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Mentor Teachers' Perceptions of Effective Mentoring Strategies

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Paula Tomlinson

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Walden University
2019

Abstract

Mentor Teachers' Perceptions of Effective Mentoring Strategies

by

Paula Tomlinson

MS, Pfeiffer University, 2005

BS, University of the West Indies, 1996

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

May 2019

Abstract

Educators at a public high school in Southeastern United States depend on mentor teachers to minimize the attrition rate among beginning teachers, yet the strategies implemented by mentors lack definition and clarity. The purpose of this study was to explore mentor teachers' perceptions of effective mentoring strategies and their needs when mentoring new teachers. Maslow's humanistic learning theory guided this bounded basic qualitative study. The research questions focused on the mentoring strategies mentor teachers perceived as effective and the needs of the mentors. Ten high school mentor teachers, who currently mentor new teachers, were purposefully selected to participate in individual and focus group interviews. Precoding, open and axial coding were used to inductively analyze the data. The results showed mentors promote school culture, are a source of information, build relationships, use data to drive discussion, provide opportunity for reflection, conduct observations, connect theory with practice, and model professional behavior as effective strategies. Mentor teachers indicated that effective communication is crucial when mentoring new teachers. Additionally, they need specific skills to help beginning teachers better understand the reality of teaching and address their unrealistic expectations of the profession. Based on the findings a 3-day professional development for mentor teachers was developed to address mentors' needs. This endeavor may contribute to positive social change when district administration provides mentor teachers with professional development to enrich their mentoring strategies which in turn may address the challenges new teachers experience and reduce the attrition rate.

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Dedication

Pursuing this Doctoral degree had been a lifelong dream for me and the realization of this dream would not have been possible without the support of my family. I dedicate the completion of this work to my husband Cuthbert for his support and understanding throughout this journey. Second, to my daughter Janae for her continual encouragement and coaching along the way. Finally, to my son Chal who taught me how to follow my heart and be true to myself.

Acknowledgments

I will never forget my first communication with my Chair, Dr. Pitt. I introduced myself and stated how fearful and humbled I was as I faced the journey ahead. Her response was "we will do it together". Those words changed my attitude towards the journey and developed trust in our relationship. Dr. Pitt fulfilled her promise of walking beside me throughout the journey. Her encouragement and personal investment along with our weekly phone calls kept me focused and informed.

Dr. Beebe, my second committee member, thank you for the professionalism you added to this process. Your feedback and suggestions were strong yet encouraging. You have given me insights into the world of qualitative research and stimulated my interest in the different types of qualitative approaches.

Dr. Howe, My third committee member, although you joined the team at the last segment your feedback was crucial to the completion of this study.

Dr. Warren, my University Review Representative, your explicit and informative feedback were instrumental to the completion of this project. This journey was made better because of your input. Your suggestions and criticism were valuable to the quality of the research.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the principal and participants for their invaluable contribution to the execution of the research. Without their willingness to participate this research would not have been possible. I am grateful for the time they invested and the wealth of information they provided.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The high attrition rate of beginning teachers contributes to the current challenges surrounding students' performance. Izadinia (2015) reported that in Australia up to one-third of the teachers quit teaching in the first 5 years. Headden (2014) stated that 67% of beginning teachers leave the profession in the first 2 years. According to McGlade (2016), each school district in South Florida requires an average of 14,500 teachers on staff: The targeted school district in South Florida, hires more than 1,000 new teachers each year to maintain staffing. McGlade (2016) also reported that there was a 45% increase in teacher turnover from 2013 - 2016 for the targeted school district.

Will (2017) reported that in the United States 86% of new teachers supported by a mentor teacher (or mentor) in the first years remain in the classroom, while 71% of those without mentors leave the profession. Izadinia (2015) identified the mentoring experience as one of the key factors in reducing the attrition rate of new teachers. According to Whitehouse (2016), public high school principals depend on mentors to minimize the attrition rate of new teachers. School districts support their beginning teachers through mentoring programs for this same reason (Polikoff, Desimone, Porter, & Hochburg, 2015). However, the strategies that might help mentors be effective lack definition and structure.

The strategies and skills mentors currently implement are left to their professional experiences and haphazard practices; thus, contribute to the lack of structure in mentoring (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015). Despite the use of mentoring to facilitate professional

growth among new teachers, educators lack information about the structure and effectiveness of mentoring practices that are implemented (Menges, 2016). S. Richards, a mentor at a public high school in South Florida, stated that she assumed the role of a mentor without receiving professional development (PD) or a prescribed set of mentoring strategies (personal communication, October 30, 2017). Freedman, Phillips, and Salmon (2015) reported that mentors are requesting PD that will provide them with mentoring strategies to help them support new teachers. Will (2017) noted that in most public-school districts the quality of mentoring needs attention and mentors need a defined set of mentoring strategies to effectively facilitate the professional growth of beginning teachers. The local problem was the lack of structure to guide mentors, at a public high school in South Florida, in identifying and implementing mentoring strategies.

The targeted public high school in South Florida was opened in 1981 and currently teaches an average of 2,508 students. Some of the current academic programs offered at the high school level in South Florida are music, journalism, visual arts, medical, culinary, and engineering. Teacher retention contributes to the success of these programs. Therefore, the administrators at the high school level adapted the Educator Support Program to support new teachers. This program requires the assignment of experienced teachers to support new teachers for at least 3 years.

Because effective mentoring strategies need to be learned or developed, experienced teachers do not naturally become effective mentors (Ambrosetti, 2014). According to Knight et al. (2014), those who mentor new teachers do not always possess the necessary skills or knowledge to be successful; therefore, attention to the practices of

those who mentor new teachers is needed. Because mentoring is crucial to the

professional growth of new teachers, effective mentoring requires an intentionally

formulated set of strategies that will give rise to effective mentoring (Glassford &

Salinitri, 2017). Additionally, Spooner-Lane (2017) stated that there is a lack of empirical

evidence on the effectiveness of mentoring strategies

Rationale

The quality of mentoring is of great concern to educators, and the amount of

mentoring new teachers receive fluctuates across school districts and public schools in

the Unites States (Will, 2017). School districts across the state of Florida have

implemented mentoring programs to address the needs of new teachers. Will (2017)

reported that 12% of all public-school teachers in the United States are first-year teachers,

while 29% of public-school teachers in Florida are first-year teachers. At the target high

school in South Florida, mentors are selected according to acquired classroom

experiences and can implement mentoring strategies they believe to be effective (D.

Parcells, personal communication, November 5, 2017). There is a need to identify and

define the strategies of mentoring as very little is known about the current practices of

those who are involved in mentoring new teachers (Knight et al., 2014).

The status of mentoring in the target school district in South Florida, along with

literature showing the lack of structure with which mentoring strategies are implemented,

form the rationale for examining mentors' perceptions of effective mentoring strategies.

The continuation of this gap in practice might contribute to poor performance of the

mentors and thus, misguide new teachers. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine

the perceptions of a targeted group of mentors, at a public high school in South Florida, on the mentoring strategies they believe are effective. To address the problem, I collect data through individual interviews and focus groups. The data collected yielded information that could help future experienced teachers in their roles as mentors.

Definition of Terms

Attrition: According to Struyven and Vanthournout (2014) Attrition is what determines the ineffectiveness, poor performance, and lack of quality in public education.

Mentor teachers: A mentor teacher is an experienced teacher who has achieved success in teaching and supports new teachers in the induction phase of their teaching career (Sunde & Ulvik, 2014).

Mentoring: According to Aspfors and Fransson (2015) mentoring is the development of a relationship between an experienced teacher and a beginning teacher with the aim of supporting learning, professional growth, and well-being.

Mentoring strategies: Mentoring strategies refer to the behavior, approach, and style that mentors exhibit to support beginning teachers smoothly through their first years (van Ginkel, Verloop & Denessen, 2016).

New teacher: Teachers with 5 or fewer years of experience are considered new teachers (Headden, 2014).

Significance of the Study

Mentoring new teachers is vital to the field of education because it is one of the key factors in facilitating the professional growth among new teachers. However, Menges (2016) questioned whether enough empirical research has been conducted to assess the

effectiveness of these mentor programs. Sowell (2017) emphasized that administrators depend on mentors to support professional growth among new teachers as well as teacher retention. While much information exists on mentoring, there is no structure in the way mentors perform their roles (Menges, 2016). Therefore, through interviews and focus groups, data were collected and coded to identify and examine the strategies that South Florida mentors perceive as effective. Because the mentor programs within the schools depend on the practices of the mentors, the implication for positive social change is the identification, definition, and structuring of effective strategies mentors can employ to strengthen their mentoring practice. As a result, students' performance could improve as the attrition rate among new teachers decrease.

Research Questions

Currently, a wide range of research is done on mentoring however, there is little empirical evidence to support effective mentoring strategies. This study sought to identify effective mentoring strategies through the eyes of mentors. According to Knight et al. (2014), studies conducted on teacher education do not provide enough information on the effectiveness of the practices of those who train future teachers. The following questions were designed to guide this research on mentor teachers' perceptions of effective mentoring strategies.

1. What strategies do high school mentors perceive to be effective when mentoring new teachers?

2. What are the professional needs of an experienced teacher who assumes the role of a mentor?

Review of the Literature

This section contains an overview of issues relating to the research problem, which involves the strategies that mentors implement in supporting new teachers. The review starts with a discussion of the conceptual framework, which guided the study along with other topics influencing the research problem. I examined the literature on mentoring to understand the responsibilities of those who mentor, and the assumptions that researchers make about the mentoring process. I analyzed and discussed the attrition rate of new teachers because mentoring emerges as a key factor in addressing attrition rate. I also reviewed literature on the issues surrounding effective mentoring strategies.

Search Strategy

The database I used to conduct the literature review included ERIC, ProQuest, and SAGE. I reviewed articles within the year range 2014-2019 and 25 of these articles were used in the review. The key terms used to drive the review included *mentoring strategies, new teacher mentoring programs, new teacher retention, and the role of mentor teachers*. In this review I examined current peer-reviewed journal articles, as well as books, newspaper articles, and educational publications.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in the humanistic learning theory. The work of researchers such as Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, added to the development of the humanistic learning theory. According to Maslow (1968), the humanistic learning theory is built on the assumption that the instructor guides the learner in discovering hidden knowledge to achieve self-actualization. Additionally, Carl Rogers

(1974) explained that individuals, through their experiences, gain information that becomes the foundation on which their perceptions of situations are developed. As a result, this theory has been applied to adult education and mirrors self-directed learning. The humanistic theory of learning is instrumental in the development of the conceptual framework that drives this study.

Like the humanistic theory of learning, the nature of this research mirrors self-directed learning because the perspective of the learner was used to inform professional growth and learning. Ozuah (2016) identified the goal of the humanistic theory as an attempt to identify and address the needs of the learner by encouraging professional and personal growth among individuals. Also, Barker (2017) argued that the humanistic learning theory assumes that individuals are more likely to participate in learning activities when their needs are in alignment with the learning outcome. Based on these assumptions, I designed the research questions to encourage participation and to identify the needs of the mentors. The humanistic learning theory supports the assumption that the learner is instrumental in identifying critical learning while the instructor facilitates the learning and thus, is consistent with the qualitative approach to this study.

Researchers such as Dennick (2016), explained that the humanistic theory of learning places the individual at the center of learning and applied this concept to the need for self-actualization. Furthermore, Conradie (2014) described self-actualization as one of the elements associated with the humanistic theory. Also, Biddulph and Carr (2017) stated that learning occurs when the learners understand the relevance to their needs and benefits. According to Sunde and Ulvik (2014), teachers possess the need for

information and to be involved in collaborative decision-making about their professional

growth and development. The awareness that individuals achieve through personal

involvement and self-reflection is crucial to this study and therefore, the humanistic

approach to learning forms the foundation for this research.

Review of the Broader Problem

      New teachers. Because of the increasing number of beginning teachers, school

leaders face challenges such as financial, cultural, and poor student performance

(Headden, 2014). Additionally, Izadinia (2015) stated that 50% of new teachers in

developed countries such as the United States leave the teaching profession within the

first 5 years. A closer look at the attrition rate of teachers with 5 or fewer years of

experience revealed that two-thirds of potentially highly effective new teachers in

developed countries leave the profession within the first 2 years (Headden, 2014).

According to Callahan (2016), it takes 6 to 7 years for a new teacher to gain the

experience that will make them highly effective. Comparing attrition rate between

beginning teachers and experienced teachers, Struyven and Vanthournout (2014) reported

that the attrition rate is higher among new teachers. Beginning teachers enter the

profession with dreams of making a difference in the lives of their students but, the

attrition rate indicates that this enthusiasm dies within the first years.

      The challenges new teachers face with classroom management, transition into

disillusionment and high-stress level among new teachers (Voss, Wagner, Klusmann,

Trautwein, & Kunter, 2017). However, researchers such as Izadinia, Glassford and

Salinitri have shown that mentoring is instrumental in minimizing the attrition rate of

beginning teachers. The relationship between a mentor and a beginning teacher can positively impact a new teacher's decision to remain in the teaching profession (Izadinia, 2015). Additionally, Glassford and Salinitri (2017) argued that mentoring is crucial to the retention of new teachers. Therefore, to address the attrition rate of new teachers, some school districts implement mentoring programs with the intention to minimizing job-related stress (Israel, Kamman, McCray, & Sindelar, 2014). However, the amount of mentoring provided to new teachers varies across school districts and schools (Kelly, Reushle, Chakrabarty, & Kinnane, 2014). The need for this study emerges because the effective strategies that might help mentors support new teachers lack definition.

Mentoring. While the education of future teachers is the responsibility of universities and colleges, teacher education extends as beginning teachers rely on mentors for guidance and support. According to Taylor, Klein, and Abrams (2014), some universities attempt to provide practical experiences for the teachers in training however, teacher education continues as the mentors become the primary teacher educators when the new teachers enter the classroom. Because teacher preparation programs are insufficient in providing the insight and knowledge new teachers need to perform effectively, beginning teachers need mentoring (Polikoff, Desimone, Porter, & Hochberg, 2015). As a result, the role of the mentor is to bridge the gap between a degree in education and the practical world of teaching (Heeralal, 2014).

Mentoring involves facilitating professional growth among new teachers, analyzing effective teaching strategies, understanding adult learning, and implementing effective mentoring strategies (Sunde & Ulvik, 2014). Others such as van Ginkel,

Verloop, and Denessen (2016) described mentoring as a community in which both experienced and inexperienced teachers engage in mutual learning. Conversely, Kemmis, Heikkinen, Fransson, Aspfors, and Edwards-Groves (2014) defined mentoring as a social practice because it depends on the way individuals interact with each other. Regardless of the differences in definitions, mentoring has positively influenced teacher-efficacy, teaching commitment, and teacher retention (Glassford & Salinitri, 2017). Additionally, Sunde and Ulvik (2014) stated that mentoring has the potential to improve the quality of education in public schools; and is the common solution to the high attrition rate of new teachers. Similarly, Izadinia (2015) argued that the wide research on mentoring implies that researchers agree on mentoring being crucial to the professional growth among new teachers.

Traditionally, future teachers learn teaching strategies independently of teaching experiences. However, mentoring serves to make the connections between theory and practice for these beginning teachers (Heeralal, 2014). Researchers such as Banks, Jackson, and Harper (2014) argued that the disconnect between theory and practice contributes to the lack of skill development and mastery among beginning teachers. Cochran-Smith et al. (2015) concluded that teacher preparation programs focus on teacher learning rather than how teacher learning will affect student learning. As a result, there is a disconnect between university learning and the classroom practices of a new teacher (Cochran-Smith et al., 2015).

The interchangeable use of the terms mentoring and new teacher induction implies there is confusion in practice; and thus, mentoring remains undefined, and lacks

structure (Pennanen, Bristol, Wilkinson, & Heikkinen, 2016). Conversely, researchers such as Sundae and Ulvik (2014) acknowledged the importance of mentoring in the support and retention of new teacher. However, the strategies that might make mentoring more effective are not clearly defined. The uniqueness of each situation shapes the mentoring strategies and presents challenges when implementing mentoring practices in different settings (Pennanen, Bristol, Wilkinson, & Heikkinen, 2016). As a result, the advantages of mentoring may vary and thus, the humanistic approach appropriately addresses the research problem.

Current issues surrounding mentoring. Some school districts have adopted mentoring programs to support the new teachers however, researchers such as Headden, Sundae, and Ulvik questioned the effectiveness of mentoring practices. Headden (2014) reported that although some school districts implement mentoring programs to support new teachers, there is little improvement in the turnover rate of new teachers; and the turnover rate of those in special education was two to three times higher than it was before the mentoring program. Sunde and Ulvik (2014) aligned the failure in mentoring with the idea that school leaders view mentoring as providing information, guiding, and that years of service is the only factor when recruiting mentors. Additionally, Knight et al. (2014) questioned the current practices of those who educate teachers and argued that the study of teacher education needs attention.

Knight et al. (2014) argued that like teaching, mentoring should be strategic and guided by effective strategies that will ensure success; instead, it is misguided and lacks structure in mentor practices. Similarly, Aspfors and Fransson (2015) stated that

challenges with mentoring emerge from the scarcity of literature on mentor practices and the strategies that guide these practices. Also, education leaders across school districts informed that there is a lack of accurate data on the policies and practices associated with the mentoring programs (DeCesare, Workman, & McClelland, 2016). Despite the crucial role mentors play in the PD of new teachers, research showed the lack of structure in mentoring practices and the undefined strategies mentors currently implement (Ambrosetti, 2014).

Conclusion

Based on the literature reviewed, mentoring is vital to the professional growth of new teachers. Although mentoring programs for beginning teachers are implemented in the local public schools, the attrition rate of new teachers continues to be of concern to school leaders and educators. The literature indicated that mentoring lacks organization and structure and the strategies implemented by mentors need definition and clarity. This study will show the strategies mentors perceive as effective and the findings could potentially influence the organization and clarification of a set of effective mentoring strategies. The humanistic approach is appropriate in guiding this basic qualitative research and the process of identifying these strategies is consistent with the nature of the study.

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Implications

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Because mentors play a crucial role in the growth and development of new teachers, this project sought to show mentoring practices that could help in addressing a gap in practice; by identifying and examining those strategies that mentors perceive to be

effective. Implications for possible project directions are based on the findings of the data

collected through interviews with the mentors at a local public high school. The findings

could provide mentoring strategies that might be shared with other mentors. The

strategies identified from the research could inform projects such as face-to-face

professional trainings, the development of a mentor manual, or online courses for

mentors. The implications for positive social change are the school district provide

mentor teachers with a defined set of mentoring strategies to strengthen their practices,

the attrition rate among beginning teachers could decline, and students' performance

could improve.

Summary

The implementation of effective mentoring strategies demands the attention of

researchers. Mentoring remains in great demand because of the large number of new

teachers. The lack of structure in, and definition of, effective mentoring strategies could

influence the performance of mentors. Therefore, I used a basic qualitative research

design to identify those strategies that mentors perceive as effective. The humanistic

theory of learning was the conceptual framework of this study as it is relevant to the

process of involving individuals in identifying professional development and

opportunities for learning.

Section 2 contains information on the methodology including the design and its

justification. The data collection process is discussed along with the procedures for

gaining access to participants. For this study the targeted population was a group of 10

mentors at a public high school high school in South Florida. A discussion of the specific qualitative approach and justification of the research design will be presented. The data collection process will be discussed along with the procedures for gaining access to participants.

Section 3 includes a description of how the research findings informed the proposed project. A review of related literature was conducted to support the development and design of the project. An analysis of how theory and research support the content of the of the project will be presented. The planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project will also be discussed along with the implications of the project.

In Section 4 the strengths and limitations of the project will be discussed. Recommendations and alternative approaches to the research problem will be presented. I will also discuss the scholarship, project development, leadership and change specific to the research. A reflection on the importance of the work along with implications and applications for future research will also be included in this section.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

This study used a basic qualitative approach, which according to Kahlke (2014),

is appropriate when examining the meaning participants make of their experiences.

Kahlke (2014) argued that the basic qualitative approach allows researchers to think in

new ways and examine new ideas to meet research needs. The purpose of a basic

qualitative approach is to learn about an issue or find answers to a specific question

(Kahlke, 2014), or to study participants' perceptions of certain practices and events

(Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015). Thus, a basic qualitative method aligns with the

purpose of this study, which is to examine mentors' perceptions of effective mentoring

strategies.

According to Atieno (2009), a quantitative research is limited in nature as is seeks

to show a small portion of a situation. A quantitative study would not have worked

because the data it would have produced would not have been able to answer the research

questions. Also, a mixed method approach would not have been a prudent decision for

this study because according to Bentahar and Cameron (2015), a mixed method approach

allows combination of different data sources. This study required data from one source

only, which makes a qualitative approach the best fit.

Examining mentors' perspectives of effective mentoring strategies is consistent

with the humanistic learning theory that DeCarvalho (1991) described as the intrinsic

motivation that propels humans to reach their full potential. Johnson (2014) informed that

the humanistic approach to learning allows the learner to explore learnings that are

relevant to their every-day experiences and explore those learnings to enhance their professional growth. A basic qualitative research design is best when the research seeks to examine participants' perceptions or experiences in relationship to a problem (Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015). Therefore, a qualitative methodology would best address the research questions because it allows the mentors to provide rich and insightful data to identify effective mentoring strategies.

Participants

To conduct a deep inquiry and gain insightful feedback, the participants were a group of 10 mentors from a public high school in South Florida. I selected them using purposeful sampling, as the sample consists of experienced teachers who serve as mentors. Ten participants were enough for a qualitative study of this nature (Van Manen, 2016). Fusch and Nuss (2015) suggested that qualitative researchers should select the sample size that ensures data saturation. A large sample does not necessarily determine saturation instead, the researcher should focus on who makes up the sample and the quality of data collected (Fusch & Nuss, 2015). The sample consists of mentors from different backgrounds who possess different levels of mentoring skills. The procedure for gaining access to participants included (a) requesting permission from the school district, (b) e-mailing an invitation letter to the principal (Appendix B) requesting permission to conduct the study among the mentors at the targeted school, (c) posting a flyer (Appendix C) to inform and gain the attention of the mentors, (d) then sending an invitation letter (Appendix D) to each mentor, by e-mail, to recruit 10 participants.

To establish a positive researcher-participant relationship and gain trust, I informed the mentors, by e-mail, of the purpose of the study, explained the data collection method, and provided information on the security and privacy of any information they might provide. The measures I executed to ensure the protection of participants' rights was stated in the consent form. Additionally, other measures were taken such as (a) confidentiality in how I collected and shared information, (b) information was shared with the nonidentification of the participants, and (c) participants are protected from harm by not linking participants to any specific piece of information. Finally, I requested and received the approval (No. 07-24-18-0658193) of the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB) before conducting this research.

Data Collection

For this qualitative study, I collected data on mentors' perceptions of mentoring strategies and their professional needs. The research questions guided the type of qualitative data collected. The data collection instruments I designed are an individual interview protocol (Appendix E) and a focus group protocol (Appendix F). These instruments were based on the constructs of the framework and the concepts in related literature.

The data collection process included 10 individual phone interviews and two face-to-face focus group interviews. Each focus group included five mentors. The interviews were recorded using a phone recording application and a hand-held voice recording device. The raw data were then documented to accommodate coding.

I designed the interview questions and the focus group protocol to allow participants the opportunity to respond to the given prompts and justify their answers when needed. Each phone interview was conducted during noninstructional time in a secured environment to ensure that the interview was not interrupted. When conducting the phone interviews, each participant was advised to use a secure room designed for private phone calls, and I used a secure room also. The face-to-face focus group interviews were also executed in a secured classroom during noninstructional time.

As the researcher, I assumed the role of the interviewer, data collector, and data recorder. I had no previous professional relationship with the mentors at the targeted school before we established a researcher-participant relationship. The common experience I have with the participants is that I also work as a mentor at another public high school in the targeted school district. The potential bias that may exist, could be my interest in those strategies I believe to be effective. To reduce the effect of researcher's bias, Johnson (1997) recommended the implementation of the reflexivity strategy. Reflexivity is a practice in which the researcher examines biases and conducts critical self-evaluation of personality that might influence the research process and outcome (Berger, 2015). Implementing reflexivity strategy, I used a researcher journal and identified the bias as my perceptions of effective mentoring strategies. To minimize the effects my perceptions might have on the data, I monitored and controlled the data collection process by executing continual self-evaluations in the reflexive process. One of the strategies I implemented during the interview was to withhold my views on the mentoring strategies I perceive to be effective. To ensure that I withheld my view, I noted

my biases in my researcher journal and reviewed my notes as I conducted data collection and data analysis. As a result, mentors were able to share their perceptions on effective mentoring strategies without the influence of my views and concerns.

Data Analysis

A qualitative analysis of data helps the researcher to identify and explain common views among the data (Dey, 2003). According to Zhang and Wildemuth (2016), qualitative analysis goes beyond the organization of data; it provides the researcher with an understanding of social phenomena from a subjective view. Because the codes and themes are determined by the data collected, the type of data analysis implemented for this study was an inductive approach. According to Ravitch and Carl (2015), inductive analysis is driven by the data. Data analysis may consist of many phases and the researcher should always engage with the data throughout each phase of analysis (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). For this data analysis I used precoding, open coding, and axial coding, which resulted in three themes.

Coding helps with organization of data and ensures that the information is manageable (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007). The first phase of data analysis included precoding, wherein I reviewed the oral recordings from the phone and focus group interviews to become familiar with the data. According to Ravitch and Carl (2015), this phase is important for the researcher to understand the overall concepts provided by the participants. The second phase of the inductive analysis process was open coding. Open coding is used to identify repeated words and phrases (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). The last phase, axial coding, is used to form categories of the open coded

data and raw data (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). In this phase relationships and patterns among

the axial codes is determined and may result in themes emerging.

Discrepant cases may occur in qualitative research. These are alternative points of

view provided by participants that do not support the themes (Ravitch & Carl, 2015).

There were no case of discrepancy that surfaced throughout the data analysis.

Data Analysis Results

This section provides a review of the processes by which data were generated,

gathered, and recorded. My first contact with the mentors was by e-mail. In this e-mail, I

introduced myself, explained the nature of the study, and invited the mentors to

participate in the study. Each mentor consented to participate by responding to the e-mail.

Second, I scheduled and conducted a phone interview with each mentor. Each interview

was recorded, after receiving verbal consent from the participants, using two different

forms of recording devices. The duration of each individual interview was from 18-30

minutes. I conducted the interviews over a period of 1week with approximately two

interviews per day. Both focus group interviews were face-to-face and were conducted on

the same day for approximately 30 minutes each.

The individual interview consisted of eight questions that addressed the first

research question centering on the mentoring strategies high school mentors perceive to

be effective. For the focus group, there were six interview questions. The second research

question centered on the professional needs of the mentors and was addresses during the

focus group interviews. All data were collected within 2 weeks as scheduled. The

individual interviews were conducted during the first week and the focus group

interviews were conducted during the second week of the data collection process. The recorded data were stored in my phone with a secured password. Additionally, the hand-held recorder was stored in a locked safe at my home. Hand-written data and researcher journal were also stored in the safe with the recorder.

Data analysis began once the phone interviews were conducted and recorded. I analyzed all qualitative data inductively in three phases; precoding, open coding, and axial coding. The precoding of the interviews was conducted at the end of each day. I precoded data from two interviews each day for the first week of data collection. Precoding for the focus group interviews was conducted during the second week of data collection. Once the precoding process was complete, I began the open coding process followed by the axial coding.

Precoding

After gathering and recording data, I executed the first phase of the inductive analysis. For Phase 1 of the analysis, I replayed the recordings of each interview and documented the information. Each participant was assigned a number for identification purpose and to separate the data among the participants. The recordings were replayed more than once to familiarize myself with the data. Ravitch and Carl (2015) refer to this strategy as precoding. During the first phase I listened to each interview twice before documenting the information. Additionally, I paid attention to the overall concepts the participants provided. After listening to the recordings, I documented phrases from each interview while reflecting on the research questions.

Open Coding

The procedure I executed for Phase 2 was a preliminary or an open coding process. Ravitch and Carl (2015) refer to this stage as the first level coding in which the researcher assigns words or phrases to the data. As a result, I assigned tentative words and phrases to summarize meanings emerging from the data as shown in Table 1. During this phase, I coded data collected from each interview and the focus groups individually then combined all the codes. During this phase there were some overlapping codes.

Table 1

Open Codes Derived from the Data

Phrases from data	Open Codes
Introduce new teacher to the culture of the school.	School culture
Encourage new teachers to attend sports events or sponsor a club after school.	After school activities
Join the school family	School family
Be a source of information	Source of information
Inform new teacher of the do's and don'ts	Do's and don'ts
Provide information on the basic day to day tasks	Day to day tasks
Share and learn from new teacher	Share information
Positive constructive feedback	Feedback
Build a professional relationship with new teacher	Relationship
Build trust Support	Trust
Problem solving	Solve problem

Care about the professional wellbeing of the new teacher	Professionalism
Collaboration Walk side-by-side with new teacher as they go through each teaching experience	Collaboration
Classroom visit must involve data collection	Use of data
Use data to drive discussion/Reflection Use data to identify areas of concerns	Data driven discussion Presenting data
Meet regularly for reflection Check in on teacher	Frequent reflections
Use reflection to identify needs and challenges	Meet for reflections
Schedule visits for new teacher to observe other experienced teachers with similar teaching assignment.	Observe experienced teachers Similar teaching assignments
Mentor should accompany new teachers for observation to have a richer discussion on any new learning that may occur.	Observe with new teachers
Discuss theory versus real-world teaching.	Theory and practice
Generate discussions about teaching as a profession	New teacher expectations
Address any unrealistic expectation the new teacher might have about teaching. Teaching is not a 9 to 5 job Address unrealistic expectations	Unrealistic expectations
Teaching strategies	Best practices
Professional conduct Collaboration with PLC members Co-teaching	Professionalism

Axial Coding

During the third phase of analysis, I organized the codes from Phase 2 by grouping them to create meaningful information (Table 2). Ravitch and Carl (2015) referred to this phase as the final or axial coding. Axial coding involves identifying relationships and patterns among the open codes and raw data. St. Pierre and Jackson (2014) encouraged the researcher to reflect on new learning and how the codes relate to the research questions. For the axial coding phase, I reflected on the codes and identified relationships and patterns among the open codes. I worked on arranging the open codes into categories. First, I color coded the open coded according to their patterns and relationships. I then narrowed down the categories by eliminating categories with only 1 open code. I created a table to show the codes into different clusters.

Table 2

Axial Codes Derived from the Open Codes

Open Codes	Axial Codes
School culture	School culture
After school activities	
School family	
Source of information	Information sharing
Do's and don'ts	
Day to day tasks	
Share information	
feedback	
Relationship	Mentor-mentee Relationship
Trust	
Solve problem	
Professionalism	
Collaboration	
Use of data	Use of data in mentoring

Data driven discussion		
Presenting data		
Frequent reflections	Reflection	
Meet for reflections		
Mentee observes experienced teachers	Observation	
Similar teaching assignments		
Mentor observe with new teachers		
Theory and practice	Unrealistic expectations	
New teacher expectations		
Mentees' unrealistic expectations		
Best practices	Modeling	
Professionalism		

Themes

Based on the coding procedure themes can emerge. Themes are broad statements

that include the categories to bring meaning to the patterns and clusters (Ravitch & Carl,

2015). During the analysis of the data three themes (Table 3) were identified among the

coded data. Addressing the first research question, the mentors focused on mentor

practices that addressed the unrealistic expectations of beginning teachers. Also, the

mentors stressed the importance of effective communication in mentoring. In reference to

the second research question, mentors identified 3 skills experienced teachers need as

they assume the role of mentors.

Table 3

Themes Derived from the Axial Codes

Axial Codes	Themes	Research Question
School culture	Addressing the unrealistic	What strategies do high
Unrealistic expectation	expectations of new teachers	school mentor teachers
		perceive to be effective
Mentor-mentee relationship	Effective communication is	when mentoring new
Modeling	crucial to mentor new teachers	teachers?

Reflection		
Observation Use of data in mentoring Information sharing	Mentors need to acquire certain skills to function effectively	What are the professional needs of an experienced teacher who assumes the role of a mentor teacher?

Addressing new teachers' unrealistic expectations. The participants discussed that new teachers who involve themselves in the life of the school are more successful than those who stay away from sporting events and other extracurricular activities. According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) teaching is more than imparting knowledge; it is forming relationship and caring for the students. Participant A stated that seeing the students interact in activities outside of the classroom helps the new teachers understand the needs and behavior of the students they work with in the classroom. The mentors referred to this best practice as helping new teachers join the school family. Observing the students in different environments outside the classroom helps the beginning teachers to better understand the reality of teaching and address their unrealistic expectations of the profession.

The mentors believed that the new teachers enter the teaching profession with unrealistic expectations developed as a result of the theories of teaching. However, the reality of the modern classroom sometimes finds beginning teachers unprepared for teaching. Theories of teaching present an unrealistic classroom setting that excludes the challenges teachers face with the classroom procedures and student behaviors. Johnson (2002) encouraged mentors to clarify expectations before entering the mentoring process. This is another area of concern voiced by the mentors and addressing this issue as early

as possible becomes a necessary practice for the mentors. This practice is consistent with the framework, the humanistic theory of learning, as the mentors guided the new teacher in realizing hidden knowledge about student behavior to facilitate professional growth.

Effective communication is crucial to mentor new teachers. Effective communication was generated through the responses from the participants. All the participants stated the importance of effective communication with the mentors. Consistent with the framework, the humanistic theory of learning, effective communication included building trust, support, problem solving, collaboration, and caring about the wellbeing of the new teacher. According to Johnson (2002), successful mentoring is based on the quality of the communication shared between mentor and mentee.

Reflection is a vital part of mentor-mentee communication as it is through this process the mentees can identify their areas of weaknesses and strengths. According to the mentors, reflection is also vital to the professional growth of the new teacher. It is through reflection that a new teacher can analyze and solve some of the problems or challenges they face in the classroom. However, 100% of the participants identified this area as the most challenging. The challenges are scheduling and the availability for communication. Most new teachers do not have planning at the same time with their mentors and meeting after school is sometimes affected by the other responsibilities of the new teachers and the mentors. The mentors simply checked on the new teacher whenever they could, such as during class change or before classes begin each morning.

Modeling was emphasized, during the focus group discussion, as a form of effectively communicating professional behaviors. The mentors believed that the day-to-day professional behavior of the mentor can influence the professional growth of the mentee. Professional behaviors were modeled in professional learning communities, professional conduct, implementation of teaching strategies, and co-teaching. Intentional modeling provides practical demonstration of professional practices and thus, learning is more concrete (Johnson, 2002). Additionally, Carroll and Barnes (2015) discussed the invaluable learning new teachers receive as they observe experienced teaches respond to complicated situation that may arise in the profession. Therefore, mentors must practice those behaviors they intend to communicate to the new teacher.

Mentors need to acquire certain skills to function effectively. According to the participants, the necessary mentoring skills include observation, use of data, and information sharing. Throughout the interviews all the participants emphasized the importance of conducting observations. The information from the mentors showed two crucial points. First, mentors should accompany new teachers when they observe experienced teachers to ensure accurate information gathering. According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2000), new teachers become more effective when they learn from a community of experienced teachers. Second, mentors should master the skills of focusing on one area of concern when observing the beginning teacher. The participants discussed that the mentors need to develop observation skills that will make the mentor-mentee discussion, after the observation, meaningful and productive.

Classroom visits must involve data collection. Data can provide the new teacher with valuable information on areas of concerns, their progress, and their achievements (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). The mentors discussed the importance of using data to drive discussions with the new teachers. Data are less threatening than the opinion of the mentor. It is more effective to used data collected during an observation to show areas of concerns than verbally presenting this information. Through data the mentee can identify areas of weaknesses and strengths. Also, mentors need to acquire skills in collecting organizing and presenting data that will show areas of weaknesses and strengths.

The mentors believed that it is vital for the new teacher to acquire basic information that is important for the day-to-day functioning of a successful teacher. All the mentors stated that giving feedback on a lesson was a major part of their relationship building with the beginning teachers as there is much new teachers need to learn about teaching. Providing positive constructive feedback is also an important skill necessary to mentor new teachers as the mentor's feedback can build or damage the new teacher's confidence as an effective teacher. Positive constructive feedback is the art of helping new teachers to grow professionally or strengthen their teaching practices. Mentors must be careful of being judgmental or dismissive of the mentees ability to identify and address issues that may occur during the learning process. The framework supports this theme as the perspectives of the learners are used to support and inform professional growth among the new teachers. Additionally, the mentors shared that mentors and mentees learn from each other, and this give-and-take dialogue helps to build positive professional relationship.

Although participants provided different types of information, the salient data I considered were those pertaining to mentoring strategies. During the individual phone interviews, five out of 10 mentors focused on teaching strategies rather than mentoring strategies. In those cases, I redirected the discussions towards mentor-mentee relationship. During the focus groups all participants focused on the interview questions as they applied to mentoring and not classroom teaching strategies.

Procedures to address accuracy of data analysis included reflexivity strategies. Reflexivity is an ongoing process that dominates the research process (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). The reflexivity strategy was used to address the quality of the data, data collection, and data analysis. According to Berger (2015), the researcher must address any bias that may influence the data. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) explained that reflexivity involves ongoing reflection, questioning and investigation of not only the data but the researcher's biases, the context of the research problem, and the participants. As the interviewer, I withheld my ideas and views on the collected data. I also withheld my ideas and views throughout the individual and focus group interviews. Throughout the data analysis processes, I used a researcher's journal to conduct continuous reflection of the coding processes to scrutinize any effects my bias might have on the data analysis. I also interrogated my actions during coding and interpretation of data to ensure reflexivity.

Based on the findings that addressed the research questions, three themes emerged from the analysis.

1. Addressing the unrealistic expectations of new teachers.

2. Effective communication is crucial to mentor new teachers

3. Mentors need to acquire certain skills to function effectively

Within each theme, participants shared specific concerns pertaining to new teachers' expectations and effective communication. Additionally, mentors identified specific skills that would assist them in their role as mentors. Mentors expressed concerns regarding new teachers in relation to school culture and their expectations. To increase effective communication, mentors asserted that building closer relationship with the mentees and providing opportunities for teacher modeling and mentee reflective practices would achieve this goal. Lastly, mentors disclosed that opportunities for observations of experienced teachers and data sharing with mentees would strengthen mentors' skills in supporting new teachers. When all these factors are in place for beginning teachers, the mentors believed the opportunities would lead to the retention of beginning teachers.

Conclusion

Although the participants agreed on the mentoring practices they perceive as effective, evidence from the data revealed the lack of structure with which these mentors implement these practices. As a result, the data analysis indicates the need for a PD to promote the implementation of an intentionally defined set of effective mentoring strategies that will strengthen and add structure to the mentoring process. As an outcome of the data analysis results, the project deliverable to address the gap in mentoring practices is a 3-day face-to-face PD. Additionally, a PD that places the needs of the mentors at the center of learning.

In Section 3, I will describe the project and discuss the literature that supports its design and development. The project evaluation plan will also be discussed.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

In this section, I will discuss literature on the approaches to the development of an effective project to address the research problem. Based on the literature reviewed, the project genre selected was a face-to-face professional development because it was consistent with the nature, purpose, and the conceptual framework of the study. The research problem centered on the lack of structure with which mentors implement mentoring strategies when supporting new teachers. As a result, the purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore mentor teachers' perceptions on effective mentoring strategies and the needs of mentors. The result of the data analysis showed three themes: effective communications, new teachers' unrealistic expectations, and specific skills needed by mentors. From the themes emerged eight mentoring strategies mentors perceived to be effective. Thus, the purpose of this project was to share a clearly defined set of eight mentoring strategies with mentors at the targeted school district:

1. Promote school culture.

2. Be a source of information.

3. Build relationships.

4. Utilize data to drive discussion.

5. Provide opportunity for reflection.

6. Conduct observations.

7. Connect theory with practice.

8. Model professional behavior.

Added to the defined mentoring strategies, this PD sought to provide mentors with practical experiences and the opportunity to reflect on the skills necessary to implement these strategies. The PD planning and design allowed time for mentors to access information, collaborate, and reflect on their practices. The timeframe for the implementation of the PD was 3 days. However, there were opportunities for participants to share, reflect, and support each other after the implementation of the PD. The PD was extended to mentors across the school district.

Rationale

Experienced teachers take on extra responsibilities when they volunteer to mentor beginning teachers and therefore, the needs and concerns of mentors are instrumental in the selection of the project genre; a PD to address the needs of the mentors. Based on the literature reviewed and result of the data analysis, a face-to-face PD was appropriate in addressing the research problem. According to Fishman et al. (2013), there is not much difference in the cost and time required for both online and face-to-face PD. Therefore, the selection of a PD must be determined by the needs of the mentors and appropriateness in each situation. I selected a face-to-face PD because it provided the appropriate setting for mentor modeling and discussions that are the highlights of the PD.

Traditional PD centers on the process rather than the product (Guskey, 2014). Consequently, what is missing in most traditional PD is a clear understanding of the purpose of the training (Guskey, 2014). As a result, PD is sometimes viewed by teachers as a waste of time (Bayar, 2014). Conversely, PD for the 21st century place emphasis on what the learner can do with new information rather that how much information the

learner can acquire (Blackley & Sheffield, 2015). In Section 2, the result of the data analysis showed behaviors mentors believe will ensure effective mentoring practices. The learning outcome of this project reflects the 21st century approach to PD as it centers on those mentoring strategies that will effect positive change in the professional practices of mentors.

Bayar (2014) constructed a description of an effective PD by exploring the perspectives of teachers. Bayer concluded that the key components of an effective PD for teachers are relevance and follow-up. Teachers work within a limited timeframe and according to Prestridge and Tondeur (2015), will benefit more from a professional development that is relevant to their practices, encourages collaboration, and minimizes the focus on written assignments. Furthermore, Polgampala, Shen, and Huang (2017) argued that PD that focuses on written assignments may result in less learning compared to PD that motivates and encourages teachers to implement new learning.

Current literature on PD for mentors, centers on the implementation of teaching strategies with very little focus on effective mentoring strategies (Polgampala, Shen, & Huang, 2017). However, Bayar (2014) emphasized the importance of relevance in any PD. The relevance of this PD is reflected in the content as mentoring strategies are pertinent to the mentors. Therefore, this project will direct the focus of the PD on the professional growth of mentors rather than classroom teaching strategies. As a result, the research problem will be addressed through a PD that is relevant, allows time for practice, and encourages reflection through follow-ups.

Review of the Literature

The content of this section involves a review of the literature associated with PD for adult learners. Based of the data analysis, I selected a face-to-face PD for the project. The purpose of the literature review was to identify empirical data that would guide the development of the PD. Additionally, the literature will inform the planning and design of an effective PD for mentors. To conduct this literature review, the search involved current literature from peer-reviewed journal articles along with books, books, and current events associated with PD. Literature on the education and PD of mentors are few and therefore, other search terms were selected to provide literature that would inform the design of the project. Search terms used to drive this review were professional development, adult education, mentor, theories of learning, and mentoring strategies. Saturation was achieved by exploring a variety of databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, and ProQuest.

Professional Development

Bayar (2014) argued that traditional PD has less impact on teachers' performance compared to nontraditional PD that requires extra time investment and follow-up activities. Traditionally, PD is described as essential to the growth and effective functioning of an individual in the work place (Bayar, 2014). According to de las Alas (as cited in Polgampala, Shen, & Huang, 2017), an effective PD includes follow-up, active learning, and collaboration. In addition, Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner, (2017), stated that PD that works involves seven features; content focused, active learning, collaboration, models of effective practice, support, reflection, and adequate time for

participants to practice new learning. Similarly, to maximize the effectiveness of PD, Zepeda, Parylo, and Bengtson (2014) suggested the combination of theory, practice, collaboration, and follow-up. Moreover, Aspfors (2015) stated that PD of mentors needs to be continuous and this might be done through mentoring those who mentor. Additionally, PD that minimizes assignments increases participation because the learners are encouraged to collaborate without the stress of assessment (Prestridge & Tondeur, 2015). Researchers have suggested many features that might make professional development more effective however, there are some features that are key to the success of any PD.

The key to an effective PD is to utilize the features that are relevant to the success of the participants (Tondeur, Forkosh-Baruch, Prestridge, Albion, & Edirisinghe, 2016). An important part of ensuring relevance in a PD for teachers is to use data to drive the planning process (Lunenberg, Dengerink, & Korthagen, 2014). Also, support and funding are crucial to the success of a PD. An effective professional development requires the support of education leaders such as principals, superintendents, and education leaders (Patton, Parker, & Tannehill, 2015). Additionally, Guskey (2014) argued that professional development may include all the features, content, and design nevertheless, planning is the key component for success.

Planning is the heart of any effective PD (Guskey, 2014). According to Bayar (2014) the purpose of an effective PD is to effect positive social change by improving or changing behavior. Whitworth and Chiu (2015) warned that internal factors such as school culture, teacher interest, and lack of funds can influence the effectiveness of a PD.

Therefore, potential factors that might influence learning and participation should be considered during the planning process (Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). Because the goal of any PD is to effect positive social change, Guskey (2014) suggested the implementation of a strategy known as backward planning. This strategy requires the planner to start at the learning outcome then design strategies that will ensure learning (Guskey, 2014). Because the learning outcome of the PD centers on the change in professional behavior among the mentors, backward planning is prudent to this project. To plan a PD that works, an understanding of issues surrounding the education of mentors is critical.

Education of Mentors

According to Davis, Sinclair, Gschwend (2015), mentoring is a relationship, between two individuals, to effect positive professional growth. To facilitate the mentoring relationship, Aspfors and Fransson (2015) stated that mentors require specific skills and knowledge. However, Aspfors and Fransson (2015) discussed the challenges associated with the professional knowledge and skills of those who mentor. Additionally, Aspfors and Fransson (2015) stated that education programs for mentors should be theoretical, practical, and evidence-based to best fit the dynamic nature of mentoring. Moreover, it is alarming that school districts with established mentoring programs do not have organized mentor education programs (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015). Also, the study of teacher education and the practices of those who educate teachers are overlooked (Lunenberg, Dengerink, & Korthagen, 2014). Davis, Sinclair, and Gschwend (2015) stated that mentors need ongoing support to facilitate effective mentoring strategies and they should be educated on how adults learn.

Callahan (2016) argued that teachers who mentor should be experienced, knowledgeable, and confident. Also, Hudson et al. (2015) stated that mentoring requires experienced teachers who possess the ability to work with other adults. However, experienced teachers might not readily possess the skills necessary to mentor beginning teachers (Callahan, 2016). Consistent with the problem statement for this study, many mentoring programs do not include an intentionally defined set of strategies to guide those who mentor (Hudson et al., 2015). As a result, Callahan (2016) proposed training that will equip mentors with a set of strategies to facilitate effective mentoring. Childre and Van Rie (2015) stated that mentors are more successful if they are given guidance, support, and structure to perform their duties. Callahan (2016) argued that the strength of any mentor program depends on the knowledge and skills of the mentors. Consequently, effective PD is essential to quality mentoring (Callahan, 2016). Because mentors can be described as adult learners and/or adult educators, an understanding of adult education becomes crucial in designing PD for the mentors.

Adult Education

Mentors, among other things, are both adult learners and adult educators; to successfully plan and implement learning mentors must have knowledge of how adults learn. Malcolm Knowles was instrumental in the promotion of andragogy as the art and science of adult education (Blackley & Sheffield, 2015). According to Blackley and Sheffield (2015), andragogy provides effective strategies that will facilitate adult learning because adults learn differently in comparison to children. Knowles (as cited in Park, Robinson & Bates, 2016) presented six assumptions of andragogy as previous

experiences, learning readiness, motivation, reason for learning, orientation and self-directed learning. Blackley and Sheffield (2015) described the approach to adult education in the 21st century with a focus on andragogy. The 21st century approach involves the principles of andragogy in a technologically enhanced setting (Blackley, & Sheffield, 2015).

Peeters et al. (2014) argued that adult learning is achieved through activities that improve or redefine previous learning and perceptions. Peeters et al. (2014) defined adult learning as making sense of personal experiences or phenomena. According to Taylor (2017), the importance of placing the experiences of the learners at the center of learning is vital to the adult learning process. Ozuah (2016) presented six assumptions of adult learning which stated (a) adults need to know the benefits of their learning, (b) the leaning needs to be self-directed (c) the learner's prior experiences need to be taking into consideration, (d) the topic needs to be relevant to the learner, (e) learning needs to be problem-centered, and (f) motivation is necessary. Nevertheless, Rothes, Lemos, and Gonçalves (2017), in the presentation of the self-determination theory, argued that motivation is the main feature of adult learning and both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation is instrumental in adult education. Learning theories are vital in understanding how adults learn and is crucial to the success of this PD.

The humanistic learning theory informed the design of this PD as the assumptions of adult learning were consistent with the nature of the humanistic theory. According to Ozuah (2016), the humanistic learning theory is flexible and can be redesigned to fit the needs of different learners. Moreover, the principle of the humanistic learning theory is

that the instructor reacts to the needs of the learner as it is problem-based and leads to

self-fulfillment (Ozuah, 2016). According to Puteh, Kaliannan, and Alam (2015), adult

learners strive to be actively involved in their learning because they become highly

motivated by their need to learn a specific body of knowledge or skill. The mentors'

intrinsic motivation to acquire skills and knowledge of effective mentoring strategies will

stimulate their interest in the PD.

Effective Mentoring Strategies

The way adults learn, and the nature of adult education contribute to the

identification of effective mentoring strategies. The strategies identified by the

participants compared with mentoring strategies suggested by other researchers, will be

intentionally defined and structured to create this PD for mentors. Izadinia (2015)

suggested that mentoring strategies that encourage beginning teachers to face challenges

and take risks are recognized as effective strategies. The collaborative strategy in

mentoring involves the mentors' willingness to share not only their strengths but also

their weaknesses with their mentees (Liu, Tsai, & Huang, 2015). According to Izadinia

(2015) three components of an effective mentoring strategy are encouragement, feedback,

and collaboration. New teachers experience different types of emotional stress thus,

mentors need to be aware of these emotions and provide emotional support (Izadinia,

2015). McDougall (2015) discussed that if adult learners can share their experiences this

will enhance their involvement and feeling of acceptance which is consistent with the

theories of adult education.

Mentors are responsible for engaging the new teacher in discussions about teaching practices. These conversations can sometimes prove to be challenging for the mentors because they provide feedback on the performance of the beginning teachers. Dobrowolska and Balslev (2017) referred to these discussions as mentoring conversations in which the mentor sets out to critique the practices of the new teacher. Mentors must be prepared when implementing this strategy because of the delicacy of the subject (Dobrowolska & Balsley, 2017). As a result, mentoring conversation is one of the strategies through which new teachers build or gain professional learning. However, Carroll and Barnes (2015) discussed that an effective mentoring strategy is not based on the amount of time spend for mentoring conversations but rather the development of trust and the quality of the relationship between the mentor and mentee.

Sheridan and Nguyen (2015) identified 4 phases of mentoring that will maximize the performance of beginning teaches. These phases are orientation, acquisition of knowledge, practicing, and perfecting the practices. Sheridan and Nguyen (2015) believed that the order of these phases is vital to the growth and development of the new teacher. Orientation to the teaching profession and the teaching community must be addressed before the new teachers begin to focus on implementing the theoretical knowledge they received from the university. The practicing and perfecting of teaching strategies follow the knowledge acquisition stage. Conversely, Vollmer et al. (2017) approached mentoring by first investigating internal resources and performances to design mentoring strategies to fit the situation rather than a one size fit all approach. For this study I have investigated the internal resources by identifying the perceptions of the

mentors and will apply this finding to the development of a set of effective mentoring

strategies.

Project Description

The purpose of this project is to address a gap in the new teacher mentoring

process. This section outlines the components of the project, potential barriers, and

solutions to any barriers identified. The research findings point to the need for a PD that

addresses the implementation of a defined set of effective mentoring strategies. As a

result of the data analysis and literature review, a face-to face PD is best to address the

gap in practice identified in the research problem. To achieve the expected outcome of

the study and effect positive social change, it is necessary to identify the existing support

and necessary resources. Participation of the mentors is crucial to the success of this PD.

Additionally, members of the research and evaluation department (at the school district in

South Florida) have stated their approval and support of the importance of this study.

Potential Barriers

The dynamic nature of the mentoring process along with the lack of awareness of

the importance in mentoring new teachers, may present barriers to the implementation of

this project. Lack of support from the leadership team could negatively influence the

success of the project. Therefore, the PD will be designed as a source of support for the

leadership team to improve performance among mentors and beginning teachers.

Additionally, mentor participation could present a challenge in the implementation. Thus,

the presentation of the strategies will address the needs and concerns of the mentors.

Another barrier could potentially be the value and importance leadership and mentors

place on the effectiveness of the strategies. The solution to the barriers will be the quality

of planning and implementation of the project that will ensure the required outcome. The

change in practice among the mentors and the evidence reflected in the evaluation of the

PD may serve to minimize questions about the effectiveness of the project.

Implementation

This project will be designed as a face-to-face PD for the mentors from the

targeted school district. The duration of this PD will be 3 days. These 3 days will be

divided into 3 six-hour modules. Module 1 will be information gathering, Module 2 will

be implementation of strategies, and Module 3 will be the application and reflection.

Although the PD is designed for three days, there will be opportunity for questions,

follow-up discussions, and reflection among the mentors after the implementation. The

projected date for this project will be February (2020). At this time of the school year,

mentors will have the opportunity to first practice and master the new strategies while

they work with their current mentees. By the start of the following school year (2020-

2021), mentors will begin working with the new first-year teachers and would have

acquired the skills necessary to implement the new mentoring strategies. This schedule

will allow for a better evaluation of the project outcome.

Roles and Responsibilities

Recommending experienced teachers for participation in the PD will be the

responsibility of the assistant principal in charge of the mentoring program at each

school. The education leaders at the school district will be responsible for providing

funding and a venue for the implementation of the project. One of my responsibilities is

to gain approval from the school district to implement the PD. I will also create and design the learning activities for the PD. My other responsibilities include the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the PD.

Project Evaluation Plan

The type of evaluation I selected for this project is outcome based. As a result, I will conduct both short-term and long-term evaluations. To assess the success of the PD, it will be necessary to examine the change in practice among the mentors and how this practice influences the performance of the beginning teachers. A short-term evaluation would provide information on how the PD has influenced mentor practices while a long-term evaluation would inform the assessment of the change in behavior among the mentors and new teachers. According to Caffarella and Daffron (2013), a program evaluation should measure the magnitude to which the program activates the required outcome. Cafferella and Daffron (2013) also discussed the importance of evaluation before, during, and after the execution of a program. Some questions guiding the evaluation are listed below.

1. What is the mentors' perception of the PD?

2. Did the PD better prepare the mentors to perform their duties? Give reasons for your answers.

3. What challenges surfaced during the PD?

4. Did the PD cater to the needs and concerns of the mentors? If yes how?

5. How did the PD improve the quality of mentoring practices?

6. What would participants change about the PD?

7. What aspect of the PD did the mentors like best?

8. Would participants encourage other mentors to participate in this PD? Why?
    or Why not?

9. Did PD better prepare the mentors to perform their duties?

The selection of an evaluation approach that will gain the participants' responses to address the guiding questions is prudent to the evaluation planning. A Systematic evaluation supports organization, while developmental and spontaneous evaluation provide rich and insightful data (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013). To evaluate this PD program, I will implement both systematic and development evaluations. The selection will involve the use of one quantitative and two qualitative documents. The quantitative document will be in the form of a Likert survey and the qualitative documents will be in the form of individual interviews and written reflections by the participants.

Likert Survey

A quantitative systematic Likert-style survey will be used to rate the program. This survey will serve as a short-term evaluation of the program. Each participant will be invited to participate in the online Likert survey. I will conduct an analysis of the result using a bar graph to show the responses of the participants. The analysis of the data will be shared with the educational leaders of the school district by e-mail. For this survey, participants will rate aspects of the program on a scale of 1 to 5 showing their level of agreement with the statement. A score of 1 would mean *strongly disagree*, while a score of 5 would mean *strongly agree*. Some features that will be rated are (a) the PD, (b) the content, (c) the delivery, (d) the relevance, and (e) the flexibility.

Individual Interviews

The individual interview is a qualitative systematic evaluation approach which will be used as a long-term evaluation. Each participant will be invited to participate in a face-to-face interview at the end of the academic year. The result of the interview will be coded and analyze to identify common trend or concerns. These data will be shared with the education leaders in the school district by e-mail. Participants will be invited to share their views on the effectiveness and sustainability of the program. Through the interviews I hope to gain information on the long-term effects of the PD on the mentoring programs in each participating school.

Reflection Log

A reflection will be incorporated in the PD. This reflection will serve as an informal qualitative evaluation approach. Each participant will be invited to write a reflection log during and after the PD. Mentors will be asked to document their thoughts and experiences on how the PD has influenced their daily practices as mentors. The purpose of the reflection log is to collect rich and insightful data that might have been missed by the interview or the Likert scale data collection processes. This evaluation process will not require a set of guiding questions as each participant will write about individual experiences. The information gathered from the reflection logs will be used as an ongoing short-term evaluation that will be summarized and shared with the education leaders at the school district.

Key Stakeholders

The success of a project depends on how it addresses the needs and concerns of the stakeholders. According to Bryson (2004), a stakeholder is anyone who will benefit from or be affected by an event. Additionally, Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997) argued that a stakeholder could be a person, organization, group, or a community. The primary stakeholders identified for this project are the mentors, new teachers, and students. The secondary stakeholders are identified as the education leaders of the school district and potentially the community. The results of this study will be shared with the education leaders of the school district. A copy of the completed study with recommendations will be shared with the department of research and development at the school district in South Florida.

Project Implications

The purpose of this project was to provide mentors with an intentionally defined set of mentoring strategies that will help them be more effective. Those who will benefit from this project are the mentors, the beginning teachers, and the students. Additionally, the school district and education leaders of the school district in South Florida will benefit through the reduction of the new teacher attrition rate and consequently, improved student-performance. The results of this project will effect positive social change in mentoring practices, and quality of instructions.

Possible social change implication is the implementation of a clearly defined set of mentoring strategies. Mentors in the school district will become knowledgeable of the strategies identified as effective. As a result, the new teacher mentoring program will be

intentionally organized and structured. New teachers will benefit as mentors practice the implementation of the defined strategies and consequently, students' performance will improve. On a wider scale, the positive change in the mentoring program may attract the attention of education leaders in neighboring school districts.

Conclusion

The focus of this section was to describe the design, implementation, and evaluation of the project. According to the result of the data analysis, I designed a face-to-face PD that will address the research problem. This PD is designed to address the needs of the mentors and would potentially improve their practices. The project will promote the implementation of a defined set of mentoring strategies that will help mentors be more effective. Those who will benefit from the result of the project are the students, new teachers, mentors, and the school district. The implications for social change are better structured mentoring programs and new teachers who are supported and encouraged to stay in the profession. In section 4 a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the project will be presented.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The discussion in this section will address the strengths and limitations of the project as it relates to positive social change. Based on my learning throughout the research process, I will provide recommendations for alternative approaches to the research problem. The application of this project to other settings will be discussed along with the implications for positive social change in the local and broader settings. Additionally, I will provide highlights on the importance of the research and discuss how this study might inform future research.

Project Strengths and Limitations

According to the data collection process and data analysis, the strengths of this project lie within the richness of the data and the data collection process. The research problem was the lack of structure with which mentors in a local public high school in South Florida implemented mentoring strategies. As a result, the purpose of the study was to explore mentors' perceptions of effective mentoring strategies. Additionally, the research design was grounded in humanistic learning theory which is consistent with the basic qualitative approach to the study.

Strengths

Carr (1994) stated that a qualitative approach to research is strong when the sample is well defined because it can be generalized to a larger population. For this study the participants were a group of mentors in a local public high school. Russell, Carey, Kleiman, and Venable (2009) argued that the strength of a face-to- face PD is confirmed

by researchers who compare both face-to-face and online PD. The richness of the data

strengthens the project because the participants provide strategies that they have

implemented and proved to be successful. Each mentor described experiences to justify

the effectiveness of the strategies they provided. The data collection process also

strengthens the project because of the measures taken to ensure confidentiality, safety,

and to minimize biases. According to Oun and Bach (2014), the strength of a research

depends on the way the researcher collects and organizes data. Oun and Bach (2014)

emphasized the strengths in collecting data through interviews and focus groups. Mentors

felt safe to share ideas as I ensured a trusting researcher-participant relationship. All

interviews were conducted in a safe environment and I refrained from sharing my

opinions on the strategies. Additionally, to strengthen the project I ensured saturation of

data by conducting two focus group interviews. During the focus group discussions there

were no additional strategies identified hence, saturation was achieved. However, the

mentors used this opportunity to share and learn from each other.

Limitations

Because project planning and development allow the researcher time to conduct

ongoing evaluations of the project, limitations to the project were identified during the

planning phase of this project. Russell, Carey, Kleiman, and Venable (2009) argued that a

face-to face PD limits participants' involvement in discussions and does not allow time

for reflection on course content. This limitation is evident for this PD because mentors

will not have enough time to learn, practice, and reflect on new learning over a period of

3 days. Second, I designed this project to address the needs of the mentors however, not

all needs and concerns could be addressed through a PD for the mentors. The qualitative data revealed areas of concerns other than effective mentoring strategies. Because of the focus of this study, some of these concerns might not be addressed.

Another potential limitation of the PD is that the education leaders within the school district might not buy into the idea of a PD for mentors. Moreover, principals might not be aware of the importance of the PD. Additionally, lack of funds might pose limitation to the implementation of the PD. Finally, according to Carr (1994) a small population sample reduces the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, the mentoring strategies the participants provided might not be applicable to schools outside the district and may require further research into the generalization of these mentoring strategies.

<div align="center">**Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**</div>

An awareness of the limitations creates the necessity to explore other alternative approaches for addressing the problem. The problem is the lack of structure with which mentors implement mentoring strategies. I could have approached this problem by investigating the cause for the lack of structure in the implementation of mentoring strategies. Also, I could have investigated the effectiveness of the current mentoring program. Moreover, a literature review on effective mentoring strategies might show strategies for the implementation of the project.

Because of the dynamic nature of mentoring, the gap in practice might have been defined differently to change the focus of the study. I could have identified the problem as the lack of support for mentors. Also, the problem could be defined as the

effectiveness of the new teacher mentoring programs. Another way to define the problem is to look at the new teaches' perception of effective mentoring strategies.

Regardless of the definition of the gap in practice, effective mentoring strategies would surface as the center of the solution. The solution to the local problem is the identification of those strategies that might help mentors be more successful. Furthermore, a face-to-face PD was designed to share these strategies with the mentors in South Florida. Considering the potential financial limitation to the implementation of the project, an online PD becomes an alternative solution to the local problem. The school district has provided online access to Google Classroom for all teachers. This access allows me to design and conduct an online PD at minimal cost. Also, the online PD would create flexibility for the mentors as they participate in the PD.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

As a learning process, this project provided opportunities for me to grow as a scholar. Also, I gained an understanding of the writing process and practiced the art of standing on the shoulders of giants. Without the work of other researchers, I would not have been able to complete this project. I must include that the preparation courses at Walden provided the skills and knowledge I needed for the final project. The knowledge I have gained throughout my journey at Walden is invaluable. All the skills and knowledge gained throughout the courses were instrumental in the development of the research project. The writing skills, use of technology, and data collection techniques all came together to produce the final study.

My growth throughout the research process is evident. As a scholar I can present my work in scholarly writing and analyze the work of other researchers. I developed patience as a person and in my every-day functioning as a practitioner. I have developed the skills to identify and interpret information used as data. I also developed skills in collecting, organizing, and coding qualitative data. The interviews I conducted to collect data allowed me the opportunity to improve my communication skills.

As a project developer, I gained an understanding of the type of evaluation necessary to assess the effectiveness of a program. I also learned the importance of ongoing evaluation during the planning of the program. My knowledge of stakeholders improved as I developed the ability to identify key stakeholders in the planning of a program. The literature reviewed on professional development provided the knowledge I needed to select the appropriate project for the mentors.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

I decided to pursue this doctoral journey because I had a wealth of knowledge to share, but I did not know how to share this knowledge. After the first course I knew I was in for an amazing journey. The instructors were professional as they maximized learning. The residency was frightening, but I gained information that would help me survive the capstone process. Finally, the members of the committee provided the encouragement and guidance I needed to produce my best work.

My work throughout this journey centered on the welfare of the mentors. At the start of this journey I planned to conduct my research study on the lack of support for mentors. However, by narrowing my research topic the focus of the research was on the

strategies that might improve the practices of mentors. The importance of this research is that the strategies were generated from the perceptions of the mentors. My intention, through this approach, was to direct the focus on mentors and away from new teachers. Through the literature review I noticed that research done on new teacher mentoring centered on the new teachers while the mentors were overlooked. I thought of the important role played by mentors in the new teacher induction programs and believed that this research might make a difference in the direction of the studies conducted on mentoring of beginning teachers.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Mentoring is multifaceted and the study of its dynamic nature may be approached from different theoretical lens. This research study assumed a humanistic approach to the study of one aspect of mentoring. The implications of this project study emerge from the attempt to bridge a gap in the mentoring practices at a local public high school in South Florida. The research findings revealed a set of mentoring strategies the practicing mentors believe to be effective. My plan is to share these strategies with mentors at the school district in South Florida. The development and execution of a professional development is prudent to the implications of this project study. Potential implications for positive social change are the improvement in mentor practices, professional wellbeing of new teachers, and students' performance.

Because the schools in the targeted district are populated with students from similar background, the project is applicable to all teachers who mentor in the school district. However, the application of the findings to other school district might present

challenges as the study was limited to a specific school district with unique challenges.
My hope is that the success of this project would attract the attention of school leaders
from other school district. Consequently, other school leaders will invest in the
implementing of an intentionally defined set of mentoring strategies to fit the needs of the
teachers who mentor.

The results of this project study revealed directions for future studies. Future
research on whether one set of mentoring strategies can fit all mentoring situations is
necessary. Additionally, the study of the support and professional development for
mentors is prudent to the success of new teacher mentoring programs. The data collected
showed that mentors face many challenges such as limited time to meet with mentors and
lack of compensation. Future research could investigate the scheduling of mentor-mentee
meetings and how this affects the effectiveness of the mentoring programs. One of the
concerns voiced by the mentors is compensation for the practicing mentors. The vital role
mentors play in the support of new teachers along with the invested time mentoring
demands, open avenues for inquiry on whether the lack of compensation directly affects
the quality of mentoring.

Conclusion

My passion for education and concern for the welfare of the mentors, are
instrumental in the development of this research study. From the work of other
researchers, I learned that there is a need for more research on the mentoring process. The
gap in practice I identified is the lack of structure with which mentors implement
mentoring strategies. The local problem is situated in a public high school in South

Florida as experienced teachers who mentor new teachers in this school practice

mentoring without structure or directions. An analysis of literature on mentoring, showed

a lack of information on the education and support for those who mentor new teachers.

As a result, the aim of this project is to explore mentors' perceptions on effective

mentoring strategies.

The study is grounded in the humanistic learning theory and a basic qualitative

approach was used to drive the research design. The research questions guided the data

collection process. I collected data by interviewing the mentors. Coding was the process

used to organize data and identify patterns. As a result of the findings, eight strategies

emerged. These strategies were used to develop a set of defined mentoring strategies used

to drive the design of a professional development for the mentors.

During the interviews and the focus group discussions, the mentors justified the

effectiveness of these strategies by sharing cases in which they implemented the

strategies. As practitioners, the participants possess a wealth of knowledge which is

valuable to the mentoring process. Each interview provided insight and new information

on mentoring strategies. I conducted this project hoping to gain a clearer understanding of

mentoring strategies that might provide structure to the mentoring process. Instead, I

gained knowledge and insight of mentoring strategies that have opened new avenues to

improving my mentoring practices.

The project I developed to address the gap in practice is a face-to-face PD. This

PD will be available to all mentors within the targeted school district in South Florida.

The purpose of the PD is to promote the implementation of the set of effective mentoring

strategies across the district. The positive social change is the improvement of the mentoring program in the school district in South Florida.

An evaluation plan was created to assess the success of the PD and the effect on mentor practices. My plan is to share the evaluation result with the education leaders in the school district. Additionally, my hope is that the PD proves to be successful and attracts the attention of others school leaders outside the district. My intention is to make a positive contribution to the mentoring program in the school district and potentially to all school districts in South Florida.

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Appendix A: The Project

The Professional Development: Mentoring Strategies to Ensure Structure and Success for the Mentor Teacher

The purpose

Mentor teachers are instrumental to the success of the new teacher mentoring programs in many school districts. However, the strategies that will make these mentors effective are undefined and unstructured. The aim of this project is to provide participants with a set of eight defined strategies mentor teachers perceive as effective. The project deliverable is a face-to-face professional development designed to address the needs of the mentor teachers at a local school district in South Florida. Through this professional development mentor teachers will learn, practice, and critique the proposed set of effective strategies.

The participants will gain the knowledge and insight on how to effectively implement these strategies. Each strategy will be defined and shared with participants through a PowerPoint presentation. Second, participants will observe other mentors as they implement the mentoring strategies. Participants will be allowed time to discuss and reflect on the implementation of the strategies. Finally, mentors will be required to role play, with peers, the implementation of a selected strategy. At the end of each presentation participants will provide feedback to show their interpretation of each strategy. In addition, teachers will be encouraged to share experiences in follow-up meetings and reflection logs.

The Goal

The goal of any learning situation centers on the learning opportunities provided for the participants. The overall goal of the professional development is to strengthen mentor teachers' practice with a defined set of mentoring strategies that will help them be more effective. Participants will be provided learning opportunities in which they will learn, observe, and practice the mentoring strategies.

Learning outcome

To assess the effectiveness of the professional development, I developed a set of measurable learning outcomes. The learning outcomes are listed below. These learning outcomes will drive the evaluation in measuring the effectiveness and success of the professional development.

1. Mentors will define the features of each mentoring strategy and provide their individual descriptions of the strategies in their unique setting.

2. Mentor teachers will analyze each strategy and discuss the critical points associated with the implementation.

3. Participants will show mastery through the effective implementation of the mentoring strategies.

4. Participants will analyze the implementation of the strategies by providing feedback as their peers roleplay the implementation.

Target Audience

Because the application of the professional development is limited to the school district in South Florida, the targeted population will be the mentor teachers in South

Florida. The project proposal centers on targeting a small number of mentors for the first implementation. The current mentor program in the school district requires a lead mentor at each participating school. The objective is to first invite the lead mentor teacher from each high school in the district to participate in the project. These lead mentors will be required to return to their schools and share the strategies with the other mentors at their schools. The lead mentors will receive training on the train the trainer model.

Modules Including Timelines and Activities

Based on the requirements for the face-to-face professional development, the project will require 3 days to meet the requirements for the implementation of the professional development. One module will be covered each day to add structure to the professional development. Module 1 will focus on the acquisition of knowledge. Module 2 will involve modeling, observing, and discussing effective implementation of the mentoring strategies. Module 3 will provide opportunity for practice and reflection.

Module	Learning Outcome
Module 1	Mentors will define the features of each mentoring strategy and provide a verbal description of the strategies in their unique setting.
Module 2	Mentor teachers will analyze each strategy and discuss the critical points associated with the implementation.
Module 3	Participants will show mastery through the effective implementation of the mentoring strategies. Participants will analyze the implementation of the strategies by providing feedback as their peers roleplay the implementation.

Module 1/Day 1

Timeline	Learning Activity
8:00 – 9:00	Breakfast will be served during the first 15 minutes. Welcome, icebreaker activity, group arrangement, and overview of the professional development.
9:00 – 10:00 (10 minutes break at 10:00)	PowerPoint presentation of the mentoring strategies. During the presentation, there will be a pause after each strategy for group discussion and sharing.
10:00 – 11:00	Each group will present (report on group discussion after each strategy is presented and discussed).
11:00 – 12:00	Lunch Break
12:00 – 1:00	Presentation and group discussion will continue.
1:00 – 2:00 (10 minutes break at 2:00)	Presentation and group discussion will continue.
2:00 – 3:00	Whole group discussion on how each strategy is applicable to the situations in different schools. Focus will be on strengths and weaknesses of each strategy.

Module 2/ Day 2

Timeline	Learning Activity
8:00 – 9:00	Breakfast will be served during the first 15 minutes.
	Participants will sit in their groups.
	Video presentation showing mentor modeling.
9:00 – 10:00	Group discussions of strategies identified in the videos.
(10 minutes break	
at 10:00)	
10:00 – 11:00	Each group will share their discussion findings.
11:00 – 12:00	Lunch Break
12:00 – 1:00	Presenter will model selected mentoring strategies.
1:00 – 2:00	Group discussions of strategies modelled.
(10 minutes break	
at 2:00)	
2:00 – 3:00	Each group will share discussion findings.

Module 3/ Day 3

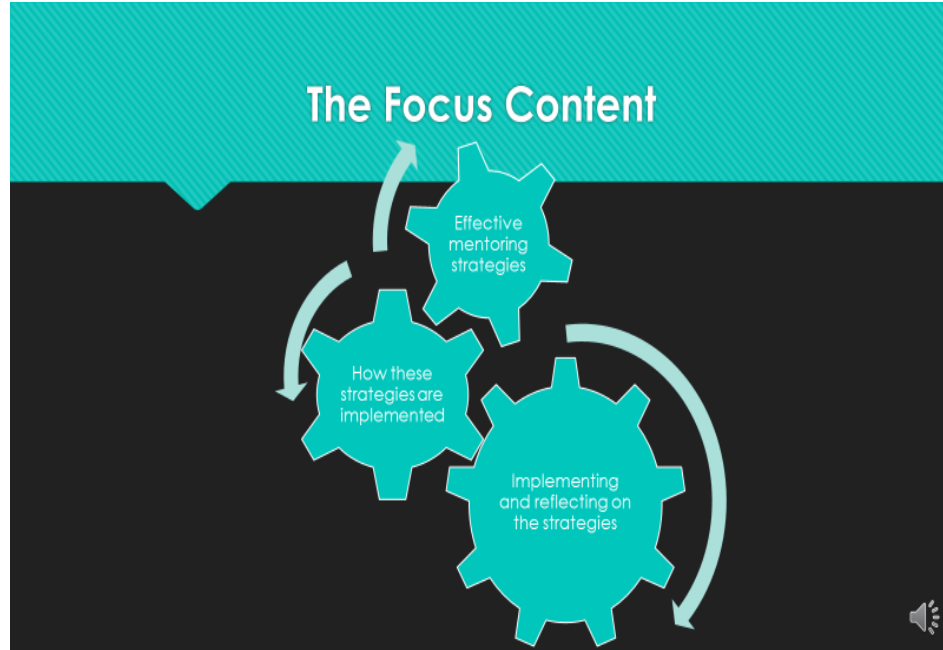| Timeline	Learning Activity
8:00 – 9:00	Breakfast will be served during the first 15 minutes. Whole group reflection on Modules 1and 2. Mentors will be assigned a partner for the next activity and one strategy will be assigned to each group.
9:00 – 10:00 (10 minutes break at 10:00)	Mentors will role play a mentor-mentee discussion in which an assigned strategy is addressed.
10:00 – 11:00	Partners will switch roles and repeat the activity.
11:00 – 12:00	Lunch Break
12:00 – 1:00	
1:00 – 2:00 (10 minutes break at 1:30)	Each group will take turns to share strength and weaknesses of the strategy they practiced.
2:00 – 3:00	Whole group discussion of the learning and how each mentor plan to share this new learning with other mentors at their school.

This PowerPoint is designed to give the participants an overview of the professional development.

The Focus Content

Effective mentoring strategies

How these strategies are implemented

Implementing and reflecting on the strategies

Learning outcome # 1

Mentors will define the features of each mentoring strategy and provide a verbal description of the strategies in their unique setting.

Learning outcome # 2

Mentor teachers will analyze each strategy and discuss the critical points associated with the implementation.

Learning outcome # 3

Participants will show mastery through the effective implementation of the mentoring strategies.
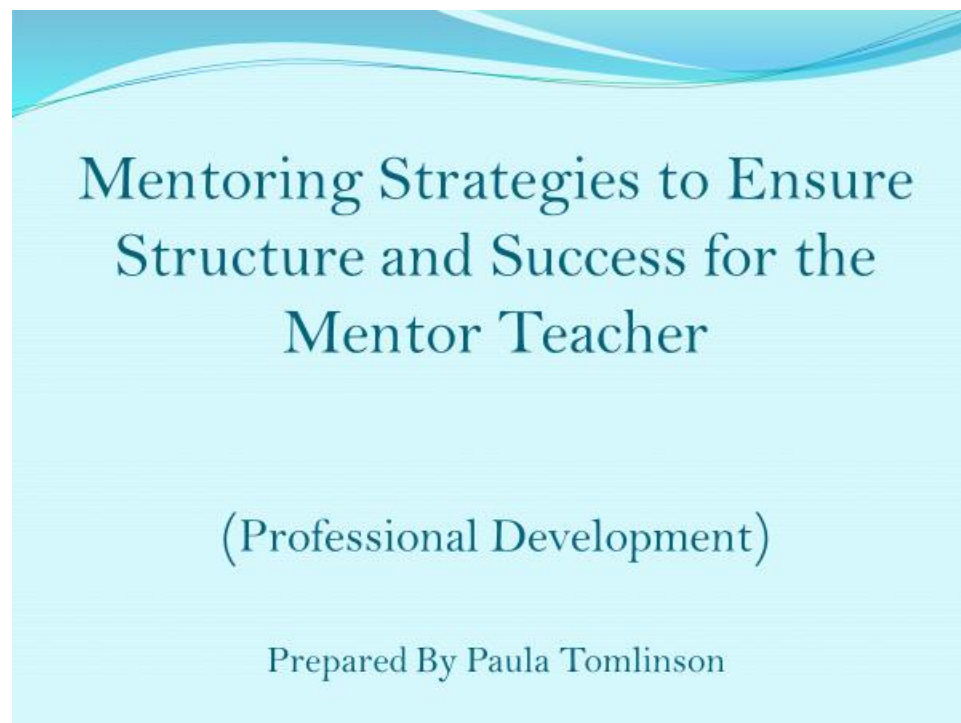
Learning outcome # 4

Participants will analyze the implementation of the strategies by providing feedback as their peers roleplay the implementation.

Now lets get started!

I hope you enjoy the course and find it applicable to your role as a mentor teacher.

After the course introduction and overview the presentation of the strategies will begin. This PowerPoint presentation will be used to introduce the mentoring strategies. Each strategy will be defined and examples of how each strategy might be addressed will be provided. After each strategy is presented participants will engage in group discussions and present findings to whole group.

Mentoring Strategies to Ensure Structure and Success for the Mentor Teacher

(Professional Development)

Prepared By Paula Tomlinson

Introduction

This presentation includes a list of 8 mentoring

strategies that mentor teachers have identified

as effective.

Promote School Culture

- Introduce new teacher to the culture of the school.
- Encourage them to attend sports events or sponsor a club after school.
- Help new teacher join the school family.

Be a Source of Information

- Be a source of information.
- Inform new teacher of the do's and don'ts.
- Provide information on the basic day to day tasks.
- Share and learn from new teacher.
- Give constructive feedback.

Build Relationship

- Build a professional relationship with new teacher.
- Build trust.
- Support.
- Solve problem.
- Care about the professional wellbeing of the new teacher.
- Collaborate.
- Walk side-by-side with new teacher as they go through each teaching experience.

Utilize Data to Drive Discussions

- Classroom visit must involve data collection.
- Use data to drive discussion/reflection.
- Use data to identify areas of concerns.

Provide Opportunity for Reflection

- Meet regularly for reflection.
- Check in on teacher.
- Use reflection to identify needs and challenges.

Conduct Observations

- Conduct classroom observations of experienced teachers (with similar teaching assignment).
- Accompany new teachers during observations.

Connect Theory and Practice

- Discuss theory versus real-world teaching.
- Generate discussions about teaching as a profession.
- Address any unrealistic expectation the new teacher might have about teaching.
- Address unrealistic expectations.

Model Expected Behavior

- Model effective teaching strategies.
- Model appropriate professional conduct.
- Model collaboration during PLC.
- Co-teach with your mentee.

The End

The mentoring strategies we have discussed are intended to improve mentoring practices. In module 2 and 3 we will explore the implementation of these strategies and discuss how we can fit them in our every day practices.

Materials

Information sharing during the implementation of the project, will be presented in various forms. A handout containing the agenda is necessary for the participants to be aware of the content of the modules and the order of presentation. I will also provide a copy of the information included in the PowerPoint presentation to be used as a source of reference. Other materials needed for the implementation of this project are phones for recording group roleplay, PowerPoint presentation of mentoring strategies in action, and a computer for presentation.

Implementation Plan

To ensure an effective implementation of the project, I will assume the role of the presenter. However, the project is designed to accommodate change and adjustments to fit different settings. The implementation plan is to execute this professional development over a period of three consecutive days during the second semester of school year 2019-2020. This plan will ensure mentors enough time to learn, implement, and reflect before the start of the following school year. Moreover, the evaluation of the program will be more meaningful at the end of the second year because the mentors will be more familiar with the implementation of the strategies.

A PowerPoint presentation of the effective strategies will be presented with an explanation of the mentor behavior required to implement this strategy. A projector will be used for sharing the videos with the mentors. My plan is to utilize a classroom or a training room at the district office to ensure easy access for the mentors. Mentors will be asked to use their phones or laptop for the role play in module three.

During the implementation mentors will be invited to share ideas and discuss the implementation of the strategies. Mentors will be the center of the learning as their needs and concerns will drive the discussions. Throughout the implementation mentors will be made to feel comfortable as an important part of the learning process. The plan is for mentors to buy into these new strategies to ensure implementation when they return to their schools.

Evaluation Plan

Because the evaluation of this PD depends on the change in behavior of the mentor teachers, the effectiveness of the PD will be evaluated at the end of each school year. However, I will evaluate the presentation on the final day of the PD. The first attempt to an evaluation is the Likert Survey for which the mentors will respond to given statements on a scale of 1 – 5 with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. Second, an individual interview will be implemented in which the participants will be asked questions on how the professional development influenced their practices. The third attempt to collect data will be in the form of a reflection log. Participants will be asked to provide an ongoing reflection as they communicate with each other after the professional development. I will create a Google Classroom and invite the participants to engage in ongoing discussions about the implementation of the new strategy and how these new learnt strategies have influenced their mentoring practices. The findings from the evaluations will be shared with the education leaders at the school district.

Survey Statements

Strongly disagree (1) Disagree (2) Neutral (3) Agree (4) Strongly Agree (5)

I am satisfied with the presentation of the professional development

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

The content shared was appropriate and catered to the needs of the mentors.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

The program supported the mission of the school district

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Each module was informative and learning was maximized.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

I learned new mentoring strategies.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

I will implement these strategies when I work with my mentee.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

The program addressed the needs and concerns of the mentor teachers.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

The learning activities during the implementation were relevant and appropriate.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Interview Questions (for participants)

1. What is your perception of the professional development?

2. Are are the mentoring strategies useful to your everyday practices? Give reasons for your answer.

3. What challenges did you face during the professional development?

4. Did the program cater to your needs as a mentor? Give reason for your answer.

5. How did the program influence the quality of your mentoring practices?

6. What would you change about the program?

7. What did you like best about the program?

8. Would you encourage other mentor teachers to participate in this PD? Give reasons for your answer.

Appendix B: Letter to Principal

Email to Principal of Targeted School

Dear Principal

My name is Paula Tomlinson and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. I would like to conduct research on mentor teachers' perspectives regarding effective mentoring strategies. The department of research and evaluation at the school district has approved my research and I would like to target the mentor teachers at your school. The department of research and evaluation requires researchers to contact the principal of the targeted school to initiate participation.

I would like to invite experienced teachers who mentor new teachers to participate in this study. If you agree to this study at your school, mentor teachers will be invited to participate in a 20-30 minutes phone interview and a face-to-face focus group discussion. This study is voluntary, and no one will treat you or your mentor teachers differently if you decide not to participate. The potential benefit of this study might be the identification of effective mentoring strategies that may help mentor teacher be more successful.

Information collected will be kept confidential and secured by use of codes instead of names. Interviews will be deleted after coding and kept secured for at least five years; as required by Walden University. Also, participants will be given teaching supplies as a token of my appreciation.

My goal is to effect positive social change in the new teacher mentoring process. In our previous communications, you indicated your willingness to consider my proposal and I truly appreciate your generosity and support.

Sincerely,

Paula Tomlinson

Appendix C: Flyer

Attention

As a doctoral student at Walden University I am conducting research regarding the perspectives of mentor teachers on effective mentoring strategies.

This flyer is to inform all teachers who have mentored a new teacher that you will be receiving an email invite to participate in the study.

Because of the nature of the study, I will need 10 mentor teachers. Therefore, the first 10 teachers who respond to the invitation email will be selected for the study.

Additionally, I will be providing teaching supplies for those 10 teachers who indicate their interest to participate.

Paula Tomlinson

Appendix D: Letter to participants

Email to Potential Participants

Dear Mentor Teachers

My name is Paula Tomlinson and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. I would like to conduct research on mentor teachers' perspectives regarding effective mentoring strategies. The department of research and evaluation at the school district has approved my research. Also, the principal provided your names and emails.

I would like to invite you to participate in the research. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be invited to take part in a 20-30 minutes phone interview and a 15-20 face-to-face focus group discussion. This study is voluntary, and no one will treat you differently if you decide not to participate. The potential benefit of this study might be the identification of effective mentoring strategies that may help mentor teacher as they work with new teachers.

Information collected will be kept confidential and secured by use of codes instead of names. I will delete the interviews after coding and keep data secured for at least five years; as required by Walden University. Also, participants will be given teaching supplies as a token of my appreciation.

My goal is to effect positive social change in the new teacher mentoring process. I am truly grateful for your attention and appreciate your invested time should you agree to participate. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Paula Tomlinson

Appendix E: Interview Protocol

Hello, my name is Paula Tomlinson and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. First, I would like to thank you for participating in this research study. The purpose of this study is to examine mentor teachers' perspectives on effective mentoring strategies. Before I begin, I would like your permission to record this interview. Please reply "yes" if you give consent. You can stop at any time throughout this interview if you change your mind.

Interview Questions

1. How many years have you been teaching?
_____

2. How many years have you been mentoring new teachers?
_____

3. What mentoring strategies have you tried when working with new teachers? (List at least three)
_____
_____

4. Which of these strategies you consider to be most effective when working with your mentees? Explain why. (You may list more than one)
_____
_____

5. Which strategy did you implement that you considered to be successful? Explain why.
_____
_____

6. Which strategy do you find to be most challenging to implement? Explain why.
_____
_____

7. Which strategy do you implement most often? Explain why.
_____
_____

8. Which strategy do you implement least often? Explain why.
_____
_____

Appendix F: Focus Group protocol

Hello everyone, my name is Paula Tomlinson and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. First, I would like to thank you for participating in this research study. The purpose of this study is to examine mentor teachers' perspectives on effective mentoring strategies. Before I begin, I would like your permission to record this focus group interview. Please reply "yes" if you give consent. You can stop at any time throughout this interview if you change your mind. To ensure individual confidentially, I would like each of you to keep the content of this discussion private.

Focus Group Questions

1. Why did you decided to mentor new teachers?

   _____
   _____
   _____

2. What would you say are the needs of a mentor teacher?

   _____
   _____
   _____

3. What strategy have you tried that you would never use again? Give reason for your answer.

   _____
   _____
   _____

4. What strategy would you recommend as most effective? Explain why.

   _____
   _____
   _____

5. What are your top three mentoring strategies? Justify your answer.

   _____
   _____
   _____

6. Which strategy would you identify as most challenging for a mentor teacher? Explain why.

   _____
   _____
   _____