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New Beginnings: A Phenomenology of the Lived Experiences of Novice Secondary Teachers Who Have Completed the Induction and Mentorship Requirements of Utah's Early Years Enhancement (Eye) Program

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NEW BEGINNINGS: A PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF
NOVICE SECONDARY TEACHERS WHO HAVE COMPLETED THE
INDUCTION AND MENTORSHIP REQUIREMENTS OF UTAH'S
EARLY YEARS ENHANCEMENT (EYE) PROGRAM

by

Philip D. Armstrong

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in

Education
(Curriculum and Instruction)

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2009

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ABSTRACT

New Beginnings: A Phenomenology of the Lived Experiences of Novice Secondary Teachers Who Have Completed the Induction and Mentorship Requirements of Utah's Early Years Enhancement (EYE) Program

by

Philip D. Armstrong, Doctorate of Education

Utah State University, 2009

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It is estimated the national teacher shortage will be approximately two million by the year 2010. Thirty to 50% of new teachers leave the profession within the first 5 years. In an effort to improve teacher quality and retain teachers, many states and local school districts have instituted induction and mentoring programs. The state of Utah's Early Years Enhancement (EYE) induction and mentoring program went into effect January 1, 2003. This purpose of this study was to examine how secondary novice teachers experience the mentorship requirement of the EYE program. A phenomenological approach was used to illustrate the lived experience of 19 Utah teachers who completed the mentorship and all other requirements of the EYE program in order to earn their Level 2 License and continue on in the profession.

Some of the themes that emerged from the participant interviews are congruent

with the literature in terms of the benefits of a mentorship. A majority of participants reported their mentorship was beneficial because their mentor was a source of advice and information; their mentor was a confidant who also inspired confidence; and they got along with their mentor. Included in the study are unanticipated perceptions regarding the portfolio and the Praxis II requirements of the EYE program, giving a more holistic picture of what participants experienced during the mentor and induction process.

(152 pages)

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I want to thank my parents, Howard and Marilyn Armstrong, for their never-ending support and encouragement.

This work is dedicated to my wife, Paula, and our children. I am so grateful for your love, patience, and sacrifice during this journey. Paula, I am especially grateful for your goodness, which inspires me to be better than I am and to excel in all I do.

Philip D. Armstrong

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DEFINITIONS

Attrition:	Term used to describe the reduction or decrease of public teachers.
Cohort:	A group of persons sharing a particular statistical or demographic characteristic.
Educator:	Public school teacher.
Experienced teacher:	A teacher who has taught successfully in a public school for at least 3 years (synonymous with veteran teacher).
Highly Qualified:	The “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act requires public educators to be “highly qualified” meaning, they have an academic major or coursework equivalent to a major in each subject taught, or they have passed a state content test in each subject taught (Educator Quality & Licensing, n.d.).
Induction:	Various programs and activities used to help new teachers be successful teachers.
Level 1 License:	Utah professional educator license issued upon completion of an approved preparation program or an alternative preparation program (R277-522).
Level 2 License:	Utah professional educator license issued after satisfaction of all requirements for a Level 1 License (including 3 years of successful education experience within a 5-year period (R277-522).
Mentee:	A new teachers who is guided by a mentor.
Mentor:	An experienced teacher who held a new teacher transition to an experienced teacher.
Novice teacher:	A first year, new, or beginning teacher.
Retention:	Continued employment of public school teachers.

- School Land Trust: At statehood, Utah was given land by the U.S. Congress to be held in a legal trust for public schools. Schools own 3.3 million acres. The lands are managed by the School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration and must, by law, be used to generate money for our schools. The money is put in a permanent savings account, which is never spent, but invested by Utah's State Treasurer. The interest earned from the permanent fund goes to each school in the state (School Land Trust Program, n.d.).
- Secondary teacher: A person who teaches public school in grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The most recent census estimate reports the United States has surpassed the 300 million population mark, making it the third most populous country in the world (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). The continuity of the democratic success of the United States is dependent on the continuous and adequate education of the populace. As the population continues to grow, the need for qualified and effective teachers also grows. Projections estimate over two million new teachers will be needed within the next few years (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Johnson, 2002; Johnson et al., 2001; Kelley, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Turbowitz, & Robins, 2003; Weiss, 1999).

Coupled with the need for more teachers is the need to remedy the high attrition rate of new teachers. Darling-Hammond (2003) found “one-third of new teachers leave the profession within five years” (p. 5). Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found “as many as 50% of new teachers leave within the first five years of entry into the occupation” (p. 682). The challenge of filling the estimated two million new teaching jobs and retaining them is formidable. Darling-Hammond (2000) argued that mentoring programs for beginning teachers may be an important way of retaining new teachers in the profession. She stated, “Beginning teachers who have access to intensive mentoring by expert colleagues are much less likely to leave teaching in the early years” (p. 22). Feiman-Nemser (1996) added “since the early 1980s...policymakers and educational leaders have pinned high hopes on mentoring as a vehicle for reforming teaching and teacher education” (p. 2). Dever, Johnson, and Hobbs (2000) restated Feiman-Nemser’s finding

that in the United States mentoring programs instituted for the purpose of retaining beginning teachers “flourished as part of the reform efforts of the 1980s” (p. 241). Accordingly, many states, districts, and schools have established induction and mentor programs in an effort to retain new teachers and improve their effectiveness (Conway, 2006; Johnson, 2002; Nielson, Barry, & Addison, 2006).

The state of Utah is no exception to the problems of teacher retention and attrition. The Utah Educator Supply and Demand Study 2004-2005 conducted by Utah State University for the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) and the Utah Board of Regents found that from 2000-2004, 30.5% of teacher attrition was from new teachers who left teaching within the first 3 years (Eastmond, Burnham, & Escalante, 2005a). Sperry (2007) reported the attrition rate of Utah teachers who taught for 5 years or less was almost 50%. In addition, the state of Utah is no exception to the trend of creating induction and mentoring programs to combat the high attrition of new teachers and to help train new teachers. Utah’s teacher induction program is called the Entry Years Enhancement (EYE) Program (USOE, 2006a). It is defined and detailed in the Utah State Board of Education’s Administrative rule R277-522.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to report the lived experiences of novice secondary teachers who had completed the mentorship requirement of Utah’s EYE program. Using open-ended interviews, the mentorship experience, from the perspective of beginning secondary teachers, has been illustrated. This will add to the literature regarding new

teacher mentoring and induction programs. In order to allow for emerging information and themes, there was one primary guiding research question: “How do novice secondary teachers experience the mentorship requirement of the EYE program?”

To date, there are no studies that examine specifically the mentorship experiences that novice teachers in the state of Utah are required to complete as part of the EYE program. However, this is not the only study to address requirements of Utah’s EYE program. In 2008, Denison completed a dissertation that assessed how primary and secondary teachers perceived the portfolio requirement of the EYE program. Her study should provide the Utah State Board of Education with some insights as to the perceived value teachers have for the portfolio requirement of the EYE program. In similar fashion, the information and themes generated from this study will provide the Utah State Board of Education with personal examples of the mentorship experience and process from those for whom the program was mandated. The themes identified and reported in this study from those experiences can contribute to the knowledge of new teacher induction and mentoring. This study may spark further interest and research regarding the importance and success of mentoring beginning teachers.

Utah’s EYE Program

The Utah State Board of Education requires “all teachers with a Level 1 License (with fewer than 3 years of successful experience as a licensed teacher in a Utah public school or accredited private school), whose employment or reemployment began after January 1, 2003...complete EYE to qualify for a Level 2 License (USOE, 2006b, p. 5).

The EYE program's global goal is to provide beginning teachers with 3 years of district, school, and mentor support in an effort to help them develop and master effective teaching skills and strategies. The program has a set of requirements that must be completed over a 3-year induction period, at the end of which participants should qualify for a Level 2 License, achieve highly qualified status, and have greater stability in the education profession (USOE). The language in the rule specifically states, "the purpose of these enhancements is to develop in Level 1 teachers, successful teaching skills and strategies with assistance from experienced colleagues" (Rule R277-522, n.d.). The specific EYE program requirements are:

1. Work with a trained mentor for 3 years.
2. Complete a portfolio review.
3. Successfully satisfy district/school evaluations for 3 years in a Utah public or accredited private school.
4. Achieve a score of 160 or higher on the Praxis II – *Principles of Learning and Teaching* (PLT) test in their area of educational preparation and assignment. (USOE, 2006a, p. 6)

The mentorship requirement is intended to help beginning teachers make a successful transition to expert teachers. Rule R277-522 (n.d.) is specific about the importance and characteristics of a mentor, ranging from providing moral and emotional support to assisting with classroom management and even development of the portfolio. In general, Utah followed the advice of Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005), who advocated that education should follow the path of other professions and provide new employees with induction and mentoring. They stated induction and mentoring provide formalized ways for new professionals "confronted with the hard reality of

transforming book knowledge into action” (p. 65). Utah’s EYE program is intended to provide that formalized training. Vierstraete (2005) explained that regardless of feeling somewhat anxious and unprepared, beginning teachers are full of energy, passion, and fresh ideas; however, “...without caring, experienced mentors, these enthusiastic apprentice teachers may become disillusioned” (p. 385). Accordingly, this study attempted to capture the lived experiences of novice Utah teachers who have completed the 3-year mentorship as required by the USOE’s EYE program.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

History and Definition

The term “mentor” originated with the character *Mentor* in Homer’s *The Odyssey*. Before setting out on his epic voyage, Odysseus entrusted his family, and particularly his son, Telemachus, to his friend, Mentor. Mentor spent 10 years watching over the family of Odysseus, as well as guiding, counseling, and advising the young Telemachus (Frazier, 2006; Giacobbe, 2003; Johnson, 2002; Vierstraete, 2005). From Homer’s epic work, “*mentor* has come to refer to a wise and faithful counselor who helps to guide a protégé through a developmental process” (Johnson, p. 4). Vierstraete wrote that “...mentoring has served as a powerful developer of human potential throughout the centuries” (p. 381). In the teaching profession, mentoring has come to be defined as the efforts of a skilled and experienced teacher who supports and guides a novice teacher towards professional growth and success (Johnson; Nielson et al., 2006; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Vierstraete).

The history of teacher induction and mentoring programs in the United States is relatively recent. Nielson and colleagues (2006) wrote that before reports of anticipated teacher shortages, the existence of induction programs were few and far between. However, now according to Nielson and colleagues, 33 states have mandated induction programs and approximately 83% of beginning public school teachers have been involved in some sort of induction program. Prior to this relatively new phenomenon of induction and mentoring, beginning teachers were “often put into a classroom and left on

their own without access to more seasoned teachers or formalized ways to work through...the difficulties...any new professional [is] confronted with [when dealing with the] reality of transforming book knowledge into action” (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005, p. 65).

Moir (2006) used analogies from the legal and medical professions to illustrate how the education profession has fallen short in inducting and mentoring novice employees. Law firms rarely, if ever allow novice lawyers to work on or litigate cases alone. New lawyers first clerk, assist and litigate with a senior partner before taking on cases of their own. The medical profession requires novice doctors to go through residency where they work with an experienced doctor before they are allowed to diagnose and to treat patients on their own. In stark contrast, many novice educators are given, from day one, “the same workload and responsibility” and are expected to perform as well as veteran teachers (Johnson, 2002, p. 2). Included with that expectation novice teachers are often given the most run-down classroom, the most difficult students, the obsolete computer, and assigned the non teaching duties like lunch-room monitor (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Dyal & Sewell, 2002; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2004; Kelley, 2004; Moir, 2006; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

If teaching is ever to be a profession in the sense that medicine and law are, beginning teachers need a chance to learn what constitutes good practice with the help of accomplished colleagues instead of being forced to figure everything out for themselves. (Johnson, 2002, p. 11)

Kelley (2004) also observed in many other professions the novice employee is placed under the care of someone more experienced, more knowledgeable; and someone

receptive to the new ideas that new employees bring with them. Unfortunately, the normal conditions of the teaching profession fall short of this model. Traditionally, the novice teacher was expected to “sink or swim” (p. 439). Even with the new phenomenon of beginning teacher induction and mentor programs, the unfortunate circumstances of having a heavy teaching schedule, a rundown classroom with obsolete technology, behaviorally challenged students, and nonteaching assignments may still exist for many beginning teachers.

Attrition, Retention, and Mentoring

The introduction to this study noted a number of reports that presented various, yet similar, attrition rates of new teachers. Combined, those studies suggested the attrition rate for new teachers in the United States, within the first 5 years, is approximately 30% to 50% (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Dyal & Sewell, 2002; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Those percentages are supported by other studies. Darling-Hammond (2000) stated approximately 30% of new teachers leave within the first 5 years. She also clarified that the attrition rate of teachers who completed an alternative licensure program is closer to 60%. The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (2003) broke the attrition rates down by the first few years of service: about 14% of new teachers leave after their first year, 33% leave within 3 years, and almost 50% of new teachers leave within 4 years. Ingersoll (2001) found more than a third of new teachers leave after 3 years and approximately half leave after 5 years. Ingersoll (2003) noted the attrition rate for beginning teachers after the first year at 14%, after the third year at 33%, and after the

fifth year at 46%.

In context to the national data and in keeping with the focus of this study, a review of Utah's teacher attrition is applicable. The Utah Educator Supply and Demand Study 2004-2005 (Eastmond et al., 2005a) reported Utah's attrition rate from 2000 to 2004 for teachers with 1 to 3 years of experience of 24.7%. Additionally, the report found 5.8% of those who began teaching did not finish their first year. Combined, Utah had a 30.5% attrition rate for new teachers from 2000-2004. Although Utah's yearly attrition rate for this same period was only about 6%, if that trend continues then Utah's attrition rate for the year 2014 is projected to be over 13% (Eastmond et al.). Sperry (2007) found similar attrition rates for Utah. In 2005-2006, almost 20% of first-year K-12 teachers left the teaching profession. The attrition rate for those teaching in a specific district for 5 years of less was nearly 50%.

Although these and other studies show the attrition rate of beginning teachers is problematic, attrition is not always seen as negative. Attrition of ineffective teachers is logically desirable. Education, like other industries, should expect a certain amount of attrition because of retirement and life events (Utah Foundation, 2007). Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) explained "all occupations, of course, experience some loss of new entrants – either voluntarily because newcomers decide to not remain or involuntarily leave because employers deem them to be unsuitable" (p. 2). In fact, teacher attrition rates are not really much different from the attrition rates found in other industries which have comparable education requirements. The National Center for Education Statistics found teacher attrition rates were similar to rates for employees in health, law enforcement, the

military, engineering, science, and legal support (Henke & Zahn, 2001).

So why the concern over attrition rates for new teachers? Moir (2006) responded by acknowledging the research is clear that “excellent teaching is the key to student achievement” and excellence often comes from collegial support and experience (p. 31). Mentoring programs give new teachers the support, experience, and confidence necessary to become excellent teachers. Darling-Hammond (2003) suggested that “well-prepared, capable teachers have the largest impact on student learning” (p. 8). She also suggested support for those novice teachers, through induction and mentoring programs, is the best way for the education system to get a return on their investment. She believes teacher effectiveness “increases sharply after the first few years” (p. 10). Smith and Ingersoll (2004) stated successful induction and mentoring programs for new teachers tend to increase effectiveness, hence student achievement. Darling-Hammond and Sykes (2003) explained the high attrition rate of beginning and young teachers not only creates shortages in many fields, but also creates a disadvantage to those students who, consequently, lose the benefit of an experienced teacher. A policy brief funded by the USOE Research and Improvements reads: “Compared to teachers receiving no collegial support, mentored novices are more effective in their early years of teaching, tend to focus on student learning, and leave teaching at a lower rate” (WestEd, 2000). Weiss (1999) also concluded mentoring programs can improve beginning teacher effectiveness and increase teacher retention. In concert with this data and the principle that preparing and retaining teachers positively impacts student achievement, The Utah Foundation (2007) reported:

Attrition negatively impacts teacher quality and limits children's access to high-quality education. Teacher attrition also tends to contribute to the unequal distribution of teacher quality across student populations. Typically, the most disadvantaged students attend schools with the highest teacher attrition rates and the lowest quality teachers. (p. 4)

Besides better preparing teachers to be effective educators, it appears mentoring adds to greater retention of new teachers. Kelley (2004) suggested mentoring is an important way for school districts to better retain new teachers. Holloway (2001) also suggested mentor programs reduce attrition rates of beginning teachers. Darling-Hammond (2000) found a number of school districts across the nation reduced attrition rates of new teachers "by more than two-thirds (often from levels exceeding 30% to rates of under 5%) by providing expert mentors with release time to coach beginners in their first year on the job" (p. 22). After reviewing various studies, Smith and Ingersoll (2004) believe there was sufficient evidence to support the argument that beginning teacher induction and mentoring programs can "increase job satisfaction, efficacy, and retention of new teachers" (p. 684). After an analysis of ten quantitative, evaluation and outcomes, and comparison studies, Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) told policy makers and education leaders "There is promise in the use of induction and mentoring as a means of reducing high rates of teacher turnover" (p. 14). Based on Smith and Ingersoll, Ingersoll and Kralik, and other studies from California and Illinois, the Utah Foundation (2007) also concluded that having a mentor increases the retention of new teachers.

Why Teachers Leave

Darling-Hammond and Sykes (2003) reported more than half of all teacher

attrition is due to job dissatisfaction. Ingersoll (2001) explained the largest rate of attrition is by new teachers who were dissatisfied with their working conditions and their lack of time to prepare for day-to-day classroom teaching. Fredricks (2001) and Johnson (2006) reported the lack of administrative support as a primary reason for such high attrition rates among beginning teachers. Weiss (1999) stated the education system is an unsupportive system which lacks “the resources and tools” to help new teachers deal with the frustrations of the workplace (p. 869). The above literature alludes to some common themes for the high attrition rate of beginning teachers: job dissatisfaction and the lack of administrative and collegial support.

In an attempt to understand the motivation behind the EYE program, and to more adequately establish the parameters of this study a review of research specific to Utah’s teacher attrition is warranted. Unfortunately, the reasons for such high attrition of beginning teachers in the state of Utah, as reported in the Utah Educator Supply and Demand Study 2004-2005, are not as telling as the national studies reviewed above. The Utah Educator Supply and Demand Study 2004-2005 listed the reasons why teachers left the profession over the last 5 years: 17.9% left because of retirement; 12.7% left because of relocation; 25.4% left without specifying why; and for 30% of those who left, no data were obtained at all. The remaining 14% left for reasons varying from the termination of a contract to death (Eastmond et al., 2005a). Some of the data for this supply and demand study were generated from the USOE’s Computer Aided Credentialing for Teachers in Utah Schools (CACTUS) system. The CACTUS system is a computer database that contains and tracks teacher licensure, endorsements, in-service, degrees, current and past

assignments, background checks, and even records of disciplinary actions (CACTUS Introduction, n.d.). Though the CACTUS system does not list the specific categories of no administrative or collegial support, Eastmond and colleagues (2005a) suggested a lack of administrative support, collegial interaction, and personal and professional development may be contributing factors for the high attrition rate of new teachers. Utah State University researchers have followed up their Utah Educator Supply and Demand Study with a qualitative study featuring focus group research for the recruitment and retention of teachers. Eastmond and colleagues (2005b) found compensation was a major factor surrounding teacher retention and recruitment. The study reported teachers and educational administrators perceive “that most people believe a teacher’s salary will not support a family” (p. 8). In support of this, the report went on to state most of the participants in the study indicated teachers have to supplement their incomes with a second job or a spouse’s job. Although this study focused on issues of retention and recruitment, logic dictates that the issue of low pay could be considered as a main reason for why there is such a high attrition rate among beginning teachers.

The Utah Foundation (2007) found the categories for leaving are not consistent across studies and across years. For example, the category of “pregnancy/childbearing,” which is used as a category in national studies, is not an independent category in the 2004-2005 Utah study; rather it is included in the “personal and family issues” category. Since this category includes everything from pregnancy to the lack of affordable housing, it is understandable why the information does not provide a more precise picture of why Utah teachers leave. In addition, since state information comes from the various districts

that select their own categories, the state is left to somehow fit the districts' list of reasons into its categories (Utah Foundation). Therefore, the inconsistency of these categories makes it "difficult to discern any type of pattern or trend across years" (Utah Foundation, p. 8). Even the Utah Foundation's own informal survey failed to clarify why Utah teachers leave the profession. The findings from a survey of five Utah school districts found respondents "selected personal reasons (childbearing, health, etc.) over salary/benefits, working conditions, or dissatisfaction with career" (p. 9).

In the end, even with Utah's inconsistencies, the literature, including the Utah literature (Eastmond et al., 2005a; Sperry, 2007) did suggest the common themes of job dissatisfaction, low pay, and the lack of administrative and collegial support as contributing factors to the high attrition rates of beginning teachers (Brock & Grady, 1998; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Dyal & Sewell, 2002; Eastmond et al.; Fredericks, 2001; Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson, 2006; Sperry).

Standards

Generally, new teachers have high expectations and are full of "enthusiasm, idealism, and optimism" (Dyal & Sewell, 2002, p. 5). The challenge for new teachers and the schools that hire them is to cultivate those ideals. Unfortunately, new teachers often find unsupportive administrators, "inadequate resources, difficult work assignments, unclear expectations, sink or swim mentality, and reality shock" (Glickman et al., 2004, p. 25). Such an environment can quickly turn a hopeful beginning in to a pessimistic ending, in which another beginning teacher leaves the profession (Dyal & Sewell, 2002).

To combat such experiences and attitudes many schools, districts, and states have turned their attention to creating and providing induction and mentoring programs based on standard to help the novice teacher transition effectively into the profession. A majority of states have instituted formal induction and mentoring programs for new teachers (Conway, 2006; Johnson, 2002; Nielson et al., 2006). These programs are often based on a set of standards that can be translated to actual teaching strategies and skills. Utah based its induction and mentoring program on a set of standards created by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), the work of Charlotte Danielson, and the New Teacher Center at the University of Santa Cruz (Utah Foundation, 2007; USOE, 2006b).

In 1987, INTASC was established to provide resources to educational institutions developing licensing, induction, and professional development programs. The ultimate work of the INTASC is to ensure effective teachers are in the classroom whereby “*all* students learn and perform at high levels” (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], n.d., ¶ 1). In 1992 INTASC developed model standards for beginning teachers, licensing, assessment, and continued professional development (CCSSO, 1992). These standards are performance based, meaning “they describe what a teacher should be able to do rather than a listing of the courses that teachers should take in order to be awarded a license” (p. 7). Since 1992, these standards have outlined the knowledge, temperament, and performances INTASC believes are essential for all teachers. The standards are:

1. The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.
2. The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide

learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.

3. The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adaptable to diverse learners.
4. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
5. The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active, engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
6. The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
7. The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.
8. The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social and physical development of learning.
9. The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning communities) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
10. The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being. (pp. 25-33)

INTASC encourages institutions adapt and use these standards in developing more specific standards for professional development and for induction and mentoring programs (CCSSO, 1992).

In *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*, Charlotte Danielson (1996) outlined what teachers should know and be able to do. The 22 different components she suggested teachers should know and do to be successful were influenced

by the national teaching standards set by the National Board for Teaching Standards. Those 22 components are grouped into four domains: (a) Domain 1 is planning and preparation; (b) Domain 2 is classroom environment; (c) Domain 3 is instruction; and (d) Domain 4 is professional responsibilities. Not only does Danielson detail each domain and its specific teaching component, she has also correlated these components with the INTASC standards. For a visual representation how INTASC standards correlate to Danielson's domains see Appendix A.

In 1988, the California New Teacher Project funded the creation of the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project (SCNTP), which established a model for mentor based teacher induction programs. The premise of that model is induction programs should focus not only on retaining new teachers, but also on developing high quality teachers. As this model was used to create actual programs a key insight emerged: "Comprehensive mentor-based programs can improve teacher retention and teacher practice simultaneously" (New Teacher Center, n.d., ¶, 4). The success of SCNTP led to the creation of the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

The New Teacher Center at the University of California at Santa Cruz is now a national resource for teacher induction programs (New Teacher Center, n.d.). As stated previously, the USOE consulted with this center in creating its own new teacher induction program—the Entry Years Enhancement program (Utah Foundation, 2007; USOE, 2006a). The New Teacher Center's induction model links "effective mentoring directly to a vision of effective teaching" (New Teacher Center, ¶, 8). It is no coincidence that Utah's EYE program's global goal of encouraging "teachers to develop effective

teaching skills and strategies” (USOE, p. 1) coincided with the New Teacher Center’s mentoring model. That model is based on the following four elements:

1. Articulation of best practices.
2. Balancing intermediate and long-term needs.
3. Approach to teaching as inquiry.
4. Commitment to collaborative partnerships. (New Teacher Center, n.d.)

Adaptation of those elements, national standards, and the use of other resources, like the New Teacher Center, can help educational organizations create induction programs that support new teachers in their efforts to use best practices in the classroom. The New Teacher Center’s own induction and mentoring program in California boasts a 95% retention rate of beginning teachers (New Teacher Center, n.d.). Mitchell, Scott, and Hendrick (1996) presented an evaluation of California’s teacher mentor program to California’s Department of Education. The evaluation took place during the 1995-96 school year. Data were gathered using focus group interviews of mentor teachers and site administrators, a large-scale survey of a stratified sample from 457 of California’s 7,821 schools, and information from the state’s educational data system. Mitchell and colleagues found “beginning teachers and mentors were significantly more satisfied with their career choices and their current job assignments than were other teachers” (p. 8). Although the evaluation did not look specifically at retention rates, the results of positive mentoring experiences justified the legislative intent that California’s mentoring program would help to better retain beginning teachers (Mitchell et al.).

With the evolution of the United States’ economy from a work-force economy to a more knowledge-based economy, schools have been forced to evolve (CCSSO, 1992). Now, instead of simply “covering the curriculum, teachers are expected to find ways to

support and connect with the needs of all learners” (p. 5). This new mission requires substantially more knowledge and skills from teachers and “...supportive policies for preparing, licensing, and certifying educators” (p. 5). INTASC, Danielson’s work, and the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz have provided model standards and resources which educational institutions can use to spark dialogue and/or adapt when developing induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers.

Ultimately, the need to help beginning teachers develop the “sophistication” of an advanced educator; specifically, “to deal simultaneously with the more complex facets of teaching context, with greater flexibility and adaptability, and a more highly developed capacity to integrate their understandings and performances on behalf of students’ individual needs” (p. 11). A standard based mentorship, like Utah’s EYE program, can assist novice teachers in developing the strategies and skills required to enhance student achievement and to advance their own professional development (Johnson, 2002; USOE, 2006b).

Darling-Hammond (2000) found that Cincinnati, Columbus, and Toledo, Ohio, and Rochester, New York, reduced the attrition rate of new teachers by two-thirds by implementing induction and mentoring programs. She also found teachers participating in those programs “become competent more quickly than those who must learn by trial and error” (p. 22). Smith and Ingersoll (2004) specifically studied the effects of induction and mentoring on beginning teacher turn over and found “having a mentor in one’s field reduced the risk of leaving at the end of the first year by about 30%” (p. 702). Dyal and Sewell (2002) reported a 93% retention rate for beginning teachers in low-income urban

districts for those who participated in induction and mentoring programs. As the previous examples illustrated, the literature does provide evidence that successful induction and mentoring programs can help reduce the attrition of new teachers, as well as help new teachers become successful.

Utah's EYE Program and Utah Professional Teacher Standards

The requirements of Utah's EYE program are intended to help beginning teachers develop effective teaching skills and strategies. The only direct teacher-support element of the program is the requirement that novice teachers work with a trained mentor for their first 3 years. Both Sperry (2007) and the Utah Foundation (2007) suggested induction and mentoring programs may help reduce the high attrition rate of new teachers and thus help with the teacher shortages projected for the state of Utah. Since the teacher shortages and the high attrition rate of new teachers can place the "education system at risk for lower teacher quality" (Utah Foundation, p. 4), induction and mentor programs are not only important in possibly curbing attrition, but also in providing the system with better-trained educators.

The National Center for Education Statistics stated mentoring is one of the most critical components of the induction process, and the benefit of mentoring increases with the amount of time which mentor and mentee actually spend together (Curran, 2002). Vierstraete (2005) concluded mentoring programs "are vital components to a healthy, successful school" (p. 390). As mentioned earlier, Utah's induction and mentoring program is centered on the Utah Professional Teaching Standards (UPTS). These

standards were inspired by and based on the INTASC standards, Danielson’s work, and the New Teacher Center (Utah Foundation 2007; USOE, 2006b). The five general UPTS standards of effective teaching practices are:

1. Creating and maintaining a positive classroom environment that promotes student learning,
2. Planning and designing curriculum to enhance student learning,
3. Engaging and supporting all students in learning,
4. Assessing and evaluating student learning, and
5. Demonstrating professionalism to support student learning. (USOE, 2006b, pp. 2-4)

Each standard has specific strategies, activities, and skills for teachers to incorporate and master to help develop effective teaching strategies and practices in an effort to promote student learning and also enhance professional practice. For a detailed look at the UPTS see Appendix B.

Utah Code 53A-10-108 defined mentor as a “career educator who performs substantially the same duties as the provisional educator and has at least 3 years of educational experience.” The code also states, “The mentor shall assist the provisional educator to become effective and competent in the teaching profession and school system.” In practical, terms this means mentors must be experienced teachers with a proven track record in understanding policy and procedures, classroom management, instruction, assessment, and the practical application of the UPTS. Utah State Board Rule R277-522 requires that in addition to holding a Utah Professional Educator’s Level 2 or Level 3 license “a mentor shall have completed a mentor training program including continuing professional development.” Specifically, a mentor is to be trained in the

practical use of the Utah Professional Teaching Standard, as well as in the areas of conferencing, observation, collaboration, and analysis of student work (USOE, 2006b).

Rule R277-522 enumerates the many specific requirements of a mentor:

A mentor shall: (a) guide Level 1 teachers to meet the procedural demands of the school and school district; (b) provide moral and emotional support; (c) arrange for opportunities for the Level 1 teacher to observe teachers who use various models of teaching; (d) share personal knowledge and expertise about new materials, planning strategies, curriculum development and teaching methods; (e) assist the Level 1 teacher with classroom management and discipline; (f) support Level 1 teachers on an ongoing basis; (g) help Level 1 teachers understand the implications of student diversity for teaching and learning; (h) engage the Level 1 teacher in self-assessment and reflection; and (i) assist with development of Level 1 teacher's portfolio.

In 2005, the state of Utah was commended for "its statewide approach to induct and mentor new teachers (USOE, 2005, p. 8). The commendation went on to say that the USOE used its State Activities funds to support the EYE program. USOE appropriations of those funds is not detailed, rather the USOE simply mentions that those funds are used for professional development opportunities (USOE, n.d.). Unfortunately, there is no reference to any state oversight of mentor training to ensure mentors know and practice the UPTS and do all that the Utah State Board of Education has listed that a mentor is required to do in Rule R277-522.

Characteristics and Elements of an Effective Mentorship

An effective mentorship begins with an experienced and successful teacher who is trained as a mentor. Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005) unequivocally stated mentors "must be given training in mentoring" (p. 66). Holloway (2001) stated for a mentoring program to be effective, mentor teachers must learn the process through

professional development. Odell and Ferraro (1992) also stressed the importance of training when they suggested,

[Mentoring is] conceptualized explicitly as a professional practice much as teaching is a practice. Like teaching, the professional practice of mentoring includes dispositions and beliefs, conceptual and theoretical understandings, as well as skills for implementing the practice. Also, like teaching, mentoring requires specialized preparation for the mentor and a significant time commitment on the part of the mentor. (p. 203)

Moir (2006) claimed the most important thing a new teacher needs is “focused instruction... guided by successful, experienced teachers *trained in mentoring* [italics added]” (p. 30).

Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005) stated effective mentoring happens when the mentor is “regularly available to coach and model good instruction” (p. 66). Coaching and modeling require mentor and the mentee to be together during school. Dyal and Sewell (2002) explained this in school, or release time is needed for beginning teachers to observe experienced teachers and confer with them about curriculum design, classroom management, and student assessment. Johnson and colleagues (2001) reported new teachers feel the most support and success when they have “frequent and meaningful interaction” with their mentors (p. 2). Monsour (2003), and Turley, Powers, and Nakai (2006) also reported effective mentorships require frequent contact between mentor and mentee. According to DePaul (2000), “well administered mentor programs that foster regular meetings between new teachers and their senior colleagues are life savers for first-year teachers” (p. 16). The National Center for Education Statistics reported, “those who work with mentors at least once a week believe the relationship has a major benefit” (Curran, 2002, p. 4). Unfortunately, as Johnson et al. (2001) related most school cultures

are not geared towards the needs of a beginning teacher, and do not include time for collaboration, observation, or mentoring. However, there are mentoring programs that stress the importance of release time. A program in Colorado known as the Partners in Education (PIE) is a collaborative effort between the University of Colorado at Boulder and six Colorado school districts. In this program, mentors are not only trained, but also fully released from their own classrooms to concentrate on the needs of their inductees. Sweeny (1994), when discussing best practices for mentoring, also emphasized adequate time for an effective mentorship. Mentor and mentee should have release time for observation and conferencing, as well as opportunity and funds to attend professional development activities together.

Adequate time is important for a mentorship to be effective, and time is what can lead to a trusting relationship. Johnson (2002) stated the difference between a successful or a failed mentorship experience is the development of a trusting relationship. Trust between mentor and mentee allow the mentor to provide, and the mentee to receive the support, the collegiality, and the modeling essential to an effective mentorship. Time together is needed to develop a relationship of trust between mentor and mentee, which is crucial to a successful mentorship. Turley and colleagues (2006) found frequent interactions between mentor and mentee helps build trust in the mentorship relationship. As a trusting relationship is established then the new teacher has the confidence to ask questions and collaborate for solutions to problems with his or her mentor (Turley et al.). Johnson suggested that trust is built when the mentor shares frustrations and successes, thus “the beginning teacher learns that problems are normal” (p. 7). Dever et al. (2000)

found that “(a) sharing concerns and joys, (b) building a sense of team, and (c) establishing trust, dialogue, and affirmation” (p. 241) are three important strategies present in a productive mentor-apprentice relationship. Monsour (2003) reiterated the idea of trust when she reported “aside from frequent contact, successful mentorships were characterized by trust” (p. 134). Glickman and colleagues (2004) believed as important as direct assistance is, like coaching, co-teaching, or observation, the heart of mentoring is the development of a “trusting, helping relationship [which] can make the difference between a successful and a failed entrance to the profession” (p. 336).

Summary of the Literature

The history and definition of mentoring new teachers is relatively consistent across the literature. Frazier (2006), Giacobbe (2003), Johnson (2002), and Vierstraete (2005) all used effective examples of mentors to define a mentor, like the original mentor from Homer’s *Iliad* to that of Socrates and Plato. For those with an appreciation of history, these examples are helpful. However, others may find synonyms and dictionary definitions sufficient. The literature reviewed in this study also explained the importance of mentor relationships in law and medicine to emphasize the same importance in the field of education (Johnson; Kelly, 2004; Moir, 2006). Although the initial educational requirements to practice law or medicine are more substantial than those required for entrance into the teaching profession, teaching is a profession that merits the benefits of mentorship programs and relationships.

The research regarding attrition rates of new teachers is also fairly consistent

across the literature (Darling-Hammond, 2000, 2003; Dyal & Sewell, 2002; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Even the studies specific to Utah reported attrition rates consistent with national averages (Eastmond et al., 2005a; Utah Foundation, 2007). Also consistent in the literature was the hypothesis that mentoring helps increase the retention of beginning teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Kelley, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Another important element in the literature was attrition, in the field of education, is not as healthy as it might be in other occupations. Various studies argued effective and excellent teaching is the key to student success, and effective teachers are, in part, the product of effective induction and mentoring programs (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Moir, 2006; Utah Foundation). Although Utah's information regarding teacher attrition is somewhat inconsistent, the literature does suggest the common themes of job dissatisfaction and the lack of administrative and collegial support as contributing factors to the high attrition rates of beginning teachers (Brock & Grady, 1998; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Dyal & Sewell, 2002; Fredericks, 2001; Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson, 2006).

The literature suggested high expectations and clear standards are necessary for any mentoring program to be successful. Standards illustrate what teachers should be able to do, and what they should be doing in order to be successful (CCSSO, 1992; Danielson, 1996; New Teacher Center, n.d.; USOE, 2006b). According to the EYE program requirements, mentors should not only be familiar with the UPTS and practicing them in their own classrooms, but also capable of teaching and modeling those standards to their mentees (USOE, 2006a). Unfortunately, there are no evaluation tools based on the UPTS

for either mentors or mentees. This makes the use and practice of those standards a subjective judgment by those involved in the mentorship program and relationship.

The literature also presented some important themes regarding the characteristics of effective mentors and mentorships. Specific training for mentors is imperative for a successful mentorship (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005; Holloway, 2001; Nielson et al., 2006). Mentors and mentees must also have release time in order benefit from the relationship. Release time and frequent contact for observation, conferencing, peer coaching, and collaboration make a mentorship a rich and a rewarding experience (Curran, 2002; Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden; Dyal & Sewell, 2002; Monsour, 2003; Turley et al., 2006; Vierstraete, 2005). Training helps to ensure an effective mentorship and time helps ensure a trusting relationship, both of which are integral parts of any successful mentorship. The literature reviewed in this study emphasized trust between the mentor and mentee is an indispensable element of an effective mentorship (Dever et al., 2000; Glickman et al., 2004; Johnson, 2002; Monsour; Turley et al.).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to report the lived experiences of Utah teachers who completed the mentorship requirement of Utah's EYE program. Since qualitative research is geared towards exploring and understanding this type of experience (Creswell, 2002), a phenomenological approach was appropriate. The guiding research question was "how do novice secondary teachers experience the mentorship requirement of the EYE program?"

Phenomenology

Phenomenological research is used to determine and describe what an experience means for those who have lived it (Creswell, 1998). van Manen (1990) explained phenomenological research seeks to describe basic lived experience and describe the meaning of the experience without "offering causal explanations or interpretive generalization" (p. 54). In this study, the lived experience of interest is the mentorship that all new and rehired teachers are expected to experience during their first 3 years of teaching in Utah. More specifically, phenomenological studies attempt to search for the central or essential meaning of an experience. Emphasis is placed on identifying the intentionality of consciousness, which means identifying the outward and inward appearance, based on the subjects' consciousness, image, memory, and meaning of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell). "From the individual descriptions, general or universal meanings are derived, in other words, the essences of structures of the

experience” (p. 54). The “structures of the experience” refers to the notion that all experiences have an underlying structure; for example, grief is the same, though not necessarily in degree, whether it stems from the death of a loved one or the death of a pet. Studying participation in a mentorship through a phenomenological design helped to describe the experience of the mentorship and identify some underlying structures and themes common to others who also lived the mentoring experience.

There are other research methods that may have been used to explore and explain Utah’s mentorship requirement. However, the focus of this study was specific to the lived experience of those who had completed the mentorship requirement. Since phenomenological research is geared to giving voice to the experience being described (van Manen, 1990), it was the most appropriate method for the purpose of this study. The purpose of this study, as is the essence of any phenomenological research study, was to transform the lived experiences of the participants into textual expressions that not only describe the experience, but also the meaning derived from the experience (van Manen). Induction and mentoring into the teaching profession is an individual experience and thus phenomenological research was an appropriate methodology.

Interview Design

Creswell (1998) indicated the use of interviews for primary source data for qualitative research is appropriate. To insure information-rich data criteria was used to purposefully select participants who had experienced the mentorship phenomena. However, not all potential participants experienced the mentorship to the extent of

providing information-rich data.

Data were collected through an open-ended emerging interview design. Interviews revolved around the guiding research question of how do novice secondary teachers experience the mentorship requirement of Utah's EYE program. Again, to ensure rich and detailed information interviews included the secondary questions, which are listed on the sample questions documents (see Appendix C).

Participants

The Utah State Board of Education has mandated all new and newly hired teachers complete Utah's EYE program. The first component of that program is the mentorship requirement. Since the literature emphasizes, as Vierstraete (2005) summarizes, "induction programs paired with mentorship programs successfully integrate new teachers into their assignments and position them more quickly for a focus upon student success" (p. 386), then a study focused on mentoring was needed.

As with all qualitative research studies and particularly phenomenological studies, participants were selected using a purposeful sampling strategy. Unique to a phenomenological study is the use of criterion sampling (Creswell, 1998). The original criteria for participation in this study were (a) participation in the mentor program after January 1, 2003, as a beginning teacher, (b) completion of the 3-year mentorship at the same school with the same mentor, (c) teachers in secondary schools (9-12), and (d) mentor and mentee established a regular meeting schedule. However, as potential participants responded to inquires about these criteria, which came in conjunction with an

ever decreasing possible participant population, it became evident the some adjustment to the criteria would be necessary.

Criterion 1 was adjusted to “participation in and completion of the EYE program after January 1, 2003 as a beginning teacher.” Criterion 2 was eliminated because it is inherent in Criterion 1. In addition, Criterion 2 was eliminated because of the unique circumstances of some of the potential participants. For some novice teachers, personnel changes, attrition, and attitudes reduced the 3-year mentorship experience to something less. However, not only were they still recommended for and received licensure advancement, but their limited mentorship experience still produced rich and detailed information. Their unique mentorship experiences demonstrate the need for program flexibility given the myriad of unpredictable events and circumstance.

Criterion 3 became Criterion 2 and simply remained the same. Criterion 4 became Criterion 3 and was changed to “mentor and mentee met often either formally or informally.” As I communicated with potential participants, it became evident that many did not have a regular scheduled meeting time with their mentor, but they did meet often. Therefore, the original purpose of this criterion, which was established to ensure rich and thick data, remained intact with the change. In the end, the criteria changes were necessary to accommodate the varying circumstances of those who expressed a willingness to participate. The criteria changes did not jeopardize the potential for rich and detailed information.

Ultimately, the criteria ensured participants came from a common experience, which is important for the “quality assurance” of a phenomenology (Creswell, 1998, p.

119). The rich and detailed experiences shared by participants provided for a greater identification of common themes. Creswell explained this type of information is what “enables the reader to transfer information to other settings and to determine whether the findings can be transferred because of shared characteristics” (p. 203).

Identification of potential participants for this study required the cooperation of the USOE. Using the CACTUS system, a preliminary search was conducted which identified 547 secondary teachers (9-12) who had started teaching after January 1, 2003, were still teaching and who had completed the EYE program. Once this study was approved and all Internal Review Board (IRB) requirements were met, a more refined search of potential research candidates was required.

The USOE used the CACTUS system to generate a total of 204 potential research candidates spread out across three cohorts. The first cohort listed 77 individuals who started teaching in 2003. The second cohort listed 112 individuals who started teaching in 2004. The third cohort listed 15 individuals who started teaching in 2005. The USOE used the following criteria as a filter to pull individual names from the CACTUS system:

1. Level 1 License issued in 2003 for cohort 1, 2004 for cohort 2, and 2005 for cohort 3.
2. Level 1 License expired, with the EYE completed in a normal 3-year period (this removed 1 year out-of-state anomalies).
3. The 3 years on Level 1 were completed at a public high school.
4. The 3 years on Level 1 were all completed at the same high school.
5. The teacher is currently active (07-08 school year) in a public school.

The third cohort (2005) listed only those teachers who had completed the process sufficient to have already received their Level 2 License in Utah. Because of the time of the request the majority of those who had started teaching in 2005 had not yet completed the EYE program and could not be included in the study. Though criterion 4 established that the teacher had completed the provisional Level 1 License at the same school some, there were a few teachers who had actually changed districts or schools. Those names were withdrawn from the list of potential participants: 10 from the first cohort and 10 from the second cohort.

The remaining 184 individuals were initially contacted by mail with a letter introducing myself, explaining the study, and inviting them to participate (see Appendix D). Approximately a week after the letters were sent a follow-up contact via email was made. The email was a thank you to those who had already responded to the invitation letter and an explanation that the nature of the study required a limited number of participants. Therefore, candidates were asked to respond via email to four questions in an effort to narrow the number of potential candidates (see Appendix E). From the various responses to those questions and a review of those who were willing to participate, eventually 19 people were identified as the research population for this study. According to Creswell, who suggested a study of this nature requires a range of 5 to 25 participants (Creswell, 1998), and given the anticipated amount of detail to be generated, this was an appropriate number of participants.

Entry and Reciprocity

Gaining entry to interview participants was eased by the fact that those who volunteered expressed interest in this study and wanted to share their stories and have their experiences recorded. Since I am a fulltime teacher at a high school, I was able to approach those who were willing to participate as a colleague who understands the joys and challenges of teaching in the public education system. This professional association helped me connect with participants. Endorsement of the study by the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Service at Utah State University and approval by the University's IRB assured participants of the importance of their contribution to this study. In addition, the Informed Consent guaranteed participants their identities would be kept confidential (see Appendix F).

Reciprocity is an important characteristic of qualitative research. The reciprocal benefit for participating was the voice which the study gave to those involved. Stokrocki (1997) explained that in a phenomenological study participants are particularly important because their stories are the data that is analyzed and reviewed. Before each interview the basic methodology of a phenomenology and the reciprocal benefit of participation were explained to the participants. Participants understood their experiences would not be interpreted; rather, this study would give them voice.

Data Collection

Phenomenological studies use "only interviews" to capture the experiences and perceptions of those participating in the study (Creswell, 1998, p. 64). Interviews were

digitally recorded and then transcribed. An open-ended interview designed around the primary research question was used. Secondary follow-up questions were used to probe for further information about the participants' attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and experiences regarding mentorships. Creswell (2002) explained, "attitudes, beliefs, and opinions are ways that individuals think about issues, whereas practices are their actual behaviors" (p. 398). Participant attitudes and practices in this study were identified through the use of an open-ended interview protocol.

Creswell (1998) recommended that an open-ended interview protocol form "(a) use a header to record essential information about the project and as a reminder to go over the purpose of the study with the interviewee; (b) place space between the questions in the protocol form; (c) memorize the questions and their order to minimize losing eye contact; and (d) write out the closing comments that thank the individual for the interview and request follow-up information, if need" (p. 126). The interview protocol for this study adapted Creswell's recommendations by including the title of the study, the study's guiding research question, and other follow-up questions on a sample questions document that was provided to both the interviewee and researcher during the interview (see Appendix C). Additional information essential to the study was contained in the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix F) which was reviewed, read, and signed by both the interviewee and the researcher prior to beginning any interview. Interview questions were memorized to ensure that the interview flowed and to also avoid losing eye contact. A statement of thanks and a request for possible follow-up information was delivered at the end of each interview. From this open-ended interview design common themes emerged

which have been identified, analyzed, and discussed.

Data Analysis

Phenomenological data analysis follows the established protocols of horizontalization of the data in which statements relevant to the topic were identified, reorganization of the information into clusters of meaning, and the convergence of these clusters making a general description of the phenomenon both texturally and structurally. The textual descriptions review “what” was experienced, while the structured descriptions review “how” the phenomenon was experienced. Finally, an “overall description of the meaning and the essence of the experience” is constructed (Creswell, 1998, p. 150). Data analysis for this study followed this protocol.

Each transcript was reviewed multiple times, while each time statements and/or sentiments relevant to the phenomenon were identified and marked in the same way. This information was further reviewed and organized into smaller units of meaning (clusters) which were, once again marked in such a way as to identify them with their specific meaning unit. These clustered were then further analyzed in order to describe not only what happened, but “‘how’ the phenomenon was experience” (Creswell, 1998, p. 149). This data analysis protocol provided for the identification of common and individual themes. Those themes will add to the knowledge and literature of induction and mentoring programs and hopefully stimulate further research. It is also hoped the reader will come away from the study with a better understanding of what it was like for someone to participate in and experience a 3-year mentoring relationship (Creswell).

Verification and Validity

Creswell (1998) listed eight specific verification procedures used in qualitative research: prolonged engagement/observation; triangulation; peer review/debriefing; negative case analysis; clarifying research bias; member checks; rich/thick descriptions; and external audits. He recommended, “qualitative researchers engage in at least two of them in any given study” (p. 203). The verification and validation procedures used in this study were triangulation, member checks, bracketing (a way to clarifying research bias), and a limited external audit. In addition, the descriptions participants shared regarding their mentorship experiences were rich and thick, which may also be counted towards the verification of the data reviewed in this study.

Triangulation which “involves corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective” (Creswell, 1998, p. 202), was inherent in this study. Triangulation was achieved by 19 different participants reporting on how they experienced the mentorship requirement of the EYE program.

Creswell (1998) argued member checking is the most significant verification procedure for ensuring the credibility of the data used in a study of this nature. Member checks involve “taking data, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions back to the participants so that they can judge the accuracy and credibility of the account” (p. 203). Such accountability leaves little, if any room for a researcher to skew the data in any way.

All interviews were scheduled and conducted at the convenience of the participants. All interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder. In order to verify and validate the data once the various interviews were transcribed, analyzed, and

coded, participants were asked to verify the accuracy of the transcripts and the emerging themes. Through email communication, all participants verified the accuracy of the transcripts and the list of emerging themes. These “verified” transcripts were the data source analyzed in this study.

Prior to initiating any interviews my own experience was bracketed to identify any preconceived ideas about the mentorship phenomenon. This was accomplished through a bracketing interview. The bracketing procedure is simply an interview in which the investigator discusses his or her own experience about the central phenomenon of the study (Kimmel & Crawford, 2000). I was interviewed by a colleague about my bias, attitudes, and beliefs relative to mentoring. This interview was transcribed, reviewed, and kept close at hand during the collection and analysis process in order to keep my bias in check (see Appendix G). In addition, a limited external audit was performed by a peer colleague. Four participant interviews were reviewed by an experienced qualitative research to ensure I did not lead the interviewees so as to more thoroughly address the issue of bias (see Appendix H; M.T. Dever, personal communication, October 5, 2007).

Creswell (1998) also suggested once the information is collected, analyzed, and parceled in to themes, a researcher can ensure an “accurate portrait of the common features and structural connections” (p. 208) by asking themselves the following five questions:

1. Did the interviewer influence the contents of the subjects’ descriptions in such a way that the descriptions do not truly reflect the subjects’ actual experiences?
2. Is the transcription accurate, and does it convey the meaning of the oral presentation in the interview?

3. In the analysis of the transcriptions, were there conclusions other than those offered by the researcher that could have been derived? Has the researcher identified these alternatives?
4. Is it possible to go from the general structural description to the transcriptions and to account for the specific contents and connections in the original examples of the experience?
5. Is the structural description situation specific, or does it hold in general for the experience in other situations? (p. 208)

In conjunction with triangulation, member checks, bracketing, and peer auditing, these five questions were kept in mind while reviewing and analyzing the data to further ensure the verification and the validity essential to the credibility of this study. Specifically, these questions were reviewed after the units of meaning were identified from the data and then again once specific themes emerged. The theme analysis of this study has fundamentally captured the lived experiences of 19 Utah teachers who completed the mentorship requirement of Utah's EYE program.

Delimitations

The delimitations of this study are essentially the criteria for participation in the study. Once the study began those criteria were adjusted to read: (a) participation in and completion of the EYE program after January 1, 2003 as a beginning teacher, (b) teachers in secondary schools (9-12), and (c) mentor and mentee met often either formally or informally. Parameters of the study were limited to 19 participants, selected from rural, suburban, and urban areas.

Limitations

This study was limited to the lived experiences of novice secondary teachers in the state of Utah who participated in a mentorship experience. Phenomenological studies are, by nature, limited to the experiences of those who participate in the study. And although it is possible for readers to transfer those descriptions to other settings because of shared or similar situational characteristics (Creswell, 1998), generalizability was not possible. Additional limitations included possible memory fade and telescoping. Memory fade is simply the propensity of people to forget or distort past memories and events. Telescoping refers to the tendency of people to recall memories which did not happen in the time period they are being asked to remember (Dick, 2005). Either is difficult to account for given the data for this study was made up of the memories of the lived experiences of the participants.

CHAPTER IV

PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR STORIES

This study involved 19 participants who are currently teaching in secondary schools in the state of Utah. All of these participants successfully completed the EYE program and received their Level 2 License in Utah. The first requirement of the EYE program and the focus of this study is that a beginning teacher “work with a trained mentor for three years” (USOE, 2006a, p. 6). Utah Administrative Code R277-522 defines a mentor as a “Level 2 or Level 3 educator, who is trained to advise and guide Level 1 teachers.” The training for mentors falls respectively to school districts and local schools. However, the USOE does suggest specific content for training “mentors in developing the attitudes, knowledge, and skills to assist new teachers” (p. 15). Those attributes, knowledge, and skills include an understanding and a practical use of the Utah Professional Teaching Standard, proficiency in conferencing, observation, collaboration, and analysis of student work, as well as helping the new teaching compile and complete a “reflective professional practice portfolio” (USOE, p. 15). The requirement to have a trained experienced teacher as a mentor is consistent with the literature (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005; Holloway, 2001; Moir, 2006; Odell & Ferraro, 92). However, noticeably absent in the State’s definition and explanation of the mentoring requirement is how Level 2 or Level 3 teachers are selected to be mentors, how mentor training is funded, how mentors and mentees are paired, and how districts and schools are held accountable for adhering to the EYE program.

Those who participated in this study did so willingly. They were cooperative and

accommodating in setting up times and places to have face-to-face interviews. Their participation is what made this study possible. Consequently, it is important to introduce each participant, using pseudonyms and vague descriptions of their circumstance.

The Participants

Anne

Anne did not start teaching until the age of 40. She is now beginning her fifth year as a Family, Home, and Consumer Science teacher at large urban high school. Growing up, she loved to sew and cook so she decided to pursue a degree in home economics. She confessed “back in the day” there was not much for her to choose from since sewing and cooking were the things in which she was interested. Besides, she figured if she ever had to work outside the home, teaching would give her the same schedule as her children. However, it was not until her children were grown and the onset of economic difficulties that she actually went to work outside the home. Her husband’s employment was jeopardized because of the economic stresses resulting from the terrorists attacks on September 11, 2001. With her husband out of work and their children all raised, she decided it was a good time to enter the work force. Since she already had a teaching degree in Family, Home, and Consumer Science she did not have to decide on what field of study in which to go.

Regardless of her more mature age, when Anne began teaching she was still a beginning teacher. Like all new teachers, she was required to complete the EYE program as part of the probationary status that new teachers must complete to receive a Level 2

License. She described the majority of the program as “busy work.” She stated, “The only thing that helped me in the transition [from new teachers to experienced teacher] was having a mentor.” In fact, she recently went to a summer conference for new teachers where she presented a handout to new teachers on what they needed to get started, including a list of sources where to find curriculum and lesson plans. Her mentor just happened to be a woman with whom she had graduated 20 years earlier; someone she already knew and considered a friend.

Becca

Becca was a fifth year teacher at a medium-sized suburban high school. She had originally intended to pursue a music career but because of personal circumstances she changed directions and used her associate degree in drafting as a stepping stone to teaching. When she first started teaching, there was not enough student interest in drafting and engineering for her to teach that curriculum fulltime. Since then she has built and promoted the engineering classes to the point she teaches that content fulltime. As with all the participants, Becca completed the EYE program and is now a Level 2 educator. She remembered all the components of the EYE program but thinks the most important component ought to be the mentorship. She believes the success of the mentorship depends a lot on the mentor and whether or not that person teaches or knows the content area of the mentee, and whether or not the mentor knows the mentee’s responsibilities in the framework of the EYE program. She said if she were ever asked to be a mentor she would provide social opportunities for her mentee. From her perspective, established teachers appear to have their “cliques,” which make it difficult for novice

teachers to break into the social circles of the profession.

Becca WAS passionate about her content area and felt like “it’s important for the next generation of students.” In fact, she said she would have liked to have a different mentor at some point just to have a different perspective. Still, there were other teachers in her department who were helpful, who were unofficial mentors.

Cory

Cory became a teacher because he liked being around kids and he wanted to help them grow and develop. Even before he became a high school teacher, he was a high school coach so becoming a teacher was just “the perfect fit.” He is now in his sixth year as a Social Studies teacher and a coach at a large urban high school. Although he said much of the EYE program requirements were just hoops to jump through he had a good mentorship experience. His mentor was and still is the Head of the Social Studies Department. Cory still considers his former mentor his mentor. In fact about his mentor he said, “That’s kind of who I am aspiring to be, you know.”

Doug

While Doug was attending college, he struggled with the decision of what field to go into. He vacillated between welding and teaching. Because of his skill in welding, many of the other students would come to him for help. He said he enjoyed helping out the other students and “seeing the light come on in their heads.” As a result, he decided to “give teaching a try.”

Doug has completed the EYE program and is now in his fourth year of teaching at

a medium to small rural high school. The person who was originally assigned as his mentor did not complete the mentor training and so two weeks later he was replaced with someone who had completed the training. Doug is grateful for this, not just because it was encouraging to know his new mentor was trained as a mentor, but also because he got along much better with the replacement. The mentorship was important because it gave him someone with whom to talk. It made him feel like the school really cared about him. The mentorship showed him the school was vested in him and wanted him to excel.

Ester

Ester was close to 50 years of age when she went back to school to get her teaching license and master's degree. Entering the teaching profession, even at a more mature age, was not a surprise to those who knew Ester. She had coached multiple sports over the years and had worked extensively with young people as a youth director and youth councilor. Unfortunately, she had a rocky start as a teacher. She was hired to teach at a large urban high school after the school year had already started and as she remembered, "I was kind of left on my own." It was not until the second term of her first year when a veteran teacher stepped in and helped her out for the remainder of that first year. She said they had to play catch up with all the paper work regarding new teacher induction. The start of her second year was much better. She was finally assigned an official mentor who, according to Ester, made the mentorship experience from then on "invaluable."

When asked how her experience might help her if she were asked to be a mentor, Ester said she was not ready to be a mentor. In fact, she expressed the desire for one more

year of mentorship. The mentorship ensured accountability for her early professional development; whereas even though she does discuss issues, concerns, and problems with colleagues there is no more accountability. She is no longer a provisional teacher. Outside of the mentorship relationship she sees too many teachers as “very secretive, and very territorial,” which makes it extremely difficult to network and to get other teachers to open up to one another.

Fran

Fran was in her sixth year of teaching at a large urban high school. She got into teaching because she loved kids. She also got into teaching much later than the average beginning teacher. When asked about her mentorship, Fran said she loved her mentor; he was the same teacher who had supervised her as a student teacher, though he is now retired. Since her mentor supervised her student teaching, she said, “We didn’t do a whole lot with that mentorship.... I think he thought he’d already taught me everything as a student teacher.” When asked if there was anybody else she could go to for help, she complained,

You don’t know what to ask because you don’t know. You don’t know what you don’t know. So you just kind of sit there and you do...and then just experience—it comes with experience. But I think if you had one of the older mentors say, ‘now, this is what you need, and this is what you need...’

As Fran further discussed teachers staying or leaving the profession she stated she believed that a mentorship would better serve a beginning teacher in their second or third year. Her rationale was as a first year teacher there is so much to do that being in a mentorship is just one more thing to do “when you are already trying so hard to get

everything done and organized. It's a real pain in the rear end."

Gretchen

Gretchen is now in her fifth year as a Family, Home, and Consumer Science teacher at a large urban high school. She is also a traditional novice teacher given she began teaching right out of college. She was not always sure what she wanted to do, but because she was interested in food and nutrition she decided to give home economics a try. After 4 years of teaching she said, "I realize that teaching is what I love...and... seeing students finally get it, or just 'cause they get excited and.... I really wanted to just help people and serve people and that's what I like to do." Gretchen went on to say how much she likes her content because it is hands on and because students get to see a final product.

When asked what she remembered about the EYE program, the first things she spoke of were the portfolio and the administrative evaluations. The school district where she works uses the JPAS administrative evaluation system, which she said helped with the EYE program because the JPAS system required examples of lesson plans, course assignments, and samples of student work, all of which could be used to fulfill the portfolio requirement of the EYE program. Thus for her the portfolio part of the EYE program was really easy. She also mentioned she was worried about taking the Praxis II, but it turned out okay. Finally, she talked about the mentorship requirement of the EYE program. She had the same mentor during her 3 years as a provisional teacher. When asked why she decided to stay in the profession Gretchen said, "I think you either like teaching or you don't, whether you have a good mentor or you don't."

Howard

Howard is now in his fifth year of teaching at a medium-sized suburban high school. He said he got into teaching by following in his father's footsteps. He enjoys the life style it provides for raising a family and he likes the idea of hopefully influencing young kids. When asked about the EYE program he recalled the mentorship, the portfolio, and the Praxis II. He said it was not until after he started teaching he found out he was required to take and pass the Praxis II exam within his first 3 years. He waited until his third year to take the test. He struggled with the questions that asked about specific educators and certain theories. Jokingly, he said he must have slept in class when those things were discussed. However, he attributed at least part of his success in passing the Praxis II to his 3 years of experience. Many of the questions on the test asked about what a teacher should do in a particular situation, and since he had experienced many of those things, he was able to answer the questions correctly.

Howard is a science teacher and his mentor was an English teacher. Other veteran teachers told him he was lucky to have a mentorship and an induction program because when they started they were given the textbook and simply told, "Go teach." Howard seemed to appreciate that sentiment because after 4 years of teaching he now knows how dynamic teaching can be and having a mentor and an induction process made it much easier to deal with those dynamics.

Isaac

Isaac's first mentor was just 1 year away from retirement and as he put it "[my mentor] had pretty much retired 5 years before." Isaac's second mentor stayed with him

for the remaining 2 years of the required 3-year mentorship. Although he is passionate he is where he should be, after his 5 years and the start of his second year he realized teaching can be pretty tough. From his experience, the beginning of a teacher's second year is really tough because most people no longer consider a new teacher new. A second year teacher is considered an experienced teacher.

Those are the years where...the safety net underneath your wire [is] gone; at least in the eyes of the kids and the eyes of the community because now you're the (pause)...you've been doing it for a year; you're not a new teacher anymore.

Isaac said if he were ever asked to be a mentor, organization and follow-up would be his top priorities. He explained that because of a lack of organization and follow up he almost missed the portfolio requirement deadline. He threw it together at the last minute of his third year and had to hand deliver it to the Utah State Office of Education with his principal's signature otherwise he would have missed the deadline for getting his Level 2 License. Therefore, in the role of mentor Isaac would be sure to know and follow up on all important assignments and dates. He would try to arrange to have the same prep period as his mentee in order to "have an official sit down for twenty minutes."

Jack

Jack owned a successful business in Utah County but at the age of 43 he realized he wasn't doing what he wanted to do. What he really wanted was work to with kids. In fact, even before going back to school to get his teaching degree, he coached one of the athletic teams at the high school where he now teaches. Through coaching, he already had a relationship with the school and the community, plus he loved working with kids, and since his business could now run without him, he decided to go back to school. He

said the funny thing was as a student he was always good at math and yet when he went back to college went into English. He wanted to figure out why English was one of his worst subjects in high school. He said,

You know, I want to figure this out. I want to know why I didn't get it when I was in high school...and as I went through the English program, I realized what all my previous teachers were doing [and I] thought maybe I could have an impact with the typical kid who doesn't want to read and doesn't want to write.

Jack is now in his fifth year at the same large urban high school where he coached before he became a teacher. He laughed about the fact it was through coaching he found his passion, and it was through coaching he had an in with the school where he now teaches, but after 3 years of doing both he has given up coaching. He said, "It was just a bit too much to do; to do both of them as well as I wanted to do. Something had to give."

As an older adult entering the profession, Jack felt like the EYE program was not necessary. He believes it is geared more towards people in their 20s who did not have a lot of life experience. Jack had already dealt with kids, parents, and what he called "the parent-kid relationship." Not only did he experience those dynamics as a high school coach, he also experienced them as a parent who had high school age children of his own. During his first year of teaching, he was not able to attend all of the school district's induction meetings for new teachers because he was still coaching and the meetings usually fell on game days. Then his second year he was taking classes to get his reading endorsement and those classes once again were in conflict with the district's induction meetings. However, he did say, "the people at the district were very understanding and sympathetic, and recognized that what I was doing was, in a way, superseding what they were teaching, and they were okay with me missing [those meetings]."

Jack said he has watched some of the younger beginning teachers work with their mentors and which seemed to “give them all sorts of confidence.” He explained younger teachers have not had to survive on their own like he had to as a small business owner. It is important for them to have a confidant, someone to turn to when things aren’t going right and someone who can reassure them they are doing okay.

Kevin

Kevin said part of his motivation to go into education stems from the exceptional teachers he had in school. He also said he just loves teaching. He is now in his sixth year at a medium to large urban high school. He also just finished a Masters Degree, his thesis for which was the creation of a unique psychology textbook. At the time of the interview he had already sold two classroom sets of his textbook. Kevin said he did not find his first year teaching difficult because he had already taught and coached teenagers in other settings. “I felt really comfortable in front for teenagers. I felt really comfortable planning and preparing and presenting and, you know, coming up with activities and everything.” He said he would have been okay even if he had not had a mentor. However, he did mention the low pay made it really difficult to stay the first couple of years.

Lori

Lori has always enjoyed being around and helping young people. She said she always wanted to be a teacher, even from the time she was umpiring the games of her little brothers and sisters. She is now in her sixth year teaching at a medium-sized suburban high school. When it comes to Lori’s mentorship experience, hers is unique.

Her first 2 years she did have the same mentor but then the teacher who was her mentor left the school. Lori was left as the most senior teacher in her department and the principal asked her to be a mentor to the new first year teacher. She did it but she did not like it.

That was not good for me. I was glad that I was relieved of those duties for my fourth year, because I was not prepared. I mean I was still new to everything and still trying to, you know, figure things out for myself and then I'm suppose to try and tell other people (pause)... I don't like it at all. I mean I didn't mind sharing my curriculum and stuff, but...

Mary

Mary said she is a natural-born teacher. Growing up she was always teaching somebody something. When she actually did grow up, becoming a teacher “just made sense,” and teaching math made even more sense. Mary is now in her fifth year at a large urban high school. She had the same mentor for her first 2 years and then he moved so she was assigned a different mentor her third year.

Nancy

Nancy said she always knew she wanted to be a teacher; she just was not sure what subject she wanted to teach. By default she eventually majored in English; however, her minor was in special education, which is where she ended up. She talked about her brother who has cerebral palsy and how she helped and watched him while he was growing up. As a result, she decided on a career in special education. She did confess, “There are definitely days I think regular ed would be a lot easier, but I enjoy it.” Nancy is now in her sixth year at a medium to small rural high school. She is also the head of the

Special Education Department and has been since her second year, which makes her mentorship experience somewhat unique.

Nancy did have a mentor her first year and they even shared a classroom, which she said was helpful as a beginning teacher. However, she referred to her first year as the “sink or swim” year. She claimed her true mentor was her principal who had spent 18 years in special education before becoming an administrator. He was the one she went to for help, particularly because her second year, she being the most senior teacher in the Special Education Department, by default, was the mentor to the new teachers.

Special education has high teacher turnover and yet Nancy is still going strong as the head of her department. Her decision to stay in the teaching profession was highly impacted by the school she teaches at and the area in which she lives. She said her and her husband love the area. They are from small towns and have always wanted to raise their children in a small town and her job provided them with that opportunity.

Oprah

Oprah also had a unique story. She dropped out of school after her 10th grade year. She eventually went back to school and got her teaching degree and even her master’s degree. She said one of the reasons she went into teaching was because she did not have many good teachers during her school years. She also said reading and education are what saved her life. Oprah is now in her sixth year teaching English at a small urban alternative high school. When asked about the EYE program, Oprah said her college classes and her college professors failed to prepare her for it. All she was told was there was a new 3-year induction process she would have to go through before she could

get her Level 2 License. When asked specifically about her experience with the EYE program she said she wished it had been “more meaningful.”

When asked what it was that has kept her in the profession Oprah said, “I think it is fun. I mean I really think it’s fun. Plus I get to keep learning.” She said she also draws from the energy of her students especially when she sees them learning to love learning. She told of one student who came to her and said, “I hate you [Mrs. Oprah]. You made me a slave to books.” Oprah explained this comment had come from a student who had never read an entire book before coming to her class. She also named other students who had attended her class and who are now attending college, something they had never dreamed of until they had her as a teacher. It was evident Oprah’s passion for English and her commitment to her students is what has kept her going in the profession.

Paula

Originally, Paula had no interest in becoming a teacher. In fact, when one of her teachers recognized her aptitude for math, he suggested she go into teaching. Her response was, “If I’m good at math, then I’m going to go where I can make some money.” Therefore, in college she began to pursue an engineering degree but she hated it. For a semester, she tried some other classes and she was miserable not doing math. In her mind she thought, “There is always teaching.” After that, she said things just kind of “fell in place.” Now Paula is in her fifth year at a medium-sized urban high school, and she loves it. She said she learned in her psychology classes “about the teenage brain and how it turns in to a night owl.” She argued if that is true, then why does school start at 7:00 in the morning for teenagers? According to her, if the state thinks it is important to put items

about the teenage brain on the test, then the state should mandate high school start later.

Quinton

Quinton said he knew he wanted to be a teacher at the age of 12. Even though both of his grandfathers were educators, his father always tried to talk him out of being a teacher; mainly because he knew it was not very lucrative. However, he was not deterred and now Quinton is in his sixth year teaching social studies courses at a large urban high school.

Quinton is not fond of standardized “multiple guessing” tests and thinks they are biased. Ironically, this past summer he corrected tests with Educational Testing Service (ETS) and said he felt himself “part of the great Satan.” In defense of his summer work, he said the tests he graded had a writing content which he believes gives the tests some validity; a lot more than the Praxis II anyway. He said he understands what the state is trying to do with having new teachers take the Praxis II but a multiple-choice test is not the best way to go about it. Quinton did not clarify what exactly he thought the state was trying to accomplish by requiring new teacher to take the Praxis II.

In the end, Quinton talked about his frustration with the legislature when it comes to education. He is frustrated because they “are always meddling” in education without looking at or talking to front-line teachers. Quinton thinks the legislature should consult with practicing teachers before mandating something like the EYE program. In reference to the EYE program, the mandate was issued by the Utah State Board of Education and not state legislature. Had Quinton known this, it was evident his desire that teachers be included when dealing with educational issues would have remained the same.

Rita

After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree, Rita went to work for a brokerage firm. However, she soon found herself back in school pursuing a master's degree in applied linguistics. She is raising her child to be bilingual and she thought a degree in applied linguistics would help her. Being in school again and teaching her own child to be bilingual kindled a desire in her to become a teacher. She was soon back in school, this time to get her teaching certificate. She is now in her sixth year as a foreign language teacher at a large urban high school.

Rita stated one of the big things that need to change in education is the culture of isolationism. She was encouraged when she saw some of the newer teachers get together regularly to talk, collaborate, and just kind of “throw ideas around.” Rita has tried to encourage a more social spirit in her building. She used to go to visit the head of her department during lunch simply because she got “so lonely” in her own classroom. After 2 weeks, her department head told her she could not come in any more. Apparently, her visits bothered her because “this was her lunch hour and she liked to be locked away.” Rita was adamant this isolationist mentality and mindset needs to change and there needs to be more collaboration and collegiality among teachers.

Sarah

When Sarah first started college, she did not intend to be a teacher. However, while in school, she worked at one of the university writing labs and enjoyed teaching and helping other students. After she earned a bachelor's degree in English she eventually decided to go back to school and get her teaching certificate. She is now in her sixth year

teaching English at a large urban high school.

The brief introduction of each participant was intended to familiarize the reader with those who shared their stories for this study. These biographies do not provide an expository review of each interview. However, the individual interviews do make up the data for this study and, accordingly, details regarding how these novice teachers experienced the mentorship requirement of the EYE program will be discussed in detail.

Teaching and Mentoring Timeline

Nine out of the 19 participants had completed their fifth year of teaching, nine had completed their fourth year of teaching, and one had completed his third year of teaching. Fifteen of the 19 experienced a full 3-year mentorship, 11 of which had the same mentor for 3 years. Three of those 15 who experienced a 3-year mentorship spent 1 year with one mentor and 2 years with another mentor. Two of the 19 experienced a 2-year mentorship. One was not assigned an official mentor her first year and the other was not assigned a new mentor once her mentor of 2 years left. One participant became a mentor her second year. Finally, one participant, who had the same mentor for 3 years, was not aware that she had a mentor until the middle of her second year. Using pseudonyms, Table 1 graphically summarizes each participant and their mentorship timeline.

Table 1

Summary of Participants

Pseudonym	Years teaching (at time of interview)	Mentor experience
Anne	4	3 years: same for 1 st & 2 nd years, new for 3 rd year
Becca	4	3 years: same mentor all 3 years
Cory	5	3 years: same mentor all 3 years
Doug	3	3 years: same mentor all 3 years
Ester	4	2 years: no mentor 1 st year, same mentor for next 2 years
Fran	5	3 years: same mentor all 3 years
Gretchen	4	3 years: same mentor all 3 years
Howard	4	3 years: same mentor all 3 years
Isaac	5	3 years: 1 st year mentor, new mentor for 2 nd & 3 rd years
Jack	4	3 years: same mentor all 3 years
Kevin	5	3 years: same mentor all 3 years
Lori	4	2 years: same mentor for 2 years
Mary	4	3 years: same mentor for 1 st & 2 nd years, new mentor for 3 rd year
Nancy	5	1 year: same mentor for 1 year
Oprah	5	3 years: same mentor all 3 years
Paula	4	3 years: same mentor all 3 years
Quinton	5	3 years: same mentor all 3 years
Rita	5	3 years: same mentor all 3 years
Sarah	5	3 years: same mentor all 3 years

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to report the lived experiences of novice secondary teachers who completed the mentorship requirement of Utah's EYE program. As a phenomenological study, the goal was to illustrate and give voice to those who actually experienced the mentorship phenomenon. Purposeful sampling and a willingness to participate eventually resulted in a research population of 19 participants.

General Themes on the Benefits of the Mentorship Experience

Participant interviews were framed around the guiding research question "how do novice secondary teachers experience the mentorship requirement of the EYE Program?" Themes were identified by following the established protocols of horizontalization, clustering, and convergence. Horizontalization was accomplished by identifying and highlighting comments and attitudes about specific aspects of the mentorship experience and other aspects of the EYE program. Similar comments and attitudes were clustered together for further review. From a convergence of these clusters of meaning, the following themes emerged.

1. The mentorship was beneficial because the mentor was a source of advice and information.
2. The mentorship was beneficial because the mentee could confide in the mentor and the mentor inspired confidence in the mentee.
3. The mentorship was beneficial because the mentee got along with the mentor.

Theme 1: The Mentor Was a Source of Advice and Information

Sixteen of the 19 teachers who participated in the study expressed in one way or another that the mentorship was beneficial because the mentor was a great source for advice and information. The essence of this theme is exemplified with specific comments, sentiments, and situations that deal with information and advice about classroom and student management, teaching strategies and content knowledge, and logistical issues, like school policies and procedures.

Classroom and student management. An integral part of the essence or unifying meaning that the mentor was a source of advice and information, establishing that the mentorship experience was beneficial, lies with the common experiences and sentiments expressed about classroom and student management. Cory appreciated the advice his mentor gave him on classroom management. He remembered one of the first things that his mentor told him was "...one of the most important things you need to remember is classroom management...you've got to manage your class, you know, if you let them be boss at all, they are going to take it and run it." Although Cory said he is more relaxed in his classroom management than was his mentor, he still tries to make adjustments with the new students he gets each trimester. Jack indicated that classroom management was always his biggest concern and struggle. He acknowledged that he benefited from the advice of his mentor concerning classroom management.

Gretchen struggled with classroom and student management when she first started teaching. She was grateful for a mentor who had the knowledge and experience to help her. She said, "[My mentor] taught me a lot about classroom set up and how to manage

the students.” Lori said it was nice to have a mentor her first 2 years to help her deal with the issues and challenges of being a new teacher. She specifically said it was important

...to have someone that has had many years of experience and dealt with the same situations probably multiple times; you know, to be able to go and to talk to them and say, ‘do you have any advice for me in this situation?’

Anne shared similar experiences with her mentor regarding discipline. She said, “it was really nice to go over and say [to my mentor], ‘this happened today. How would you handle it? Did I handle it correctly?’”

Lori said that her mentor’s advice with classroom management and discipline issues was probably the most helpful. For instance, when she had a couple of students use some inappropriate pictures on an assignment, even after she had explained that such pictures were not to be used. She was not sure how to handle the situation. Her mentor suggested she pull the girls aside; first, make sure they understood the assignment and second, offer them a chance to redo the assignment. The mentor explained that since it was early in the semester it would not be a good idea to come down hard on them because that might ruin the chances of having a positive relationship with those students in the future. As a result of her mentor’s advice and now her own experience, she always tries to give students the benefit of the doubt, to trust them until they give her cause not to.

Becca, who described her mentor as poor, ironically acknowledged that her mentor helped her deal with specific student behaviors and even how and when to talk to parents. When it came to advice and knowledge about classroom management, Paula was grateful to have a mentor that was willing to and always did help. She said, “...so every

single time I've had a discipline problem she just knew immediately how to take care of it." Doug said the advice on managing difficult student behaviors was beneficial. For example, in his first year, he had a student who was very disrespectful and defiant and he was not sure how to deal with this student. His mentor advised him to "pull her to the side and talk to her on the side." He explained that if he were to confront her in view of the other students, he would probably only exacerbate the problem. Doug followed the advice and was successful in mitigating the disruptive behavior. Though she provided no specific examples, Ester also said she was grateful for her mentor's suggestions and strategies on managing disruptive students.

Teaching strategies and content knowledge. Another essential part of the unifying meaning that the mentor was a source of information and advice is evident from the many illustrations offered by participants about how their mentors helped them with teaching strategies and when possible content knowledge. Gretchen shared that one of the most important and beneficial pieces of advice came after her mentor observed her teach. Her mentor suggested she walk around the classroom more—interact more with the students. Now she says, "I walk around the room a lot to help students...you can't just sit at your desk and teach. You get up and you walk around and you help students." Doug told of a similar experience when after his mentor observed him teach, the mentor suggested that he walk around the classroom more when conducting a class discussion or showing a Power Point presentation. Doug teaches computer technology classes and has a large classroom to accommodate for all the computers and the non computer work stations and moving around the classroom more would help his students stay focused on the

discussion at hand. His mentor told him, “Just walk in front of them. They will get over it. They will get their notes, as long as you keep their attention.”

Cory was grateful to have a mentor in the same content area. In fact, his mentor was the AP (Advanced Placement) History teacher and an avid reader. Cory said,

We actually team-taught a couple of times where he would help me with a certain subject because you don't know a lot when you first start out. And his area was the Civil War. So we would always (pause)... I would always have him come in and help me with the Civil War.

Kevin said his mentor did a “really good job...she would come and observe and her feedback was really precise and useful.” He especially appreciated the constructive feedback he got from his mentor because that was what was missing from his previous jobs. He said any feedback or evaluations from his previous jobs were “really vague... not practical, [and] not helpful.” For example, one of the first things she encouraged him to do was to make sure he had a plan of where he was heading with the curriculum. Kevin said his mentor's advice to identify teaching objectives was beneficial because it helped him to look critically at the purpose of his assignments and activities, rather than just assign something because it might appear to be fun. Sarah's mentor was also helpful with content knowledge. Her mentor would lend her files to Sarah so she could see how a particular unit looked. Using her mentor's files and her mentor's experience she knew how to better organize her curriculum and clearly define her objectives. In fact, one of the most notable pieces of advice and knowledge she shared was the importance of backwards mapping. Sarah said,

Instead of just doing assignments randomly, which is what I started doing, then giving a test for each unit, she would talk about the big picture, and how to have, you know, have an ultimate goal. And then everything you do leads up to that

goal, which is logical, but not when you start.

Gretchen said her mentor provided her with all sorts of handouts; in fact, sometimes she gave her too much stuff. However, it was always offered in good faith and not as a mandate. Though she did not use all the materials her mentor provided, the material that was the same content of one of the classes Gretchen was teaching her first years was useful. She used the information as a guide in helping her map out the direction of where to go with the course curriculum.

The knowledge and advice Mary received from her mentor came in the form of content and teaching strategies. The math courses at the high school where she teaches are sequenced differently from most other high schools. Her mentor's knowledge and experience on how to sequencing the curriculum for those courses was invaluable. She said, "he did a very good job of helping me know the order, giving me ideas of how much to teach the different things that I was teaching and the program that I was going to be using." Rita's mentor was also able to provide her with specific knowledge and advice about the language she was teaching because her mentor had previously taught that language.

Logistical issues. The final aspect of the essence of the unifying meaning of the emergent theme that the mentor was a source of information and advice is expressed in terms of advice and information regarding logistical issues, such as school policies and procedures. Once Anne started teaching, she soon realized her college classes had not taught her how to grade or how to use the grading program. One of the things that made her mentorship beneficial was her mentor's training on how to use the grading software.

Anne said in conjunction with showing her how to use the grading program, “she [had] the instructions which hadn’t been passed on to me [and] she copied them off and said, ‘here you are. You will want to keep these forever.’” Her mentor also shared procedures for grading homework, tests, and other activities.

Becca mentioned that having a poor mentor helped her develop independence. However, she also mentioned her mentor’s role in helping her expand her program. “She gave me a lot of suggestions on who to talk to and when to talk to them, things to say to help with [building my program].” Ester also started off in a poor mentorship. It was not until her second year that she was assigned a mentor who appeared to genuinely care about helping her progress. Ester said the mentor taught her “the ins and outs of just education in general.” For instance, her mentor taught her about how to request and obtain School Land Trust money for classroom materials. In her case, it was to get white boards for her classroom.

Howard recalled his mentor was a great source of advice and information. Each month his mentor would meet with him and the other mentees assigned to her. She answered whatever questions they had and she also kept them up to speed on school policies, procedures, testing dates, and even extracurricular events. Howard said, “Basically anything that was going on in the school she helped us to answer any questions that we had.” Like Howard’s, Isaac’s mentor did not teach the same subject area. However, he still got help for what he called “logistical things.” He said,

If I had issues with (pause)...the grading of homework, or the assigning of grades; or if I needed to talk to her about how to deal with parents and the administration as we approached [them] and presented some ideas and new things.

Nancy's mentorship only lasted her first year. Her mentor accepted a position at another school and the next year Nancy became the department head and, by default, the mentor to any new teachers coming into the department. However, that first and only year with a mentor was beneficial. He shared his knowledge about the IEP (Individual Educational Plan) process and even coached her through completing multiple IEPs. Although, he was not much of a mentor in other areas, in this, his advice, expertise, and experience were extremely helpful, particularly given the integral part of the IEP process in special education.

Rita said her mentor was a seasoned veteran teacher and always had good advice and information on "who to talk to and how to go about doing different things on the district level." Paula was also grateful for a seasoned mentor who was knowledgeable and experienced with administrative issues. She said she often felt like the administration, with all the rules and policies, just got in the way of her teaching. Her mentor was always able to explain to her why things were the way they were and, to some extent, why things happened.

Theme 2: The Mentor Was a Confidant

Another prevalent theme to emerge from a majority of participants was that the mentor was a confidant and inspired confidence in the mentee's ability to teach and progress in the profession. Being a confidant and instilling confidence is illustrated by participants' statements and attitudes about the importance of having someone to talk to and the importance of having someone who helps them build confidence.

Someone to talk to. The unifying essence of being a confidant was made clear

through the common expressions and sentiments of the participants. Anne explained that an important part of why her mentorship experience was beneficial was because she could take any troubles and concerns to her mentor. In turn, the mentor always did her best, either to just listen or to help Anne remedy the problem or address the concern. Becca's experience with being able to talk to and vent to her mentor epitomizes the definition of a confidant. She said,

It was nice to have somebody just that I could go to, kind of vent to when I was having problems. So that is always nice to have an older teacher that you can go talk to, and they understand what you are going through.

Along the same sentiments, Cory explained that as a beginning teacher there are those "hell days and you are wondering why you are even in the profession." He exclaimed it was nice to have a seasoned colleague to whom a novice could vent, and who could help the day go a little "smoother." Cory said having a mentor during those difficult days as a new teacher "helped a ton." Though his mentorship is over, Cory still considers his mentor a mentor figure and he said he still talks to him regularly about different questions and issues.

Doug described his mentor as a confidant. Teaching can be overwhelming for a novice so it was helpful to have "somebody that you [could] always go and talk to" about the challenges of just starting out in the profession. Had he not had someone to talk to, or vent to he believes he would have felt that he were not valued and may have left teaching. Doug said, "I felt comfortable around him. I didn't really feel like he was judging me, or trying to downgrade me." He went on to say that anytime he had a problem or a question he could go and talk to his mentor, who always pointed him in the right direction. Ester

felt similar about her experience. She said, “When you have a mentor it is like okay, you know, you sit down, you discuss [a problem] and you take care of it.”

During Isaac’s second and third years when his class rolls were in decline, having someone to talk to was very important. He explained as a band teacher he is one of the “odd teachers that likes to have 50 to 70 kids in [the] classroom.” With his class numbers dropping it was hard for him to not get discouraged and think that maybe he was a horrible teacher. He said that “having someone that I could talk to those years was essential for me.” It was also essential for Paula to have someone to talk to during her early years. As a new teacher, and even now as an experienced teacher, she gets annoyed with school politics. She expressed, “Sometimes I just (pause)...I guess I get like frustrated and I’m like why can’t we just do our jobs. Or why can’t they just leave me alone and let me do my job.” Her mentor was always able to calm her down and explain to her why things were a certain way.

Confidence building. Participants exemplified the unifying meaning of how a mentor helped build their confidence through various statements and attitudes. Gretchen is comfortable as a teacher and appears confident in her abilities. However, she did acknowledge that during “those discouraging times” it is important to have a mentor who can help reassure a new teacher that he or she is doing a good job. She said a mentor can help “show...what you are capable of, I guess; because some people get in a rut, maybe, or no one is there to keep them going when they get so overloaded.” Howard talked about how teaching is a “dynamic profession,” and how a teacher has a myriad of situations to deal with almost every day. As a beginning teacher, it was almost too overwhelming. He

said without his mentor's reassurance and confidence he would have doubted himself and what he was doing. Instead, he said, "I had somebody there that was going to encourage me and tell me, 'yes, you are doing this right.'"

Isaac said he was "pretty head strong" and believed he was where he should be, even given the challenges that a first year faces. However, he discovered that his challenges were greater during his second and third years. He teaches band and his enrollment numbers were going down and so his confidence as a teacher began to wane. During his second and third years, he was glad to have a mentor to talk to and a mentor who reassured him that he was doing a good job.

Ester's mentor helped her develop confidence as a teacher by requiring evidence she was doing the things they had discussed. "Whatever she suggest[ed] she [had] to see back. So, if she asked me to write something up I have to write it up. She had to see my lesson plans." Ester expressed that being held accountable for her development gave her confidence as an educator.

The strengthening of Jack's confidence as a teacher was the beneficial byproduct of going through peer coaching training with his mentor. After completing the training, they decided that peer coaching would be a great way to go through the mentorship for the rest of the year. According to Jack, because of peer coaching, the mentorship just took care of itself. Later he explained he was comfortable with his mentor coming in to observe him and give him feedback because of what they had already gone through together. He was also aware of how his peer coaching mentorship experience increased his confidence. He believes that a mentor can give a novice teacher "all sorts of

confidence.”

Lori said that it was evident that her mentor, particularly during her first year, inspired her with confidence and reassurance to continue teaching, and to progress in the profession. She said,

I remembered wondering a lot my first year if I was doing any good, you know... I don't know if I'm doing this right, I don't know if I'm doing any good; and so to have her come and say, 'you're doing a good job,' and give me specifics of, you know, 'you're doing this well, and this well, and this well.' And then also give me some things that I could work on...were very important to me.

Mary's confidence grew as her mentor helped her improve in her content knowledge and with her teaching skills. She was grateful he was always there to help her know what to teach and to provide her with ideas on how to best teach it. When asked specifically if the mentorship experience impacted her development as a teacher and helped her build confidence, Mary said,

It did. Mainly I think because it did help me get, and figure out quicker on anything that I wasn't sure on, so I wasn't having to spend all the time worrying about something that I was struggling with. I could get past it quickly and figure it out and then just keep focusing on new things.

Paula received strong support from her mentor while she pursued an additional teaching endorsement. The mentor wanted her to grow professionally and insisted that Paula's schedule not change while she went back to school for her Level 4 math certification. Paula said, “She has really always had my back.” Such support and loyalty increased Paula's confidence as an educator. Sarah also attributes part of her confidence to her mentor who always watched out for her. For example, during her first year when she was staying after school late the mentor talked to her about it. Sarah confided in her about the difficulties of being a new teacher. The mentor was able to help by opening her

files and giving Sarah additional resources for curriculum development and teaching strategies. Having that support and additional resource increased her confidence. She indicated that feeling valued by her mentor, the school, and even the district inspired her to a greater level of confidence and professional development.

Quinton's mentorship relationship also helped him to build confidence. Quinton was a former student of his mentor, so he was somewhat intimidated by him and was hesitant to approach him. However, Quinton did indicate that his mentor inspired confidence in him with simple passing comments like, "you're doing a good job." He explained that as a former student to his mentor he knew the difficulty level of his courses and so having successfully adapted and incorporated some of his mentor's assignments gave him confidence in his abilities. His mentor was also a Utah Teacher of the Year recipient. He said, "Just having that influence and having it validated by the state and the nation and all those other places and people...has helped me become what I am."

Theme 3: Getting Along

From a simple majority of participants, another theme emerged as to why the mentorship was beneficial. The theme is simply the mentorship was beneficial because the mentee got along with the mentor.

Anne's mentor for her first 2 years turned out to be someone she already knew.

She said her mentorship

...was a wonderful situation in the sense that the person that mentored me was my best, kind of in a sense a best friend. She was 40 and I was 20 when we graduated from college. And then I got hired and she was 60 and I was 40. And so it was

kind of fun to work with her.

Anne had the benefit of already knowing and having an amicable relationship with the person who was assigned as her mentor. Consequently, the mentorship experience went well and Anne felt comfortable talking to and discussing problems with her mentor. Unfortunately, after 2 years her mentor retired and Anne was assigned a new mentor her third year of whom she said, "I didn't get along with at all." This theme did not necessarily emerge from stories like Anne's; however, her story of getting along with one mentor and not the other demonstrates how getting along was an integral part of Anne's successful mentorship experience.

After talking with Cory, it was evident that his mentorship was not just beneficial because his mentor was knowledgeable in the content area or experienced with teaching strategies, but also because his mentor "wasn't pushy at all." Cory said his mentor had an open door policy. He told Cory "if you don't need to meet with me, don't meet with me...if you have a question I'm always here, my door is always open for you." Cory explained that because he did get along with his mentor he "actually asked him to come in and tell [him] what [he] was doing wrong, or what he thought [he] could do." This actually led to some team teaching experiences between Cory and his mentor which not only helped Cory's professional development, but also transformed their mentorship into a friendship.

Doug's first mentor was assigned to him for only about 2 weeks before he was assigned a different mentor. His first mentor could not complete the mentor training sessions and so he was replaced. Doug was grateful because he said he did not get along

with his first mentor. He said his new mentor was somebody with whom he got along, somebody with whom he felt comfortable. This open and friendly relationship was what made Doug's mentorship a "good experience."

Ester had a difficult first year. Her department head referred to her as a "long term sub" and she was not assigned an official mentor that year. She said about half way through her first year a fellow teacher helped her complete the EYE requirements for her first year. Fortunately, she was assigned an official mentor her second and third years. These 2 years were "invaluable" in helping Ester transition from novice to experienced teacher; more importantly the mentorship developed into a friendly, collegial relationship. Ester said she still talks a lot with her former mentor about everything from student discipline to administrative issues.

Gretchen had the same mentor for the duration of the mentorship. About the mentor and the mentorship experience she said,

She's a very motherly person so she just took me under her wing, and she's the department chair and it is just her and I. ...we just talk to each other every single day, 'cause she is right next door to me.

She compared her experience with that of one of her fellow teachers. Gretchen said her mentor was always there for her and they became friends. On the other hand, her friend only had two or three visits from his mentor the entire year.

Howard described his mentor as "phenomenal." He talked about how his mentor met regularly with him and kept him informed of school policies, practices, and activities. Notably, what he emphasized more than once was that she was always there for him, especially if he had a bad day. He indicated she would just listen and help out. He stated

she was “there through everything that happened for 3 years. If something bad happened or something good happened, she was there making sure things were going well for [me].”

Jack entered the teaching profession a little later than most novice teachers and so he came with previous experience as a businessman, a coach, and a father who had already raised high school age children. However, he and his mentor developed not only a collegial relationship, but also a collaborative relationship. They attended peer coaching training and for the remainder of his first year they practiced peer coaching. This took care of the mentorship, and it facilitated a collaborative relationship. After their training together and the peer coaching was under way, Jack reminisced:

I would come and observe her and she would give me some things to watch for and help her with and then it would work the other way around; she would come in to my class. So it wasn't just her monitoring what I'm doing. This worked really well. It probably did more for me than anything. It was a great mentorship. And we became good friends, and we still do peer coaching every now and then.

Paula talked a lot about how fabulous her mentor was. She mentioned how her mentor helped her with student discipline problems, how she always remained positive, and how she was able to quell her concerns about what she saw as administrative interference. She said because her classroom was right next to her mentor's they talked almost daily. The mentorship was collegial and it did evolve into a collaborative relationship. Paula explained that in 2007 their department received all new texts, so all the teachers had to build a completely new set of assignments and activities centered on those texts. Describing that event in terms of her mentorship experience, she said,

It was really great, me and her. She was the only one that I was able to do this with, with Algebra 1 we split it up. And she took half the chapters and did them

and I took half the chapters, and so that was also a really nice thing.

Rita entered to teaching after working in the financial sector of the economy. She was surprised by the lack of socialization in the teaching profession, which was common place at the brokerage firm where she had worked. However, she did get along with her mentor. She said since they were always in contact a social and collegial relationship developed. When asked specifically about her mentor as a friend she said, “Yeah! She’s a colleague, she’s in my department, she’s taught my subject matter, had a classroom near mine. It led to more of a...you know our lives just kind of intertwined with other school activities.”

Sarah talked a lot about the first year of her mentorship and how beneficial it was. She remembered how grateful she was that her mentor instigated most of their conversations. Sarah thinks it is hard for a novice teacher to go to a veteran teacher and instigate conversation. Thus, it was helpful when her mentor asked things like, “What’s your biggest concern this month?” When asked if her mentorship evolved into a collegial relationship Sarah said that it had. Specifically she said, “It keeps you there because you have a personal relationship, hopefully with your mentor.”

Exceptions to the Themes

Quinton said his mentorship experience was not beneficial due mainly to the fact his mentor “didn’t want to be associated with the program.” However, his mentor’s reassurance that he was doing well and the mentor’s reputation as an excellent teacher did inspire Quinton to excel in the teaching profession. Oprah was the other participant who said her mentorship was of no benefit. She qualified her assessment by saying, “Well,

when I first started I was given a mentor; somebody who is not an English teacher. It was a math teacher who was totally disconnected from everything that I was doing (pause)... and she came with as many questions as [I] did.”

Five additional participants said the mentorship was beneficial only because of specific circumstances, or simply because one mentor was not helpful while the other was. Anne said it was the mentor her first 2 years who was helpful. Her third year she had a different mentor with whom she did not get along. Becca said, “I think having a poor mentor in, in the area of she really didn’t know what I was supposed to be doing helped me become more independent. And I got better at finding resources for myself, which has really helped, actually.” Still, Becca conceded that having a mentor facilitated social interaction with other teachers and gave her someone to whom she could vent her frustrations. Ester was not assigned an official mentor until her second year. However, she did describe the mentorship her second and third years as “invaluable.” Fran’s mentor turned out to be the same teacher who supervised her student teaching. However, for a year and a half neither Fran nor her mentor knew that he was her mentor. About him and the mentorship experience she said,

I loved him dearly, because he’s the guy I did my student teaching with, and then I was hired here. And I think he thought he’d already taught me everything (pause)...so we didn’t do a whole lot with that mentorship.

Isaac recalled it was his mentor’s last year before retirement and commented, “he had pretty much retired 5 years before.” Isaac also recalled his mentor’s first words of advice, “...just make sure you have kids do all this work for you so you don’t have to work so hard.” Isaac said his mentor “...did the minimalistic amount that he could do and he was

ready to go.” However, the next year Isaac did get a new mentor who stayed with him the next 2 years and of who he said, “As far as the actual mentoring she did a great job.”

Summary

The participants all had unique mentorship experiences; however, as they shared those experiences and as their stories began to unfold, notable themes began to emerge.

1. The mentorship was beneficial because the mentor was a source for advice and information.
2. The mentorship was beneficial because the mentee could confide in the mentor and the mentor inspired confidence in the mentee.
3. The mentorship was beneficial because the mentee got along with the mentor.

The essence of the first theme was exemplified with specific experiences, attitudes, and statements all dealing with information and advice about classroom and student management, teaching strategies and content knowledge, and logistical issues, like school policies and procedures. Some participants shared experiences that covered all the sub categories of this theme. Regardless of the nature of the advice or the information, the mentor was there to provide it, which is what ultimately accounted for the mentorship being described by the participants as a beneficial experience.

A review of the second theme highlights how the mentorship provided the mentee with a confidant and inspired the mentee with confidence. This theme was illustrated by attitudes and statements made by participants about how important it was for them to have someone to talk to, and to have someone who was vested in their success giving

them greater confidence as an educator. The mentor was a confidant, someone to whom the mentee could go to with their problems and frustrations. The mentorship provided the mentee with a safe place to express the frustrations and challenges associated with being a new teacher. Mentors also encouraged and reassured these mentees that they were progressing and developing well.

A unifying meaning of the third theme was evident in the relationship that developed between the mentor and the mentee. Though not all participants noted that they got along with their mentor, of those that did, the mentorship relationship led in many cases to a friendly, collegial relationship. Although there were only two who clearly expressed the evolution of their mentorship relationship to a collaborative relationship, many illustrated experiences and expressed sentiments as evidence that they indeed got along with their mentor, inferring the development of a friendly, collegial relationship.

The exceptions to the themes about the benefits of a mentorship are most prominently expressed by Quinton and Oprah. Quinton's mentor would have nothing to do with the EYE program. He was a mentor to Quinton simple because Quinton revered him. Oprah clearly expressed her mentorship experience as disappointing. Not only did her mentor know nothing about the EYE program, she knew nothing about Oprah's discipline, and was thus unable to help Oprah with her course content. Anne, Ester, and Isaac all had two different mentors over the duration of their 3-year mentorship. They described one of their mentorship experiences as beneficial and the other mentorship experiences as non beneficial. Although Becca did not describe her mentorship as

beneficial, she eventually expressed that a mentorship has a greater potential of being a beneficial experience than any other EYE program requirement. Fran also did not describe her mentorship as beneficial, but always spoke highly of her mentor.

CHAPTER VI

PARTICIPANT PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE EYE PROGRAM

The guiding research question for this study was “how do novice secondary teachers experience the mentorship requirement of the EYE Program?” However, to ensure rich and thick descriptions additional follow-up questions were asked from the sample interview questions document (see Appendix C). Answers to those follow-up questions produced an array of unanticipated data. Although the information gleaned goes beyond the mentorship experience it does fall within in the parameters of the EYE program and provides a more “holistic picture” (Creswell, 1998, p. 15) of the how the teachers highlighted in this study experienced the 3-year induction and mentoring program. Creswell defined qualitative research as a process of inquiry “that explore[s] a social of human problem [where] the researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (p. 15). Since qualitative research allows for such fluidity, the additional information about the EYE program gleaned during the interview process is analyzed and discussed here providing a more detailed illustration of what participants experienced during their 3-year induction and mentoring process.

At the beginning of each interview participants were asked what they knew or remembered about the EYE program. Generally, the first response was that they remembered the program required a 3-year mentorship. Next, most participants talked about the portfolio requirement followed by comments about the requirement to pass the Praxis II—Principles of Learning and Teaching exam. As noted earlier, the EYE program

as defined by Utah Administrative Code R277-522 requires new teachers to complete a portfolio, to pass the Praxis II test, and to successfully satisfy district/school summative evaluations twice a year for the first 3 years in order to qualify for their Level 2 License. Participants shared significant amounts of information regarding the mentorship, portfolio and Praxis II requirements. A discussion of those perceptions provides that more holistic view referred to earlier. However, only 10 participants mentioned the summative evaluation requirement, and those comments were insubstantial and will not be discussed.

Relevant Literature

Portfolios

Literature relevant to the issue of mentoring has already been discuss; however, in an effort to better understand and frame participant perceptions about the portfolio and the Praxis, a limited review of related literature is appropriate. Imhof and Picard (2009) described a portfolio as “a focused collection of diverse documents and artifacts that are apt to reflect a person’s learning process” (p. 149). Mansvelder-Longayroux, Beijaard, Verloop, and Vermunt (2007) defined a portfolio as “a dossier in which individual teachers reflect on themselves as teachers and on their own functioning and development” (p. 127). Kramer (2007) simply said a portfolio was “nothing more than your current life on paper, in a notebook with detail on what you do every day” (p. 66).

Atinello, Lare, and Waters (2006) explained, “the portfolio has gained acceptance with educators as a means for a more authentic assessment of teacher growth and an

extension of their professional development” (p. 133). Mansvelder-Longayroux and colleagues (2007) reported the intended purpose of a portfolio is to illustrate a teacher’s “practical knowledge” and encourage improved practice and professional development (p. 127). Bowers (2005) and Hill (2002) suggested that portfolios needed to be based on professional teaching standards. Both authors reference the INTASC standards, which were mentioned earlier in this study. Referring to the EYE program requirements, Utah Administrative Code R277-522 explains that a portfolio

[S]hall be based upon INTASC principles; and may: (a) include teaching artifacts; (b) included notations explaining the artifacts; and (c) include a reflection and self-assessment of his or her own practice; and, (d) be interpreted broadly to include the employing school district’s requirement of samples of the first year teaching experience.

In addition to what the state code lists the USOE (2006b) stated that portfolios should “be a vehicle for collaboration with the mentor. Provide evidence of professional growth... [and] provide evidence of content knowledge and pedagogy” (p. 7).

Praxis

Watras (2003) recounted that during the first half of the twentieth century, educators looked to business and industry for ideas and models to improve the American public school system. The later part of the twentieth century business and industry attempted to improve public schools by imposing military and industrial performance methods on educational institutions. That effort came in the form of tests “that the developers claimed would enable state departments of education to determine whether candidates for teaching had the necessary skills to help children master academic materials” (p. 72). The most popular “tests” are the Professional Assessments for

Beginning Teachers examinations series, better known as Praxis. Praxis exams are created and administered through the Educational Testing Service (ETS). Approximately 40 states and “several hundred” colleges and universities require passage of the Praxis for either graduation or teacher licensure (Brown, Brown, & Brown, 2008, p. 31). According to the Educational Testing Service (n.d.), the Praxis series assessments “measure basic academic skills...[and] general and subject-specific knowledge and teaching skills.” Rule R77-522 requires “passage of a pedagogical examination.” Specifically, the code reads that beginning teachers must take the Praxis II-Principles of Learning and Teaching, which “(a) shall be administered by ETS; (b)...[and] the beginning teacher shall earn a qualifying score of at least 160; (c) [and the exam] may be taken successive times.”

Data Analysis

From these data, three participant perceptions have emerged about the EYE program with respect to participants’ attitudes regarding the mentorship requirement, the portfolio requirement, and passage of the Praxis II requirement.

1. The mentorship requirement was the most, if not the only, beneficial aspect of the EYE program.
2. The portfolio requirement of the EYE was not clearly outlined. It was just busy work, just one more hoop to jump through.
3. The requirement to take and pass the Praxis II exam was a negative experience and nonessential in achieving success in the education profession.

Perception 1: The Mentorship as Part of the EYE Program

This study has already established and discussed the benefit of the mentorship experience through three emergent themes. Here participant perceptions are framed simply as a requirement of the EYE program and not as a specific research issue. Therefore, though some of the information shared is somewhat redundant, a brief overview of comments and sentiments show support for this perception is provided.

Anne said the mentorship was “the only thing that helped me transition” from new teacher to experienced teacher. She commented on how her mentor was “in a sense, a best friend...and it was kind of fun to work with her...[since] our classrooms [were] connected...I could walk over there with any trouble and say, ‘What do I do?’” Gretchen stated that the mentorship was beneficial because her mentor “was right next door to me...[and] I could go to her for anything, or just talk to her.” Paula described her mentorship as “fabulous.” She explained, “My first year [my mentor] was just across the hall and then the next year...I moved right next to her.”

Howard said his mentor “was phenomenal.” He qualified this by stating, “If [I] had a bad day, you know which happens as teachers, especially in your first year, she was just there to listen and help out, which I thought was...a big help to me.” About his mentor his second and third years, Isaac said, “as far as the actual mentoring she did a great job...we’d sit and I’d bring her my problems and we could talk [them].”

Cory said the mentorship experience “helped me a ton. So I would recommend it to anybody, to be honest with you.” His mentor shared with him different techniques and strategies that had worked for him “to get [high school] kids to grasp onto different

things.” Jack and his mentor attended training and then practiced peer coaching. His mentor relationship was such that when he was “not always successful” in presenting a particular concept, he was able to receive constructive feedback from his mentor. He said, “It was a great mentorship. And we became good friends, and we still do some peer coaching every now and then.” Kevin said he “had an exceptional mentor...she did a really good job. She would come and observe and her feedback was really precise and useful.... She did a really good job of focusing my teaching on objectives.”

Doug’s first year he met with his mentor every Friday during lunch. He said, “We would discuss issues and different things to help with the teaching process, dealing with students, any problems.” Lori said, “having the mentor available for help..., that was a really good thing.” Sarah stated her first year mentorship “was the most helpful year.” Her mentor would come to her and ask her, “What’s your biggest concern this month?”

Ester described the mentorship experience her second and third years as “invaluable.” In fact, she even stated later “I felt like I needed a mentorship one more year because that weekly [meeting is where] you could grasp a problem and take care of it and move on by the next week.” When asked about the mentorship requirement Mary said, “The mentorship my first years went really well.” Her mentor taught the same courses and was able to help her. She explained that further by stating,

They teach the curriculum in a different order, so I was confused in and of itself on how and what I was teaching. And he did a very good job of helping me know the order, giving me ideas of how much to teach the different things that I was teaching and the program that I was going to be using.

Rita and Nancy indicated the mentorship requirement was the most important element of the EYE program. Rita said her mentorship “went really well,” and that it was

nice to have “our classrooms pretty close together.” Nancy’s first year she shared a classroom with her mentor. She explained, “having him in close proximity was something that I really remember being helpful.”

The remaining four participants who indicated their mentorship experiences were not beneficial did, after some reflection, conclude they could see how a mentorship could have benefited them, and also how it would probably benefit other novice teachers. Their sentiments about mentoring give strength to the theme that the mentorship is the most, if not the only beneficial part of the EYE program. For instance, Becca was frustrated with the requirement because her mentor did not know anything about the EYE program, still said she “really like[ed] the idea of a mentor.” Fran’s mentor did not do much in terms of mentoring, arguing he had already done everything he could for her when he supervised her student teaching. However, she admitted that as a new teacher, she did not know everything and she had to go to others in her department for help. She acknowledged that having an experienced teacher as a mentor would be beneficial in helping a beginning teacher. Oprah described her mentorship experience as “pointless.” However, she expressed that she wished her experience had been “more meaningful.” In fact, on two separate occasions she said the mentorship requirement was “a great idea.” Quinton explained the idea that the entire EYE program was a waste trickled down from the administration, to his mentor, and ultimately to him. Although Quinton joined in poking fun at the EYE program, which his administration and “mentor” did not value, he recognized that, as a novice teacher, he was often in “survival mode” those first 3 years and he could have benefitted from a mentor.

The perception that the mentorship was the most beneficial requirement of the EYE program was associated with the emerging themes regarding the benefits of the mentorship experience. Though redundant, it was discussed here because of how it was framed as simply another EYE program requirement and not as a specific research issue.

Perception 2: The Portfolio

The rich and detailed data regarding the portfolio requirement of the EYE program was unexpected. It is discussed here because it provides a more holistic view of the overall induction and mentor experience. The perception is that the portfolio requirement of the EYE program was not explained well. It was essentially just busy work, just another hoop a novice teacher had to jump through. Following are participant comments and sentiments that give substantiate this perception.

Anne said the portfolio “was just busy work to me.” The annoyance she felt having to do the portfolio was almost palpable when she explained that for part of it she had taken lesson plans, which she had done 20 years earlier and used them in her EYE portfolio. Later she stated, “It isn’t making us more highly qualified, it isn’t making us better teachers...having to make portfolios.” Fran expressed similar sentiments when she said, “that portfolio...I’ll be honest with you; it seemed like just one more thing you had to do. I didn’t think it was all that helpful.” She thinks new teachers just fake their way through the reflections portion of the portfolio by simply writing down what they think their mentors or their administrators want to hear. She went on to say, “I think the mentor should be there but to have to do all these portfolios and crap, I think that’s...I’m telling you honestly, I think that’s nonsense.”

Paula is a math teacher who found writing reflection papers for her portfolio very difficult. She is not against reflection, in fact, she said, “I reflect pretty much on everything I do...I have a whole stack of sticky notes of stuff I want to change for next year.” About this requirement, Paula said, “I felt like I could have been doing a lot more productive things with my time than writing up all those reflections.” What further frustrated her about this requirement was when she turned it in to her principal.

My principal, no offense to him, great guy but I don't think he even opened it up. He just signed it off saying, 'Good job, you did it.' I think he took it to the district and they're like, 'Oh, great job.' I highly doubt anybody opened it up and looked at it.

Quinton, like Paula, said reflection, as an educator, is important but “it comes down to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.” Since the portfolio is part of the mandated EYE program, then “it was kind of a last minute thing and one of the teachers always just said ‘I need to work on classroom management.’” Therefore, from Quinton’s experience “it was treated just like another hoop you had to jump through.” Of his own portfolio he said, “I still have my portfolio.... I haven't looked at it since then.”

Nancy said her college professors had her put all sorts of things in her portfolio and yet when she turned it in to her superintendent with things she had added from her first year he told her it was too much and to scale it down. She later asked him about the “leaner” portfolio she had turned in. She said, “He didn't say much, he just said, ‘Oh, I got your portfolio, I've reviewed it and I am recommending to the state that you move on to Level 2.’”

Becca was frustrated by the portfolio requirement because of the lack of direction from her mentor about what it should include and because of her administration's lack of

knowledge that it was even a requirement that new teachers had to complete in order to earn a Level 2 License. When she finally turned the portfolio in to her principal he said, “Oh, you have a portfolio? That looks like a good portfolio.” Her shock still resonated when she remarked,

[He] just signed it off; [he] didn’t even look through it. So I’d spent 3 years collecting all this data and compiling this huge thing and I was so stressed about it and [he] didn’t even know that I needed one.

Isaac’s frustration with the portfolio requirement matches Becca’s, except neither his mentor, nor his administration knew about the portfolio. Isaac admitted he also forgot about it. He said,

My portfolio (pause)...it was a piece of poop. I threw it together in about two minutes at the very last minute. In fact, I threw it together my third year, because we just forgot it, we missed it. My principal didn’t follow up with me in the second year. In fact, I had to hand deliver the principal’s signature to the State Office of Education the day that it would have been due, or the next day I wouldn’t have been able to get my second level.

Lori said that she thinks she understands that the purpose of the portfolio is to “try and get people to show that they’re, you know progressing and trying to improve and stuff.” However, she also said, “[I] didn’t like the portfolio at all... I felt like it was just too overwhelming being a new teacher.” Kevin also mentioned he thinks he understands the purpose of the portfolio; however,

It wasn’t helpful, it was a hoop. I did it and I got a good score on it, but it didn’t make my teaching any better. It was just extra time I had to put in...and I understand that they need to have some kind of (pause)...something to look at as evidence in order to justify whatever, but in all reality, and that isn’t unique to me, everyone (pause)...we all think it’s just a hoop.

Howard first described the portfolio requirement as positive. He said, “[My] district did a good job with the portfolios...it is good to have a portfolio; I haven’t used it

since, but I think it helps to...kind of organize your thoughts, or organize what [I] did over the 3 years.” However, later he said the portfolio was “a little bit strenuous,” and the administration was “a little bit over the top sometimes on making sure that [I]...put everything in the portfolio.” By the time Howard was done analyzing his experience with the portfolio, he declared, “It was the biggest pain to me...just putting everything together; and almost (pause)...almost busy work type.”

Rita was warned by her college professors that the portfolio requirement could be a big stressor but not to stress about it because she wouldn't have to do it until her second year. She said her district did try to limit the stress of completing the portfolio requirement by linking it to JPAS—their own in-district induction and evaluation system. However, it was something Rita said was a waste of time.

I wasn't happy with it. I didn't want to do it. I felt like when I was doing... my student teaching and I had to prove that I could teach. So I felt like I'd already jumped through the hoops to show that.

She further described her frustration with the portfolio by explaining it did not matter what was in the portfolio because teachers are not held accountable for what is in it.

I could sit in my classroom and show videos and do absolutely nothing, but have this cute little portfolio. It just seemed like another thing...it's like, why are you doing this? I mean if you really want to put money into it and go into a classroom and see if the teacher is doing a really good job, you don't just randomly say, ‘Oh, did you put this together? Oh, okay, let's see (pause)...looks good, bye.’

Oprah's annoyance with the portfolio requirement began in college when she first learned it was something she would have to do during her provisional licensure period, and yet she was given no details or even examples of what a portfolio should look like. After she was hired, she and the other new teachers were told,

Go find the nine INTASC standards and build [the portfolio] around that. So there were no models for us at all, there was no rubric, no kind of grading—nothing. It was just, ‘Have at it.’ So now mine is a model, but I don’t even know if it’s a good one.

Oprah said even though her portfolio was being used as a model, the new teachers she met this past year appeared to be as clueless about the portfolio as she had been. She acknowledged that being in the first cohort of novice teachers required to complete the EYE program explains, though does not justify, some of the failings and vagueness of the program. Unfortunately, after 5 years of implementation the portfolio requirement of the EYE program remains vague. She said of the new teachers in her school, “They didn’t know how to put it together or what was expected of the portfolio. So I’m not sure if there is still anything out there that states it needs to look this or this is... They’re totally clueless.”

Like Oprah, Mary struggled with the portfolio. She said, “It isn’t very outlined on exactly what is supposed to be in that portfolio, so nobody really knows exactly what they are doing.” She also noted from her experience “some people [had] to put in a lot more effort and time into the portfolio than others, depending on what [was] required at their location.” However, in the end, Mary said though “it was a little confusing... it wasn’t bad.”

Jack entered the education profession after his own children were gone and with prior experience as a high school coach and a small business owner. He felt like most of the induction process was geared more towards “20 year olds” who did not have much life experience. Consequently, Jack was extremely busy his first 3 years with coaching and pursuing additional educational endorsements. Though the district and the school

understood his situation, he was still required to complete a portfolio. His one comment about the portfolio was, “It was pretty demanding to do that on top of teaching.”

Cory talked about having to collect “different ways of teaching, different styles... different learning aspects, or examples” to put in his portfolio. He continued, “And I would collect everything I could and I would take what I thought would fit my teaching style and I would use it. And it helped me a ton, to be honest with you.” In this practical sense the portfolio experience was helpful to Cory and goes contrary to the perception discussed. He even mentioned he has kept his because

It is always nice to pull out your portfolio, especially when your principal wants to see something you’ve been doing because sometimes our principal says, ‘Okay we have an interview next week bring in something you are doing in your class.’

However, he said once he turned the portfolio in to his mentor, his mentor just forwarded it on to someone else. He said,

As far as the portfolio and having to turn it in and get signatures, I mean that you know of course that doesn’t really do much for you as far as, I guess other than you have to do it and collect the stuff.

There are a few participants whose experience runs counter to those perceptions reviewed above. Doug’s explained that many of the items required for the portfolio were similar to items required for the JPAS evaluation system. He observed,

And once I had my JPAS over he (my mentor) told me to just keep hold of that stuff because I could use it for the portfolio part of it. So that kind of helped, otherwise I would have been scrambling to do more work when it had already been done; well, a lot of it was already done, I just had to add on a few things.

Gretchen’s experience completing the portfolio was similar to Doug’s. She agreed that the,

JPAS helped with the EYE portfolio because (pause)...we had to put stuff

together anyway. And so doing your portfolio was a piece of cake 'cause I was like, oh, I already have this stuff and I just put it all together again. So having that was easier for me to do.

Gretchen said “some teachers I’ve heard complain [the portfolio] is just another thing to do.” However, her experience was positive. After she had put her portfolio together and looked at it she said, “I do assess this, and I do different learning styles, and I do this for the other students. And so you can see personally what you do.”

Sarah said because of the support and the accountability she had completing the portfolio she “had a really good experience.” Similar to Gretchen, she knows other teachers have had a bad experience with it. She surmised the bad experience others have had stems from the change in personnel at the district level. When she completed the portfolio, the district person overseeing portfolios went through it with her and held her accountable for what she had done. She said, “I felt very accountable for what I did because I had to show that portfolio and she looked at it... [It] was helpful because you are tracking your own progress, you’re held accountable for something by someone else.” Unfortunately, as far as she knows the new person in charge of the portfolio does not even look at it; she simply says, “Okay, here check.” Ester also talked accountability. She believes it is important that “teachers should be held as accountable as the students.” Without mentioning the portfolio by name, she pointed out her mentor wanted “documentation on everything.” She said when her mentor suggested something, “she wanted proof...she had to see...lesson plans” to know Ester had indeed followed through with her suggestions. Ester concluded, “And I still have it all—everything. And I have gone back this year, two times to make sure; you know that I did this year what I had

done previously on rules and behavioral issues.”

Perception 3: The Praxis II

The third perception to surface from the additional data deals with the frustration of having to take and pass the Praxis II exam in order to earn a Level 2 License. Besides being a licensure advancement requirement the stated purpose of the Praxis II—Principles of Learning and Teaching test is to assess “a teacher’s understanding of such areas as human growth and development, classroom management, instructional design and delivery techniques, and evaluation and assessment” (USOE, 2006b, p. 8). The Praxis exam referred to in this study is the one specific to the preparation and the assignment of educators at the secondary level. The prominent perception discussed is the negative experience of taking the Praxis. The general sentiments and expressions clearly indicate that the exam did nothing to improve their practice or impact their professional development.

At the beginning of the interview, Becca was asked what she remembered about the EYE program and she quickly mentioned all four of the requirements: the mentorship, the Praxis II, the portfolio, and the administrative evaluations. Towards the end of the interview Becca reviewed what she thought was good and what she thought was bad about the EYE program. She though the Praxis II was bad. She stated,

I thought the Praxis was ridiculous, honestly. A lot of questions on it were related to legal cases back in the 50s and 60s when I took it. And I just didn’t really see how that would affect my (pause)...like knowing the names and dates of the cases affect my ability to teach.

Doug had similar things to say about the Praxis II. He exclaimed, “I don’t see

how taking that test shows that you are a better teacher or not.” He also stated he thought the Praxis II should be done away with as part of the EYE program. It reminded him of being in school again, and he thought he was done with that part of his life.

I figured if I go to an institution that the state says, okay, they have been accredited by the state and they are teaching what they should be, why do I have to go and take another test on that?! I don't know? It just frustrated me. I was upset. I was mad.

Doug was further put off because the test was timed. There were only 35 questions “but each question asked you for about three different parts to the question. So there is really no way to finish it.” He also said it was expensive and if you requested to alter the process or location in any way there were even more fees. The only reimbursement, which his school district provided, was for the cost for the test when he passed it.

Besides saying she “hated” the Praxis II, Ester also complained about the expense. According to her, it cost \$125 to take the test. She missed passing it the first time by one point. She missed passing the test the second time and paid \$300 to have her score contested. She argued that there was a lot of talking and moving by others who were taking the test, and she had to change seats three times to avoid the distractions. She was unsuccessful in contesting the results and had to take the test again. The third time she passed it by doing what she has her students do: she practiced taking tests. Regardless, she saw the Praxis II as “very arbitrary [with] very ambiguous questions.” She said, “I understand high school kids’ dilemmas a lot more with CRTs and UBCSTs because certain cultures do not answer questions or even understand the questions the same way other people might.”

After Howard was hired, he was surprised to learn he had to take and pass the

Praxis II, before he could receive his Level 2 License. He said as a preservice teacher he was never told about the Praxis requirement. He waited until his third year to take the test and expressed

I think [waiting] helped me because I had been in those situations, 'cause on the Praxis tests they ask questions about what would you do if you were in this situation. Well, I've already been there and done that; whereas I think people taking it before they go on to teaching it's all (pause)... what I think I would do.

Although he passed the Praxis II test, his relief was evident when he said “Who likes tests?!”

Lori's experience with and attitude towards taking the Praxis were similar to Howard's. When asked about it she sardonically exclaimed “How could I forget?!” Then she simply said, “It was a stressful experience.” Gretchen also recalled being stressed and “worried about it.” She said, “I had a course that helped me with it, to study it.” Moreover, with detectable relief she said, “I am glad I passed it the first time.” As with all aspects of the EYE program, Oprah's frustrations with the Praxis II were palpable. She was dumbfounded that someone who had never taken the Praxis II was assigned to talk to her and other novice teachers about the exam.

She came with as many questions as we did. So that was a little bit pointless to me. It could have been better if they had brought someone who had taken it or someone who was more connected and that worked more closely with that process.

Paula's statement about the Praxis II that “you have to answer so much in so little of a time period,” denoted it was a stressful experience for her. She did concede that there is a “point behind testing...to make sure that teachers understand basic rules.” However, she questioned the validity of the exam. Apparently, there were some child and brain

development type questions on her exam, because she argued that if the state really believed it was important to know how the teenage brain learns then why does the state support an education schedule contrary to the research on teenage brains. According to Paula, “We’re catching [teenagers] at the worst time of the day. Their brains don’t wake up until 9:00 am. So basically my first period is a wash every day.” In the end, she said she “learned better from experience [than from] taking a test.”

Quinton explained that he is not a fan of standardized testing. He said, “I don’t like the ACT. I don’t like the Praxis. It’s right in there with that. Without actually explaining the purpose of the Praxis II, he confessed, “I understand what they’re trying to do, but I don’t know that multiple choice guessing is the best way to go about it.” Ironically, the past summer he worked for and graded tests for ETS. However, he remarked, “Correcting tests with ETS this summer with the AP [I] felt myself part of the Satan.”

Again, without qualifying the actual purpose of the Praxis II, Isaac stated “I understand what they are trying to get at it, but it doesn’t do a very good job...it’s a bad test. It’s just bad.” Isaac did describe how bad of a test it was in the strongest language used by any of the participants:

It is the worst test I have taken in my life. I walked away from that test thinking if this is what it takes to be a good teacher, I suck. I went out horribly depressed. I walked away thinking I am a horrible teacher and I still think I passed the test. There is something wrong with a test that you can pass that you walk away from feeling like I did. I was ready to walk away from the profession because I took that test. I mean when I took it, I was thinking my entire career hinges on this little piece of paper; that if I don’t pass this it is somehow telling me that I am a horrible teacher.

Although, Anne and Kevin’s personal experiences with the Praxis II stand in

contrast to those just mentioned, their attitudes do not. Anne took the pilot Praxis for Family Consumer Sciences, but only as a case study, which meant she did not have to pass it. She did have to take and pass the Praxis II for teachers in secondary education. She said she can “appreciate” the test because “it could maybe weed out bad teachers.” However, when she spoke about her husband’s experience with the Praxis, she was upset. He is in special education and he has yet to receive his Level 2 License because he has not taken the three Praxis tests required for a Level 2 License in Special Education. After a few more details about her husband’s plight and the \$80 price tag for each test, she said, “the Praxis isn’t making us more highly qualified; it isn’t making us better teachers; it is giving us a bigger work load when we could be focusing on being teachers instead of having to study for tests.”

For Kevin, the Praxis II was “really easy.” He said he “aced it.” He explained that the test was easy for him because he was already familiar with many of the theorists and methodologies on the test. He said he teaches some of those same things in one of the units he covers in his curriculum. He was also on the Utah State Office of Education committee that wrote a Praxis-like test for psychology teachers. However, he did state he knew other teachers who struggled with the exam. They told him “it felt kind of disconnected from what they actually do in the classroom.” He conceded one possible solution to the discrepancy teachers feel is the “Praxis itself [could] be tweaked.”

Fran, who was not fond of all the extra work that the EYE program required of new teachers, simply acknowledged she had taken the Praxis II. Her dislike for it registered when she commented on how another teacher in her building did not pass it

until the third time, and yet Fran referred to her as, “a very competent teacher.”

Jack’s sense of relief for having gotten the Praxis out of the way early on was noticeable. He said, “I just took the Praxis right after I finished college, right after graduation; I just wanted to get that done.” Nancy simply said, “The Praxis was okay.” However, she was not enthused to find out there is another Praxis exam she must take to be considered highly qualified in her discipline. “They’ve come out and said that I have to go back and take another one...for highly qualified stuff for special ed.”

The majority of comments and sentiments from the participants substantiated the perception that taking the Praxis II was a negative experience, and that it did not improve their practice or positively impacted their professional development. Even the 2 participants, whose practical experience with the Praxis II was positive, eventually expressed negative sentiments about the test. In addition, Jack and Nancy’s experience even appeared to be laced with a certain degree of disdain for the Praxis II. Although perceptions ranged from hate to indifference, for a majority of the participants in this study, the Praxis II was ineffectual in helping them improve their practice or transitioning in becoming a more experienced teacher.

Summary

Although the focus of this study was the mentorship experience of novice secondary teachers, the perceptions discussed here provide a more comprehensive and holistic picture of how participants in this study experienced the EYE program

The first perception is filled with redundancies connected to the three emergent

themes that make up the focus of this study. However, here the mentorship is framed as simply a requirement of the EYE program with the data illustrating participant perceptions of that requirement. Most perceived the mentorship was the most beneficial element of the EYE program. And eventually all participants expressed in words or other sentiments that a mentorship for beginning teachers is the most important part, if not the only important part of the EYE program.

The data regarding the portfolio requirement was included because it provides a clearer picture of what novice teachers have to experience in completing Utah's EYE program. There were a few participants who described their portfolio experience as positive; however, the overall perception was that the portfolio was a waste of time, or just another hoop to jump through. Imhof and Picard (2009), and Attinello and colleagues (2006), when questioning teachers about the portfolio, found that most perceived the process as time-consuming. Denison (2008), who studied the perceived value of teacher portfolios in the EYE program, stated, "the most overpowering concern connected to the teacher portfolio and the basics of the portfolio process was time" (p. 86). In Attinello and colleagues study, participants "complained about the lack of feedback from their mentors and supervisors" (p. 152) regarding their portfolios. Participants in the study conducted by Mansvelder-Longayroux and colleagues (2007) expressed sentiments similar to those in this study that the portfolios is only worthwhile if seen by others who can hold teachers accountable for what is contained in the portfolio. Finally, Bowers (2005) brought up the issue of providing a portfolio template for new teachers which was a concern that some of the participants in this study voiced.

The final perception revealed from the additional information was that taking the Praxis II test was a negative experience that did nothing to improve teacher practice. Brown et al. (2008) explained that many in the education system see the Praxis exams “unfair and inadequate (not reliable and not valid) as a tool for culling teacher candidates” (p. 32). Watras (2003) and Watanabe (2008) questioned the reliability and validity issue of the Praxis, in terms of the culturally discriminating nature of it, particularly on the part of the indigenous peoples of the United States. Although passing the Praxis II is necessary for a Level 1 educator to become a Level 2 educator in the state of Utah, participants in this study described the test and their experience taking it with adjectives like “stressful,” “costly,” “redundant,” “ridiculous,” “disconnected,” and just plain “terrible.”

CHAPTER VII

RESEARCH BENEFITS

This study recognized the staggering projection the United States will soon need over two million new teachers. Moir and Gless (2008) of The New Teacher Center in Santa Cruz, California, said those two million new teachers might be needed as early as 2010. This figure is more daunting when coupled with the high attrition rate of beginning teachers. First to fifth year teachers continue to leave the profession at a rate of 30% to 50% (Darling-Hammond, 2000, 2003; Dyal & Sewell, 2002; Ingersoll, 2001; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Since the 1980s, the predicted teacher shortage and statistically proven high attrition rates of new teachers have incited the creation of induction and mentoring programs across the nation (Feiman-Nemser, 1996). Depending on the state, district, or school, induction and mentoring programs vary widely, as do the successes and failures of those programs; however, the prevalence of said programs is becoming commonplace.

Utah's attrition rate for novice teachers is on par with the national average. Due to increased enrollment and continued attrition, Eastmond et al. (2005a) suggested Utah "may need over 44,000 new educators in the next 10 years." Like other states, Utah is concerned about high attrition, teacher shortages, and also about ensuring highly qualified teachers are in the classroom. Sperry (2007) identified Utah's problem as "a serious and growing gap between the number of teachers being produced and the number of teachers Utah public school districts need to hire" (p. 6). The Utah Foundation (2007) reported, "policy makers are especially concerned by the very high rate of attrition among the newest teachers...[and] that nearly half of new teachers leave teaching within their

first 5 years” (p. 1). The Utah Foundation declared that mentoring programs are the most desirable remedy to help curb the high attrition rate of new teachers.

As a principal response to the growing challenges of training and retaining new teachers, Utah created and implemented an induction and mentoring program for new teachers—the EYE program. Utah’s EYE program went in to effect January 1, 2003. There are now three cohorts of teachers who have completed the EYE program as required by the Utah State Board of Education in order to earn their Level 2 License. This study reported on how 19 novice secondary teachers experienced the mentorship requirement of the EYE program. An open-ended emerging interview design was used with secondary follow-up questions to ensure rich and thick information. From comments and attitudes, detailed in the interviews, themes emerged that illustrate the lived mentorship experience of those that participated in this study.

Mentorship Themes

From those who reported their mentorship experience as beneficial, three themes emerged which show: (a) The mentor was a source for advice and information; (b) the mentor was a confident and instilled confidence; and (c) the mentee got along with the mentor. These themes are congruent with some of the characteristics of an effective mentorship identified in the literature review of this study.

The essence of the first theme that the mentor was a source for advice and information is embodied in participant illustrations of classroom and student management, teaching strategies and content knowledge, and logistical issues. Comments

and sentiments about classroom and student management revolved around descriptions of how mentors helped their mentees not only understand the importance of appropriate classroom and student management, but also strategies and examples of how to implement such management. Stories of mentors sharing effective teaching strategies with their mentees and providing content knowledge when possible further capture the unifying meaning of this theme. Finally, the essence of the unifying meaning of the emergent theme that the mentor was a source of information and advice is expressed in terms of advice and information regarding logistical issues such as school policies and procedures.

A mentor as a source of advice and information for the novice teachers is also supported by the literature. One of the key ingredients to an effective mentorship is that the mentor be a successful and experienced teacher (DePaul, 2000; Dyal & Sewell, 2002). In the literature, Moir (2006) claimed a mentorship is effective when the mentee is given “focused instruction” (p. 30) and that instruction is provided by a successful and an experienced teacher who is trained as a mentor. Furthermore, the Utah State Board of Education’s Rule R722-522 mandates a mentor hold at least a Level 2 License and be trained to guide and advise provisional teachers. As of January 1, 2003, those who become Level 2 educators will have to have completed the EYE program requirements, which completion supports the literature and the theme that an effective mentorship stems from an experienced and successful teacher who can provide a novice teacher with helpful advice and information (DePaul; Dyal & Sewell; Johnson et al., 2001; Moir).

The second emergent theme that a mentor is a confident and instills confidence in

a beginning teacher's ability and professional development is illustrated by participant statements and attitudes regarding the need for someone to talk to and the importance of having someone who builds up their confidence. The most common refrain was that as novice teachers many participants were grateful to have a veteran colleague they could talk to about the dynamics, frustrations, and joys of teaching. Often these conversations contained words of encouragement and reassurance, which helped to build confidence in the beginning teacher. Some participants expressed that an encouraging word, or a compliment, even in passing went a long way in sustaining and building confidence.

Dever and colleagues (2000) established that communication about frustrations and satisfactions with teaching, collegiality and collaboration, and trust are all "productive mentoring strategies" (p. 241). Productive communication is inherent in the elements of time and trust which are also identified in the literature as important ingredients to a fruitful mentorship experience. Regarding the element of time Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005) said a mentorship is effective when the mentor is "regularly available to coach and model good instruction" (p. 66). A program which encourages and fosters time for mentor and mentee to spend together has generally been identified as successful (Dyal & Sewell, 2002; Johnson et al., 2001; Monsour, 2003; Turley et al., 2006; Vierstraete, 2005).

A synonym of trust is confidence, both of which are byproducts of a mentorship where adequate time between mentor and mentee is achieved. Turley et al. (2006) found frequent interaction between mentor and mentee builds trust in the mentorship relationship. That trust, or its synonym confidence, even more than direct support, like

observing, coaching, or modeling, is often the defining element to a successful mentorship experience (Glickman et al., 2004; Johnson, 2002; Monsour, 2003).

The third theme to emerge identified the mentorship as beneficial essentially because the mentee got along with the mentor. Getting along with one's mentor is intrinsically connected to the characteristic of trust as mentioned in the literature. Johnson (2002) and Turley et al. (2006) both discuss the importance of establish trust between mentor and mentee and that one way to do that is by sharing frustrations. Dever et al. (2000) also identified trust as an essential strategy for a successful mentor-mentee experience. Getting along with one's mentor facilitates the development of a friendship relationship. Logically this theme is intrinsically connected to the characteristic of trust as mentioned earlier. Remembering how confidence is associated with trust and trust is linked to time spend together; it is merely a logical step that mentor and mentee spend time together because they get along with one another. Besides, having a colleague who is a confidant is essentially like having a friend with whom problems and personal matters are discussed. In addition, although only a simple majority of participants indicated experiences illustrative of this theme, it is relevant because of its close proximity to theme, which describes the mentor as a confidant and the literature, which discusses the importance of a trusting relationship.

EYE Program Perceptions

The secondary questions resulted in the participants going beyond simply reporting their mentorship experience. They provided an array of data that described

participant perceptions about some of the other EYE program requirements. Those perceptions were: (a) The mentorship is the most useful requirement of the EYE program; (b) the portfolio was just busy work; and (c) the Praxis II does not help new teachers become better teachers.

The unifying meaning of the emergent themes established that the mentorship experience was beneficial. Though redundant, the perception that the mentorship was the most, if not the only useful requirement of the EYE program was noted and reviewed because it provided a clearer picture of the entire EYE experience. In fact, even the participants who described their mentorships experiences as less than beneficial admitted a mentorship would probably be useful in helping a novice teacher transition to an experienced teacher. Though induction programs vary across the nation, most require novice teachers participate in some form of a mentorship (Nielson et al., 2006).

Regardless of whether novice teachers perceive the mentorship experience as beneficial, the literature concludes mentorships are important for teacher development and teacher retention (Conway, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Dever et al., 2000; Johnson, 2002; Nielson et al., 2006), and are thus likely to be a part of the experience of most, if not all beginning teachers.

The descriptions of participant perceptions about the portfolio requirement also provide a more “holistic picture” of the EYE program experience (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). Generally, participants described the portfolio requirement as a negative experience. The overriding sentiment was that it was not clearly explained. It was a waste of time, just another hoop to jump through for beginning teachers. Denison’s (2008) found the “time

requirement as a critical disadvantage of the portfolio process” (p. iv). She also found “Teachers in the study expressed concerns about the accuracy of the portfolio to measure their performance” (p. 86). Beginning teachers can easily feel overwhelmed, and the additional requirement of completing a portfolio only compounds those feeling (Weiss, 1999). The literature identified these sentiment and even connected it with the high turnover of beginning teachers (Darling-Hammond and Sykes, 2003; Fredricks, 2001; Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson, 2006). The negative experience of completing the portfolio requirement did not cause any of those who participated in this study to leave teaching; still, their attitudes and sentiments are congruent with those identified in the literature.

The data about the Praxis II showed a shared disregard for being required to take the Praxis II exam. Comments and sentiments produced the perception that the Praxis II does not help new teachers progress in the profession. Brown et al. (2008) supported this perception explaining that many in the education system view the Praxis series as an unjust and unsuitable means for selecting teacher applicants and/or measuring teacher effectiveness. Watras (2003) and Watanabe (2008) also questioned the reliability and validity of Praxis because, they say, it culturally discriminates against Native Americans. However, there is support for the Praxis. Chenoweth has (1999) argued that Praxis tests can be used as a “partial indicator of teacher quality” (p. 14). Sullivan (2001) noted there are many who support teacher licensure exams as a means of assessing the “pedagogical knowledge” of new teachers (p. 15). Brown et al. even identified the importance and popularity of the Praxis with regulatory bodies like state legislatures and state school boards as a requirement for teacher licensure and as a means of assessing teacher quality.

Still, the perception revealed in this study runs counter to the purpose of the Praxis, which is to ensure highly qualified teachers are in the classroom (USOE, 2006b). A majority of the teachers in this study explained the Praxis II did nothing to improve their practice or add to their professional development, regardless of its attachment to the label of highly qualified.

Conclusion

Through a phenomenological approach, this study has illustrated how 19 novice secondary teachers experienced the mentorship requirement of the EYE program. The essential theme to emerge was that the mentorship experience was beneficial because the mentor provided useful advice and information, the mentor acted as a confidant and instilled confidence, and the mentees got along with their mentors. In the end, this study also provided a more comprehensive view of the EYE program experience as participants also shared their perceptions regarding the portfolio and Praxis requirements of the EYE program. Essentially completing the portfolio was a negative experience, and taking the Praxis did nothing to further their professional development.

It is hoped that readers have come away from this study with a better understanding of what it is like for someone to participate in a required mentorship relationship, as well as other induction program requirements. It is also hoped that readers have identified “shared characteristics” enabling them “to transfer information to other settings” (Creswell, 1998, p. 203).

Recommendations for Further Research

The nature of a phenomenology is to simply share a common experience of those willing to relate that experience. Those who willingly participated in this study shared rich and detailed information about their common/lived mentorship experience. Some of the themes and perceptions in this study corroborate with some of the themes found in the literature regarding the characteristics of an effective mentorship. The findings of this study will be extended with the following new studies.

1. A follow-up study of the lived experience of mentors could be developed, which would strengthen, counter, or illuminate new information relative to themes that have emerged from this study.
2. A companion study could be conducted on how novice elementary teachers experience the mentorship requirement of Utah's EYE program.
3. A more comprehensive study could be conducted in order to survey all teachers who have experienced the EYE program.
4. A study could be conducted specific to the creation of, need for, and purpose of the portfolio requirement of the EYE program.
5. A study could be conducted concerning the purpose and validity of the various Praxis exams, as related to induction, mentoring, and licensure.
6. Studies could be developed to determine ways for matching mentors and mentee.
7. A complete and comprehensive evaluation of Utah's EYE program could be conducted.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Danielson's Components Linked to INTASC

Table A-1

Correlation of the INTASC Standards with the Framework for Teaching Components

INTASC standard	Description of teacher performance	Framework component	Description of teacher performance
Principle 1	Understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structure of the disciplines taught; creates learning experiences to make them meaningful to students.	1a 1e 3c	Demonstrates knowledge of content and pedagogy. Designs coherent instruction. Engages students in learning.
Principle 2	Understands how children learn and develop; provides learning opportunities that support their development.	1b 1c 1f 3b 3c	Demonstrates knowledge of students. Selects instructional goals. Assesses student learning. Uses questioning and discussion techniques. Engages students in learning.
Principle 3	Understands how students differ in their approaches to learning; creates instructional opportunities adapted to diverse learners.	1b 1e 2a 2b 3b to 3e	Demonstrates knowledge of students. Designs coherent instruction. Creates an environment of respect and rapport. Establishes a culture for learning. Instruction Domain.
Principle 4	Understands and uses variety of instructional strategies.	1d 1e 3b to 3e	Demonstrates knowledge of resources. Designs coherent instruction. Instruction Domain.
Principle 5	Creates a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.	1e 2a 2b 2c 2d 2e 3c	Designs coherent instruction. Creates an environment of respect and rapport. Establishes a culture for learning. Manages classroom procedures. Manages student behavior. Organizes physical space. Engages students in learning.
Principle 6	Uses knowledge of communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction.	2a 3a 3b 3c	Creates an environment of respect and rapport. Communicates clearly and accurately. Uses questioning and discussion techniques. Engages students in learning.

(table continues)

INTASC standard	Description of teacher performance	Framework component	Description of teacher performance
Principle 7	Plans instruction based on knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.	1a to 1e 3c 3e	Planning and Preparation Domain. Engages students in learning. Demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness.
Principle 8	Understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies.	1b 1f 3d 3e 4a 4b 4c	Demonstrates knowledge of students. Assesses student learning. Provides feedback to students. Demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness. Reflects on teaching. Maintains accurate records. Communicates with families.
Principle 9	Reflects on teaching.	4a 4d 4e	Reflects on teaching. Contributes to the school and district. Grows and develops professionally.
Principle 10	Fosters relationships with colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community.	1d 4c 4d 4f	Demonstrates knowledge of resources. Communicates with families. Contributes to the school and district. Shows professionalism.

Appendix B

Utah Professional Teacher Standards (UPTS)

Utah Professional Teacher

Standards

Promoting student learning and enhancing professional practice are the focuses of Utah Professional Teacher Standards. The standards define high quality teaching as the core of a successful education for all students. (Utah Professional Teacher Standards are based on INTASC standards, *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* by Charlotte Danielson, and the California Standards for the Teaching Profession.)

1

Creating and maintaining a positive classroom environment that promotes student learning

- Create a physical environment that supports a culture for learning and engages all students.
- Implement classroom procedures to enhance student learning.
- Manage student behavior.
- Establish a civic classroom based on caring, responsibility, and respect for diversity.
- Use instructional time effectively to enhance student learning.

2

Planning curriculum and designing instruction to enhance student learning

- Demonstrate knowledge of content.
- Demonstrate knowledge of age-appropriate pedagogy.
- Design and articulate instruction aligned with Utah Core Curriculum standards.
- Select instructional goals based on student achievement data and knowledge of students.
- Connect curricula to student development and cultural background.
- Use appropriate resources to facilitate individual student learning.
- Integrate curricula across multiple content areas.

3

Engaging and supporting all students in learning

- Communicate instruction clearly and accurately.
- Use research-based instructional strategies to enhance student learning of content.
- Accommodate individual students' cultural, physical, emotional, social, and intellectual growth.
- Reflect on teaching and learning.
- Differentiate instruction to meet individual student learning needs.
- Incorporate understanding of the diversity of the school community into student learning.
- Integrate the Utah Life Skills document into student learning.
- Engage families as partners in learning.

4

Assessing and evaluating student learning

- Assess learning goals based on Utah Core Curriculum standards.
- Use multiple sources of formal and informal assessment to verify student learning.
- Maintain accurate records of student progress.
- Use student achievement data to inform instruction.
- Communicate feedback on learning progress to students and parents/guardians.

5

Demonstrating professionalism to support student learning

- Understand and act consistently with education laws.
- Demonstrate moral and ethical conduct as educators and role models for young people.
- Maintain professional demeanor and appearance.
- Establish professional goals, reflect on teaching and pursue opportunities to grow professionally.
- Contribute to the educational community and demonstrate professional leadership.
- Act as an advocate for students, consistent with professional standards and with respect for parents and families.



Appendix C
Sample Questions Document

Sample Questions Document

Dissertation Proposal Title:

New Beginnings: A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences of Novice Secondary Teachers Who Have Completed the Induction and Mentorship Requirements of Utah's EYE Program

Guiding Research Question:

How do novice secondary teachers experience the mentorship requirement of the EYE Program?

Sample Interview Questions:

1. Tell me why you decided to enter the field of education (why did you want to become a teacher?).
2. What do you know of the EYE program and its requirements?
3. In what ways do you think the mentorship requirement of the EYE program effects the transition of novice teacher to experienced teacher?
4. What kind of impact or influence has your competition of the EYE program requirements had on your development as a teacher?
5. What are your perceptions regarding the mentorship experience?
6. How might your mentorship experience influence you if you were asked to mentor a new teacher?
7. Explain whether or not you believe that your mentorship experience played a role in your decision to stay in the teaching profession.
8. How would you describe your overall experience in a three-year mentorship?

Alternative questions to consider:

1. What do you believe the purpose of a mentorship is?
2. What do you know of the mentor selection process?

Appendix D
Letter of Invitation



Dear _____:

My name is Philip Armstrong. I am a fulltime Social Studies teacher at Union High School in Roosevelt, UT. I am also an Ed.D (Education Doctoral) candidate in Utah State University's distance doctoral program. I am conducting data collection to complete the research for my dissertation entitled: *New Beginnings: A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experience of Novice Secondary Teachers Who Have Completed the induction and Mentorship Requirements of Utah's EYE Program.*

Due to your unique situation as a relatively new teacher in the state of Utah who has successfully advanced from a Level 1 to a Level 2 License, you have been identified as a possible candidate for participation in this study. If you agree, your participation includes an interview, conducted by me, regarding your experience in the Early Years Enhancement (EYE) Program. The interview will last approximately 30 to 60 minutes and will take place at your school, classroom, or another location of your choosing.

Participation in this study will give voice to your experience in the EYE Program, your perspective as a new teacher, and add to the general knowledge about mentoring and inducting new teachers, particularly in the state of Utah. There are no anticipated risks or discomforts for those who do participate. You will not be personally identified when the results of this study are reported.

The scope of this study does not allow for all those in circumstances similar to yours to participate. Therefore, in an effort to narrow the number of those who are asked to participate I will be contacting you in the near future asking that you respond to a few simple questions.

Please know that whether you participate or not your efforts to educate and inspire the youth of this great country are to be commended. I am planning on following up this letter by contacting you either through email or telephone. I look forward to speaking with you and I hope that if you are selected to participate that I can adequately give voice to your experiences. Please feel free to contact me at parmstrong@dcsd.org, or at 435-725-4536.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Philip D. Armstrong
Doctoral Student
Utah State University

Appendix E
Email Follow-Up



Dear Potential Research Participants:

First, I want to thank those who have already contacted me. I appreciate your willingness to participate. By now most of you have received a letter from me explaining that your unique circumstance as a relatively new educator in the state of Utah has qualified you as a potential participant in my dissertation research study.

As I stated in my letter to you the scope of this study does not allow for all those in circumstances similar to yours to participate. Therefore, in an effort to narrow the number of those who do participate I am asking that you respond to the following questions:

1. Did you complete the EYE program, specifically the mentorship requirement of the program, at the same school where you started teaching?
2. Did you have the same mentor during the mentorship?
3. If not, what is the longest period of time during which you had the same mentor?
4. Did you establish a regular meeting schedule with your mentor?

You can simply email your responses to me at parmstrong@dcsd.org. Once I review your response I will be contacting you again via telephone and email. Again, thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Philip Armstrong
parmstrong@dcsd.org
435-725-4536 (direct line)
435-722-9067 (home)

Appendix F
Informed Consent

Utah State
UNIVERSITY
 Department of Elementary Education
 2805 Old Main Hill
 Logan UT 84322-2805
 Telephone: (435) 797-0385
 Fax: (435) 797-0372

Date Created: March 28, 2007; Page 1 of 2
 USU IRB Approved: 04/02/2008
 Approval terminates: 04/01/2009
 Protocol Number: 2018
 IRB Password Protected per IRB Administrator

INFORMED CONSENT

New Beginnings: A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences of Novice Secondary Teachers Who Have Completed the Induction and Mentorship Requirements of Utah's EYE Program

Introduction/Purpose: Dr. Gary Carlston in the Department of Elementary Education at Utah State University (USU) and Philip Armstrong, a doctoral student at USU are conducting a research study to examine the mentorship experience that all new teachers in the state of Utah are required to complete. You have been asked to participate because you were hired after January 1, 2003, when the State Board of Education mandated that all new or rehire teachers complete Utah's induction and mentoring program, known as the Entry Years Enhancement (EYE) Program. There will be approximately 5 to 25 participants in this study.

Procedures: If you agree to be involved in this research study, the following will happen to you:

1. You will participate in an open-ended interview with the researcher discussing your experience as a new teacher in Utah's EYE Program. The interview will be a minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of 90 minutes. Interviews will be held at your school; in your classroom, a conference room, or an alternative location that you identify. The names of mentors are not necessary, and I will encourage interviewees to not mention them by name. If a mentor's name is mentioned it will be held confidential and not reported
2. Sample Questions are attached
3. You will not be personally identified nor will your responses be attributed to you; responses will be confidential.
4. You may be asked to participate in a shorter, follow-up interview. Once the primary interview is transcribed and reviewed, you will be notified by telephone or email whether or not a follow-up interview is necessary. A follow-up interview will be needed *for* clarification and verification to ensure accuracy
5. You will be asked to review the transcript and a brief analysis of your interview for verification purposes.

Risks: There is minimal risk involved in this study.

Benefit: The benefit for participation in this study is that it may give voice to your mentorship experience, and possibly add to the general knowledge about mentoring and inducting new teachers, particularly in Utah. Researchers may also be able to identify personal and common themes regarding the mentorship experience that emerge from this study. Potentially, this information could be used to spark further research regarding mentorships, especially research about Utah's mentorship requirement in the EYE program.

Explanation & Offer to Answer Questions: Mr. Philip Armstrong has explained this research study to you and answered your questions. If you have other questions or research-related problems, you may contact Dr. Gary Carlston at gary.carlston@usu.edu.

Voluntary Nature of Participation and Right to Withdraw without Consequence: Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without consequence or loss of benefits.

Utah State
UNIVERSITY
 Department of Elementary Education
 2805 Old Main Hill
 Logan UT 84322-2805
 Telephone: (435) 797-0385
 Fax: (435) 797-0372

Date Created: March 28, 2007; Page 2 of 2
 USU IRB Approved: 04/02/2008
 Approval terminates: 04/01/2009
 Protocol Number: 2018
 IRB Password Protected per IRB Administrator

INFORMED CONSENT

New Beginnings: A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences of Novice Secondary Teachers Who Have Completed the Induction and Mentorship Requirements of Utah's EYE Program

Confidentiality: Research records will be kept confidential, consistent with federal and state regulations. Only the researchers will have access to the data. To protect your privacy your name will be replaced with a code number along with the interview session. Confidentiality will be maintained by keeping all identifying information including digital information on a password protected computer. A hard copy of the information will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the locked office of Philip Armstrong. Personal identifiable information will be kept for two years from the date I successfully defend my dissertation. At the end of those two years all information allowing for the identification of participants will be destroyed. Digital recordings of the interviews will be kept for two years from the date I successfully defend my dissertation and then destroyed. I will keep these records for two years as references to future research. In its raw form the information will not be used in workshops, seminars, or in any other public setting. However, it is possible that references to my dissertation topic could transpire in a public setting, such as a workshop or seminar. Transcripts of the interview with no personal identifying information will be kept for five years from the date I successfully defend my dissertation and then destroyed. Again, these transcripts will be kept as references for future research. These transcripts will have neither names nor codes that could be used to identify the participants.

IRB Approval Statement: The Institutional Review Board for the protection of human participants at USU has approved this research study. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights, you may contact the IRB at (435) 797-1821

Copy of Consent: You have been given two copies of this Informed Consent. Please sign both copies and keep one copy for your files.

Researchers Statement: "I certify that the research study has been explained to the individual, by me or my research staff, and that the individual understands the nature and purpose, the possible risks and benefits associated with taking part in this research study. Any questions that have been raised have been answered."

 Dr. Gary Carlston
 Principal Investigator
 435-797-0370

 Philip Armstrong
 Student Researcher
 435-722-9067

Participant's Signature: By signing below, I agree to participate.

 Participant's signature

 Date

 Print name

Appendix G
Bracketing Interview

Philip Armstrong's Bracketing Interview (May 23, 2008)
 Dissertation Research Interview
 Interview conducted by Dennis Garner

Tell me why you decided to enter the field of education?

Okay for me I actually always wanted to, but I thought I would always do it later in life as a college professor; and when that wasn't panning out like I thought it was I decided to move into trying to get into it at the secondary level and figured that would eventually take me ultimately to that goal and so that's why I got in; plus I have always enjoyed teaching.

And why did you want to become a teacher?

I feel like that I have so good experience and some good things to offer and I have an ability to motivate and inspire kids, at least some kids. Even if that is only few, that's something... you know to motivate them onto improving their own lives.

What do you know of the EYE program and its requirements?

The EYE program is the Early Years Enhancement; it is Utah's, the State of Utah's mandatory induction and mentoring program for new teachers. And when I was first hired there was no such program, which was 1998, and so I didn't experience any of that. But when I left public teaching for a year when I came back, it was in 2003, and the EYE program had actually started that year and so I did have to have kind of a condense version. The fact that I had already taught in the state for 4 years, they allowed me to accelerate. It is a list of requirements for novice teachers to go from a Level 1 license to a level 2 license. And it requires a portfolio and a mentorship for three years, it requires passing the PRAXIS test, and I think that it is it.... But anyway...

In what ways do think mentorship requirement of the EYE program effects the transition of a novice teacher to an experienced teacher?

For me, I think it would have helped... I am using my own experience because when I was first hired as a new teacher; it was a little bit of unique circumstance I didn't have my teaching certificate so I had to take classes for that while I was teaching. And I did not have a mentor, nobody. Even when I was evaluated by the administration they never gave me any feedback. So my first few years were actually kind of miserable; and as I have since studies and researched this topic of mentorships, and its tie into attrition it is anywhere from, depending of the research, 30 to 50 percent of new teachers leave within three to five years. And I basically fit that bill pretty much perfectly. After my second year I was ready to leave. It got a little better the next couple of years, probably because I got more experience; but then I did leave. But then I came back. And when I came back the EYE program was in effect. And I did have a mentor for just... part of a year here at Union, just to show me, I don't know show me a few things but because I had, already had experience they kind of expedited that. But I think that based on my own personal experience that I would really help because so many times new teachers come in and without a mentorship it is a sink or swim attitude. I mean they don't know, they are not sure even if they are limited on copies or maybe even how to run the copy machine, how to use the grading program, and that's part of what a mentorship is all about. And if you get a really good mentor, somebody that cares is going to help those new teacher transition, otherwise they might have my experience which was pretty

awful the first couple of years and I felt like I should leave.

What are your perceptions regarding the mentorship experience?

Well because I really didn't have one that is a hard one to answer. I can say that the mentorship experience I had kind of short lived one here, it was alright. But because I was already an experienced teacher I didn't really feel the need for it. But again, like I said I think had it been something I had to do as a new teacher I probably should have appreciated, at least knowing I could go to somebody.

Have you been a mentor for another teacher since you have been here?

I haven't. I have been asked to help some of the newer teacher on occasion, from a mentor, and that teacher let them come into my classroom and observe me teaching or go into their classroom and share. So I had that opportunity, but I have not been a mentor.

As you have seen other mentors work with new teachers, what's been your experience, positive, negative, or what?

Most of the time it is positive. The ones I am thinking about have been pretty positive. I think that is an important part of the mentorship that these teachers that are asked to be mentors they need to be, I think that they need to be selective on who they are. They need to be good teachers. Because you know, it seems like the longer you are in education, particularly, at the secondary level there is a cynicism that works it way in. Just the other day one of the teachers was telling me, you know, that he doesn't know if he will make it last five years. Came in all idealistic and now he has about had it.

What specific things occurred in the mentorship that experience you saw, you say it was positive, but what specific things did you observe?

I think that the one thing I observed... two things: one was that they actually, at some point, I know that they provided a substitute for the mentor to go and be with the mentee, and they did that the opposite too, they provided a substitute for the mentee to actually go be with the mentor, in their classroom so they could, you know, collaborate watch each other help each other out. And like my own experience, here is the mentor and the mentee, and the mentor comes to me and me and includes me in this process, even though I am not a mentor but yet said, "hey, I think that you have some things maybe you could offer this new teacher." So there wasn't just... the mentorship wasn't just an isolated relationship between the mentor and the mentee. This particular mentor branched out to other teacher. And I am sure that I wasn't the only one. I would image if they were coming to me they would have talked to others.

How might your mentorship experience you if you were asked to mentor a new teacher?

Just my little experience and then a couple of other collaborative experiences I have had here, I think they would be very helpful because it give you a little bit of an idea of what, particularly a new teacher, what it is like to be a new teacher, and so you can have that, that connection, you know, and that experience and be able to hopefully share with those, that mentee that you might be asked to do; you know that there is going to be rough times but yet it is rewarding and what not.

Explain whether or not you believe that your mentorship experience played a roll in your decision to stay in the teaching profession?

For me, because when I first started I didn't have one, it played a roll in wanting to leave. Because, I did, I really had a miserable experience my first two years. In fact, by the end of my second year I was job hunting and I found two jobs. And for some reason we didn't take either of them. Then things got a little bit better the next two years. But... so based on that, my gut tells me, and I guess my minimal mentorship here tells me that it would be very, it could be a very powerful thing in helping a teacher decided to stay in the professor, because there is support, you are not left and isolated alone.

What were some of the frustrating things that you faced as a new teacher that made it so that you didn't want to continue teaching?

For me it was... one was the administrative aspect of it. Nobody explained to me, I never had anyone explain to me the grading program. I never had any, what would you call it?... in-service on it. Another one was classroom management; which is probably one of my strong points now, but still again, there was never any in-service or anybody, even the administration on ideas of classroom management. One teacher told me just be mean. And the other aspect was that I didn't really know who I could go to. I felt like I was kind of isolated. So I didn't... there was nobody I could single out and say, you know, I knew that they would help me. Even like... purchase order request and teacher money, and these little nid-bit things that might not seem important or... but as a new teacher you do not know about them, you don't know how they work, you don't know what you are suppose to do. And so I didn't know any of that, and I never had any... instruction on what to do or even who to go to. So I had to kid of figure all that on my own.

Where you teaching at a small school?

No. It was a big school.

I am a little bit surprised you didn't have more impact, because there would be others in your department, that, at your school they didn't have anything to help with new teacher...

No they didn't have set up when I stated. But there was one teacher who was pretty good. But he was only good if I went to him. I mean he never, and there was a few times when I got a little more comfortable and I understood that it was okay to go in an talk to him, because I never even had that invitation, but once I figured that out he was pretty good, and I could go talk him. But again it was never, "you can go talk to Mr. So and So any time you want." Or have him come and tell, "I will be here to help you." Yeah, it was pretty rough.

How would you describe your overall experience in a three-year mentorship?

I never had one. Unfortunately

It was short...

Yeah... nonexistent.

What do you believe the purpose of the mentorship is?

Well for me, I think a big part of it is to give those new teachers some reassurance and support. And let them know that they are not alone. And I also think that if you can match

them up with an experienced and successful teacher, then you give them a model. Not that they have to follow what they do, but you give that new teacher a model of somebody that is successful that has creative ideas. I also think that the collaboration of a mentorship is something extremely important. It probably even gets overlooked because we still have that isolated this is my classroom mentality and I don't want anybody in there. I think that a mentorship can help break that down. And if we can have more collaboration I think that we would have better teachers.

Why do you think that so many teachers have that attitude of this is my domain, I am afraid to share what I am doing well, as well I am afraid for others to see what I might not be doing well?

I think it is probably that second part, as part of the reason there is that mentality is you as teacher you might be a little self-conscious about, you know, you might know your shortcomings and exaggerate them and think that if anybody see them they will think less of you. And then, you know the other reason is, I think part of it is a cultural thing that has been around for awhile; maybe stemming back from the one room school house. And I don't know, it seems like it is still hanging there in the air, just a little bit, that cultural aspect of isolation. I mean, I don't know... that's a good question.

So you think the EYE program would impact or change that isolation process, or mindset?
I think it has the potential to do it. But just the limited experience I have had with looking at potential participants, it looks like most of them probably are not experiencing that aspect of the EYE program, the mentorship aspect of the EYE program like the state probably intended. Just have a mentor for three years, a successful experience teacher, where they can get a camaraderie going, and increase the collegiality. Just, like I said from trying to break, trying to get, setting up the criteria for my study I found that there are quite a few people that didn't really experience it that way. And some of them don't even know what it is [the EYE program]. Even though it is mandated that they do it since 2003. I think that in the written aspect it would help because it would encourage more collaboration. But in practical terms I think it is falling short; and maybe that's because there is not, there still has yet to be an evaluation of it. And there's still no accountability to whether or not it is being handled. I mean no real accountability. I mean all you got to do is say yeah I had a mentor; whether they did or they didn't, but there is no check this of did they do this in the mentorship.

What do you know of the mentor selection process?

I don't really know much. And the only thing that the law says, if I recall, is that it has to be somebody that has at least three years experience, and I think that is it really, And so what happens is each district then, or even each school even go down to an individual school kind of set their own criteria and some of that criteria is simply whose available, I think. There are some, I know some district actually have some training for people that are going to be mentors, but I don't know exactly what that training entails.

How are the mentors selected at Union?

The district has a mentor training for them; but I am not sure how they select them. They do have to be at least three years... three successful years of teaching, and they have to have a level 2 license. But, I am not sure how they actually select them. But, I do know they have a

training they have to go to, but I think it is pretty minimal... like maybe an afternoon here and an afternoon there.

Okay.

Thanks, Dennis.

Appendix H
Peer Colleague Verification



1680 West Hwy 40
Vernal UT 84078

Phillip Armstrong
135 N. Union St.
Roosevelt, UT 84066

Philip:

I have reviewed a selection of qualitative interview transcripts which you'll be using for your doctoral dissertation. I understand that three were selected purposefully because they had not yet been member checked, and a fourth was randomly chosen. I was not told which transcript was which.

In the four transcripts I reviewed, your questions were similar in rhetorical structure. Despite various follow-up questions in each interview, the overall sequence and style of questions showed commonality. I believe the information you received from each participant was rich and varied, but that was because of the different experiences and observations of each participant and not due to any deviation from your fundamental question sequence or style.

If these four qualitative interview transcripts are representative of your total set, I'd have no problem validating that your interviews were conducted according to acceptable professional standards in qualitative research.

Please contact me if you have additional questions about your research methodology.

Sincerely,

Virginia Norris Exton, Ed.D
Assistant Professor
School of Teacher Education and Leadership
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Personal Statement

I believe that learning is a life-long endeavor. It is my own passion for learning that has led me to the field of education. Teaching affords me the opportunity to constantly read, research, and learn. Teaching also affords the opportunity to motivate and inspire others to academic achievement and greater individual scholarship. As people become vested in their education they begin to achieve great things. I believe the university provides the environment to build an academic foundation for vocational and personal success. It is my desire and goal to be part of that environment.

Education

Doctorate of Education, Utah State University, College of Education and Human Services
Logan, Utah. The Emma Eccles School of Teacher Education and Leadership: Graduation:
April 2009.

Dissertation Title: New Beginnings: A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences of
Novice Secondary Teachers who have completed the Induction and Mentorship
Requirements of Utah's EYE Program. Approved: January 6, 2009.

Chair: Dr. Gary Carlston

Administrative / Supervisory Administrative Certificate (on hold). Utah State University,
College of Education and Human Services.

Master of Public Administration. Brigham Young University (BYU). Provo, Utah: George W.
Romney Institute of Public Management. Graduation: April 1995

Bachelor of Arts. BYU. Provo, Utah: International Relations. Graduation: April 1993.

Secondary Education Certificate. Southern Utah University. Cedar City, Utah: Social Science
Composite and Spanish. Education Certification: August 2001.

Minor. BYU. Provo, Utah: Spanish. Graduation: April 1993.

Teaching Interests

- Foundations of education
- Secondary Social Science courses
- New teacher induction and mentorship programs

Research Interests

- Beginning teacher preparation and mentoring
- Induction and mentoring principles and measurement tools
- Importance and relevance of Social Studies curriculum

Academic Experience

Member-Delegate. International Society of Teacher Education, the 27th Annual Conference-The Rocky Mountain Rendezvous. Weber State University. Ogden, Utah, June 2-9, 2009. Paper: What Mentees Have to Say About Being Mentors.

Conference Presenter. Mountain Plains Adult Education Association Conference. Topic: Juggling a Dream: The Lived Experience of a Distance Doctoral Student. Salt Lake City, Utah, April 23-26, 2008.

Social Studies Teacher. Snow Canyon High School, St. George, UT (1998-2002) and Union High School, Roosevelt, Utah (2003-present). I have nine years of experience successfully motivating and engaging students in social studies curriculum (primarily US and world history) through a variety of techniques and strategies.

Assistant Dean of Students. Southern Virginia University. Buena Vista, Virginia (August 2002 – July 2003). While at SVU I successfully chaired the university's disciplinary review committee and coordinated new student orientation, along with fulfilling traditional administrative duties.

Visiting Graduate. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel: Rothberg International School (July 1994-January 1995). I studied Israeli Politics and US Foreign Policy. I also participated in a tutorial that dealt with the transition to Palestinian autonomy that was outline in the Oslo Peace Accords of 1993.

Related Experience

Graduate Assistant. BYU, Provo, Utah Dr. Doyle Buckwalter: Sept. 1993 – April 1994.

Graduate-student Intern. Idaho Falls, Idaho, City of Idaho Falls, Human Resources Department: May and June 1994.

Undergraduate Internship. Washington, D.C House of Representatives: June – August 1992.