflection phase so that the new teacher can review strengths and weaknesses as an exercise in self-analysis (Tetzlaff & Wagstaff, 1999).

The Texas Teacher Appraisal System (TTAS) was developed in 1989 based on prescribed assumptions or expectations of teachers. Categories were developed to address each of the assumptions, and some of the areas that were addressed were as follows: instructional strategies, classroom management and organization, and presentation of subject matter. The TTAS included formal and formative evaluation components for new and veteran teachers with a significant supervisory element (McCleary & Ovando, 1991).

Youngstown, Ohio, City Schools created a mentoring program known as New Educators’ Support Team (NEST) established through a grant from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). The program elements are mentor and protégé orientation, selection of mentors, specific mentor training, activities that include portions of Harry Wong’s The First Days of School, and a final summative report that is provided to the ODE (Carter, 2004).

Studies of mentoring and induction have also been conducted in countries around the world (Ballantyne & Hansford, 1995; Britton, Ganser, & Wong, 2005). Induction for
teachers in Switzerland begins during the student teaching phase and is a system that is designed to develop the professional teacher, but includes the development of the whole person. Components of the Swiss system are practice groups, counseling, courses, and a self-evaluation. The entire process is headed by a team of professionals that employs group leaders who are teachers, and these teachers are given a reduced teaching load to provide time for practice group leadership to prepare teachers for the classroom (Britton, et al., 2005).

In China, the focus of induction for teachers is centered on lesson-preparation groups, teaching-research groups, and teaching competitions. There are multiple learning opportunities for new teachers at the school and district levels, and celebrations of successes are included in the plan. Teachers in New Zealand go through a 2-year induction phase and must successfully complete this phase in order to acquire full teaching credentials. In Japan, new teachers are given a reduced teaching load, given a mentor teacher, and are required to demonstrate a lesson to a team of professional educators twice a year. This team of professional educators provides a critical analysis of the lesson, and the new teacher continues to work to perfect the delivery of lessons (Britton, et al., 2005).

Tillman (2003) indicated that the importance of mentoring may also extend beyond the retention of teachers to improving “their professional and personal competence” (p. 227). Both life and education are filled with times of transition; a positive mentoring experience would be one in which the protégé has grown in some way (Daloz, 1999). “The present educational climate demands that professional development strategies and programs be given the attention they deserve” (Uzat, 1999, p. 41).
Considering these references to the importance of mentoring in reducing the attrition rate of teachers in the United States, additional investigation of the influence of mentoring on teacher retention is warranted.

Mentoring of beginning teachers has increased in popularity since the 1980s, and more than 30 states have put some type of mentoring or induction program in place since the mid-1990s (Brady, 2003; Feiman-Nemser, 1996). Mentoring of teachers has steadily increased since the 1980s, and, as a consequence, more educators have been exposed to this dynamic professional development of teachers. Uzat (1999) surmised that “[i]t has become obvious that the experience of being a teacher is a complicated adventure, one not to be traveled alone” (p. 41).

Quality mentoring programs have similar components. According to Jones and Pauley (2003), essential elements for a successful mentoring program include an intensive training program for school administrators, mentors, and protégés; a culture that encourages collaboration and communication; and involvement in professional organizations. Many schools offer induction and mentoring programs for teachers who are new to the profession or to the school (Jones & Pauley, 2003; Kajs, 2002). Induction is the process whereby teachers are introduced to the procedures and policies of the school, common practices for educators, and may include special instructions for duty, development of classroom rules and procedures, and course design (Moir & Brown, 2003). This induction period typically lasts from a few days up to a week. The information gained during the induction period is helpful for new teachers, but there is some confusion between the meaning of induction and mentoring because some authors
indicate that mentoring is a component of induction (Britton, et al., 2005; Moir & Brown, 2003).

While mentoring can happen spontaneously, as when experienced teachers extend an offer of assistance to a novice teacher, the intensity of the mentoring experience provides the basis for its effectiveness (Inman & Marlow, 2004; Trubowitz, 2004). Informal mentoring can be effective as relationships between colleagues occur naturally in the workplace and the novice teacher is comfortable asking questions of the experienced teacher. Formal mentoring programs are designed with a training component for both the mentor and the protégé and provide a structure for professional development and a reflection component that aids in the measurement of professional growth.

Mentoring programs offer a wide variety of positive results for students, teachers, and the organization (Holloway, 2001; Kajs, 2002; Renard, 2003; Tetzlaff & Wagstaff, 1999). Brown (2003) reported on the retention of teachers who had been mentored over a 2-year period in Iowa indicating, “new teachers in this type of setting are most likely to continue teaching” (p. 20). A case study by Schlichte, Yssel, and Merbler (2005) demonstrated an increased awareness of new teachers gaining the skills to meet the learning needs of students and found that “strongly forged relationships and the accompanying feelings of emotional well-being are protective factors and critical to retention” (p. 39) to the teaching profession.

According to Kajs (2002):

The challenge is for the campus community to see the mentoring process as a mechanism to increase teacher retention in the profession, which promotes quality
education for classroom students and provides lifelong learning opportunities for teachers, addressing their developmental needs (p. 67).

Where mentors are assigned, consideration should be given to the gender of the mentor and the protégé. Fretwell (1989) reported a response to a questionnaire where the protégé respondent indicated that all of the qualified mentors available in her department were male and she would have chosen a female if given a choice. The respondent did, in fact, seek a female mentor from a different department. This is not always the case, however, as Hall (2001) found in a study of superintendents that “[m]ale mentors were chosen more frequently by both male and female protégés. Few females were selected as mentors” (p. 85). In light of this seemingly conflicting data, it would be prudent for administrators of mentoring programs to consider the wishes of the protégé when assigning mentors.

The most effective mentoring programs have a strong training component for mentors (Kyle, Moore, & Sanders, 1999). Mentor preparation is essential to the success of a mentoring program and should include training in classroom observations, coaching techniques, and adequate time for mentor/protégé conversations (Oregon Research Report, 2002). Because mentors serve such an integral part in the success of any mentoring program, it is logical to recognize the positive influence of highly trained mentors to the success of mentoring and consequently, the retention of new teachers to the teaching profession.

Purpose of the Study

Much research has been conducted on the components of formal mentoring, from induction to extended professional development, in countries around the world and in
numerous states in the United States. The purpose of this study was to gather data to determine whether current teacher practitioners perceive peer mentoring as a factor in retaining teachers in the profession in south Mississippi public schools and whether the gender of the mentor has an effect. The study investigated if either formal or informal peer mentoring has an influence on teacher perceptions.

Significance of the Study

This study involved current teaching practitioners in kindergarten through 12th grade in public schools in south Mississippi within a 75-mile radius of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. It measured the teachers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of formal and informal mentoring, whether gender played a role in the effectiveness of their own mentoring experience, and the part their mentoring experience played in their decisions to remain in the profession.

The area of the state that is included in this study is representative of the general population of the entire state according to census data gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau (U. S. Census, 2000) for the counties that are within a 75-mile radius of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Additionally, the 4th Congressional District makes up the largest part of the selected area and is demographically similar to the state of Mississippi (Wikipedia, 2007).

Teacher retention in Mississippi has become an increasing concern as evidenced by the Mississippi Report Cards which indicate a reduction in highly qualified teachers from 98.2% for 2002-2003 to 96.8% in 2003-2004 (Mississippi Department of Education, 2007). In early 2007, the Mississippi Department of Education initiated an online survey titled Project Clear Voice to offer teachers an opportunity to anonymously report on their
working conditions. This project was designed to help define the reasons that teachers are leaving the profession in the state and included several questions on mentoring. Understanding the reasons behind a shortage of highly qualified teachers is essential to the success of education in the state. If mentoring, whether formal or informal, plays a significant role in retaining highly qualified teachers who are hired in the state, school administrators will want to know. School administrators across the state of Mississippi can benefit from learning more about the extent to which peer mentoring keeps their teachers in the profession and in their schools.

Delimitations of the Study

1. The study was delimited to teachers employed in public school districts within a 75-mile radius of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, during the spring semester in 2007.

2. This study was delimited to schools in districts whose superintendents approved their participation.

3. The study was delimited to teachers who stayed in the profession and did not include those who left the profession.

General Research Questions

This study investigated the relationship of teacher perceptions of informal or formal mentoring and teacher retention as perceived by current teachers in south Mississippi. It sought to determine if either formal or informal mentoring encourages teachers to remain in the teaching profession. Specific questions investigated in this study were:
1. Do teachers in south Mississippi perceive that formal or informal peer mentoring has influenced their retention to the profession?

2. Is there a difference between the perceptions of mentoring held by protégés who have had a mentor of the same gender and those who had an opposite gender mentor?

3. Are there differences between the perceptions of teachers who are formally or informally mentored with regard to the amount of assistance received?

4. Does the level of teaching assignment (elementary, middle, high school) affect the perceptions of teachers regarding formal and informal mentoring?

5. Does the gender, current age, age at the time that their teaching careers began, level of teaching assignment, years in the profession, or number of years intending to teach affect the teachers’ perceptions of mentoring effectiveness?

Hypotheses

Hypotheses for this study included:

H₁: Teacher perception of formal or informal peer mentoring is related to their intent to remain in the profession in south Mississippi.

H₂: There is a significant difference between the perceptions of participants in the mentoring process with the same gender mentors and the perceptions of participants with opposite gender mentors.

H₃: There is a significant difference in teachers’ perceptions regarding the level of teaching assistance received between those who were formally mentored and those who were informally mentored.
H₄: Teacher perception of the influence of formal or informal mentoring differs based on level of teaching assignment (elementary, middle, and high school).

H₅: Teacher perceptions of mentoring are related to their gender, current age, age at the time that their teaching careers began, level of teaching assignment, years in the profession, and number of years intending to teach.

Definition of Terms

The definitions that follow have been selected to provide clarity of terms for the purposes of this study:

*Coaching* – for the purposes of this study, “short informal observations on one specific, teacher-identified area” (Gottesman, 2000, p. 23).

*Formal mentoring program* – for the purposes of this study, a prescribed program of mentoring that provides a structured, systematic means of mentoring a protégé within a defined time period (Kimbrough-Robinson, 2006).

*Induction* – the process of introducing the teacher to the profession at the beginning of the teaching career (Fabian & Simpson, 2002).

*Informal peer mentoring* – for the purposes of this study, a process by which a person with experience in education provides guidance, advice, and support to a less experienced peer without specific guidance or a prescribed program (Hopkins, 2005).

*Mentor* – advisor, wise and trusted counselor, one who helps to prepare the next generation (Rothstein, 2000). For the purposes of this study, an experienced teacher who is willing to invest time in building a relationship with a protégé (mentee) for the accomplishing of professional goals and student achievement.

*Mentor Teacher* – serves as a positive role model, an experienced and
successful teacher who assists a novice teacher (protégé or mentee) in becoming acclimated to the school system and teaching profession (Zimpher & Rieger, 1988).

**Mentoring process** – involves identification of goals, working with peers, identifying and improving weaknesses, working toward collegiality (City College of San Francisco, n.d.). For the purposes of this study, the activities associated with mentoring range from mentor training through independence of the protégé being fully acclimated to the teaching and learning environment.

**Peer** – for the purposes of this study, professionals working at the same level (Gottesman, 2000).

**Protégé** – someone who seeks guidance from another with more experience or expertise (Moliff, 2005). For this study, a beginning (new) teacher to a school who is in need of induction into the school culture and acclimation to the teaching and learning environment.

**Teacher attrition** – describes teachers leaving the teaching profession because of retirement, change of location, change of profession, release by a school, or other reason causing a separation from the teaching profession in a public school (Billingsly, 2004; Stotko, Ingram, & Beaty-O’Ferrall, 2007).

**Teacher retention** – describes teachers staying in the teaching profession after one or more years of experience (Brown, 2003).

Summary

The exploration of the relationship of mentoring on teacher retention to the profession is important, as reported by Ingersoll and Kralik (2004), who found that mentoring programs generally propose to provide a foundation for the development of
capable, effective teachers. This foundation becomes the basis for reducing attrition.

The problems associated with retraining and retaining new staff members are exacerbated by the number of teachers who leave the profession within the first 3 years (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Voke, 2002). Multiple mentoring models have been tested and shown to be effective in California, Texas, and Ohio (Carter, 2004; McCleary & Ovando, 1991; Tetzlaff & Wagstaff, 1999) and provide a basis for the consideration of mentoring programs as a means of retaining teachers who are highly qualified according to the No Child Left Behind Act (115 Stat. 1425 Public Law 107-110—Jan. 8, 2002).

Those with the answers to the questions asked in this study are current teachers who were willing to respond to a questionnaire that sought to ascertain their perceptions of mentoring, either formal or informal or both, and the influence of that mentoring experience on retention to the profession. By revealing the group response data, the researcher adds to the body of knowledge on the subject of mentoring in education and how the results may affect school administrators.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter provides a review of literature associated with mentoring including the origin of the mentoring relationship, the development and design of mentoring programs, teacher attrition, teacher retention, mentoring processes, the influence of mentoring on protégés and mentors, and the value of mentoring. Mentoring is a multifaceted concept that dates back even further than the term “mentor” and shows promise as a method of retaining teachers to the teaching profession. The investigation of mentoring provided a plethora of information dating from Homer’s *The Odyssey* through the works of journal writers and book authors who have written about mentoring during the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Origin of Mentoring Relationship

A mentor can be defined as an advisor, wise and trusted counselor, or one who helps to prepare the next generation (Rothstein, 2000; Troutman, 2002). The word mentor has its origin in Homer’s *The Odyssey* where Odysseus’ good friend and counselor is “Mentor” (Homer, 2004). As told by Homer, when Odysseus departs to fight in the Trojan War, he leaves the education and guidance of his son, Telemachus, to Mentor. Mentor is responsible for the entire development of Telemachus including his physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and administrative development (Crow & Matthews, 1998; Villani, 2002). Thus, the word mentor evolved from the name of a character in a Greek epic to literally mean one who performs the duties ascribed to the character who bore the name, Mentor.
Crow and Matthews (1998) stated that a mentor is someone with more expertise or experience who provides guidance to another of lesser experience. This particular definition of a mentor led to using the term “protégé” to refer to the person being mentored or guided. Derived from the French “protégére,” the word protégé means protected by someone of influence. The definitions of mentor and protégé, as modeled initially by Mentor and Telemachus, are dynamic over time and as applied to specific circumstances or situations. Villani (2002) proposed that the meaning of the word mentor has evolved and matured to indicate a supporter, friend, guide, protector, and sponsor. While the word mentor may have originated in classic Greek literature around 800 B.C., the concept of mentoring can be traced back even further.

Mentoring in the early 21st century has evolved from its earliest stages of development, but the fundamental concepts are the same. Multiple organizations and individuals have provided definitions of mentoring. The London Borough of Hillingdon has a mentoring program for students and they have defined mentoring as “a one-to one, non-judgmental relationship in which an individual voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another” (London Borough of Hillingdon, 2006). Supporting Others Through Volunteer Action (SOVA) defined mentoring as “support, assistance, advocacy or guidance given by one person to another in order to achieve an objective or several objectives over a period of time” (Supporting Others Through Volunteer Action, 2006).

Some of the earliest recorded examples of mentoring may be found in the Holy Bible where, in the Old Testament book of I Samuel written about 930 B.C. (NIV, Tyndale, 1984), Eli took in the young Samuel and taught him the ways of God and the priesthood. Much as Mentor guided Telemachus, Eli raised Samuel from childhood to
manhood teaching him about God, Jewish customs and laws, and how to serve God. When Eli's own sons lost the favor of God because of their sin, the protégé, Samuel, was chosen to become the next spiritual leader of the Jewish people (I Samuel, Ch. 2). There are numerous other biblical examples most notably in the New Testament of the Holy Bible where Timothy became the protégé of the Apostle Paul (Acts, Ch.16). He, too, learned the ways and the will of God for his life from the more experienced Apostle. He traveled with the Apostle Paul throughout Asia Minor and learned by Paul's example as they visited Christian churches.

Other mentoring pairs can be found in business, industry, politics, entertainment, and education. Actor John Wayne mentored Actor James Arness, and Richard Burton mentored Sir Anthony Hopkins. Mentors can be found in movies as in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* where Hagrid is a mentor for young Harry Potter and in *The Matrix* where Morpheus mentors Neo. Political examples of mentoring include Theodore Roosevelt (26th president of the U. S.) who mentored William Howard Taft (27th president of the U. S.) and John F. Kennedy (35th president of the U. S.) who mentored Rey A. Carr, the CEO of Peer Resources. In literature, Jim Collins who authored *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don't* was mentored by Peter Drucker, who is considered an early pioneer of management consulting (Peer Systems Consulting Group, Inc, 2006).

New teachers in a school need to possess an understanding of expectations for first year or novice teachers and the means by which professional development can occur. Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall (1998) asserted that mentoring experiences should be designed to "promote the learning and growth of teachers as persons and as
professionals” (p. 2). DeBolt (1992) indicated that mentoring involves helping a new
teacher through the first year of “experiences and teaching” (p. 44). According to
Troutman (2002), “[t]he initiation and sustaining of mentoring relationships is important
in providing a basic foundation for successful education programs. How individuals are
oriented or inducted into positions is important in terms of retention and longevity” (p.
50).

Mentoring in the Workplace

Mentoring has been used in different ways in a variety of professions, and
mentors have been assigned to teachers new to the teaching profession or a school
district, businessmen and women entering the workforce, doctors, lawyers, and others.
Mentoring has been determined to be an effective method of introducing new members to
a profession. An extensive amount of literature is available that discusses the concept of
mentoring teachers who are new to the profession.

New teachers need mentors who will be a source of answers to frequently asked
questions and also be an example of a high quality teaching professional. According to
Hurst and Reding (2002), mentors of new teachers should lead by example, stressing the
importance of following actions rather than just words. Hurst and Reding (2002)
contended that mentoring can become “natural” as the mentor assists the protégé with the
tasks required of a new teacher. The mentor should provide opportunities for the protégé
to observe best practice lessons, assist in the organizational skills that help to make
teachers effective, and be available for sharing ideas. Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall
(1998) reported using mentoring in the promotion of teacher development through
various stages and cognitive domains.
Mentoring in Education

Mentoring and teacher induction have proven to be important elements for maintaining new teachers to the profession. According to Portner (2003), by the turn of the 21st century, the majority of states had teacher induction programs that included support for teachers. The advent of such programs is likely due to the high rate of attrition of teachers new to the profession. This high attrition rate among new hires causes schools to take into consideration the factors that would cause teachers to leave and those that may cause teachers to stay in the profession. A 1996 report from the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future indicated that “recruiting, preparing and retaining good teachers is the central strategy for improving our schools” (p. 8).

Portner (2003) indicated that it takes many years to develop the techniques and experience required for a teacher to become successful in the teaching profession. Unfortunately, since so many leave the profession in the first few years, they are not in the classroom long enough to fully develop the qualities necessary for a successful career in teaching. Portner (2003) further reported that school leaders are supportive of mentoring because of the number of veteran teachers who are eligible or nearly eligible for retirement. Studies show that new teachers benefit from mentoring, but some questions remain as to the relationship of mentoring to the mentor, the protégé, and longevity to the profession. A study by Andrew and Quinn (2005) measured the effect of mentoring on teachers’ perceptions of the support they received during their first year of teaching. The results showed that first year teachers, who had been assigned mentors, perceived a greater level of support than those who were not assigned mentor teachers.
According to a doctoral dissertation study by Thompson (1998), administrators may be supportive of mentoring. Thompson (1998) found that school principals who were mentored said that they were "twice as likely to mentor fellow educational leaders" (p. 100). Thompson's (1998) study further indicated that 80% of school principals who were not mentored perceived that they would have benefited from a mentor both with career development and professional progress. The researcher reported a need for a mentoring component for principal preparation programs. Additionally, many individual participants in the study reported that they had been chosen for their administrative position by their mentor and that this element added a measure of strength to the mentoring relationship (Thompson, 1998).

The beneficiaries of mentoring extend beyond teachers and school principals. Boyd (1996) found that college students who were mentored by college faculty expressed a greater satisfaction in their academic successes than those who were not mentored. Further, Boyd (1996) indicated that the prevalence of minority instructors encourages and motivates minority students toward a satisfactory college experience. Daloz (1999) reported that "[t]he student feels uniquely seen by the mentor, and if the mentor is endowed with particularly desirable qualities or unusual power in the world, the effect can be a potent tonic" (p. 214). These findings provide a basis for the purposes of mentoring on students and student success. If, indeed, students respond positively to mentoring as they work their way through their own educational process, then the sense of "specialness" that is acquired may be enough to help motivate them toward achieving their educational goals (Daloz, 1999).
Mentoring in education impacts more than those who work in or attend school. Many private citizens have made a difference in public schools in the United States by working with students in mentoring programs. Evans (1992) gave examples of many individuals who provided support to public school children including people like Betty Flood of New Jersey who started a recreation center for children who lived in her building because she wanted them to have a place to go after school. Another mentor included in Evans’ (1992) account was Tom Pilecki who took an after school arts program and integrated it with the academics of a failing elementary school across the street. This integration of the mentoring program and school resulted in the creation of the St. Augustine School for the Arts where students now score average or above average on standardized tests and continue to experience academic success (Evans, 1992). These examples provide a glimpse at the benefits of mentors in the education community, but mentoring is used effectively beyond education into other professions.

*Mentoring in Other Professions*

Brady (2003) reported on the impact of mentoring in business, in particular, where Charlene T. Begley had moved through the ranks of General Electric to become the president and CEO of GE Transportation Systems. Begley understood the value of a great mentor. Her biggest champion, David L. Calhoun, president and CEO of GE Aircraft Engines, recognized her talent when she worked for him on the audit staff and then asked her to become its chief financial officer, despite her limited experience with finance. As Begley’s mentor, he recognized her drive and determination and gave her opportunities to succeed. Like Begley at GE, Connie Duckworth became successful in the investment-banking firm of Goldman Sachs. In the November 10, 2003 issue of
Fortune magazine, Duckworth was quoted as having said, “I had guidance from very good mentors... Every senior woman I know devotes an immense amount of time to mentoring” (p. 192).

Mentoring has been used in the medical field to recruit and retain health professionals. Mody (2003), a professor at the Nelson R. Mandela School of Medicine, was asked about his most influential teacher to which he responded, “my mentor and my friend, Professor Orlando Meyers of the University of Cape Town, from whom I learned the value of commitment, caring, and compassion” (p. 1004). Reilly (2003) reported that hospitals in California had implemented a mentoring program in an effort to retain nurses to meet the requirements of a controversial staffing law — “The Safe Staffing Law” (A.B. 394). This staffing law (A.B. 394) assigned fines of up to $10,000 for hospitals that failed to comply with a prescribed nurse-to-patient ratio in California hospitals. In order to facilitate the retention of nurses, the California Nurses Association was awarded a $904,000 grant to implement a nurse-mentoring program at four hospitals in the state of California to help with the retention of nurses (Reilly, 2003).

The legal profession uses mentoring to assist in the transition of attorneys from law school to the courtroom. Ward (2004) reported on the legal profession’s use of mentoring where attorney Leslie D. Davis of Ohio provided guidance and advice to younger lawyers and often had them accompany her to court appearances to observe motions and the preparation of witnesses. In addition, Ward reported mentoring programs in law firms in Wisconsin, California, and Georgia and concluded that a key to successful mentoring was having a person to whom new associates could pose “dumb questions.” Tod Arnovitz wrote in the May 2003 Florida Bar Journal, “in our profession
today, mentoring provides wise and experienced attorneys to extend guidance and promote professional advancement for inexperienced younger attorneys. In the high-pressure world of today’s law practice, the need for mentoring is more important than ever” (p. 4).

The use of mentoring in business, banking, medicine, and law for introducing individuals to the profession and/or to retain them to the profession provides strong support for using it in education. Daloz (1999) wrote of the transformation that takes place in a professional. “We grow through a progression of transformations in our meaning-making framework, from relatively narrow and self-centered filters through increasingly inclusive, differentiated, and compassionate perspectives” (Daloz, 1999, p. 145). Daloz (1999) further indicated that mentors change as transitions change and was quoted to say, “I found most of my mentors in men who seemed the personification of what I wanted to believe possible for myself—especially in the world of work” (p. 205).

Components of a Mentoring Program

Mentoring begins with the selection of mentors which is followed by training for the mentor teachers. As the mentoring program begins, mentors and protégés must develop a positive relationship and find time to participate in the mentoring process. Finally, an evaluation component will help in determining the effectiveness of the mentoring program (Ganser, 2002).

Selection of Mentors

Mentor selection is an important part of the mentoring process. Pairing mentors and protégés according to a specified group of factors can help to facilitate a more
successful mentoring program. Selection criteria for mentoring programs may include qualifications, availability, respectability, and gender.

The first step in the mentoring process is locating qualified, willing mentors. Texas utilized a creative idea to locate mentors to work with their first year teachers. Hammer (2005) reported that the Texas State University System partnered with Houston Endowment Incorporated for a grant to fund a program they titled the Novice Teacher Induction Program (NTIP). Under this grant, retirees were selected and trained and then served as mentors to teachers entering the profession. These retirees helped to supplement “on campus” mentors who were already busy with teaching their own classes and managing their own careers. Retirees were selected primarily because of their expertise, years of experience, and time available to devote to the project. By 2005, 37 school districts and 151 school sites were participating in the mentoring project (Hammer, 2005).

Zimpher and Rieger (1988) cited five considerations for teacher mentoring. First, the mentor selection is a key component to the success of the mentoring relationship. The mentor must be available, knowledgeable, responsible, and respectable. Second, school level administrators may want to consider input from the mentor-teacher when considering “long-term staffing decisions” (p. 181). Third, mentors need to be properly trained to be successful mentors. Fourth, the mentor must be a trustworthy individual who will take the responsibility for bringing the protégé into the profession with a measure of success. Finally, mentors need support in their roles as mentors.

Another consideration in the selection of mentors is the gender of the mentor and the protégé. Hall (2001) conducted a study of superintendents in the southeastern portion
of the United States and reported that both male and female protégés seek male mentors because they seem to have more knowledge of power issues and the politics of an organization. Results of a study by Campbell and Campbell (2000) indicated “a need to address differing expectations at the outset of a mentoring relationship” (p. 516). “The selection of mentor teachers should follow a careful process” (Hurst & Reding, 2002, p. 23).

Once mentors have been selected and trained, the process of mentoring begins. In the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* (QSE), Cawyer, Simonds, and Davis (2002) cited five steps or functions of the mentoring process as “teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counseling, and befriending” (p. 226) which incorporate not only the career functions of a mentor, but also the psychosocial. The socialization of one protégé was studied using a qualitative method that identified five characteristics which may impact a protégé’s successful socialization into the organization. The identified characteristics were interpersonal bonding, social support, professional advice, history of the organization, and accessibility to the protégé.

*Training for Mentors*

Mentor training is the first step following mentor selection, and Holloway (2001) reported that mentors need both training and support and need to have the opportunity to “discuss ideas, problems, and solutions with other mentor teachers” (p. 85). It is important for mentor teachers to be trained in order that they may acquire the skills to provide the support and guidance at the level necessary to assure success in the protégé. By providing career guidance and emotional support, the mentor gives the protégé an outlet for expressing concerns and a needed support in the early years of teaching.
DeBolt (1992) expressed the importance of “training and preparing” mentors for their roles. DeBolt indicated that while programs may differ, they all “emphasize skills and knowledge needed by mentors such as observation and conferencing skills, stages of adult development, and effective teaching practices” (p. 194). Brooks and Sikes (1997) pointed out that teachers need professional development activities to identify what they are to do in their role as mentors.

Proper training or preparation for the mentor is essential to an effective mentoring experience for both the mentor and the protégé. According to Crow and Matthews (1998), research has suggested that mentor training does help in the mentoring process. In two separate studies, mentors who had been trained in mentoring had a higher level of mentoring activity, and protégés rated their relationship with trained mentors significantly higher.

Blair-Larsen (1998) indicated that beginning teachers who have recently completed their educational programs would benefit greatly from the support and assistance provided by a mentoring program.

They enter the profession at different stages of development: some returning after a number of years absence; some beginning a second career at mid-life; and others starting their first job. A mentoring program can begin at any one of these points (Blair-Larsen, 1998, p. 602).

According to Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall (1998), in one program, “prospective mentors participate in a reflective practicum while they work with a novice professional. The practicum lasts one semester and follows a semester of coursework that introduces them to developmental supervision” (p. 97). Ganser (2002) stated that “[t]he need for
high quality training is understood when it is accepted that being a good teacher is a necessary but insufficient condition for being a good mentor" (p. 51). It stands to reason that training is an essential element for successful mentoring and that mentors must possess additional skills to their teaching skills to provide the support and knowledge their protégés need.

Mentoring Relationship

Another important component in the mentoring process is the development of the mentor–protégé relationship. Trubowitz (2004) reported the importance of the development of the mentoring relationship by asking some poignant questions. Once the questions of who should mentor and why have been answered, the next steps are to provide specific suggestions of what to do in the classroom in the first days and weeks of school. Once school has started, the mentor should be listening to the troubles and frustrations of the first year teacher and trying to identify with these challenges and guide the protégé toward solutions. Finally, both the mentor and the protégé should keep logs so that progress can be measured and clarified. The relationship should develop to the point where there is mutual respect for one another and conversations are two-way and not one-sided (Trubowitz, 2004).

Successful mentoring requires the development of an interpersonal relationship between the mentor and the protégé (Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1998). According to Hurst and Reding (2002), “[a] good mentor is a friend” (p. 9). Feiman-Nemser and Rosaen (1997) indicated that in a caring relationship, the “participants would help each other realize their ethical ideals” (p. 11).
As the mentoring relationship matures, “[t]he continuing dialogue between the mentor and mentee allows for an exploration of different ideas, and the eventual arrival at solutions that satisfy the needs of the mentor, mentee, administrators, and the school” (Jones & Pauley, 2003, p. 24). The Oregon Research Report (2002) reported that teacher respondents to a mentoring survey most valued the emotional support they received during the process.

**Time for Mentoring**

Brooks and Sikes (1997) reported that while early meetings between mentor and protégé may focus on goals and other practical matters, it will be important to set aside time in order for mentoring to work. Time management should be a priority for both the individuals involved in mentoring as well as the school of which they are a part (Brooks & Sikes, 1997). Hurst and Reding (2002) indicated that, “[m]entoring can become natural to you and can fit into your schedule without being a time-killer” (p. 10).

Because schools have such a difficult time providing mentors with release time for mentoring, Blair (2003) reported that the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE) is preparing to offer a virtual mentoring program for novice teachers. “The program will permit newly certified rookies to partner with ABCTE-credentialed veteran teachers to discuss classroom practice online” (p. 1). By establishing a “virtual” mentoring environment, Blair (2003) purported that even new educators in rural districts would have access to experienced teachers willing to aid them in their development as professionals. Rural school districts who find it difficult to acquire sufficient mentors within their own schools may have to rely on alternative mentoring sources such as those that are available via the Internet. “Obtaining access to
professional development programs has been a particular problem in rural areas” (Pittinsky, 2005, p. 33).

**Evaluation of Mentoring**

Mentoring programs are strengthened by the inclusion of an evaluation component. Crow and Matthews (1998) asserted that “[s]everal types of evaluation should be used as part of any mentor program” (p. 161). The major types of evaluations should include a full, comprehensive evaluation of the program and a needs assessment to make necessary changes to the mentoring program. “The participating mentors and protégés should give careful consideration to evaluating mentoring content and methods. We recommend both a confidential instrument administered to the mentors and protégés and selective interviews with those willing to give frank and open feedback” (Crow & Matthews, 1998, p. 161). The needs assessment evaluation should be done annually as “the profession of educational leadership transforms, as student demographics change, and as other district and school needs and visions change, continual efforts for renewal need to be made in the mentor program” (Crow & Matthews, 1998, p. 161). Finally, Crow and Matthews (1998) further asserted that a program evaluation should include feedback from all of the program participants measuring the “quantity and quality of mentoring in the program” (Crow & Matthews, 1998, p. 161). The challenges associated with acquiring this feedback may be instrument based, relationship based, or impacted by the length of the program or its design.

Ganser (2002) indicated that mentoring had existed long enough in education to have a history of development, implementation, and design. Ganser cautioned that as mentoring and staff development have changed over the past generation of teachers, this...
“second generation” of mentoring programs had some characteristics specific to 21st century mentoring. The changes taking place near the turn of the 21st century included electronic communications from e-mail to distance-learning options, timely training for mentors as they lead protégés through the mentoring process, team mentoring, and multi-year mentoring programs (Ganser, 2002).

Characteristics of Mentoring

A primary characteristic of any mentoring program is the development of trust between the mentor and the protégé (Hurst & Reding, 2002). Tetzlaff and Wagstaff (1999) reported that “veteran teachers coach the new teachers in a nonthreatening atmosphere, providing support and materials. The mentor builds a relationship based on trust with the new teacher” (p. 288). Trust is an essential component of mentoring if the relationship between the protégé and the mentor is to be a productive and successful one.

Another characteristic of mentoring is the professional development and awareness of the protégé. Brooks and Sikes (1997) reported keeping a professional journal was one method of aiding “personal and professional development” (p. 154). The importance of inquiry, monitoring growth, and adjusting to circumstances are all strategies that can be employed to help new teachers to “develop a self-awareness of their professional knowledge and skills” (p. 155). A protégé will need to learn to monitor and adjust instruction to meet the needs of the learners in the classroom, and the mentor can help to provide the guidance necessary to help the protégé become successful in teaching.
Mentoring Process

Teaching the New Teacher

After mentors and protégés have been paired and mentors have been trained, the actual mentoring can begin. According to Renard (2003), teaching needs to become a profession that “nurtures its young” (p. 64). School administrators and leaders can facilitate the mentoring process and nurturing new teachers by providing the mentor and protégé the same planning period, limiting the number of course preparations for the first 2 or 3 years for the new teacher, and gradually introducing the new teacher to a full complement of duties and responsibilities (Renard, 2003). It is important for the mentor to understand adult learning, and Kajs (2002) identified levels of teacher development from novice to expert. Kajs (2002) reported that “during the novice teacher stage, mentors will probably exercise more of a counseling role to deal with the protégés’ personal issues than at the advanced beginner level, where mentoring is more geared to instructional refinement” (p. 63).

Kajs (2002) further asserted that protégés need assistance with learning to be reflective about their teaching practices in order that their instruction may improve. Renard (2003) suggested that new teachers’ main concerns for instruction consist of classroom management, motivating students, differentiated instruction, and dealing with parents. “Mentors not only help new teachers reflect on teaching practices, but they also set an example for professionalism in teaching” (Hurst & Reding, 2002, p. 40).

Sponsoring and Encouraging the Teacher

The protégé needs to have encouragement to help with the process of becoming acclimated to the teaching profession. Hurst and Reding (2002) reported the importance
of the protégé having someone to act as an advocate, particularly when misunderstandings associated with the teaching profession occur. Mentors who offer correction with gentleness, exhibit patience in dealing with the protégé, behave in a consistent manner, demonstrate a positive attitude, and display enthusiasm provide encouragement and a positive mentoring experience for the protégé (Hurst & Reding, 2002). "When new teachers receive this kind of help and support, chances are better that they will be more successful, and therefore more content, in their classrooms" (Hurst & Reding, 2002, p. 9).

A study by Ballantyne and Hansford (1995) indicated that personal support was one of the most important functions of mentoring for new teachers. The study results found that “[b]eginning teachers value the opportunity to have someone to talk to and need to feel comfortable in asking for advice and assistance” (p. 299). Inman and Marlow (2004) asserted that new teachers benefit from support systems that exist within the school environment and that the community can “contribute toward the beginning teacher’s feeling of self-worth and thus improve the condition of the classroom environment through active involvement” (p. 610).

Impact of Mentoring

Attrition and Retention

Teacher retention to the teaching profession has been a concern among school leaders in public schools in the United States for many years (Inman & Marlow, 2004; Voke, 2002). Voke (2002) indicated that up to 50% of new teachers left the profession within the first few years of teaching. School administrators have sought more effective retention strategies to encourage good teachers to stay (Inman & Marlow, 2004). In an
effort to remedy a growing teacher shortage, Inman and Marlow (2004) examined factors that increased the likelihood that teachers would remain in the teaching profession. In particular, teacher perceptions of positive elements of teaching were investigated. Results of the study indicated that teachers can benefit when provided with opportunities to interact and work with (1) teacher education mentors, (2) colleagues with similar ideas about teaching and working cooperatively, (3) administrators who encourage and promote teachers’ ideas and (4) a community which feels positive about the educational system and those involved (Inman & Marlow, 2004, p. 613).

Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) researched the impact of mentoring on teacher retention by reviewing 10 of 150 empirical studies that met their rigorous criteria. Criteria included the involvement of quantitative research data in a study, evaluation of the effects of induction on teachers who were mentored, and a comparison of individuals who were mentored with those who were not. These researchers found that the percentage of teachers leaving the profession within the first 5 years was between 40-50%. The research revealed that while the influence of mentoring and induction programs varied widely among the 10 studies, “collectively the studies do provide empirical support for the claim that assistance for new teachers and, in particular, mentoring programs have a positive impact on teachers and their retention” (p. 1).

Further, Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) found that the most intensive mentoring programs provided the lowest attrition of new teachers. In examination of the multiple “packages” of mentoring programs experienced by newcomers, those who received no mentor or did not participate in any mentoring or induction activities left the profession at...
a rate of about 20% per year. However, those newcomers who had a mentor, common planning time, and collaboration with other teachers had a reduced attrition rate of 11.8%. Those least likely to leave (7.1% attrition rate) had a mentor, common planning, collaboration, an external network, and fewer course preparations. The researchers concluded that their “findings should indicate to policymakers and education leaders that there is promise in the use of induction and mentoring as a means of reducing high rates of teacher turnover” (p. 10).

In the 2005 fall issue of Preventing School Failure, Schlichte, Yssel, and Merbler (2005) studied factors associated with retaining first-year special education teachers. While the study was limited in scope (5 respondents), it did reveal some tentative observations including the importance of mentoring, the need for multiple support sources, building administrator support, training, communication, and networking. The researchers found “that strongly forged relationships and the accompanying feelings of emotional well-being are protective factors and critical to retention” (p. 39).

Other Impacts of Significance

Tillman (2003) examined mentoring, reflection, and reciprocal journaling among African-American teachers in a large urban high school in the United States. There were two major findings in the case study; these were the protégé’s professional competence concerns and the feeling of being separate from the school community. This case study involved journaling by the protégé, mentor, and building principal, but the findings focused on the writing of the protégé and the principal. The principal learned the importance of the principal’s role in providing support and inclusion of new teachers in the school community. Principals should find time to interact with new faculty, be
thoughtful about the selection of mentors, and acknowledge power issues that naturally occur between principals and new teachers (Tillman, 2003).

Hopkins (2005) studied mentoring among community college faculty and staff examining both informal and formal structures. The data from this qualitative study were coded and analyzed using an inductive approach. Results demonstrated that mentees (protégés) wanted strong institutional support with an informal program structure. Mentees (protégés) also indicated a need for increasing awareness of activities that would enhance their professional development (Hopkins, 2005).

A study by Andrew and Quinn (2005) measured the effect of mentoring on teachers’ perceptions of the support they received during their first year of teaching. The results showed first year teachers, who had been assigned mentors, perceived a greater level of support than those who were not assigned mentor teachers.

Value of the Mentoring Relationship

The value of the relationship established in the mentoring process can be measured in a variety of ways. Determining the effectiveness of a mentoring relationship includes its impact on the mentor, the protégé, and the organization. Crow and Matthews (1998) provided suggestions for evaluating the value of mentoring for the mentors including “renewed enthusiasm” for the teaching profession; new insights in teaching, technology, and leadership; opportunities for reflective thought and writing; and “validation” of their ability to communicate ideas to a new audience resulting in a positive mentoring experience. Principals can assist with the success of mentors by providing encouragement, training, and release time for observations, and by monitoring the process (Hurst & Reding, 2002).
Protégé benefits, likewise touted by Crow and Matthews (1998), include developing greater insight into self, learning to be an effective classroom leader, and acquiring multiple strategies for dealing with various classroom situations. Other gains for protégés included an exposure to new ideas; the opportunity to interact with experienced teaching professionals; protection from difficult situations; reflection on current practices; and increasing confidence and professionalism. Daresh (2003) reported protégés benefit from the mentoring relationship with increased competence, putting theory into practice, improved communication skills, and a sense of belonging.

Crow and Matthews (1998) cited the following benefits to an organization that has a mentoring program:

- Administrators with mentoring programs in their districts have more capable leaders.
- A community of learners becomes more apparent.
- District administrators gain better recruits and candidates for administrative positions.
- Teachers and students gain the opportunity to work with more dynamic leaders.
- Family and friends benefit from protégés learning to balance multiple roles. Through mentoring, protégés tend to have a clearer perception of the roles they play with school, family, and friends. (p. 11)
Summary

Effective mentoring programs have a positive influence on both the individuals and the organizations involved. “We must commit ourselves to becoming the profession that nurtures its young” (Renard, 2003, p. 62). Thirty of the 50 states require some type of teacher induction or mentoring, according to a survey reported by Education Week (State Support for New Teachers, 2003). This growing trend of mentoring bodes well for the profession and for public education in the United States.

Whether the program is limited to a year or is expanded to include the first 2 or 3 years of a protégé’s career, the program parameters must be outlined and understood from the beginning. Some “school systems see the mentoring process as a 2-years-or-longer endeavor, and plan for it as a part of the overall professional development of teachers in the district” (Villani, 2002, p. 25).

According to Villani (2002), when an induction or mentoring program emphasizes extended support and makes instructional practice the focus, the benefits to new teachers and veteran teachers alike are likely to be significant. Daresh (2003) indicated that teachers who served as mentors expressed greater satisfaction with the teaching profession. Mentors also benefit from more recognition from peers, have increased enthusiasm for teaching, and experience greater opportunity for advancing in their careers.

Mentoring is an increasingly popular concept that has benefits that reach beyond the individual to the organization that is being served. Specifically, school districts gain many advantages from having mentoring programs. According to Daresh (2003), school districts across the United States have explored mentoring schemes for
teachers and identified that they have a more capable staff with an attitude of lifelong
learning. Schools also reported higher motivation among the teaching staff as well as
increased job satisfaction, teacher self-esteem, and improved productivity.

Finding the appropriate incentives or motivation for an effective mentoring
program will go a long way toward its success. Incentives may include financial rewards,
continuing education units, compensatory time, or additional planning time, but whatever
the incentive or motivation, ultimately the desire for improvement must be intrinsic to the
protégé. Several factors need to be considered in selecting mentors (Crow & Matthews,
1998). "Mentors should exemplify good school leadership. They need to be highly
regarded educators and leaders with strong character reputations and well respected in the
community" (p. 157).

Brock and Grady (1997) identified areas of needed assistance for new teachers
that included discipline and classroom management, emotional support, and planning for
varying student ability levels. They further identified needs for how to plan, organize,
and manage time, how to communicate with all stakeholders, how to appropriately assess
student progress, and how to understand the procedures of the school as well as the
policies of the school district. Additionally, they indicated the need for the protégé to
have the human resources necessary to successfully adjust to the teaching profession,
procedures for acquiring needed teaching materials, and identification of the most
effective teaching strategies for the group of students in their classes.

Because new teachers to the profession need guidance to maximize their
success in the classroom, Brock and Grady (1997) found that:
a critical source of data often overlooked when planning a mentorship program is the beginning teachers themselves. Before school begins and again at a point midway through the year, beginning teachers should be asked to identify problem areas and assistance needs. (p. 85)

Blair-Larsen (1998) indicated that “a mentoring program is considered productive when it provides support to new teachers and opportunities for personal and professional reflection” (p. 603).

The National Mentoring Network reported that mentoring is used in an education environment to improve achievement, self-esteem, and socialization. It was further reported that mentoring is used in business to promote development of personnel, provide support to employees, and encourage business development. Mentoring is used in many communities to support youth who are considered “at risk” of failing in society (National Mentoring Network, 2006).

Finally, Blair-Larsen (1998), writing for Education magazine, stated that:

the successful implementation of a mentoring program is a challenge to the educational profession. Through them, teaching joins other professions that already induct their new members through a carefully defined procedure. If beginning teachers are to acquire effective teaching strategies and become members of the school community, local school districts and teacher educators must join ranks (p. 603).

Mentoring programs should have an evaluative component. Odell stated that, “a formative evaluation provides contemporary information about the teacher mentoring process and permits one to revise and redirect the ongoing program as necessary in order
to achieve programmatic goals” (cited in Bey & Holmes, 1992, p. 99). Mentoring can be a successful experience when the program is in place, mentors have been selected and paired with protégés, and a method of monitoring and adjusting to meet the needs of the participants has been established.
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methods that were used in this study to measure the relationship of mentoring on teacher retention to the profession. The data were gathered to determine whether current teacher practitioners perceive peer mentoring as a factor in retention to the teaching profession and whether the gender of the mentor has an effect. Additionally, the study investigated whether formal or informal peer mentoring influences teacher retention. The sections in this chapter outline information regarding the research design, the participants, the type of information that was gathered via the instrument, procedures for collecting the data, and an overview of the data analyses that were performed.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research questions for the study include five areas of focus. These questions are:

1. Do teachers in south Mississippi perceive that formal or informal peer mentoring has influenced their retention to the profession?

2. Is there a difference between the perceptions of mentoring held by protégés who have had a mentor of the same gender and those who had an opposite gender mentor?

3. What is the difference between perceptions of teachers formally or informally mentored with regard to the amount of assistance received?

4. Does the level of teaching assignment (elementary, middle, high school) affect the perceptions of teachers regarding formal and informal mentoring?
5. Does the gender, current age, age at the time their teaching careers began, level of teaching assignment, years in the profession, or number of years intending to teach affect the teachers’ perceptions of mentoring effectiveness?

Hypotheses for this study included:

H\textsubscript{1}: Teacher perception of formal or informal peer mentoring is related to their intent to remain in the profession in south Mississippi.

H\textsubscript{2}: There is a significant difference between the perceptions of participants in the mentoring process with the same gender mentors and the perceptions of participants with opposite gender mentors.

H\textsubscript{3}: There is a significant difference in teachers’ perceptions regarding the level of teaching assistance received between those who were formally mentored and those who were informally mentored.

H\textsubscript{4}: Teacher perception of the influence of formal or informal mentoring differs based on level of teaching assignment (elementary, middle, and high school).

H\textsubscript{5}: Teacher perceptions of mentoring are related to their gender, current age, age at the time their teaching careers began, level of teaching assignment, years in the profession, and number of years intending to teach.

Panel of Experts Review

The researcher created an instrument titled Teacher Mentoring and Retention Questionnaire (Appendix A) that was used to collect data from participants including demographic data, years of teaching experience, mentoring experiences, and intentions of staying in the teaching profession. The questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of experts.
for the purpose of establishing validity of the instrument. Review participants were five expert teachers representing kindergarten through 12th grade and institutions of higher learning. Experts included two college professors, one elementary school teacher, one middle school teacher, and one high school teacher. These review participants examined the questionnaire to be used in the data gathering process to help determine readability and ease of understanding of the instructions and the instrument. The information gathered was used to refine the survey instrument used in the study. Review participants agreed to recuse themselves from participation if the questionnaire was administered at their school sites.

Instrumentation

The Teacher Mentoring and Retention Questionnaire was designed to measure the perceptions of teachers regarding peer mentoring and whether that mentoring (formal or informal) influenced the teachers’ retention in the teaching profession. The demographic portion of the Teacher Mentoring and Retention Questionnaire used the open-ended response method and included questions on gender, longevity in the teaching profession, age, age at the start of the teacher’s career, current teaching assignment, and years in the teaching profession. Questions 9 and 10 inquired about the teachers’ expectations to remain in or leave the teaching profession and a list of possible reasons why. Questions 11 through 15 prompted teachers to answer questions concerning mentoring during their career and whether that mentoring experience was formal or informal. Questions 16 through 19 are only for those teachers who had a formal mentoring experience in their career, and questions 20 through 23 refer to informal mentoring experiences. Question 24 provides an opportunity for all respondents who
have been mentored to indicate their opinion on specific mentor/protégé relationship characteristics and influences.

Hypothesis 1 was measured using questions 7, 11, 18, and 22. Hypothesis 2 was measured by responses to questions 1, 11, 18, 19, 22, and 23. Hypothesis 3 was measured by questions 11, 19, and 23. Hypothesis 4 was measured by questions 5, 18, and 22. Hypothesis 5 was measured by questions 1 through 6.

Research Design/Procedures

A panel of experts reviewed the questionnaire created by the researcher to determine readability, understandability, validity, and reliability, and changes were made as deemed appropriate. The study was approved by the Human Subjects Review Board (Appendix B), and the questionnaire was distributed via the United States Postal Service to participating schools. Schools were from districts located within a 75 mile radius of Hattiesburg, Mississippi (Appendix C).

The questionnaires were mailed in large mailing envelopes to the principal of each participating school who was asked to administer the instrument to teachers either themselves or through their library/media specialist. Schools were selected at the discretion of each district superintendent who returned permission for participation letters. Superintendents were sent a letter asking permission to conduct the study and to select schools where data may be collected (Appendix D). Questionnaires and a letter explaining the purpose of the study (Appendix E) were to be distributed to teachers in the schools during a staff meeting, although some principals indicated that they would put the questionnaires in the teachers’ mailbox and request return to a specific location. School principals received the packages with a letter for the library/media specialists (Appendix
F) that explains the procedures to be followed and a specific statement to be read prior to administering the questionnaires to teachers. Once questionnaires were completed, they were returned to a large mailing envelope. Each library/media specialist or principal collected the envelope with the questionnaires and returned it to the researcher in a self-addressed, stamped envelope that was provided in the packet. Questionnaires were color coded for the purpose of identifying specific education levels (e.g., elementary, middle, high). While the researcher expected to collect data from 300-500 individual participants, there were actually 751 recorded respondents. The data were entered into SPSS for analysis.

Incentive for participation included drawings for two $50.00 gift certificates to Books-a-Million for participating school library/media specialists. Additionally, the school district may request a copy of the results of the study. Each school library/media specialist or principal participant received a postcard (Appendix G) which they returned separately from the completed questionnaires to be entered in the drawing.

Participants

The study was conducted in schools in south Mississippi in districts that are within approximately 75 miles of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. This region is demographically similar to the state of Mississippi, according to U.S. Census data (Census, 2000). Superintendents of each district selected any or all schools in that district for participation in the study. Many superintendents chose all of the schools of their district, while others selected from a checklist that was provided by the researcher.

Districts and schools were chosen to represent the demographics of the general population of Mississippi. Pre-participation contact with many of these districts was
made via email, telephone conversations, and face-to-face meetings to ensure this sample would include teachers who had experienced mentoring as well as some who had no mentoring experience.

Data Analysis

The researcher used the independent samples $t$ test to predict the retention of a mentored teacher to the profession for Hypothesis 1. Variables for Hypothesis 1 were mentor perceptions and whether the respondent will remain in the profession. Hypothesis 2 was measured using an independent samples $t$ test and the variables were mentor perception of both the formally and informally mentored and how much that mentoring aided the respondent in the profession. A Pearson chi-square test was also used to measure the relationship between those who were mentored and intention to remain in the profession. A $t$-test was also used to measure the perceptions of teachers whose mentor was the same gender or opposite gender for Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 3 was measured using a $t$ test and measured the perception of how much mentoring aided the respondent in the profession comparing the formally mentored with the informally mentored.

A one-way ANOVA was run to measure Hypothesis 4 to measure teacher perceptions of the mentoring experience for both the formally and informally mentored by level of teaching assignment. Hypothesis 5 was measured using a regression model that included teacher perceptions of the mentoring experience and descriptive information that included gender, current age, age at the time their teaching career began, level of teaching assignment, years in the profession, and number of years intending to teach.
Summary

This study was conducted to measure the relationship between mentoring factors and teacher retention to the profession in south Mississippi to help school administrators determine if mentoring is a necessary component to the retention of their teachers. In addition, demographic data that included current age, age at the start of the teaching career, number of years the respondent intends to teach, gender, number of years of experience in teaching, and level of teaching (elementary, middle, high) were measured to determine if any of these provided information that would help determine longevity to the profession. These study results will add to the body of knowledge on the subject of mentoring and teacher retention to the profession.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to measure the influence of mentoring, both formal and informal, on teacher retention in south Mississippi public schools as perceived by current practitioners. This chapter includes information regarding the descriptive statistics of data collected, data analysis of each hypothesis, and a summary.

Descriptive Statistics

Data for this study were collected from April 23 to May 25, 2007 from participating schools in south Mississippi. These schools were selected by superintendents who responded to a request for signed letters of permission. There were 20 of 38 superintendents who responded to the letter of permission, and 3 returned the letters denying participation. Contact was then made with the principal of each school requesting his/her participation in the study. Of the 68 principals who were contacted, 52 granted permission for the study to be conducted in their schools. There were 52 packets mailed to schools; 40 were returned in a timely manner and 4 were returned after the data were analyzed. A total of 2,163 surveys were mailed, and 751 (34.7%) were returned in time to be included in the data analysis.

Table 1 provides information on the demographics of the gender of respondents. Of the 751 respondents, 635 or 84.6 %, were female; 113 or 15 % were male; and 3 or .4 % chose not to respond to the gender question (Table 1).
Table 1

*Questionnaire Respondents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>84.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>751</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Participants were asked to respond to a question regarding their intention to stay in the teaching profession. Of the 749 who responded to the question, 723 or 96.3% indicated they intended to teach the next school year. When asked whether they intend to teach in the same school the next school year, 685 of 745 respondents or 91.2% planned to teach in the same school, while 8% indicated they would not teach in their current school.

Respondents were asked to provide their current teaching assignment by selecting one of three prompts. The prompts were elementary school, middle/junior high school, and high school. Of the 747 teachers who answered the question, the majority, 44.2%, were elementary school teachers. The remaining groups of teachers included 234 or 31.2% of middle school teachers and 183 or 24.4% high school teachers.

Table 2 shows demographic data that include teachers’ average age at the beginning of their careers, the average current age of respondents, as well as, the average number of years the respondents expected to remain in the profession (Table 2). Teacher experience in teaching ranged from 0 to 41 years with a mean of 13.23, median of 11.00, and a standard deviation of 9.521. The average age of teachers at the beginning of their teaching career was 26.67 years with a range of 19 to 59 years, the median age was 24.00. Respondents indicated their current age to be in a range from 21 to 66 with a mean of 41.13 years and median age of 42 years. Of the 650 respondents who provided the number of years they plan to remain in the teaching profession, the average expected to teach 25.70 years with a range of 0 to 45 years.
Table 2

Demographic Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years Teaching</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>0-41</td>
<td>13.23</td>
<td>9.521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at Start of Teaching</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>19-59</td>
<td>26.67</td>
<td>6.397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Age</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>21-66</td>
<td>41.13</td>
<td>10.826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Intending to Teach</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>0-45</td>
<td>25.70</td>
<td>6.477</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teachers who indicated they intended to remain in the profession responded to prompts that helped to explain why they were choosing to stay in the teaching profession. Selections included: financial reasons (I cannot afford to leave the job), love teaching, supportive environment, I have school-aged children in this school system, I cannot find a job doing something else, I have a supportive mentor, I am vested in the state retirement system, and proximity to my home. There were 715 teachers who selected one or more of these prompts and 50 teachers chose to write in a response as to their reasons for remaining in the teaching profession.

There were 63.2% of teachers who selected the financial reasons prompt, 88.1% of teachers selected a love of teaching, 55.5% selected a supportive environment, and 28.3% indicated they had school-aged children in the school system. Additionally, 2.2% responded that they cannot find a job doing something else, 11.6% have a supportive mentor, 48.8% are vested in the state retirement system, and 43.7 selected in proximity to their own home.

For the teachers who are choosing to remain in the profession, the majority indicated their reasons for staying included financial reasons, a love of teaching, and a supportive environment (Table 3). Respondents who selected an option for remaining in the profession are represented by the “Selected” column of Table 3. The “percent selected” column represents the percentage of respondents who selected that particular prompt.
Table 3

*Reasons Teachers are Remaining in the Profession (n=715)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 9 Prompts</th>
<th>Selected</th>
<th>Percent Selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial reasons</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love teaching</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>88.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive environment</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-aged children</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot find other job</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive mentor</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vested in retirement</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to home</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants who indicated they intended to leave the teaching profession \((n = 34)\) selected from specified prompts to help explain why they are leaving. These prompts included: financial reasons (I cannot afford to stay in the teaching profession), I do not love teaching, lack of a supportive environment, I have school-aged children in a different school system, I found a job doing something else, I do not have a supportive mentor, I am retiring, and proximity to my home (moving or no longer able to commute).

Teachers who are leaving the profession primarily indicated that their departure was due to retirement (Table 4). Respondents who selected an option to the question’s prompts are represented in the “Selected” column. The other major reasons for leaving the profession were the lack of a supportive environment and the procurement of another job.

Respondents were asked whether or not they had a mentor and if that experience was formal and/or informal. Of the 751 respondents, 191 or 25.4% had no mentor, 270 or 36% had an informal mentor, 93 or 12.4% had a formal mentor, and 188 or 25% had both a formal and an informal mentor. Approximately 75% of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire had some form of mentoring. Teachers were asked if they had a formal or informal mentor in their first year of teaching. Of those who responded to the questions, 29.2% had a formal mentor in their first year, and 51.3% had an informal mentor in their first year of teaching.
Table 4

*Reasons Teachers are Leaving the Teaching Profession (n=34)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 10 Prompts</th>
<th>Selected</th>
<th>Percent Selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial reasons</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not love teaching</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of supportive environment</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-aged children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Found another job</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack a supportive mentor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retiring</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data associated with selection of formal mentors was collected through question 14 with the following prompts: did not have a formal mentor, you selected your mentor, a school administrator assigned your mentor, the mentor was assigned based on grade/content area, and don’t know. The majority of respondents indicated that a school administrator assigned the mentor at 62.4%, with the next closest respondents choosing the mentor was assigned based on grade/content area at 25.8%.

Demographic data provided for the formal mentors \( (n = 281) \) indicated that the majority of mentors were female teachers and had from 4 to 15 years of experience with 55.2% falling in this range. Over 54% of the protégés did not know if their mentor received any training as a mentor, but 38.5% indicated their mentor did receive training. The average length of the formal mentoring experience was 2.13 semesters, with a mode of 2 semesters. Respondents were asked to respond to a series of prompts regarding their mentoring experience from 1 (most negative/worst) to 10 (most positive/best). Approximately, 97% of those who had formal mentoring responded to these prompts. With regard to the overall mentoring experience, the mean response was 8.14. Concerning the relationship with the mentor, the average response was 8.63. Considering the influence of the mentoring experience on keeping the respondent in the teaching profession, the average response was 7.46. Support from the administration had an average response of 7.71 (Table 5).
Table 5

*Formal Mentoring Responses (281 possible respondents)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 18 Prompts</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall mentoring experience</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>8.14</td>
<td>2.493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with mentor</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>8.63</td>
<td>2.227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of mentoring experience on retention in the teaching profession</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>7.46</td>
<td>2.810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from the administration for mentoring</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>7.71</td>
<td>2.704</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Scale 1-10*
Formally mentored individuals were also asked about their perceptions regarding how much the mentoring experience helped them by responding to nine prompts with a range from 1 (*not at all*) to 10 (*extremely helpful*). The mean response rating for each was as follows: Lesson planning, 7.10; Classroom management, 7.03; Acclimation to the school, 8.07; Acclimation to the district, 7.55; Acclimation to the teaching profession, 7.37; Reducing stress, 7.13; Resolving problems with students, 7.16; Working with parents, 6.85; and Being a better teacher, 7.67. Table 6 provides the number counts (N), mean, and standard deviation for each of the nine prompts.

Response to the lesson plan prompt yielded the highest response 33.2%, classroom management responses were 29.3% for the 10 selection. There were 44.9% of respondents who selected 10 (*extremely helpful*) for acclimation to the school. Acclimation to the school district received a 10 for 37.4% of the teachers, while mentors providing acclimation to the profession received a 10 for 33.6% of teachers. For the remaining prompts, reducing stress yielded a 10 response for 32.5% of participants; resolving problems with students received a 10 for 31.4%; working with parents yielded a 10 for 27.7% of respondents; and on mentoring helping the protégé to be a better teacher, the 10 response was selected by 38.1% of teachers.
Table 6

Formally Mentored Teachers' Perceptions of Mentoring (281 respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 19 Prompts</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Planning</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>3.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>7.03</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acclimation to School</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>8.07</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acclimation to District</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acclimation to Profession</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>2.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing Stress</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>7.13</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolving Problems w/Students</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>7.16</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with Parents</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>6.85</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a Better Teacher</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>7.67</td>
<td>2.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographic data for the teachers who had informal mentors (458 respondents) indicated that these mentors were mostly female mentors (86.4%) who were teachers (93.1%) with 16 or more years of experience (42.9%) who received no mentor training (38.5%). The average number of semesters that the mentoring experience extended was 2.84 with a mode of 2, which is about one semester longer than that received by formally mentored teachers. Responses to the length of the informal mentoring experience ranged from 1 semester to 28 semesters with 63.5% of respondents indicating 2 semesters of mentoring. A response range of 1 to 10, where one is *not at all helpful* and ten represents *extremely helpful*, was the basis for the mean. Table 7 provides the number (N) count, Mean, and Standard Deviation for each prompt.

Responses to how mentoring aided the respondent in several areas resulted in the following averages for each: Lesson planning, 7.53; Classroom management, 7.79; Acclimation to the school, 8.33; Acclimation to the district, 7.82; Acclimation to the teaching profession, 7.97; Reducing stress, 7.82; Resolving problems with students, 7.94; Working with parents, 7.46; and Being a better teacher, 8.43 and can be found reported in Table 7.
Table 7

*Informally Mentored Teachers’ Perceptions of Mentoring (458 respondents)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 23 Prompts</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Planning</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>7.53</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>7.79</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acclimation to School</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acclimation to District</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>7.82</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acclimation to Profession</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>7.97</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing Stress</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>7.82</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolving Problems w/Students</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>7.94</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with Parents</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>7.46</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a Better Teacher</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>8.43</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The mentoring experience, as rated by the informally mentored respondents on a scale from 1 (most negative/worst) to 10 (most positive/best), provided the following average responses. With regard to the overall mentoring experience, the average was 8.69; relationship with the mentor averaged 9.18; impact of the mentoring experience on keeping the teacher in the profession had a mean of 8.09; and administrative support of mentoring yielded a mean of 6.99.

For the informally mentored, 47.7% of the participants selected the 10 response (extremely helpful) for overall mentoring experience, while 61.9% selected the 10 response for the relationship with the mentor. The impact of the mentoring experience on keeping the protégé in the teaching profession received a 10 response from 40.6% of the respondents. There were 31.4% who selected the 10 response for the prompt that indicates support from the administration for mentoring (e.g., given appropriate time and resources to support your informal mentoring experience).

A comparison of responses to questions about the perceptions of mentoring by those who were formally mentored (281 respondents) and those who were informally mentored (458 respondents) can be seen in Table 8. The mean for each prompt and the difference between the two is shown in the table and indicates that those who were informally mentored had slightly higher means for each prompt than those who were formally mentored.
Table 8

Comparison of the Formally (281 respondents) and Informally Mentored (458 respondents) Teachers’ Perceptions of Mentoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompts</th>
<th>Formally Mentored Mean</th>
<th>Informally Mentored Mean</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Planning</td>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>7.53</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
<td>7.03</td>
<td>7.79</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acclimation to School</td>
<td>8.07</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acclimation to District</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>7.82</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acclimation to Profession</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>7.97</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing Stress</td>
<td>7.13</td>
<td>7.82</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolving Problems w/Students</td>
<td>7.16</td>
<td>7.94</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with Parents</td>
<td>6.85</td>
<td>7.46</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a Better Teacher</td>
<td>7.67</td>
<td>8.43</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When asked their opinions of the importance of selected factors of mentoring, the responses in order of agreement (where the scale is 1-\textit{strongly agree} to 5-\textit{strongly disagree}) were: that the protégé should have the opportunity to observe the mentor teacher in the act of teaching, 1.53; mentor and protégé should have a common planning time, 1.69; mentor and protégé should be in the same building, 1.72; informal mentoring provides the best opportunity for mentoring success, 2.10; mentoring contributed to the teacher remaining in the teaching profession, 2.43; formal mentoring is the best opportunity for mentoring success, 2.34; same gender mentor is important, 2.74; and the mentor and protégé should be the about the same age, 3.31 (Table 9).

Table 9

\textit{Importance of Selected Factors of Mentoring (Range 1-strongly agree to 5-strongly disagree)}

\begin{tabular}{llll}
\hline
Question 24 & \textbf{n} & \textbf{Mean} & \textbf{Standard Deviation} \\
Prompts & & & \\
\hline
Same Gender as Mentor & 542 & 2.74 & 1.127 \\
Close in Age & 541 & 3.31 & .977 \\
Common Planning & 532 & 1.69 & .854 \\
Opportunity to Observe Mentor & 539 & 1.53 & .717 \\
Same Building & 538 & 1.72 & .875 \\
Remaining in the Profession & 538 & 2.43 & 1.117 \\
Formal Mentoring Best & 530 & 2.34 & 1.039 \\
Informal Mentoring Best & 533 & 2.10 & .826 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
Data Analysis

This section examines the information revealed by the analysis of the data. Data were tested using a variety of tests available in the software package, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. These tests include \( t \) tests, Pearson’s chi-square, and analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Hypothesis 1 was stated as follows: teacher perception of formal or informal peer mentoring has an influence on teacher retention to the profession in south Mississippi and was measured using questions 7, 11, 18, and 22. An independent samples \( t \) test was used to analyze the correlation between a teacher’s intention to stay in the profession and perceptions of the mentoring experience (Table 10). The test indicated there was not a significant difference between the perceptions of those teachers who were remaining in the profession and those who indicated they planned to leave where \( t(520) = -.89, p = .38 \).

A mean of \( M = 7.63 \) (SD = 2.33) was evident among those who do not intend to teach during the next school year and a mean of \( M = 8.13 \) (SD = 1.86) was observed for those who do intend to teach the next school year.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor Perceptions</th>
<th>( n )</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaving Profession</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.63</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remaining in Profession</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>8.13</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Pearson chi-square test measured the differences between those who were mentored, either formally or informally or both, and those who were not mentored and whether or not they intended to remain in the profession. Findings showed that those who were not mentored had stronger intentions to leave the profession than those who were both informally and formally mentored; the latter groups were less likely to express an intention to leave the profession. Of the 14 participants who responded that they had no mentor, 7 indicated that they were retiring and the other most common response was lack of a supportive environment. The Pearson chi-square results showed \( \chi^2(n=740, df = 3) = 12.87, p = .005 \). Table 11 discloses the results of the test.

Table 11

*Pearson Chi-Square Test for Hypothesis 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q11 – Mentoring Experience</th>
<th>No Mentor</th>
<th>Informal Mentor</th>
<th>Formal Mentor</th>
<th>Both Formal and Informal Mentor</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q7 Leave</td>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(7.3%)</td>
<td>(3.0%)</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
<td>(2.1%)</td>
<td>(3.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>-.5</td>
<td>-1.8</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Q11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(92.7%)</td>
<td>97.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>96.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.5</td>
<td>.1</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>191</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Q11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 2 was stated as follows: there is a significant difference between the perceptions of participants in the mentoring process with the same gender mentors and
the perceptions of participants with opposite gender mentors: it was measured by responses to questions 1, 11, 18, 19, 22, and 23. The perceptions of the mentoring experience by mentored teachers of the same gender and the aid provided in mentoring were measured using an independent samples t test.

This test measured the perceptions of mentoring among respondents who were informally and formally mentored. As shown in Table 12, the test was significant, t(494) = -2.09, p = .04 with those who were both formally and informally mentored by someone of the same gender (M = 8.17, SD = 1.87) and those mentored by someone of the opposite gender (M = 7.62, SD = 1.84). This test also measured the degree to which mentoring helped respondents in the teaching profession. This portion of the test was not significant, t(447) = -1.07, p = .29, with those both formally and informally mentored by a same gender mentor (M = 7.70, SD = 2.16) and opposite gender (M = 7.37, SD = 1.97).

All of these results can be seen in Table 12.

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Opposite Gender</th>
<th>Same Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perceptions of mentoring</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>7.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mentoring aid</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>7.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Hypothesis 3 was stated as follows: there is a significant difference in teachers’ perceptions regarding the level of teaching assistance received between those who were formally mentored and those who were informally mentored, and was measured by questions 11, 19, and 23. Using an independent samples $t$ test, hypothesis 3 was found to be without statistical significance as shown in the group statistics of Table 13 where $t(290) = 1.25, p = .21$.

Table 13

$t$ Test for Hypothesis 3 for Informal/Formal Mentoring Aid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Formal Mentoring Aid Perception</th>
<th>Informal Mentoring Aid Perception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$n$</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aid</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>7.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 4 was stated as follows: teacher perception of the influence of formal or informal mentoring differs based on level of teaching assignment (elementary, middle, and high school) and was measured by questions 5, 18, and 22. A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to measure the difference among the preferences of teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools and found no significant differences in this study as seen in Table 14. The ANOVA was not statistically significant, $F(2,519) = .127, p = .88$. 

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Table 14

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Hypothesis 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentoring Level</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>8.14</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>8.11</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>8.04</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>8.11</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 5: teacher perceptions of mentoring are related to their gender, current age, age at the time their teaching careers began, level of teaching assignment, years in the profession, and number of years intending to teach: was measured using questions 1 through 6 by multiple linear regression. While there were no statistically significant findings in the test \[F(6,445) = .620, p = .715\], the overall relationship among the six predictors and mentoring perceptions is .091, the \(R^2\) is .008 and the adjusted \(R^2\) is -.005. The descriptive statistics are found in Table 15.
Table 15

*Multiple Linear Regression for Hypothesis 5 (n = 452)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentoring</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions</td>
<td>8.11</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Age</td>
<td>38.92</td>
<td>10.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at Career Start</td>
<td>26.73</td>
<td>6.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Teaching Level</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Teaching</td>
<td>11.24</td>
<td>8.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intended Years</td>
<td>25.42</td>
<td>6.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another test of demographic data was conducted to determine if there were any statistically significant differences among the responses to the first six questions of the questionnaire. An ANOVA of the demographic variables that included age, gender, age at the start of teaching, current teaching level, number of years in the profession, and the intended years in teaching provided no statistically significant findings where $F(6,445) = .62, p = .72$ and $R^2 = .008$.

**Summary**

Chapter IV provided descriptive statistics for 5 hypotheses and analyzed data also in accordance with five research questions. Statistical significance was found in Hypothesis 1 where there was a significant difference between the intent of respondents who were mentored to remain in the profession and the intent of those who were not mentored and their intention to leave the teaching profession. In addition, significance
was found in Hypothesis 2, where the results suggest a relationship between the mentoring perceptions of those who had same gender mentors and opposite gender mentors. Chapter V will include conclusions and recommendations based on the information gleaned from the data that were collected.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to gather data to determine whether current teacher practitioners perceive peer mentoring as a factor in retaining teachers in the profession in south Mississippi public schools and whether the gender of the mentor has an effect. This study investigated how teachers who were formally and informally mentored responded to a series of prompts regarding their perceptions of mentoring and how much it aided them. Data were collected using a questionnaire developed by the researcher for the purposes of this study.

Ultimately, the goal of this study was to acquire additional research data that would add to the body of knowledge available on the subject and support established research that indicates that mentoring has a positive influence on teacher retention to the profession (Inman & Marlow, 2004; Mutchler, 2000; Tetzlaff & Wagstaff, 1999; Trubowitz, 2004; West, 2002). As south Mississippi school administrators are informed of the influence of mentoring on teacher retention in their schools, decisions about how to spend professional development dollars will be affected. These data will assist in the determination of benefit of mentoring, whether formal or informal, to retaining teachers in schools in south Mississippi.

The research questions considered for this study included:

1. Do teachers in south Mississippi perceive that formal or informal mentoring has influenced their retention to the profession?
2. Is there a difference between the perceptions of mentoring held by protégés who have had a mentor of the same gender and those who had an opposite gender mentor?

3. Are there differences between the perceptions of teachers who are formally or informally mentored with regard to the amount of assistance received?

4. Does the level of teaching assignment (elementary, middle, high school) affect the perceptions of teachers regarding formal and informal mentoring?

5. Does the gender, current age, age at the time their teaching careers began, level of teaching assignment, years in the profession, or number of years intending to teach affect the teachers’ perceptions of mentoring effectiveness?

Summary

The purpose of the study was to gather data and ascertain if current teachers perceive mentoring as a factor related to their retention to the teaching profession and whether the gender of the mentor plays a role. In addition, the study sought to discover if either formal or informal mentoring has an influence on teacher retention to the profession. These purposes were supported by five hypotheses and five research questions designed to discover the truth of the situation in south Mississippi.

In April of 2007, 2,163 questionnaires were mailed to 52 schools, and 751 of these were returned in time to be included in the data analysis phase of the research process. The questionnaire consisted of 24 questions, a portion of which were answered.
based upon whether a respondent had no mentor, formal only, informal only, or both formal and informal mentoring experiences. In the first portion of the questionnaire, respondents reply to eight demographic questions including gender, age now, age at the beginning of the teaching career, number of years expected to be in the profession, how many years already served as a teacher, the level of teaching assignment (elementary, middle, high), intention to remain in the current school for the next school year, and intention to teach in the next school year.

Conclusions and Discussion

Each of the research questions was explored through hypotheses and inquiry and yielded mixed results. Research question 1 and Hypothesis 1 asked if south Mississippi teachers perceived that peer mentoring influenced their retention to the profession. Analysis of the results of an independent \( t \) test indicated that there was not a significant difference between the perceptions of those who had been formally or informally mentored and their intention to remain in the teaching profession. There were 458 teachers who indicated they had been informally mentored and 281 who had been formally mentored. Of these, 188 teachers had been both formally and informally mentored. Test results indicate that teachers who were mentored did not perceive a relationship between mentoring and their intention to remain in the profession.

A Pearson chi-square test provided analysis that indicated there was a significant difference between those who were not mentored at all and those who were mentored, as those who were not mentored were more likely to indicate they intended to leave the profession. Because the sample size for this group is small at 26, this finding should not be overstated. There were 14 participants who indicated they had no mentor and, of this
number, 7 were retiring while 3 respondents lacked a supportive environment. This finding appears to be consistent with the 1996 report from the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future that expressed the importance of properly recruiting and training teachers in order to keep them in the profession when considering that the teachers who intended to leave the profession did not receive the special training provided by either a formal or informal mentor.

A comparison of the responses of those who were formally mentored and those who were informally mentored revealed an interesting phenomenon. Those who had been informally mentored rated each of the specific prompts associated with mentoring perceptions higher than those who had been formally mentored. This finding indicates the relationship between the mentor and the protégé that evolves naturally or by accident may play a more important role in the success of a mentoring experience than a formal mentoring program.

Research question 2 and Hypothesis 2 dealt with whether mentor-protégé gender had an influence on the perception of the mentoring experience. The result of an independent $t$ test returned a significant finding indicating that indeed there is a difference in perception of the mentoring experience related to gender. While this test could not identify the specific relationship, the significance is present, nonetheless. The test conducted measured whether or not there were differences between those who had same gender mentors and those who had opposite gender mentors and not the specifics of why or what caused the differences. The $t$ test measured the relationship between mentoring perceptions of those who had same gender mentors and those who had opposite gender mentors. This test also showed a significant difference between the
perceptions between those who had the same gender or opposite gender mentors, implying that gender matters when it comes to the perceptions of mentoring of the protégés.

Hypothesis 3 and research question 3 were measured using an independent samples t test to determine if there was a significant difference between the perceptions of those who were informally mentored and those who were formally mentored. Analysis of these test results indicated that there was no significant difference between the mentoring perceptions of the two groups.

In the case of research question 4 and Hypothesis 4 concerning the differences between the mentoring perceptions of those who work at the varying levels of public education at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, a one-way analysis of variance found no significant differences among the three groups. There were 330 respondents who were elementary teachers, 234 were middle school teachers, 183 were high school teachers, and 4 did not respond to the question. According to means reported, elementary teachers had a slightly higher perception of the mentoring experience; middle school teachers had a lower perception of the experience, and high school teachers had the lowest perception of the mentoring experience. While the literature review for this study did not reveal current information regarding the mentoring perceptions of teachers at varying teaching levels, this subject would provide insight as to the value of peer mentoring at each level.

Research question 5 and Hypothesis 5 were tested using a multiple linear regression to determine if there was a significant relationship among any of the following demographic data collected: gender, current age, age at the time their teaching career
began, level of teaching assignment, years in the profession, and number of years intending to teach. The test results indicated that there were no significant relationships among the variables of the data set.

Limitations

This study was limited by the following:

1. Teachers who chose to respond in the 52 schools within a 75-mile radius of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, whose principals responded affirmatively to a request for participation. Roughly 35% of the questionnaires were returned in time to be included in the data analysis.

2. Superintendents who responded, in writing, with permission for some or all of the schools in the district to participate in the study.

3. Sample size of those who were intending to leave the profession with formal mentors.

4. Respondents not answering all questions associated with all of their mentoring experiences.

5. Lack of access to perceptions of mentoring held by teachers who left the profession.

Recommendations

The findings in this study may be helpful to school administrators as they determine the factors that teachers perceive are related to the retention of teachers to their schools and districts in south Mississippi. A statewide study of teachers, during the same semester as this study, yielded similar findings regarding teacher perceptions that retention was influenced by: instructional strategies, curriculum, classroom management

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and discipline strategies, school and district policies, social support, and general encouragement. The Mississippi Department of Education sponsored Project Clear Voice where the educators in Mississippi indicated their experiences associated with mentoring in addition to questions about time, facilities and resources, professional development, empowerment, and more. Results of this survey revealed that teachers who were a part of supportive work environments that included mentoring intended to remain in the profession (Mississippi Department of Education, 2007).

Teachers who participated in the teacher mentoring and retention questionnaire and had some type of mentoring experience indicated with higher frequency their intention to remain in the profession than those who had no mentoring experience at all. As a result, school leaders may want to consider funneling some of their professional development resources into the development of a mentoring program for their school’s teaching staff. Because mentoring appears to be important to the retention of teachers to the profession, school administrators could provide assistance in the form of a mentor to newly hired teaching personnel and those who are new to the district or school in an effort to retain the teaching staff.

While gender appeared to be a factor in this mentoring study, further study is required to determine both the extent of the differences and specific components of the perceived differences. A qualitative study would be helpful in determining specific factors related to the differing perspectives on gender and mentoring. Additionally, a qualitative study may provide further information regarding the influence of gender on other factors including whether the mentoring experience is formal or informal.
There seems to be little or no difference in the perceptions of teachers who were either formally or informally mentored. The most striking difference with intention to leave the profession was found with those who had no mentoring experience at all. Because the sample size was so small, further study would be warranted to seek additional data from and about more teachers who plan to leave the profession.

Since there were no significant differences of perceptions of teachers within or between groups of those who taught at the different levels of education (elementary, middle, high school), the inference is that mentoring will be equally beneficial for retaining teachers at all levels. In addition, these results yielded no differences related to age and other demographic data. From the information gathered in this study, school administrators in south Mississippi can deduce that mentoring provides support that teachers find necessary for experiencing success in the profession. Participant data indicated that those who were intending to leave the profession were less likely to have had a mentor.

Implications for Further Research

This study found a significant relationship between the perceptions of mentoring based on the gender of the respondent. Another study would be necessary to explore these differences in an effort to determine if there is a correlation between the perceptions of mentoring and the gender of the protégé respondent rather than the gender of the mentor. Additionally, a study of the perceptions of the teaching profession by those who had no mentor, either formal or informal, may provide insight into the other factors that contribute to teacher attrition.
Research shows that mentoring is a tool that helps teachers stay in the profession. As additional studies are completed in the area of teacher retention to the profession, evidence regarding the effectiveness of mentoring is likely to increase. Other areas related to mentoring that may provide added information on how mentoring aids in the retention of teachers to the profession include: the quality of specific mentoring programs, how long the mentoring process should continue, whether the age of an individual entering the profession is a factor in mentoring, and whether ongoing training for mentors improves outcomes including protégé teacher retention to the teaching profession. Research into the questions associated with these factors will provide further data that school administrators can use to select or design a mentoring program for their schools in an effort to retain teachers. This study suggests that school administrators should consider the value of mentoring in the retention of teachers, consider time for mentoring and mentor preparation, and weigh the gender of protégés when assigning mentors.

Summary

Teachers perceive that mentoring is related to their intent to remain in the profession. The findings in this study indicate that teachers who had no mentor at all were more likely than teachers who had a mentor to express an intention to leave the profession. As school administrators work to retain teachers in their schools and districts, mentoring should be included in their consideration of how to spend money set aside for the acquisition and retention of teachers. The No Child Left Behind Act requires schools to have highly qualified teachers in the core subject areas and because current data indicates that teachers are leaving the profession in large numbers within the first three
years of teaching, school administrators would be prudent to consider the perceptions of teachers that mentoring influences their decisions to remain in their schools.

Additionally, since the findings in this study also demonstrated that teachers who were informally mentored rated their perceptions of specific mentoring components more highly than those who were formally mentored, school administrators may want to consider what type of mentoring is most appropriate for their site. If relationship is fundamental to the success of the mentoring experience, school leaders may want to create an environment that fosters this kind of relational development in order to enhance mentoring in the school.

As mentor teachers guide their protégés through the first years of teaching, they develop relationships that provide the foundation for collegiality that will become a part of the support system necessary for success in the teaching profession. The challenges associated with teaching children with diverse learning styles and varying ability levels are numerous. Added to these challenges are the societal changes that have brought about significant modifications in the structure of the family, where many students lack the support at home to perform well in school. In the face of these challenges, teaching can be a formidable profession. For those who find their niche in the teaching profession, the support from school administrators, the community, and parents is essential for success; mentoring appears to be a key component of the support structure.
APPENDIX A

TEACHER MENTORING AND RETENTION QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your gender? Male Female (circle one)

2. How many years have you been teaching? ________ (include this current year)

3. At what age did you begin your teaching career? ________

4. What is your current age? ________

5. How would you describe your current teaching assignment? (check one)
   _____ Elementary     _____ Middle / Jr. High     _____ High School

6. Including years already taught, how many years do you intend to teach in your career? ________

7. Do you intend to teach next school year? Yes No (circle one)

8. Will you teach in your current school next year? Yes No (circle one)

9. If you answered Yes to question 7, explain why you are choosing to stay in the teaching profession. Check all that apply.
   _____ a. financial reasons (I cannot afford to leave my job)
   _____ b. love teaching
   _____ c. supportive environment
   _____ d. I have school-aged children in this school system
   _____ e. I cannot find a job doing something else
   _____ f. I have a supportive mentor
   _____ g. I am vested in the state retirement system
   _____ h. proximity to my home

   Other(s): __________________________________________________________________________

10. If you answered No to question 7, explain why you are choosing to leave the teaching profession. Check all that apply.
    _____ a. financial reasons (I cannot afford to stay in the teaching profession)
    _____ b. I do not love teaching
    _____ c. lack of a supportive environment
    _____ d. I have school-aged children in a different school system
    _____ e. I found a job doing something else
    _____ f. I do not have a supportive mentor
    _____ d. I am retiring
    _____ e. proximity to my home (moving or no longer able to commute)

    Other(s): __________________________________________________________________________

The following questions relate to your experiences with mentoring. The following definitions are provided to help guide you as you answer these questions:

A mentor is someone who guides you through your first year(s) of teaching.

A formal mentor is someone who is assigned or selected to guide a new teacher in a prescribed program.
An informal mentor is someone who provides guidance or assistance based on relationship rather than assignment to the task.

11. During my teaching experience I have/had, (check one)
   - no mentor
   - an informal mentor
   - a formal mentor
   - both an informal and a formal mentor

*** If you marked no mentor above, you have completed this questionnaire. If you had a mentor, please continue.

12. Did you have a formal mentor as a first year teacher? Yes No (circle one)

13. Did you have an informal mentor as a first year teacher? Yes No (circle one)

14. If you have/had a formal mentor, how was the formal mentor chosen?
   - did not have a formal mentor
   - you selected your mentor
   - a school administrator assigned your mentor
   - the mentor was assigned based on grade/content area
   - don't know
   - other (write in)

15. If you have/had an informal mentor, how was the informal mentor chosen?
   - did not have an informal mentor
   - you selected your mentor
   - your informal mentor selected you
   - someone recommended the mentor to you
   - other (write in)

The following items relate to Formal Mentoring. If you did not have a formal mentor, skip to the section on Informal Mentoring.

16. Describe the characteristics of your primary formal mentor:
   Gender: Male Female (circle one)
   Title: Teacher Administrator Other (circle one)
   Number of years in the field of education: 1-3 4-10 10-15 16 or more (circle one)
   Did your mentor receive mentor training? Yes No I do not know (circle one)

17. For what period of time was the formal mentor assigned? _______________ (# of semesters)

18. Using the provided scale, rate your mentoring experience by circling the number you feel best represents your views on the following:
   
   \[ 1 = \text{most negative/worst and 10 = most positive/best} \]
   
   a. Your overall mentoring experience 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   
   b. Your relationship with your mentor 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
c. Impact of your mentoring experience on keeping you in the teaching profession
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

d. Support from the administration for mentoring (e.g., were you given appropriate
time and resources to support your mentoring experience)
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

19. To what degree did formal mentoring aid you in the following areas?

   \[1 = \text{not at all}; \ 10 = \text{extremely helpful}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom management</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acclimation to the school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acclimation to the district</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Acclimation to the teaching profession</td>
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<td>Reducing stress</td>
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<td>Resolving problems with students</td>
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<td>Working with parents</td>
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The following items relate to Informal Mentoring. If you did not have an informal mentor, skip to question #24.

20. Describe the characteristics of your primary informal mentor:

   Gender:
   - Male
   - Female (circle one)

   Title:
   - Teacher
   - Administrator
   - Other _________________________ (circle one)

   Number of years in the field of education:
   - 1-3
   - 4-10
   - 10-15
   - 16 or more (circle one)

   Did your mentor receive mentor training?
   - Yes
   - No
   - I do not know (circle one)

21. For what period of time were you mentored by an informal mentor? ______________ (# of semesters)

22. Using the provided scale, rate your mentoring experience by circling the number you feel best represents your views on the following:

   \[1 = \text{most negative/worst and } 10 = \text{most positive/best}\]

   a. Your overall mentoring experience
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

   b. Your relationship with your mentor
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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c. Impact of your mentoring experience on keeping you in the teaching profession 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

d. Support from the administration for mentoring (e.g., were you given appropriate time and resources to support your informal mentoring experience) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

23. To what degree did informal mentoring aid you in the following areas? 1 = not at all; 10 = extremely helpful

Lesson planning 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Classroom management 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Acclimation to the school 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Acclimation to the district 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Acclimation to the teaching profession 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Reducing stress 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Resolving problems with students 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Working with parents 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Being a better teacher 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Other: ____________________________________________________________ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

24. Give your opinion on the importance of each of the following using the provided scale: (Check one box per statement.)

SA = strongly agree  A = agree  NA = No opinion  D = disagree  SD = strong disagree

| a. the mentor and protégé should be the same gender | SA | A | NA | D | SD |
| b. the mentor and protégé should be close in age |    |   |    |   |    |
| c. mentor and protégé should have a common planning |    |   |    |   |    |
| d. the protégé should have the opportunity to observe the mentor teacher in the act of teaching |    |   |    |   |    |
| e. mentor and protégé should be in the same building |    |   |    |   |    |
| f. mentoring has contributed to my remaining in the teaching profession |    |   |    |   |    |
| g. a formal mentoring program provides the best opportunity for mentoring success |    |   |    |   |    |
| h. an informal mentoring program provides the flexibility necessary for mentoring success |    |   |    |   |    |
APPENDIX B

The University of Southern Mississippi
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Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Tel: (601) 266.6420
Fax: (601) 266.5509
www.usm.edu

Institutional Review Board

HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- The research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the safety of the subjects.
- The research plan makes adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 27030733
PROJECT TITLE: Mentoring: Impact on Teacher Retention in South Mississippi Public Schools as Perceived by Current Practitioners
PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: 03/05/07 to 07/31/07
PROJECT TYPE: Dissertation or Thesis
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: Linda Jean Lewis Smith
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education & Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership & Research
FUNDING AGENCY: N/A
HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 04/16/07 to 04/15/08

[Signature]
Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
HSPRC Chair

4-12-07
Date
APPENDIX C

SCHOOL DISTRICTS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE

This is a complete list of school districts that will be contacted for this study on mentoring and teacher retention to the profession.

Bay St. Louis Waveland School District
Biloxi Public School District
Brookhaven School District
Columbia School District
Covington County School District
Forrest County Agricultural High School
Forrest County School District
George County School District
Greene County School District
Gulfport School District
Hancock County School District
Harrison County School District
Hattiesburg Public School District
Jackson County School District
Jefferson Davis County School District
Jones County School District
Lamar County School District
Lawrence County School District
Laurel School District
Lincoln County School District
Long Beach School District
Lumberton School District
Marion County School District
McComb School District
Moss Point Separate School District
Ocean Springs School District
Pascagoula School District
Pass Christian Public School District
Pearl River County School District
Perry County School District
Petal School District
Picayune School District
Pike County School District
Poplarville Municipal School District
Richton School District
Stone County School District
Walthall County School District
Wayne County School District
APPENDIX D
SAMPLE LETTER TO THE SUPERINTENDENTS

Dear Superintendent,

I am a doctoral candidate at The University of Southern Mississippi conducting a study on the impact of mentoring to teacher retention to the profession in south Mississippi. As a researcher, it is necessary for me to acquire permission to conduct the study and as the leader of your school district, I request that permission from you. It is important to me that I get an adequate sample size for the study so that meaningful data can be collected and analyzed to add to the growing body of knowledge about the impact of mentoring on teacher retention.

The study requires teachers from kindergarten through 12th grade to give responses to a questionnaire that will take 5 to 10 minutes to complete. I request that the school library/media specialist of each school administer the questionnaire to your teachers, and for their participation the school will be entered into a drawing for one of two $50.00 Books-a-Million gift cards which will be awarded to two participating schools.

I respectfully request that you identify the schools in your district that I may contact for participation in the study by selecting from the listing below. If you wish to receive a copy of the study results, please indicate in the proper place below and it will be forwarded to you after the successful defense of the dissertation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Linda L. Smith
Ph. D. Candidate
Name of School District
_____ Yes, all of the schools in this district may participate in the study.

_____ No, I prefer that none of my schools participate in the study.

_____ Only the following schools (check all that apply) may participate in the study.

- Elementary
- Elementary
- Upper Elementary
- Middle School
- Middle School
- High School
- High School

_____ Please send me the results of the study.

Comments: __________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Superintendent Signature

Date
Dear Colleague,

I am a doctoral candidate researching the impact of mentoring on teacher retention to the teaching profession in south Mississippi. Much has been written about mentoring in the past 25 years, but little information is available about mentoring of teachers in south Mississippi. This study seeks to discover whether there is a relationship between formal mentoring, informal mentoring, and gender of mentors and protégés.

Participation in this questionnaire is completely voluntary and you may be assured that your individual responses will be absolutely confidential. No individual responses will be reported. Your participation indicates your consent to voluntarily respond to the questionnaire.

The questionnaire will take from 5 to 10 minutes to complete and I ask that you honestly and thoughtfully respond to each question. Thank you for your participation in the study and adding to the body of knowledge available regarding mentoring in our profession.

Sincerely,

Linda L. Smith
APPENDIX F

LETTER TO MEDIA SPECIALISTS

Dear Media Specialist / Librarian,

My name is Linda L. Smith and I am a doctoral student at The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. As a graduate student, I am required to select a topic for study, conduct a study, and analyze the results. Your principal has agreed to have the certified teachers in your school complete a questionnaire that is designed to gather information about mentoring and retention to the teaching profession. I have received permission to conduct the study through media specialists, where possible, and, as a reward, you will be entered into a drawing for a $50 Books-a-Million gift card. To enter the drawing, return the enclosed postcard with your contact information and return it separately from the questionnaires. Below, you will find a list of what needs to be done with the questionnaire so that I may acquire the most helpful information. This questionnaire is voluntary for your teachers and is completely anonymous.

What to do:

1. Check the package to assure that all items have been received and call me if items are missing from your package.
2. During a faculty meeting, distribute a letter to colleagues and a questionnaire to each teacher.
3. Read the following statement: “Please read the cover letter for the questionnaire first. Your participation is voluntary and completely anonymous. Answer each question to the best of your ability and place the completed questionnaire in this envelope.”
4. It should take respondents about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire.
5. Participants’ instructions tell them to place the completed questionnaire in the large envelope. Please leave the envelope in a place that is accessible to all.
6. When all the questionnaires have been placed into the large envelope, seal the envelope and mail back to the researcher via the United States Postal Service.
APPENDIX G

SAMPLE POST CARD

Entry for drawing for $50.00
Books-a-Million Gift Card

Name

Phone

Linda L. Smith
355 Rault Drive
Lumberton, MS 39455
REFERENCES

Actual average beginning teacher salaries (2002-2003). Available online at
http://www.aft.org/salary/2003/download/2003Table2.pdf


Ganser, T. (2002). Building the capacity of school districts to design, implement, and evaluate effective new teacher mentor programs: Action points for colleges and universities. Mentoring & Tutoring, 10(1), 47-55.


New International Version. Holy Bible, 1 Samuel 2, 1 Timothy, Tyndale


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Available at http://www.sova.org.uk/whatmentor.htm


Thompson, J. (1998). Principals’ perceptions and experiences with mentoring, reflective
leadership development, and related variables (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Southern Mississippi, 1998).


