UNDERSTANDING MENTORING PRACTICES IN A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

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by

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative dissertation study reports the findings of research conducted with four mentors in a Professional Development School [PDS] teacher preparation context. Two of the mentors were considered veteran mentors in the PDS with over ten years of mentoring experience, while two were novice mentors with around five years of mentoring experience. In addition, one veteran and one novice mentor in the study were prepared as teachers in the same PDS context in which they currently mentor. This instrumental case study with phenomenological underpinnings sought to answer the following research questions: 1) What are the self-reported practices of mentors in the PDS context? 2) Why do mentors engage in these practices? 3) How have these practices developed and changed over time? Through the methods of semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, the data were analyzed using open coding to create narrative profiles of each mentor. In addition, cross-case analysis was utilized to identify similarities and differences across the practices of the four mentors. Four specific mentoring practices are described and analyzed in this study: co-planning, providing “teacher” opportunities, co-teaching, and collaborating with the Professional Development Associate [PDA]. These practices were also compared to the Yendol-Hoppey and Dana’s (2007) framework for effective mentoring in order to provide illustrations of the domains for effective mentoring of preservice teachers and contribute a new component for consideration. Implications for mentor teachers, supervisors, and teacher preparation programs are discussed.
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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Problem

In a climate in which teacher preparation is under great scrutiny and there is a call for more intense, high quality clinically-based teacher education, the role of mentor teacher during clinical experiences has taken on new meaning and implies greater responsibilities for those who choose to take on that role. The mentor works with the preservice teacher throughout the clinical experience and has the potential to greatly influence not only how the novice teaches but also what the novice thinks and believes about teaching; therefore, the mentor and the field placement experience are important elements in teacher preparation (Clarke & Jarvis-Selinger, 2005; Franke & Dahlgren, 1996). It seems urgent to try to understand how mentors engage in the practice of mentoring as well as the development of the beliefs that inform their practices in order for teacher education programs to be able to best support or facilitate their work (Clarke, Triggs, & Nielsen, 2014). With greater understanding about these professionals with whom preservice teachers are placed, we may be able to identify professional development opportunities that have potential to impact teacher education practices.

Mentor teachers, or cooperating teachers, who take on the responsibility of working with a preservice teacher, are signing on for a great commitment. Whether the preservice experience is one semester, a year, or even longer, the amount of time that a preservice intern spends with a mentor teacher is typically greater than the amount of time spent with any other single teacher educator. The mentor is the teacher educator who has the most access to the preservice teacher during the practicum experience. “It is the classroom teacher who, because of the close interaction during the practice of
teaching, potentially exerts the greatest influence on the development of a perspective teacher” (Stanulis, 1995, p. 331). Not only is this statement verified by the comments of student teachers themselves, but also by university faculty: “The university teachers usually maintain that during the practical part of teacher training the mentors are the greatest influence on the student teachers before they enter the profession” (Franke & Dahlgren, 1996, p. 627).

Many have made the argument that mentors are in fact teacher educators (Feiman-Nemser, 1998; Nolan & Parks, 2010). Based on the potential impact, positive or negative, they have on preservice teachers it is hard to argue against that view. Mentors working with preservice teachers have complex roles in the classroom. Not only are they responsible for educating the P-12 students in their classroom, the teacher part of the role, they also are responsible for educating the preservice teacher about teaching P-12 students, arguably the teacher educator part of the role. Some researchers argue that mentors may not see themselves as teacher educators due to the traditional epistemology of teacher education, where knowledge is located at the university, and a culture of teaching as isolating (Feiman-Nemser, 1998). However with studies (Awaya et al., 2001; Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1993; Nolan & Parks, 2010; Parker-Katz & Bay, 2007; Yendol-Hoppey, 2007) indicating that mentors can be thoughtful and effective classroom-based teacher educators, it is imperative to learn about their practices to potentially improve mentoring for all.

**Studying Mentoring**

**Mentoring models.** Studying mentoring has taken a variety of perspectives. Some researchers have described mentoring through the use of mentoring models
(Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1995; Maynard & Furlong, 1995). These models include, but are not limited to: competency, situated apprentice, reflective, and critical constructivist. Using the models to describe the practice of mentoring is helpful because they illustrate what mentoring practices might look like within the model. However, models can be problematic for the purpose of describing mentoring. Even though studies state that mentoring may reflect more than one model in practice, the models do not provide a very clear way of representing that differentiation. The research surrounding the use of mentoring models does not consider how a mentor came to a particular model or how mentors work among different models over time. Furthermore, the names of the models may not be representative of the mentor’s voice and how the mentor would describe his or her mentoring practice.

**Mentoring moves and practices.** Mentoring has also been described in terms of mentoring moves and strategic practices (Clarke, Triggs, & Nielsen, 2014; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Nolan & Parks, 2010; Schwille, 2008). Whereas there is not one exhaustive list of all of mentoring strategies that mentors should carry out in their work with preservice teachers, conceptualizing practice in terms of strategies supports the idea of differentiated mentoring to meet the needs of the preservice teacher. Mentoring strategies or moves include, but are not limited to co-planning, stepping in, processing teaching, stepping back to encourage risk taking, probing thinking, and modeling. Studying mentoring practice using moves and strategic practices highlights the complexity involved in mentoring, but does not provide needed insights into what mentors believe about mentoring. Longitudinally speaking, it is also important to develop
an understanding of how these practices developed and changed over time from working with different kinds of preservice teachers.

**Educative Mentoring.** Educatively mentoring provides a lens for studying mentors’ beliefs and practices in a more holistic way than the perspectives previously described. Educatively mentoring has roots in Dewey’s (1938) concept of educative experiences, which are experiences that promote, future growth and lead to richer subsequent experiences. According to Dewey, the educator is responsible for arranging physical and social conditions so that learners have growth-producing experiences. The learner interacts with her or his own environment in ways that result in growth (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Schwille, 2008; Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, 2006). Feiman-Nemser, who first contrasted this concept with a more traditional supervisory approach to mentoring, describes educative mentoring in following way:

Educative mentoring rests on an explicit vision of good teaching and an understanding of teacher learning. Mentors who share this orientation attend to beginning teachers’ present concerns, questions, and purposes without losing sight of long-term goals for teacher development. They interact with novices in ways that foster an inquiry stance. They cultivate skills and habits that enable novices to learn in and from their practice. They use their knowledge and expertise to assess the direction novices are heading and to create opportunities and conditions that support meaningful teacher learning in the service of student learning. (p. 18)

write, “Educative mentoring is a complicated act, as it entails simultaneously attending to three components: 1) creating an educative mentoring context; 2) guiding a mentee’s professional knowledge development; and 3) and cultivating the dispositions of a successful educator” (p. 15). The three domains that these authors describe serve as a framework for understanding the practices of mentors. Educative mentoring is about being responsive to the needs of the student teacher and providing him or her with appropriate challenges and long-term learning opportunities in deep and personal ways.

**Context for Mentoring**

Studying mentors of preservice teachers in a wide variety of contexts is important since preservice field experiences occur in a wide variety of settings; however the more recent calls for developing clinically-rich teacher preparation programs make it imperative to study mentoring in those types of contexts in particular. Mentors in a clinically-rich context typically mentor for an extended period of time and may have more opportunities to develop practices that reflect those of educative mentoring as depicted by Yendol-Hoppey and Dana.

In their report, *Preparing Teachers: Building Evidence for Sound Policy* (2010), the National Research Council identified clinical preparation as one of the “aspects of teacher preparation that are likely to have the highest potential for effects on outcomes for students” (p.180). Undergraduate students should have opportunities for quality clinical experiences in order to experience what Ball and Cohen (1999) have termed “learning in and from practice.” Teachers need to be able to adapt their practice in the moment of teaching. The need to adapt practice in the midst of teaching has influenced some theorists to describe teaching as “a partially improvisational practice, contingent on
the ideas and contributions that are offered in the classroom,” and to assert that “novices must be trained to manage the uncertainty that arises as a result” (Forzani, 2014 p. 7).

Due to the call for developing rich clinical experiences as an essential component of high quality teacher education programs, there is a sense of urgency to establish expectations for quality preparation experiences for teacher candidates. In fact, the Blue Ribbon Panel Report (2010) commissioned by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) states:

The education of teachers in the United States needs to be turned upside down. To prepare teachers for 21st century classrooms, teacher education must shift away from a norm which emphasizes academic preparation and course work loosely linked to school-based experiences. Rather, it must move to programs that are fully grounded in clinical practice and interwoven with academic content and professional courses (p. ii).

NCATE identified ten design principles for enacting clinically based preparation. Additionally, in their 2010 policy brief the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) described the eight critical components of clinical preparation as being “school embedded”—i.e., grounded in the work of schools—through closely linked partnerships between the preparation program and the school.

**Professional Development Schools.** A Professional Development School (PDS) is one model of teacher preparation that has the potential to enact rich, clinical experiences that are embedded in schools and have close relationships with a university. Thus studying mentors within a PDS provides an optimal context for learning about mentoring that occurs in a rich, clinical practicum. Locating PDS contexts that exemplify
the concepts of clinically-rich experiences is not easy. Although both standards for PDS sites (NCATE) and essential characteristics of PDS (NAPDS) have been developed, there is a plethora of models across the teacher education landscape that have been labeled as PDS. Many do not share common characteristics other than the presence of field experiences (Nolan, Mark, Grove, Peters, & Leftwich, 2011). One strategy for identifying PDS sites that do offer clinically-rich experiences is to turn to sites that have received recognition from national associations as being exemplary.

The CSU/SVSD PDS Partnership. The PDS partnership between Central State University and the Sunshine Valley School District has been recognized by multiple national organizations (ATE, Holmes Group, NAPDS) as an exemplary partnership for quality teacher preparation. Many of the structures that have been implemented and sustained over the years in this “highly developed” setting model many of the characteristics called for in policies for clinically-based teacher preparation (Darling-Hammond, 2014).

Mentors in a PDS partnership do more than provide a space for interns to practice. According to Badiali and Titus (in press), “They actively coach, collaborate, co-teach and participate in classroom inquiry with their intern. What differentiates mentors in a PDS from cooperating teachers in a school district is their willingness to learn alongside of teacher candidates” (p. 2). Feiman-Nemser (1998) found that effective U.S. mentors taught in PDS’s where they learned to collaborate with other teachers and university faculty. The findings were not clear about what specific supports or strategies contributed to their learning, but perhaps the PDS context has implications for mentoring as well as preservice teacher preparation.
The PDS context may not only provide rich, clinical teacher preparation experiences, but it may also serve as a potentially powerful context in which to prepare the next generation of teacher educators. The interns who participate in the Central State-Sunshine Valley School District partnership have the experience of being mentored for an entire school year. They abandon the university’s calendar in order to follow the school district calendar from August through June. During the fall semester, interns spend four days a week in their field experience placement and one day a week in their methods courses, plus two evenings. During the spring they spend every day in their placement classroom until the last day of school in June. The amount of time that these particular interns experience mentoring is quite significant, therefore mentors may be doing even more than guiding preservice teachers into the teaching profession, they may in fact be influencing how interns will mentor preservice teachers in their future classrooms.

There is research to support the influential nature of teacher preparation experiences on future practice as a mentor. Hawkey (1998) found that mentors each named their teacher preparation practice as an overwhelming influential factor on their mentoring. This is an interesting finding as it connects with preservice teachers developing an “apprenticeship of observation” in regards to their understanding of teaching and learning (Lortie, 1975). It seems that perhaps mentors practice mentoring based on the way they were mentored themselves. Jones and Straker (2006) also identified that two-thirds of all 102 mentors who responded to their questionnaire named their experience as a preservice teacher as an area of knowledge that informs their work with preservice teachers.
Thus studying mentors, including those who were prepared as preservice teachers in a PDS context, has the potential to add to the literature not only in terms of the power of clinically-rich settings for teacher preparation, but also may add to the impact of their own preservice mentoring on the later mentoring of teachers.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the mentoring practices of four current mentors, two of whom previously were prepared as interns in the same PDS context in which they mentor. In addition to examining mentors’ current practices, the study will look at the development of their mentoring practices over time.

**Research Questions**

Three primary research questions will be addressed in the study:

1. What are the self-reported practices of mentors in a PDS context?
2. Why do the mentors engage in these practices?
3. How have these practices developed and changed over time?

The goal of this study is to illustrate the mentoring practices in order to unpack the complexity of mentoring preservice teachers. It is not the intention of this study to establish the usefulness, benefits, or efficacy of the mentoring practices.

**Definitions**

**Belief:** an individual’s representation of reality that has enough validity, truth, or credibility to guide thought and behavior (Harvey, 1986).

**Intern:** an undergraduate student at the university who opts for a year-long student teaching placement in a PDS context. Interns must be eligible for a spring student teaching placement to participate in the year-long option.
Mentor: often referred to as a cooperating teacher in traditional student teaching contexts, a mentor in a PDS context works with the same preservice teacher in his or her classroom for the year-long student teaching field experience.

Perceptions: the way to think about or understand something, (e.g. mentoring practices).

Practices: mentoring that occurs within the relationship between a mentor (inservice teacher) and a mentee (preservice teacher intern) either directly observed, or described by the mentor.

Professional Development Associate (PDA): a university or school-based hybrid educator who can be a university faculty member, a graduate student, or a reassigned classroom or mentor teacher (Burns, 2012). The PDA works with the same mentor-intern pair for the entire year-long clinical experience.

Professional Development School (PDS): “a specific form of a school-university partnership wherein the school(s) and university share a commitment and a responsibility to improve the education of the students in the public schools by simultaneously renewing the lifelong education of teachers and the institutions responsible for that education.” (Snyder, 1999, p.136).

Chapter Summary

Mentoring preservice teachers is an important area to research as mentors have significant influence on the preservice teacher during the practicum experience and standards for teacher preparation have become more rigorous. It is essential to understand all that we can about the mentoring practices of the classroom-based teacher educators with whom preservice teachers are placed. Whereas some research demonstrates the effective practices of mentors, the research tends to be episodic in nature and does not
provide insight into how mentors develop and adapt their practices over time. There is also support in the research for the notion that effective mentors learned to collaborate while working within a Professional Development School, therefore the Central State/Sunshine Valley PDS context may provide a fertile location for examining the factors that impact mentoring practices, not only in current practice, but how they develop over time. The proposed study aims to contribute to these areas in the literature.
Chapter 2
A Review of the Literature

Teacher education policy that calls for high-quality or clinically rich preparation programs thrusts mentors of preservice teachers into critical roles in these programs. University faculty and students cannot meet this challenge alone. Partnerships with school districts and extended experiences with classroom mentors are needed. “Efforts to improve teacher education have recently focused in on the importance of well-supervised clinical practice as a critical element of effective preparation” (Darling-Hammond, 2014, p. 547). Mentors in a professional development school partnership work with preservice teachers sometimes in extended internships of up to one school year. While mentors are not considered supervisors in the traditional sense, there is growing support for these mentors as classroom-based teacher educators because of the thoughtful work they do with preservice teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 1998, Nolan & Parks, 2010).

Because mentoring is such a complex concept, it has been studied in multiple ways. Most of the empirical work focuses on isolated aspects of mentoring, e.g. roles, knowledge, practices, beliefs, etc. Conversely, other writers have approached the task of mentoring on a more conceptual level and identified frameworks that depict the multifaceted work of mentoring. This proposed study will attempt to blend both approaches by contributing empirical data to a conceptual framework for mentoring.

The initial section of the chapter explores the empirical research that has focused on various aspects of mentoring including: roles that mentors play, mentor knowledge, mentor practice, and mentor beliefs. The empirical research that centers around mentoring is complicated as some research concerns the mentoring of preservice teachers
and some research concerns the mentoring of inservice teachers, however it is important to synthesize both types of literature to draw out common themes. The chapter then turns to frameworks for conceptualizing mentoring beliefs and practices. The chapter concludes briefly with a summary that identifies how the proposed research might contribute to the literature on mentoring.

**Empirical Research on Components of Mentoring**

Mentoring is complex and there are many facets of the topic that researchers can pinpoint in their studies. Different approaches for studying mentors include but are not limited to their roles, knowledge, practices, and beliefs. Some of the research is clear in regards to the aspect of mentoring that is the focus of study, however, some research speaks to many mentoring components within the same study.

**Mentor Roles and Responsibilities**

Mentor roles and responsibilities is an area of research in the literature that has been investigated to understand how mentors view their role in relation to the mentees with whom they work (Awaya et al. 2001; Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005). The list of responsibilities that mentors play or are encouraged to play is daunting. It includes: critical friend, reflective practitioner, provider of feedback, counselor, observer, and more.

Kwan and Lopez-Real (2005) utilized surveys that listed ten researcher-generated mentoring roles from which mentors could select and rank three roles they perceived as most important to mentoring. Some of the overall roles included: observer, role model, counselor, manager, provider of feedback, instructor, critical friend, and equal partner. Based on the questionnaire data the three most important roles ranked by mentors were:
provider of feedback, counselor, and observer. This does not mean that other roles were
not important to the mentors, but forcing participants to rank only three inevitably
excludes some roles. The research strategy of using concepts derived from university
personnel as opposed to mentors is also potentially problematic. It creates doubt as to
whether or not the designated roles are the ones that mentors would list as most important
if they were given an opportunity to list roles.

Awaya et al. (2001) viewed “mentoring not as a role imposed from the outside,
but as a developing relationship…”(p. 46). These authors took an insider approach to
understanding the mentoring relationship, as three of the authors of the article were
mentors in the teacher education program under examination. The findings from their
study describe the mentoring as a “constructive partnership between two people” (p. 56).
By including actual mentors as authors in their study, they were able to access the
mentors’ points-of-view regarding the uniquely constructed relationship between mentor
and student teacher and how it differs from the more traditional cooperating teacher and
student teacher relationship. The three roles identified in this study include: a source of
moral support, a guide to practical knowledge, and a provider of space for the preservice
teacher to prove herself. The source of moral support and guide to practical knowledge
roles appear to be similar to Kwan and Lopez-Real’s roles of counselor and instructor,
but Awaya et al.’s role of space provider does seem to be substantially different than the
other roles included by Kwan and Lopez-Real. The most similar role that Kwan and
Lopez identified would be provider of feedback, but the role of providing space seems to
be more about encouraging preservice teachers to take risks and discover who they are as
teachers in more of a constructivist fashion as compared to the role of provider of
feedback which is a much more structured role often connected to refining the preservice teacher’s competence. Awaya et al. discovered fewer roles, three compared to ten, and described more specifics regarding the roles.

Feiman-Nemser and Parker (1992) conducted research with mentors of first year inservice teachers in Los Angeles. Because this type of mentoring is mandated by state legislation, there are officially defined responsibilities for trained mentors including being able to “guide” and “assist” new teachers. From their research, the authors were able to uncover the many structures in which mentors needed to “guide” and “assist” including: curricular issues, classroom management, and school context issues. In addition to naming responsibilities for mentors, this study identified some of the contexts where mentors would be expected to “guide” and “assist”. Unlike the previous research, this study also contributed to the knowledge base by including specific examples from interview transcripts of the ways in which mentors enacted their roles. In one example, a mentor identifies one of the hardest parts of being a new teacher as not having materials. She assists her mentee by providing her materials she might need, even if the mentee decides not to use them. Another mentor describes guiding her mentee with advice whether or not he chooses to follow the advice.

**Mentor Knowledge**

Mentor knowledge is another domain that researchers have studied within the mentoring literature. Parker-Katz and Bay (2007) investigated the substance of mentor knowledge, as well as how it guides mentors’ work with novices, and in turn, how the work reshapes their knowledge. Their conversations with mentors revealed three major ideas that mentors draw on in their work with preservice teachers: “the importance of
asking who teacher candidates can become as teachers, the importance of focusing on individual pupils’ learning as a means to learning teaching, and the importance of collective responsibility in teaching,” (p. 1266). These three major ideas indicate that mentors did not specifically identify a particular type or subset of knowledge that was most important to impart to the preservice teacher universally. Instead they focused on guiding the student teacher to address the needs of the students in the specific classroom context in order to develop the particular kinds of knowledge that new teachers needed. Thus, these mentors saw knowledge for teaching as tied to specific learners as opposed to being global. “Mentors promoted a vision of teaching and learning teaching rather than the idea of accomplishing particular goals or showing evidence of meeting discreet standards” (p. 1267). This is a powerful claim that draws attention to the idiosyncratic nature of mentoring. The qualities the mentors in this study explicate are intangible in nature. Without data to explain how these mentors enact these qualities in preservice teachers, it is unclear how mentors do this work in practice. The researchers found it surprising that the mentors did not provide a specific list of knowledge domains and performance abilities that mentors could simply “check off” as they worked with preservice teachers, since many teacher preparation programs do provide checklist-type standards for their mentors.

The importance of asking who teacher candidates can become as teachers, the importance of focusing on individual pupils’ learning as a means to learning teaching, and the importance of collective responsibility in teaching are qualities that require individualized guidance on the part of the mentor and indicate a more thoughtful approach to mentoring. The ways in which one mentor helps a preservice teacher focus
on individual pupils’ learning as a means to learning teaching may look quite different than that of another mentor. This may indicate a more autonomous approach to mentoring. During conversations, the mentors did not list tasks that preservice teachers need to accomplish such as: attend parent conferences, design a rubric, or complete lesson plans prior to teaching. The quality of “who teacher candidates can become as teachers,” indicates that the mentors in this study consider the strengths and needs of their particular preservice teacher. This is similar to Awaya et al.’s role of providing space to the preservice teacher in which the relationship between mentor and preservice teacher is constructivist in nature and not a mentor imparting knowledge in a one-directional way. This research does not contribute specific illustrations how a mentor guides his/her student teacher to enact these ideals as it may look very different from one mentor to another. This study also does not describe how these mentors developed this knowledge about preparing preservice teachers or how they might apply these ideas to different preservice teacher with different needs. However the themes are sophisticated in describing what mentors do. Another powerful element of this study is that the knowledge was constructed from the mentors’ viewpoints using mentor language. It may be that the types of roles and responsibilities described in the previous literature could be similar to the themes that emerged from this study, however the vocabulary like coach, provider of feedback, and friend were not used by the mentors.

Jones and Straker (2006) investigated mentors’ perceptions of the relationship between their professional knowledge and practice. Using Shulman’s framework of teacher knowledge as well as standards from teacher training in England, the authors found that mentors often draw on their teacher knowledge alone without considering
knowledge of working with adult learners as well as the underlying principles of
teaching. The authors utilized both questionnaire and interview data to identify their
findings. The questionnaire data revealed that a high percentage of mentors relied on their
professional practice and experience as well as their experience as a trainee teacher to
inform their practice with mentees. While this study exclusively looks at mentors who are
being trained to work with new teachers, it explicates the need for the professional
development of mentors more broadly than their personal teaching experiences. At the
same time that mentors are teaching K-12 students, they are also teaching adult learners
about teaching those K-12 students, and this area may need more research in order to
better understand how to help and support mentors with this responsibility. A mentoring
pedagogy may be helpful for quality development of mentors. It is also interesting to note
that a majority of mentors did use their experience as a preservice teacher in mentoring
others, so this may be an area where more research is needed to understand what
components of the teacher preparation program were influential.

Mentor Practices

The empirical research that follows identifies two different types of studies on
mentor practices. The review begins with one study that, like some of the studies on
mentor roles, resulted in listing and labeling a number of practices that mentors employ.
Two other studies that will be taken up later in this section do not list and label mentor
practices, but focus on portraying deeper, more substantive conceptualizations of
mentoring practice with explanation and illustrations.

A study by Jones and Straker (2006) examined mentor practice in their research
by utilizing responses to a questionnaire in which mentors chose from a list of pre-
determined practices. Their questionnaire data revealed that the most utilized strategies chosen by mentors were modeling good practice, encouraging self-evaluation in the preservice teacher, and feedback and discussion. Like the roles and responsibilities literature discussed previously, this research is helpful in listing and naming the various types of practices that mentors use with preservice teachers.

In contrast to the Jones and Straker study, which identified different types of mentoring practices, Feiman-Nemser and Parker (1992) examined mentor practices more closely. The researchers studied four mentors in two different contexts, two mentors in Los Angeles and two mentors in Albuquerque, and included illustrations of how mentoring is enacted in the practices of four mentors. From their observations of the mentors, the researchers identified three different practices that were common among the mentors, but were enacted differently due to their mentoring contexts. The three common practices are: observing and talking about teaching, enacting roles, and communicating messages about teaching and learning.

In Los Angeles, when mentors observed and talked about teaching they would talk through lessons they had observed and make comments or pose questions to the teacher without a clear plan or purpose of their own. The Los Angeles mentors enacted roles such as local experts and neutral observer. As local experts they would share knowledge about district policy or advocate for teaching practices based on their own teaching experience. In their messages about teaching and learning to teach these mentors indicated that good teaching is defined by teaching research and that good teaching is individualistic. The mentors in Albuquerque observed and talked about teaching by focusing on both student and teacher learning. These mentors enact roles like co-learner
which means they are directed by the concerns of the teacher to support and encourage them. Their messages about teaching and learning to teach include teaching what the students know and need to know and that good teachers are learners.

While these researchers identified similar practices among the four different mentors, they found that the mentors’ practices were shaped by their contexts including the “working conditions, preparation, and social structures of mentoring” (p. 715). The impact of preparation is an intriguing finding from this study. All of the mentors in this study were prepared with formal training within their contexts, however their preparation varied. Feiman-Nemser and Parker (1992) state:

L.A. mentors receive little help integrating the variety of information and ideas they are exposed to with the actual demands and requirements of their work…The Albuquerque program provides support teachers with ongoing conversation and reflection about how to help novices learn to teach, (p. 707-708).

Whereas these contexts formally prepared mentors, many teacher education programs work with mentors who are not formally prepared to work with preservice teachers. In designing a research study of mentors, exploring their development over time may reveal a connection between their teacher preparation program where they were mentored as a preservice teacher and their mentoring of preservice teachers.

Another example of explicating mentoring practices comes from Fairbanks, Freedman, and Kahn (2000) who made effective mentoring practices visible through narrative accounts of mentors’ experiences in a social environment. Mentors and researchers came together and held conversations around specific mentoring practices. Effective mentoring practices emerged from their collaborative dialogue, and the
researchers highlighted three categories of practices: helping student teachers survive their beginning teaching experiences and define their teaching lives; establishing relationships based upon dialogue and reflection; and building professional partnerships.

The practices that define helping student teachers survive their beginning teaching experiences and define their teaching lives include but are not limited to: taking the student teacher around the school and introducing her to different professionals in the building, giving advice about how to balance teaching and professional duties, and asking the student teacher what type of feedback they need. Establishing relationships based upon dialogue and reflection involved mentor teachers sharing their reflections with the preservice teacher either orally or via a dialogue journal. Within building professional partnerships, mentor practices include: co-planning units together and reflecting together upon their teaching in a more collegial manner.

The previous two studies are helpful because they provide illustrations of the mentoring practices they describe. They also point to the autonomy mentors have in how mentoring is enacted with preservice teachers. This resonates with the constructive relationship discussed previously where mentors described a developing relationship with the preservice teacher (Awaya et al., 2003)). In teacher preparation contexts where mentors are not provided with a week-by-week guide for what preservice teacher should be teaching in the classroom and have decision-making abilities in regards to their mentoring, understanding mentors’ beliefs and practices more deeply will have great importance for teacher preparation programs as a whole.

Like the empirical research that studies mentoring roles and responsibilities, studies that depict mentor practices through the development of broader conceptual
categories based on the experiences of a large number of mentors are very useful in that they provide a strong foundation for developing a general understanding of what happens within the mentoring process. However, mentoring is such a complex, individualized practice, that grouping mentors into general categories without accounting for individual mentoring experiences over time may not capture the individualized and contextualized nature of mentoring, thus failing to provide researchers with the robust knowledge needed for developing and supporting quality mentors.

To deepen the collective knowledge base about mentors of preservice teachers, there are important components to consider for designing a study. The empirical literature discussed in this section provides supportive evidence for articulating how complex mentoring can be in terms of the number of roles and practices that mentors enact. A large population of mentors may be able to respond to surveys and questionnaires, however rich illustrations for what mentoring looks like in practice cannot be gleaned. Complementing this type of research with interviews, observations, and examples from actual mentoring practice may provide a more complete picture of mentoring and include mentor voice. Often the mentoring research is episodic in nature and focused on one particular mentoring year. Investigating mentors’ development over time and across different mentees are important elements to consider in designing a study. Exploring a mentor’s development by accessing their histories may also provide insight into what factors impact mentoring over time. Conducting a study with these components would contribute to the literature on mentoring.

**Studying Beliefs**
This section of the chapter reviews the research on teacher educator beliefs as well as some of the research on mentor beliefs. Since mentors are now more widely acknowledged as serving as teacher educators, it seems germane to review the research on teacher educator beliefs here as well. Studying beliefs can be a challenge. It is important to recognize that the educational literature surrounding beliefs is complicated due to multiple definitions of the concept of beliefs (Pajares, 1992). Knowledge and beliefs are two terms that are often used synonymously. Clandinin and Connelly (1987) attempted to distinguish between these two terms in their work regarding teachers’ beliefs and found many synonyms in the literature that all seemed to refer to the same concept: perceptions, values, attitudes, perspectives, and conceptions among others. Researchers often define beliefs or knowledge in terms of their own research interests, which makes it difficult to develop a shared understanding of these terms in the teacher and teacher education literature (Pajares, 1992).

Nespor (1980) valued experience in his consideration of distinguishing between beliefs and knowledge. He theorized that beliefs reside in an episodic memory with material drawn from experience, whereas knowledge is semantically stored and operates independent of beliefs. Knowledge is open to examination and evaluation and is more receptive to reason. Beliefs, which Nespor claims are the greatest factor in predicting behavior, do not require any general consensus regarding the appropriateness of the belief and can defy reason.

There is some evidence that considering an experiential component to the definition of beliefs and how they are distinguished from knowledge, much like Nespor’s thinking, may be very appropriate in understanding mentor beliefs. Jones and Straker
asserted that mentors draw on their own experiences as a teacher when mentoring preservice teachers. Mentors themselves are classroom teachers working with preservice teachers in teacher education programs. Their experiences as classroom teachers may have implications for their beliefs about how they mentor preservice teachers. For example, a mentor may have a previous classroom experience teaching a mathematics lesson that was particularly challenging for her students due to their lack of prior knowledge on the subject. This experience may influence a mentor’s beliefs regarding how she approaches the situation when her preservice teacher also teaches the same mathematics lesson. Based on her classroom teaching experience, perhaps the mentor believes in highlighting the potential challenges before the preservice teacher instructs the lesson. Or perhaps she believes the preservice teacher needs to have her own experience, without the influence of the mentor’s previous experience. Of course this example is not only appropriate for teaching mathematics, but other subject areas as well. Classroom teaching experience could influence mentoring beliefs in other ways as well.

**Teacher Educator Beliefs**

The research regarding teacher educator beliefs is a relatively new subset of the teacher educator literature. While Berry (2007) does not use the term beliefs specifically in her self-study of teacher educator practice, she describes “tensions” that she experiences in her everyday practice that have implications for beliefs and practice. Tensions emerge as teacher educators attempt to navigate between their goals for preservice teachers’ learning and the needs expressed by preservice teachers. For example, the tension between telling and growth is about the struggle teacher educators have balancing the desire to inform preservice teaching about their knowledge of
teaching and creating opportunities for preservice teachers to reflect and learn about teaching for themselves, both of which they may believe are important at times. While Berry uses the tensions as a conceptual frame for making teacher educators’ professional knowledge explicit, there may also be connections to beliefs. Teacher educators may believe in the power of reflection for preservice teachers to direct their personal learning, however they face struggles in practice when preservice teachers need to be told something about teaching. Berry acknowledges that these tensions interact with one another and do not exist in isolation. It may be difficult to determine without further research when a particular part of the tension impacts another. A teacher educator may believe in both telling and growth at different times, and navigating those beliefs in practice can be problematic for teacher educators. This implies that perhaps teacher educators and mentors are not able to practice what they believe all of the time.

Depending on what a preservice needs in order to learn and grow, a teacher educator may need to be prepared to do something in which they do not necessarily believe because their experiences interacting with preservice teachers influence them to do so.

Zeichner and Tabachnick (1982) conducted a study that explored the supervisory-belief systems among a group of university teacher educators who served as supervisors and were all attempting to employ clinical supervision in their practice. The researchers found that the belief-systems of the supervisors fell among three categories: technical-instrumental, personal growth-centered, and critical, which like the tensions that Berry describes, are not mutually exclusive of one another.

A technical-instrumental point of view emphasizes the practices and techniques of teaching. The teacher’s curriculum is a driving force within this belief-system. It is not as
much about what the teacher wants to do, but it is more about the importance of doing what the teacher has to do well. Depending on what the curriculum dictates a teacher must do within their classroom, technical-instrumental supervisors, believed in aiding their students to do that work to the best of their ability.

Personal-growth centered belief-systems focused on the preservice teacher as the driver for supervision. The supervisors helped preservice teachers identify their teaching goals as well as defend their goals when challenged throughout the semester. These supervisors believed in questioning the preservice teacher about what teaching practices they were choosing and why in order to support the development of the preservice teacher’s beliefs.

Critical supervision emphasized students discovering the links between classroom experiences and societal structures within the community. While supervisors enacting this belief-system value the classroom experience, they also view it as problematic for challenging status-quo. These supervisors try to get their students to step back and critically think about their instruction in the classroom and the impact it has on the students in relation to the real world. These supervisors do not want their students to enter the profession with “blinders” on. Instead, they hope to prepare preservice teachers to be sensitive to the ways classrooms reflect society and eventually change schooling structures to address societal issues.

These categories of supervisory belief-systems have connections to the conceptualizations of mentoring by Franke and Dahlgren (2006) and Feiman-Nemser and Parker (1992). Technical-instrumental is similar to Franke and Dahlgren’s taken-for-granted perspective. Learning for the preservice teacher is centered around the content of
the curriculum or the expertise of the mentor. Personal-growth beliefs systems are like educational companions and the reflective perspective. Attention is placed on the preservice teacher, or even the students as a way to learn more about teaching. Agents of change and critical belief systems similarly include a component for considering teaching in a broader view than just the context of the classroom.

While all of the supervisors within the Zeichner and Tabachnick study were utilizing clinical supervision in their practice as supervisors, this research investigating their beliefs about their practice uncovered how different the approaches to practice may look. In the same respect, mentors who practice mentoring may employ similar structures to their practice with preservice teachers, but ultimately what underlies their practice can look quite different which is why specific illustrations of mentoring practice is so crucial. Even though all of the supervisors were required to enact clinical supervision, the way in which that happened varied among individuals. “Our analysis suggests that if we want to begin to understand the complex dynamics associated with the implementation of a teacher-education program then we need to pay attention to how individual participants in a program interpret and change the original ‘instructional plan’” (p. 50). Even though teacher education programs have certainly changed in the thirty years since this study was conducted, this implication is true for understanding mentoring. While a teacher preparation program may espouse certain goals for a program, until individuals are studied and more deeply understood, what is actually happening in classroom may not be known.

Self-study is a popular research methodology within recent studies of values and beliefs (Berry, 2007; Kosnick, 2007; Russell, 2007). Through focusing on Korthagen and
Vasalos’s (2005) “onion model” for core reflection, both Russell and Kosnick refined their missions as teacher educators by exposing their values and beliefs about teacher education. Core reflection is defined as, “the pursuit of deeper levels of reflection aimed at a teacher educator’s sense of mission and can help to explain the less rational sources of teacher behaviour,” (p. 279). The onion analogy was created to illustrate the levels of reflection. The layers of the onion represent the various depths of a person’s qualities. The outer layers are more superficial representing environment, behaviors, and competencies, while the inner layers represent deeper qualities like beliefs, identity, and mission. Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) created questions to match each layer in order to bring reflection to the surface.

![The onion model](image)

*Figure 2.1. Core Reflection ‘onion’ model. This figure illustrates the levels of reflection.*

As a result of both Russell and Kosnick realizing their values and beliefs through deeply personal responses like core reflection, their teacher educator missions were
impacted in ways that created “greater clarity and a greater likelihood of better aligning teaching intents and actions,” (2007, p. 279). Exposing their beliefs directly impacted their practice to be more consistent than prior to exposing their beliefs.

While mentor teachers may not take up self-study on their own to contribute to the research base for teacher education, it is up to teacher educators to collaborate with and study mentors in order to provide opportunities for their professional growth.

“…values and beliefs, when realized, drive a teacher educator’s mission in ways that can create greater clarity and a greater likelihood of better aligning teaching intents and actions—a professional learning outcome that fundamentally impacts professional development” (Loughran, 2014, p. 10). The very practice of researching mentors may have important implications for their growth as classroom-based teacher educators and may help them to be more cognizant of their beliefs and histories in their current mentoring practice.

Mentor Beliefs

Studying mentor beliefs specifically is not as prevalent in the mentoring literature. Perhaps this is due to the challenging nature of accessing one’s beliefs, as well as the abundance of programs that specifically prepare mentors to do the work and may not acknowledge what mentors actually believe about preparing preservice teachers. Research identifies the mentor’s teacher preparation program as having a strong influence on mentoring beliefs (Hawkey, 1998). A mentor’s teacher preparation program is a part of the mentor’s past, therefore acknowledging and exploring the experiences that mentors bring with them to their experience as mentors is valuable. The research that follows also identifies conceptual categories of mentoring beliefs and practices much like authors in
the literature previously discussed. The categories offer deeper descriptions of mentoring, however they do not account for how a mentor develops and adapts over time.

Hawkey (1998) attempted to relate mentors’ “espoused” theories of mentoring to “theories in action.” She found a variety of factors that appeared to be influential, but the two mentors in the study each named their teacher preparation practice as an overwhelmingly influential factor on their mentoring. This is an interesting finding as it connects with preservice teachers developing an “apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie, 1975) in regards to their understanding of teaching and learning. It seems that mentors may enact mentoring based on the way they were mentored themselves. This also adds another layer for teacher preparation programs to consider. Not only are programs preparing teachers to enter the teaching profession, they may also be setting an example or creating implicit theories and beliefs about how to mentor teachers into the profession.

This research also gives credit to acknowledging and addressing the incoming assumptions and beliefs that mentors bring with them to mentoring. While the mentors in this case study were prepared to mentor within a reflective model of teacher preparation, they way in which they enacted their mentoring was different, similar to the supervisors in the Zeichner and Tabachnick (1982) study who were operating within a clinical supervision model. Although teacher preparation programs may want to mandate how preservice teachers are prepared in programs, when human beings are involved, they may operate from their personal lens. For professional development purposes, it may be more effective to understand the personal lenses rather than provide a “one size fits all” model of professional development.
The other influential factors were not named in the study, so perhaps they were not as powerful. The researchers were able to link examples of mentoring in practice to the espoused influence, namely their teacher preparation, that mentors had identified which proved consistency between theory and practice. For example, one of the mentors George, typically utilized a directive and informative style of mentoring with his preservice teacher much like he had experienced as a student teacher himself. Hawkey identifies a need for longitudinal studies to understand how mentors’ approaches adapt and change as a result of more mentoring experiences working with different kinds of mentees.

In their research, McNally and Martin (1998) utilized Daloz’s (1986) mentoring model, which suggests the ways mentors provide support and challenge can impact a novice teacher. These authors studied mentoring practices to identify underlying beliefs. Research with eight subject-specific mentors revealed beliefs about mentoring based on the levels at which support and challenge were used in practice, and as a result three styles of mentoring emerged.
Figure 2.2 Daloz’s Model of Support and Challenge.

These three styles represented three of the four quadrants of Daloz’s model of support and challenge (See Figure 2.2). In addition to support and challenge, mentors were also distinguished by their view of the novice teacher, how they welcomed the novice teacher, and their vision. “Laissez-faire mentors” were generally nurturing and more supportive, believing their responsibility was to provide emotional support and reduce stress. Their view of the novice teacher is one of natural development. In welcoming a novice teacher, laissez-faire mentors provide a lot of information and support in the beginning and the novice teacher is responsible for setting his/her own goals for development. These laissez-faire mentors were similar to Feiman-Nemser and Parker’s (1992) “local guides” and Fairbanks, Freedman, and Kahn’s (2000) mentors who helped student teachers survive their beginning experiences. In that, they provided high support and low challenge. “Collaborative mentors” believed in providing high support and high challenge to their novices to create optimal individualized growth. They work with the novice teacher to understand their needs and provide support early on to provide appropriate experiences for their growth. While novices are encouraged to set goals, the mentor and novice work together to create them. This is reflective of the collaborative working relationship illustrated in Fairbanks, Freedman and Kahn’s professional partnerships and Feiman-Nemser and Parker’s agents of change. The “imperial mentor” had strong beliefs about teaching and learning and was characterized by high challenge with low support. The mentor is viewed as the expert and ultimately the mentor wants the novice to adopt her beliefs about teaching and learning. This study identified categories for understanding mentors’ beliefs that were similar to typologies
developed to explicate supervisory practices and mentoring practices. Imperial mentors may see themselves as the expert and mentor in a way that is similar to the taken-for-granted perspective (Franke & Dahlgren, 2006) as well as the technical-instrumental model (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1992).

While understanding the beliefs of mentors is an important piece of the overall complexity of the role, it is equally as important to consider how the beliefs are or are not enacted in mentoring practice. According to Pajares (1992):

> It is also clear that, if reasonable inferences about beliefs requires assessments of what individuals say, intend, and do, then teachers’ verbal expressions, predispositions to action, and teaching behaviors must all be included in assessments of beliefs. Not to do so calls into question the validity of the findings and the value of the study. Traditional belief inventories provide limited information with which to make inferences, and it is this step in the measurement process that understanding the context-specific nature of beliefs becomes critical (p. 327).

Studying mentors must include both beliefs and practice to gain a greater picture of mentoring. Teacher education programs may also be interested in supporting their mentors through professional development opportunities, whether this is with formalized preparation or not. There seems to be a very personalized nature to mentoring, and valuing mentors’ histories including what beliefs and experiences they bring with them to mentoring may lead to designing better professional development experiences for all.

**Frameworks for Conceptualizing Mentoring**
This section of the paper will explain three different frameworks that have been offered as useful frameworks for conceptualizing mentoring: mentoring as supervision, models of mentoring, and educative mentoring.

**Mentoring as Supervision**

The research in supervision is important to consider for studying mentors as many teacher educators have called for the “formalized training of cooperating teachers as supervisors” (McIntyre & Byrd, 1998, p.413). Currently, there are teacher preparation programs that purposefully select and prepare mentors to work with preservice teachers, as well as contexts where mentors volunteer. Often, mentors are trained or supported with the use of strategies from supervision, and the clinical supervision model is the model most frequently mentioned for these purposes (Franke & Dahlgren, 1996). There is research to support the idea that mentors should be carefully selected and prepared for their role in preparing preservice teachers as supervisors, however there is research that points to both conclusive and inconclusive results from preparing mentors (Killian & McIntyre, 1987; Killian & Wilkins, 2009; McIntyre & Byrd, 1998; Wang, 2001).

Killian and Wilkins (2009) studied the supervisory effectiveness of cooperating teachers through interview and other artifact data. The group of teachers found to be highly effective in their supervisory skills had a midrange number of years of teaching experiences, had supervised more than five students, closely collaborated with the university supervisor, and had graduate-level preparation in supervision. The mentors who had deep preparation with coursework on systematic observation and feedback were able to articulate their mentoring beliefs and enact practices that were consistent with those beliefs. Their graduate-level coursework was the most powerful association for
high-effectiveness in mentoring. It is unclear if these effective mentors were effective simply because of their coursework or if they were already predisposed to be quality mentors. In addition to this, some mentors may not find supervisory work to be an exact match for their own mentoring practice. Supervisory coursework may preclude some mentors from participating, especially if there is a tuition cost for coursework. The supervisory work may be helpful for professional development workshops for mentors, although it would be important to know what aspects mentors find valuable in order to tailor professional development opportunities.

Another example of the powerful effects of supervisory training on mentors is described by Crasborn et al. (2008) who indicate many positive outcomes were observed in mentor teachers who received supervisory training in a variety of areas. However, the authors also point out that some effects observed in mentors were not as positive.

This may be caused by the fact that the training content and approach is often the same for all participants, while their needs and skill level were possibly different. Training is not working out the same for every participant. There is a potential influence of personal characteristics of each trainee and also features and facilities of the workplace. Studies into the effects of training on the supervisory repertoire of mentor teachers should therefore also map individual differences…” (p. 502).

This excerpt speaks to the fact that more information is needed in order to understand the professionals working with preservice teachers. While there are clearly similarities between supervision and mentoring, there are differences between the roles as well. Simply imposing a “training for all” model of professional development may not be the most effective practice for the uniqueness of mentoring preservice teachers. The
personal characteristics that Crasborn et al. (2008) allude to would certainly include understanding mentors’ beliefs, practice, and development over time. As the mentoring field develops, and studies demonstrate the complexity of the mentor role, it is becoming increasingly clear that perhaps the supervision models are insufficient for supporting mentors.

Ralph (1994) studied supervision in a teacher education program that adopted the contextual supervision model to promote professional growth with their preservice teachers. He found that as a supervisor to a mentor-intern pair, contextual supervision was potentially a meaningful supervisory approach to use. Contextual supervision is “a leadership approach that promotes the professional growth of participants” (p. 354). In this model, supervisors attempt to match their style of supervision to the needs of the supervisee’s situations. The most pressing need supervisors consider is the readiness level of the supervisee which is a combination of their competence and confidence with a particular skill. This model also promotes the consideration of other contextual factors that may influence readiness levels such as: culture, school environment, and curriculum. The goal is to bring these variables into conscious consideration, not necessarily to change them. Within the implications of his research, Ralph identifies that it would be beneficial to understand how mentors are naturally using elements of contextual supervision without training. This connects to the idea that mentoring may be different than supervision and it is important to learn more about mentors to better support them. Additionally, in terms of professional development, understanding the natural work of mentors rather than imposing a particular strategy on them values the work the mentor is already doing.
Mentors working with preservice teachers are in complicated roles that involve both affective and evaluative domains, which is why the supervision literature may be of importance for this study. Mentors need to provide feedback to preservice teachers, but at the same time, they need to “live” with them in the classroom day to day. This is different from the traditional university supervisor, who may be present to observe and give feedback, but ultimately leaves the classroom to work with other students. Perhaps the supervision research should not be the sole knowledge base used to support and provide professional development for mentors. According to Killian and Wilkins (2009) “although many authors have described training and have made recommendations, there is little systematic research on exactly what the most effective supervisors do, let alone how they develop those skills” (p. 68). By continuing to unpack the complexity of mentoring more can be learned to provide the most authentic and powerful support for mentors.

**Mentoring Models**

The educational research literature in general, as noted previously in this chapter, has not always distinguished clearly between beliefs and knowledge. The difficulty in distinguishing between the two has been explored extensively. Not surprisingly then, the mentoring literature is not always clear regarding beliefs and knowledge either. The conceptualizations described below represent specific views regarding how preservice teachers might learn to teach. The beliefs and practices that underlie each of the perspectives likely influence how one approaches mentoring (Feiman-Nemser & Rosaen, 1997).
Clarke and Jarvis-Selinger (2005) used the term “teaching perspective” adopted from Pratt (1998) to encompass the “beliefs, actions, motivations, and intentions in relation to the manner in which one conceives the context of learning” (p. 66). The Teaching Perspectives Inventory is limited to five pre-determined perspectives. These perspectives are quite similar to other mentoring models within the literature (Wang & Odell, 2002; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1982) and these approaches may be reflective of the mentors’ beliefs and practices. While there are multiple models that could be used to view mentoring, four models are summarized below that represent a continuum of mentoring in an attempt to synthesize what is represented in the research discussed in this chapter.

Transmission perspective or competency model. A transmission perspective, or competency model would value subject matter expertise. Within this view of teacher education, the mentor becomes a trainer, providing opportunities for the preservice teacher to practice a set of pre-determined skills and tasks, often provided by a university. Primarily, the mentor is charged with presenting content “accurately and efficiently” (Clark & Jarvis-Selinger, 2005, p. 67). This model fits well within the traditional student teaching model where the preservice teacher has a predetermined schedule for when to take over specific subjects and teaching responsibilities. In the first stage the mentee observes and learns from the expert mentor teacher. In the second stage of the model the mentee takes gradual control of the teaching responsibilities in order to learn by doing. Preservice teachers practice some of the mentors’ routines combined with their own adaptations while the mentor acts as a coach for specific skills. It is possible that a ceiling effect could take hold within this model as both the mentor and mentee could believe that
once the prescribed list of tasks is complete, so is the learning and growing (Maynard & Furlong, 1995).

Preparing teachers within a competency model assumes a belief that there is a finite set of competencies that a preservice teacher could and should eventually “master” and then be prepared for a lifetime of teaching. For example, a preservice teacher could potentially develop knowledge about what third graders need to learn in mathematics from a mentor who has taught third grade for many years, however, that knowledge may or may not be transferrable to other contexts, nor does it consider the different kinds of third grade learners. This model for preparing teachers would not prepare students to view teaching as problematic, but rather the opposite. Theoretically, a teacher could teach the same content, using the same techniques endlessly. This model appears to downplay reflection and responsive teaching practices. This model connects with Zeichner and Tabachnick’s technical-instrumental model that places emphasis on the curriculum and the successful execution of teaching as the focus for learning, as well as Franke and Dahlgren’s taken-for-granted perspective where the mentor is viewed as the expert.

**Apprenticeship model.** An apprenticeship perspective believes that learning is achieved through application. The task of mentoring from the perspective of situated apprentice is to help novices develop the necessary practical knowledge for teaching, know the available resources for teaching, and understand the context and cultures of teaching (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1995). This perspective seems to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The assumption for learning here is that it consists of gradual participation in the practices of a professional community through apprenticeships (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The belief of mentoring is for mentors to act as
local guides to the resources, curriculum, and culture of teaching in the particular context where they are learning to teach and may end up teaching while at the same time articulating the significance of what is happening in the classroom (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; Maynard & Furlong, 1995).

The apprenticeship perspective is helpful in getting preservice teachers familiar with skills and tools and the culture of the school. There is a strong emphasis on understanding and being responsive to one’s particular context for teaching. In contrast to the competency model that assumes there is a universally applicable set of teaching competencies, the apprenticeship model places strong emphasis on the particular context in which teaching occurs and learning from teaching in that situated context. However, this model may not provide teachers with opportunities to learn how to critically think about their teaching practices and develop an inquiry-stance towards teaching. The danger in the apprenticeship model is that it may result in reproducing the kind of teaching that the mentor models perhaps leading to an ‘apprenticeship of observation’ effect (Lortie, 1975; Wang & Odell, 2002; 2007).

Reflective model. As compared to the competency and apprenticeship models, the mentor mentoring within a reflective model would believe in and encourage the mentee to move beyond mastering skills and techniques and begin to question and think more deeply about teaching and students’ learning, much like Franke and Dahlgren’s (2006) reflective perspective, Feiman-Nemser and Parker’s (1992) educational companion, and Fairbanks, Freedman, and Kahn’s (2000) professional partnerships. The mentor not only models these behaviors for the preservice teacher, but also does them in conjunction with her. This model is reflected in Zeichner and Tabachnick’s (1982)
personal-growth model where the supervisor turns the focus for growth to the student, the preservice teacher. This model encourages preservice teachers to engage in their practice by reflecting on themselves and their students.

This model of mentoring places an emphasis on the preservice teacher’s ability to critically think about teaching, therefore a mentor would hold a belief that the preservice teacher needs to critically think about her practice in relation to its outcome for students, not necessarily critical in the sense of social justice. The reflective model would promote novices in embracing teaching as problematic, as well as consider the theoretical underpinnings that support their teaching practices. There is not an explicit acknowledgement of subject-specific knowledge within this model, although the teacher is being responsive to the needs of her students which may imply that the subject-specific knowledge is important especially concerning the effects of teaching within different content areas.

**Critical constructivist or social reform perspective.** A social reform perspective has roots in critical theory and encourages students to challenge the status quo. From the perspective of critical constructivist, the belief of mentoring is to work with preservice teachers as “agents of change” (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992). They should model how to critically look at existing knowledge, structures, and the culture of teaching and schooling, develop a strong commitment toward reform-minded teaching, and work collaboratively to transform such knowledge and practice continuously for social justice (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Critically looking at practice in this model is different from critically looking at practice described within the reflective model above. There is a social-justice element to critically examining
practice within this perspective much like the critical belief system described by Zeichner and Tabachnick. This perspective seems to move one step beyond that of the reflective model as the focus for change extends beyond the classroom walls. This inquiry stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) towards teaching may also be one of the most important tools a preservice teacher acquires before embarking on their own teaching journey.

Each perspective implies fundamental beliefs and practices about teaching and learning. The models are advantageous for thinking about mentoring beliefs and practices in that they offer some generalizations and broad categories for identifying what mentors might believe. However, the use of models is somewhat rigid. Even though mentors could operate within more than one model at a time, the models do not offer much in thinking about the differentiation that a mentor might employ with each individual preservice teacher with which they work. Depending on the needs of the preservice teacher, different perspectives may be utilized with different preservice teachers. While the models may reflect what mentors believe about preparing preservice teachers, they do not explain how a mentor develops within or among the models, including how mentors come to practice within a particular type of model. The models are frameworks that can be applied to mentoring situations; there is not much depth beyond the descriptors that identify each model. Mentoring is multi-faceted and often dependent on the mentor and mentee. The following conceptualization may be more appropriate for understanding mentors’ beliefs and practices.

**Educative Mentoring**

Educative mentoring provides a lens for studying mentors’ beliefs and practices in a more individualistic way than the perspectives previously described because the focus
is placed on the preservice teacher. Rather than view a preservice teacher’s development in relation to a rigid structure of learning to teach, educative mentoring creates learning opportunities that consider the needs and goals of a particular preservice teacher at a particular time. The ideas that underlie the models previously described may be embedded within educative mentoring, but that would be dependent on the needs and goals of the preservice teacher. Educative mentoring has roots in Dewey’s (1938) concept of educative experiences, which are experiences that promote, rather than retard future growth and lead to richer, subsequent experiences. According to Dewey, the educator is responsible for arranging the physical and social conditions so that learners have growth-producing experiences. The learner interacts with her or his own environment in ways that result in growth (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Schwille, 2008; Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, 2007). Feiman-Nemser, who first identified this concept in order to distinguish it from a more traditional supervisory approach, describes educative mentoring in following way:

Educative mentoring rests on an explicit vision of good teaching and an understanding of teacher learning. Mentors who share this orientation attend to beginning teachers’ present concerns, questions, and purposes without losing sight of long-term goals for teacher development. They interact with novices in ways that foster an inquiry stance. They cultivate skills and habits that enable novices to learn in and from their practice. They use their knowledge and expertise to assess the direction novices are heading and to create opportunities and conditions that support meaningful teacher learning in the service of student learning (p. 18).

Schwille (2008) also expands on this concept:
Mentors engage in educative mentoring when they go beyond emotional or psychological support and resource procurement and base their practice on the premise that learning to teach requires creating learning opportunities that involve the mentee intellectually in her or his “zone of proximal development” (Vygotsky, 1978). Learning to teach requires more than just handholding—it demands involvement in and an understanding of the intellectual nature of teaching and learning to teach (p.141).

Although they do not use the language of educative mentoring specifically, Hennissen et al. (2011), from their extensive research review found that the extent to which mentor teachers are able to address mentee’s learning needs is an important factor in successful mentoring. “Mentor teachers need to assure that the mentoring roles they take and the strategies they use to support mentees’ learning are receptive to their mentee’s concerns and suitable for their stages of development. These findings certainly ring true when thinking about the support principles of educative mentoring, however, Hennissen et al. (2011) are missing the element of creating learning opportunities to meet long-term goals for preservice teachers in their assumption of effective mentoring. Educative mentoring is about both providing support to the present needs of preservice teachers as well as maintaining vision for long-term growth.

Educative mentoring is about being responsive to the needs of the student teacher and providing him or her with appropriate challenge and long-term learning opportunities in a deep and personal way. It would be ideal for mentors or cooperating teachers in any context to strive for this type of mentoring, however, if a mentor believed and practiced within more of a competency based model, she may not be viewed as an educative
mentor. A mentor practicing within a competency model of mentoring would likely be concerned with a checklist of “must-dos” for the preservice teacher to complete. The practices a preservice teacher needs to master during the preservice field experience becomes the center of mentoring. The notions of support and challenge may be present in terms of supporting a preservice teacher to complete a requirement and challenging a preservice teacher to move on to the next requirement. The support and challenge components present within educative mentoring would center on the needs of the preservice teacher. There are certainly elements of the previous perspectives found within educative mentoring. An educative mentor would be responsive to the teaching context as indicated in the apprenticeship model. Educative mentors would also provide opportunities for the preservice teacher to reflect meaningfully on her practice and would even reflect alongside her. Of course most mentors would agree they want to be educative mentors. Studying the beliefs and practices of actual mentoring would provide insight into the degree of actual educative mentoring happening and the following conceptualization of educative mentoring may be helpful in doing that.

**Conceptual Framework for Educative Mentoring**

Yendol-Hoppey and Dana (2007) offer a conceptualization of educative mentoring in their book *The Reflective Educator’s Guide to Mentoring* that can function as a framework for conducting research on mentors’ beliefs and practices. The authors acknowledge the complexity of mentoring and identify the three major components that a mentor needs to attend to when working with a mentee as: “creating an educative mentoring context, guiding a mentee’s professional knowledge development, and cultivating the dispositions of a successful educator” (p. 15). It is important to note that
Yendol-Hoppey and Dana describe educative mentoring for an audience of mentors working with novice inservice teachers, although their conceptualization is also appropriate for mentors and researchers working with preservice teachers. See Appendix A for a visual of this framework.

Creating an Educative Mentoring Context

The first component Yendol-Hoppey and Dana identify in their conceptualization of educative mentoring is creating a mentoring context which means providing emotional support, creating a strong relationship, and understanding the prior knowledge and beliefs about teaching the mentee brings into the classroom.

**Provide emotional support.** The emotional support piece of mentoring is crucial and has been identified as an important mentoring component throughout the literature (Daloz, 1986; Fairbanks, Freedman, & Kahn, 2000; Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992). Mentor teachers need to provide emotional support to the novice teacher especially in the teaching climate today. The teaching profession is under great pressure due to teacher evaluation methods, issues of tenure, the charter school movement, and much more. In order to prepare future teachers for success and sustainability, emotional support is “an essential underpinning to any future professional development” (p. 16). These authors do not identify any specific behaviors that would explicitly point to what emotional support looks like in practice as they conceptualize it and empirically studying mentors may contribute to this component. However, Fairbanks, Freedman, and Kahn’s category of helping student teacher survive and Feiman-Nemser and Parker’s “local guides” may be examples of this emotional piece in the research. Yendol-Hoppey and Dana unpack this
component a bit more to describe how effective or educative mentors might create a mentoring context.

**Develop a strong relationship.** Along with other researchers, Yendol-Hoppey and Dana identify developing a trusting and respectful working relationship with the mentee in order to create an educative mentoring context (Awaya, 2001; Clarke & Jarvis-Selinger, 2005; Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005). Specifically, they name open lines of communication between the mentor and mentee as essential for engaging in educative mentoring. Clarke and Jarvis-Selinger identify this emotional element as a nurturing perspective which is a critical element of the field experience. “If nothing else, an environment of trust and care that a Nurturing perspective provides increases the possibility that feedback is both accepted willingly and actively sought out by the student” (p. 69). Both the mentor and mentee need to be willing participants, but especially without the participation of the mentee, educative mentoring would be quite challenging. The audience for Yendol-Hoppey and Dana are mentors working with inservice teachers, so they also describe the importance of the separation of mentoring and evaluation. When mentoring inservice teachers, the mentor is not responsible in any way for evaluating the mentee, therefore it is imperative for the mentee to be able to trust the mentor and be able to share concerns with the mentor without the fear of evaluation. This is not the same for mentors working with preservice teachers, as those mentors do have a shared responsibility for evaluating the preservice teacher with the classroom supervisor. This may be a tricky area to balance developing a trusting relationship while simultaneously needing to evaluate the preservice teacher although it should not diminish the importance of trust in the mentoring relationship.
Also, mentors of preservice teachers need to recognize the issues of power in their relationships with preservice teachers. While this may be a natural part of the relationship, mentors should identify ways to encourage the preservice teacher to “exercise agency rather than act as a passive recipient in the learning-to-teach process” (p. 17). A passive recipient may be present in models of learning to teach such as the transmission perspective or competency model of learning to teach where the mentor is perceived to have all of the knowledge and needs to strictly impart that knowledge to the preservice teacher (Clark & Jarvis-Selinger, 2005; Franke & Dahlgren, 1996; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1982). Although Yendol-Hoppey and Dana again do not identify exact ways to promote agency within a preservice teacher, they are clearly making an attempt to describe what educative mentoring is not, and studying mentors working with preservice teachers may provide descriptions of how this component is illustrated in practice.

**Ascertaining a mentee’s prior knowledge.** Finally, understanding the mentee’s existing knowledge about teaching and learning may contribute to the creation of an educative mentoring context. Research previously described has shown that preservice teachers come to the field experience with their own ideas about teaching and learning based on their own experiences as students. Without specific recognition and acknowledgment of their beliefs, it may be difficult for preservice teachers to grow. Yendol-Hoppey and Dana do offer a specific way to access prior knowledge by creating a teaching platform with the mentee in order to articulate their thoughts in an exact way (Nolan & Hoover, 2008). In addition to creating a context for educative mentoring, mentors are also responsible for guiding a mentee’s professional knowledge development.
Guiding a Mentee’s Professional Knowledge Development

Yendol-Hoppey and Dana draw on several scholars to identify seven knowledge bases that educative mentors need to attend to and develop within their mentees: content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, student-learner knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical-content knowledge, context knowledge, and classroom-management knowledge (Good & Brophey, 1994; Levin & Nolan, 2000; Shulman, 1987). At times the authors identify practices that mentors can engage in to support the preservice teacher’s development of the different knowledge bases, and at times they do not provide specific examples of what a mentor should specifically do. These authors specifically outline and name the types of professional knowledge in this conceptualization. Other researchers (Jones & Straker, 2006) have also studied mentor knowledge, but grouped the teacher knowledge together into one category, so it is difficult to know exactly what knowledge that category encompasses.

**Content knowledge.** There are three components of content knowledge crucial for teaching that Yendol-Hoppey and Dana identify (Ball & McDiarmid, 1989):

First, the teacher must understand the central facts, concepts, theories, and procedures essential to the lesson content. Second, the teacher must have an explanatory framework that organizes and connects the ideas for both himself or herself and the students. Third, the teacher must understand the rules for evidence with the content area (p. 19).

Mentors need to make their content knowledge explicit to mentees when planning and instructing a lesson so preservice teachers have a sense of the knowledge mentors are drawing on to teach. At the same time, mentors have a responsibility to help preservice
teaching develop their content knowledge. Although the authors do not identify specific ways a mentor might do this, it could involve exposing preservice teachers to a variety of curricular resources that may help deepen their content knowledge.

**Pedagogical knowledge.** A second form of knowledge that preservice teachers need complements the content knowledge. Pedagogical knowledge refers to the instructional tools preservice teachers need to familiarize themselves with in order to effectively teach students including: standards, the ability to plan, instruct, and assess learning. Mentors need to help preservice teachers expand their pedagogical knowledge base, but it is not clear how mentors might do that and empirical research may help contribute to this area.

**Student-learner knowledge.** Preservice teachers also need to develop an understanding of the students in their classroom that they are teaching. Knowledge of student-learners will help them to plan effective lessons and differentiate when appropriate. Mentors can help preservice teachers do this by analyzing student work, interviewing students to better understand their thinking, and helping preservice teachers observe the impact of their instruction on a variety of students (p. 20). These specific practices, as well as others, can help preservice teachers know their students better as learner.

**Curriculum knowledge.** Curriculum knowledge requires a teacher to know the standards, organization, sequence, and differentiation of the curriculum inside and out. Mentors need to “introduce curriculum standards, make explicit current research on curriculum implications for student learning, and help novices negotiate the element of high-stakes testing” (p. 20). Standards-based reform requires teaching for conceptual
understanding (Wang & Odell, 2002). While preservice teachers may not need to negotiate these ideas during their field experience, especially if they are not placed in high-stakes testing grade levels, teaching for conceptual understanding will certainly be a piece of the lessons they plan for their students and may be quite different from how they learned curriculum as a student.

**Pedagogical content knowledge.** Pedagogical content knowledge is a practical type of teacher knowledge that teachers consider as they, think about how to connect a specific subject matter to students with diverse backgrounds and academic needs within a particular school characterized by limited resources and significant accountability pressures, while at the same time considering the misconceptions the students may hold (p. 21).

When considering the complex notion of teaching itself, mentoring involves doing all of the above things as a teacher and then making that knowledge explicit for preservice teachers during the planning phase. In addition to making this knowledge explicit for preservice teachers, the authors suggest that developing pedagogical content knowledge may also involve deepening subject matter knowledge, helping preservice teachers consider the perspective of the students, and learning how to organize students to learn the content. Mentors who operate within a reflective perspective of teaching or as an educational companion are likely to help novices consider the viewpoints of their students. A transmission model or taken-for-granted perspective of mentoring would only be concerned with imparting the mentors’ knowledge to the student teacher.

**Context knowledge.** Context knowledge development stresses the importance of preservice teachers understanding where they teach in addition to whom they teach.
Preservice teachers may need guidance in negotiating the politics of their context including district policies, school leadership style, the school’s mission, roles and responsibilities of educators within the school, and the community that surrounds the school. Mentors may help develop this knowledge in their preservice teachers by making their negotiations within a school context explicit to them so they may see connections to their future teaching placements as inservice teachers. Local guides and mentors helping student teachers survive their beginning experiences may see this as part of their responsibility when welcoming a new teacher to the school environment.

**Classroom management knowledge.** Finally, classroom management knowledge is an area that mentors need to attend to within their preservice teachers. “Knowledge of classroom management includes how students are expected to use classroom and school facilities and how to establish routines or procedures that make the day run smoothly” (p. 22). Mentors need to explicitly help preservice teachers in this domain as well.

Yendol-Hoppey and Dana identify at least seven different knowledge bases that mentors must help develop in their mentees in addition to developing a context for educative mentoring. Mentors must also consider the development of a mentee’s professional dispositions as they enter the teaching field.

**Nurturing the Development of a Mentee’s Professional Dispositions**

“Professional dispositions refer to a prevailing frame of mind or spirit that is part of the fabric of not just who one is as a teacher, but who one is as a person as well” (p. 24). Yendol-Hoppey and Dana identify four professional dispositions that educative mentors must help mentees develop within themselves: a commitment to equity, a commitment to inquiry, a commitment to collaboration, and a commitment to a strong
work ethic. Parker-Katz and Bay (2007) conducted research with mentors to identify mentor knowledge and found that mentors in their study focused more on who preservice teachers should become rather than specific domains of knowledge. They described dispositions toward learning, students, and the profession of teaching.

**Commitment to equity.** Mentors need to help preservice teachers analyze their teaching practices from the point of view of the students to understand who students are and acknowledge what they bring to the classroom. “According to Cochran-Smith (1991), cultivating a commitment to equity often requires developing a dissatisfaction with the current teaching practice, recognizing that current teacher practice often deflates freedom, equality, and student dignity” (p. 24). Developing this disposition within preservice teachers will help them become more aware of committing to equity for their students. The critical constructivist or social reform model of mentoring would reflect this commitment to equity and focus on preservice teachers as advocates of change in education.

**Commitment to inquiry.** Another disposition that mentor teachers should develop within their mentees is a commitment to inquiry (Howey, 1988). Due to the complex, and naturally problematic nature of teaching, it is important for preservice teachers to learn how to face and embrace their issues of practice. Educative mentors should model this for preservice teachers by thinking aloud through their dilemmas, and perhaps even systematically studying their practice. Mentors can push their mentees’ thinking by posing questions that create dissonance. “Since dissonance can often cause discomfort, mentees must help the novice teacher recognize that dissonance is a powerful impetus for professional growth that should be embraced rather than smothered” (p. 25).
Additionally, mentors of preservice teachers can engage in the inquiry process collaboratively with their preservice teacher. Having mentor support while engaged in studying problems of practice will help mentees understand how inquiry is embedded in teaching. This may be seen in the reflective model for learning to teach described previously where the focus shifts away from the preservice teacher and onto the students and the effects of the teaching.

**Commitment to collaboration.** Teachers must work together to “support each other, facilitate learning, and problem solve together” (p. 26). Mentors working with preservice teachers should focus on developing a collaborative disposition within them. While Yendol-Hoppey and Dana identify collaboration as a component of a successful educator, more research may be needed to specifically identify how a mentor develops this in practice. Kwan and Lopez-Real (2005) found from their interview data that mentors specifically identified collaboration as leading to “improved professional practice for both mentor and student teacher” (p. 283). This study identifies collaboration as a necessity between the student teacher and mentor, however fails to connect the collaborative attribute as something the preservice teacher will need for success in the field. Mentors categorized as agents of change would also value this collaboration between mentor and mentee where the relationship can be described as more collegial then hierarchal.

**Commitment to a strong work ethic.** Preservice teachers cannot enter the teaching profession unless they have a strong understanding of the demanding work ethic that is needed to be a successful educator. Mentors need to communicate and model that a teacher’s workday does not end at 3:00pm. Yendol-Hoppey and Dana name initiative,
dependability, and accountability as “critical attributes” that mentors should attend to in their mentees, although they do not name how to specifically develop these attributes. Hamel and Jaasko-Fisher (2011) also identify initiative as one of the “hidden labors in mentoring” although they illustrate initiative as drive within the preservice teacher to take on responsibilities in the classroom and not necessarily as an attribute they will need to be successful in the teaching profession.

This conceptualization of effective mentors illustrates the complexity of what is involved in mentoring preservice teachers. Yendol-Hoppey and Dana identify three components that underscore effective mentoring, but there are also layers that support each component. Mentoring is quite multifaceted. Conceptualizing mentoring in this way provides a holistic picture of mentoring that includes the emotional, practical, and professional factors that contribute to effective mentoring. Although some of the empirical research around mentoring preservice teachers does contribute to parts of this framework, it has not been conducted purposefully with this conceptualization in mind. Empirically studying mentors’ beliefs and practices about mentoring will contribute to a broader understanding of effective, or educative mentoring.

**Summary**

Mentors have complex roles in the teaching profession. They are responsible for educating their classroom students, and also have a great responsibility for preparing preservice teachers. Teacher education programs are concerned with providing quality clinical experiences for preservice teachers, therefore explicating and understanding the practices of mentor teachers, as well as how mentors develop over time and adapt their practice to different preservice teachers is crucial.
This chapter explored what has been studied in the research regarding mentoring. Roles, knowledge, practices, and beliefs have all contributed to a greater recognition of the idiosyncratic nature of mentoring. Some researchers have included mentors’ points of view in their studies which offers deeper knowledge about how mentoring is conceptualized but more illustrations of mentoring in practice would contribute to the literature in understanding how mentoring is enacted. Now that mentoring is becoming more of a critical component of teacher education programs, it is important to understand how mentors develop their practice, as well as how they have been adapted over time when working with different kinds of students. These two pieces are critical to achieving a deeper understanding of mentors and their work with preservice teachers. This knowledge will be beneficial in providing professional development for mentors, both veteran and novices.

In addition to understanding the practices of mentors more deeply and over time, this knowledge has implications for teacher education programs that want to support mentors and provide professional development opportunities for them. The supervision research has been effective in providing support for mentors, as they can be considered a type of supervisor. However, it is also clear that there may be personal characteristics of mentors that do not allow the supervision training to be as effective as it can. A one-size-fits-all approach may not be effective for mentors as they bring their own prior knowledge and experience to mentoring situations. Mentors are similar to supervisors, but not exactly like them. Learning more about mentors may help to provide even more effective professional development for them.
Mentoring can be conceptualized for study in a variety of ways. Models have been used in all areas of literature as demonstrated in this chapter. While the models provide important knowledge about mentoring, the categories may be too broad for understanding the uniqueness of mentoring from classroom to classroom. Educative mentoring speaks more specifically to individualizing mentoring based on the needs of the preservice teacher. Yendol-Hoppey and Dana’s conceptualization of effective, or educative mentoring provides a lens for viewing mentoring in a way that captures the holistic picture of emotional, practical, and professional components of mentoring, while also providing some specific descriptors for effective mentoring. Conducting empirical research of mentors’ beliefs and practices with this conceptualization may provide more illustrations of how mentors develop into effective mentors and what specifically they do.
Chapter 3

The Research Design

This study examined the self-reported mentoring practices of four current mentors in a PDS context. Two of the mentors previously served as interns in the same clinically rich context. The study used the conception of educative mentoring as articulated by Yendol-Hoppey and Dana (2007) as the framework for understanding mentoring practices. In addition, this study sought to understand what factors affected the development of their practices and how they changed over time. These goals are reflected in the following research questions:

1. What are the self-reported practices of mentors in the PDS context?
2. Why do the mentors engage in these practices?
3. How have these practices developed and changed over time?

The second section of this chapter is dedicated to identifying the theoretical framework that guided the research study. Then, the chapter will identify the research site as well as the specific participants who served as the mentors in this study. Following this, the methods of data collection and analysis are explained. Finally, validity, trustworthiness, and the researcher’s perspective for the study are described.

Methodological Perspectives

All types of research are situated in a given world view, or philosophy, and these paradigms represent different views of the given world and how knowledge is acquired such as: critical social theory, pragmatism, phenomenology, or constructivism. A paradigm is a framework or philosophy of science that makes assumptions about the
nature of reality and truth, the kinds of questions to explore, and how to go about doing so (Glesne, 2011, p. 5).

Positivists, who tend to favor quantitative methods, seek to identify objective reality and utilize concepts of probability and hypothesis testing in carrying out their work. The researcher also does not directly interact with the people being studied in order to not influence the research or participants in any way. Qualitative researchers tend to think about truth in a different way. Instead of trying to quantify truth and measure it objectively, qualitative scholars seek to understand human knowledge and illuminate and portray the perceptions of those they study. Instead of trying to test cause and effect relationships, qualitative research helps researchers to understand individuals, cultures, and other phenomena (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

Using positivistic methods, the researcher is separated from the study as much as possible to avoid any influence upon the research. Methods used to collect data need to be quantified in some way in order to be analyzed statistically, hence the name quantitative methods (Glesne, 2011).

Quantitative researchers differ from qualitative researchers in a variety of ways including: assumptions, research purposes, research approach, and researcher role (Glesne, 2011). In opposition to a belief in a fixed reality that can be identified and measured as positivists believe, interpretive researchers have ontological beliefs reflecting reality as constructed and dynamic, making them difficult to measure.

These constructed realities are viewed as existing, however, not only in the mind of the individual, but also as social constructions in that individualistic perspectives interact with the language and thought of the wider society. Thus,
accessing the perspectives of several members of the same social group about some phenomenon can begin to say something about cultural patterns of thought and action for that group (Glesne, 2011, p. 8).

In terms of research purposes, positivists have goals to generalize their results and provide explanations from cause and effect studies that may lead to better predictions in the future. Qualitative researchers seek to understand the phenomena of study in a deep, descriptive way so as to provide an opportunity for generalization to theory by the reader. These kinds of studies are very contextualized and interpretive due to the ontological beliefs of interpretivists about truth. During data collection and analysis, interpretivists do not reduce their experimental data to quantifiable bits to be analyzed but use naturalistic, inductive processes to provide an in-depth explanation of the findings. Unlike quantitative research, the interpretive researcher’s role is to interact with the study in order to understand the perceptions of the participants in their natural world. “This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.3), whereas positivists detach themselves from their research in order not to influence the study in any way (Glesne, 2011).

Identifying a research paradigm goes deeper than naming interpretive versus positivist. When conducting a study, a researcher should explain the philosophy that informs his/her beliefs and frames the study, however, a researcher also needs to make decisions about a variety of approaches or methods that could be used in the research study and most importantly, insure congruence among those choices. There is flexibility within any research. There can be choice as long as the choices make sense and are
thoroughly explained. The theoretical paradigm that framed my research study was a case study with phenomenological underpinnings.

**Case study**

Case study is a flexible methodology that allows for in depth examination of a subject that explores the particularity of the subject, although references can be made to other subjects. Definitions of case study have varied concerning what a case study is and how it is executed (Savin-Baden and Major, 2012; Simons, 2009).

Stake (1995) defines case study as “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (p. xi), however, he does not define case study as a methodology, but a choice of what is to be studied (Creswell, 2012; Glesne, 2011). He also highlights two important considerations for undertaking case study. The first is to make reference to the tradition you are drawing upon, and second is case study does not necessarily imply qualitative methods. It is possible to utilize quantitative methods with case study.

Merriam (1988) defines case study as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit. Case studies are particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources” (p. 16). Merriam goes on to describe case study in education more specifically, “More commonly, though, case study research in education seeks to understand specific issues and problems of practice” (p. 23).

Case studies can be identified in many different ways. Merriam (1998) claims that they can be identified by discipline orientation, end product (description or evaluation), or some combination of the two, while Savin-Baden and Major (2013) state that case
studies can be identified by purpose, discipline, and research approach. Below are four descriptions of case studies identified by Merriam (1998) and Stake (1995).

A descriptive case study in education is one that presents a detailed account of the subject of study. This type of case study lends itself to detailed and rich description of the context and case. They are useful when investigating areas of education where little research has been done, so they often lack in theoretical grounding. This type of case study seems to align with phenomenology in seeking to understand the uniqueness of something. The literature on mentoring does provide ideas for conceptualizing mentoring, therefore, my research has theory to support and underpin it.

Instrumental case study is used to understand something else. A researcher has a question and studying a particular case will provide insight into the research question. The case becomes instrumental in leading to that insight (Stake, 1995).

In a collective case study, a researcher may study many cases in order to inquire into the phenomenon. It is instrumental study extended to several cases. Understanding many cases may lead to better understanding of the overall phenomenon (Stake, 2005).

An interpretive case study seeks to develop conceptual categories or to illustrate, support, or challenge theoretical assumptions held prior to the data gathering. As a result, the level of abstraction can range from suggesting relationships among variables to constructing theory. These studies contain rich, thick description and utilize an inductive analysis process (Merriam, 1998). It seems that an interpretive case study combines elements from both descriptive and instrumental case study. An interpretive case study might challenge a theory that exists or argue for a new conceptualization altogether.
The advantages for case study research are many. It is a flexible and responsive approach that allows for an in depth investigation. Case study warrants rich, thick description and is grounded in real life situations so it encompasses the complexity of the phenomenon. The disadvantages for using case study research are that it can lead to a simplistic worldview with false assumptions, as well as being time consuming. Depending on a single case can be problematic as the research can result in being too narrow and researchers may forget that the case only represents a slice of the whole.

This research is a collective case study as previously defined. I studied four current mentors in a PDS context. There were matched pairs within the four mentors. Two of the participants were considered veteran mentors in the PDS, having mentored at least ten interns. The other two mentors were considered novice mentors, have mentored five or fewer interns. Two of the four mentors, one of the veterans and one of the novices, were former interns who participated the same clinically rich teacher preparation program. These participants bound the study to a very special case of mentors who learned to teach in the same teacher preparation context in which they mentor, matched with those who did not. This may limit the study in terms of its potential applicability to other contexts, however the findings provide insights for other mentors in this professional development school context as well as other clinically rich teacher education contexts.

**Phenomenology**

Phenomenology is a qualitative research perspective intended to understand and portray a lived human experience at a fundamental level. The intent is to reduce the experience(s) to a description of the universal nature or essence of the thing.
Phenomenological research may involve one or more participants. “Researchers may investigate the phenomenon in its outward form, which includes objects and actions, as well as in its inward form, which includes participants’ thoughts, images, and feelings” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 215) The researcher attempts to write a thick description of not only what was experienced, but also how it was experienced. Phenomenology moves beyond the issue of appearances and forces one to see the parts in relation to its whole. Phenomenological researchers use the study of an experience to compose a worldview (Creswell, 2012).

Phenomenology is another appropriate methodology for when the researcher is truly trying to understand how someone else experiences a particular phenomenon and the commonalities they share with others who experience the same phenomenon. The goal is not to interpret the essence of the experience, but to give voice to the participant(s) and tell their story in a richly descriptive way.

Though this case study was not a phenomenology in the strict sense because it did not seek to understand the essence of the experience of mentoring, it did have phenomenological underpinnings because I sought to understand mentoring practices from the perception of the mentors. Phenomenology honors that what the participants communicate about the phenomenon of study is the truth.

**Context of the Study**

**Research Site**

Darling-Hammond (2014) identified three components she believed were critical for programs to achieve high-quality teacher preparation: coherence and integration, explicit links between theory and practice, and new partnerships with schools. A
Professional Development School is a model that can be used for enacting these qualities. The development of PDS partnerships started in the mid-1980s with many education reform groups and individuals advocating for their use (Carnegie Forum, 1986; Goodlad, 1990; Holmes Group, 1986). PDSs were intended to be joint partnerships between P-12 schools and universities where models of best practices would occur as well as new knowledge generated to be shared with the larger teacher education world. A PDS is not intended to be one-sided where one institution is trying to “fix” the other. PDSs were intended to encourage simultaneous renewal between the partners. Because PDS models vary from site to site, it is important to establish the particulars about the Central State University and Sunshine Valley School District PDS context that made it an appropriate context for conducting this study (Nolan et al., 2011).

The PDS partnership. The study was situated in a “highly developed” elementary professional development school partnership between Central State University and the Sunshine Valley School District (Darling-Hammond, 2014). The relationship began almost 22 years ago. The PDS program, designed collaboratively by teams of mentor teachers, school administrators and university faculty, encompasses the final year of a four-year undergraduate teacher preparation program for PreK-4 candidates. This extended clinical experience, developed with collaboration from all stakeholders, allows interns to experience explicit connections between their coursework and their classroom of students. The university methods courses are designed using the school district curriculum as resources, therefore interns are often able to directly apply their classroom learning to their classroom teaching.
Over the years, the partnership has gradually grown to more than 50 interns and mentors in all 8 elementary schools in the district. In contrast to many PDS partnerships in which each school is viewed as a separate PDS, this PDS is viewed as one community, distributed across all of the district’s elementary schools. To emphasize the unity of one PDS, a variety of structures were established to encourage collaboration and interaction across all school sites. The fact that all of the schools are in the same school district facilitates the one community aspect of the PDS.

The Professional Development School that exists between Central State University and the Sunshine Valley School District is an exemplar PDS that has won numerous national awards (ATE; Holmes Partnership; NAPDS). The mission of this elementary professional development school collaborative, which both encompasses and extends the mission of each partner, is expressed by its four goals: 1) **Enhance the educational experiences of all learners**; 2) **Ensure high quality induction into the profession for new teachers**; 3) **Engage in furthering our own professional growth as teachers and teacher educators**; and 4) **Educate the next generation of teacher educators** (Nolan et. al, 2009).

The preservice interns agree to abandon the Central State calendar and follow the school district calendar for the academic year. During the fall semester, the interns spend four full days each week in their mentor’s classroom and also attend four methods classes (math, science, social studies, and classroom learning environments) on the fifth day of the week and after school. During the spring semester the interns spend every day in the mentor’s classroom. The intern’s engagement with the mentor begins on the very first inservice day in August and continues until the last day of school for students in June.
Thus, mentors play a significant role in shaping interns’ experiences during the entire school year.

**Mentor teachers.** Any teacher who has taught in the district for at least three years has the option to volunteer to become a mentor teacher with the approval of the building principal. Mentors as a group are involved in interviewing potential candidates for the PDS and also play the key role in formulating the matches between mentors and interns. No screening process for mentors beyond their volunteering and principal approval is used. The philosophy of the PDS is that all members are learners and have the potential to learn and grow over time.

During the first few years of the PDS partnership, an attempt was made to strike a balance between providing some general guidance for mentors and yet making sure that the process of learning to teach was individualized for each intern. This allowed the mentor and PDA a great deal of discretion in guiding the intern’s development over time, resulting in a year-long guide for mentors that lays out some possible tasks for interns during each month of the school year (www.ed.psu.edu/pds/elementary/mentor-resources).

Currently, mentors in this PDS context play a significant role in shaping interns’ experiences during the entire school year. The model of teaching that is advocated in this PDS context is a co-teaching model in which both the intern and mentor are typically engaged in working directly with students (Badiali & Titus, 2011). The responsibility for planning instruction shifts gradually over the course of the year. This scaffolded approach is dependent on the needs of the particular intern and enables the preservice teacher to “grow ‘roots’ on their practice,” (Darling-Hammond, 2014, p. 551). Over the course of
the year, interns develop at their own pace, and have opportunities to develop their teaching practices on a deeper level in many subject areas. This responsive model is representative of the policy call for clinically based teacher preparation. It also varies from a traditional experience where student teachers have specific, timely responsibilities to “take over” within their fifteen weeks. The PDS co-teaching model differentiates the process of learning to teach for each intern, much like a teacher would differentiate for his or her students within the P-12 classroom.

**PDS philosophy.** The philosophy of the Central State/Sunshine Valley PDS is that all community members are learners and have the potential to learn and grow over time. Not only are mentors committed to the classroom responsibilities of working with an intern, but they are a part of the larger program structures as well. Each building has a monthly mentor meeting facilitated by the PDAs, who are assigned to that building for the purpose of discussing the mentoring process, raising questions and solving problems. In addition, all mentors are invited to participate in a PDS retreat once each semester in which larger issues are discussed and professional development is often provided. These meetings and retreats all take place within an elementary school building. A mentoring course for graduate credit is offered to mentors on a voluntary basis each year as well as a number of other on-site, graduate level courses in various disciplines or technology. The university methods courses are planned and sometimes co-taught by university faculty and teams of mentors who agree to work with each of the methods courses as a professional development team. These professional development opportunities are ways to support and educate mentors, and further their professional learning. Providing
mentors a voice throughout the entire year-long experience supports the belief that mentors are at the very least equal partners in this collaborative (Nolan et al., 2009).

Components of this particular Professional Development School site include the district-wide support of the partnership, extended clinical experience with at least thirty weeks of supervised practicum, university and school district co-teaching professional development opportunities at school sites, monthly meetings to support mentors, designing and co-teaching university methods courses, and the co-teaching philosophy characterize this context as a “highly developed” Professional Development School model and an optimal context for conducting this research (Darling-Hammond, 2014).

Participants

For this dissertation, I studied four mentor teachers in the Central State/Sunshine Valley School District Professional Development School program. The four mentors have similarities and differences, which provided matched pairs that allowed me to gain a broader perspective of characteristics that impacted mentoring practices. These four mentors represent the bounded case for the research.

Purposive Sampling

Whereas some studies use random sampling for their research, purposive sampling was the optimal research decision for my study. “Purposive sampling requires a procedure that is governed by emerging insight about what is relevant to the study based on the focus determined by the problem and purposively seeks both the typical and divergent data to maximize the range of information obtained about the context” (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 148). The participants I studied were chosen for specific reasons. In order to gain insight in regards to how a particular teacher preparation
program may influence a mentor’s mentoring practices within the same program, it is crucial to include participants who were prepared as preservice teachers via the Professional Development School Program at Central State.

I studied four current PDS mentors in matched pairs. Two of the mentors participated as interns in the same PDS context, while two did not. Two of the mentors were considered veteran mentors due to mentoring over ten years and two were considered novice mentors because they had mentored for five years. One veteran mentor was a former intern and was matched with one who was not, as was the same with the novice mentors. It is important to note that the mentors’ mentoring experience did not necessarily coincide with their years of teaching experience. For example, all of the mentors had been teaching longer than they had been mentoring. To provide additional contrasting data, each of the participants represented different elementary schools within the PDS context, and one of the novice mentors selected was the only male mentor at the time of the study. The former interns did not teach and mentor in the same elementary school in which they were prepared as interns. All four of the mentors taught in what is considered the Intermediate Division, grades three and four. The two veteran mentors taught third grade and the two novice mentors taught fourth grade.

I collected data from March 2015 through May 2015. I began in March as soon as the research proposal was accepted, and concluded the data collection in May 2015 so there would be time to schedule follow up interviews, if needed, before the end of the school year. This length of time provided opportunities to observe the mentoring practices of each mentor one time per week, and resulted in many field notes and artifacts to augment the interviews that were the primary data source.
Methods of Data Collection

Data collection methods vary greatly depending on the research interests. Due to the phenomenological nature of this phenomenological case study research, below are the data collection methods I used to answer my research questions.

Interviews

Interviews were the primary source of data for this study. I interviewed all four mentors multiple times. The purpose of conducting interviews in qualitative research is for the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants’ perspectives. According to Seidman (2013) interviews are a way of getting at other people’s stories. It is a reflective process that allows participants to make sense of their stories in a “meaning-making experience” (p. 7). “If the researcher’s goal, however, is to understand the meaning people involved in education make of their experience, then interviewing provides a necessary, if not always completely sufficient, avenue of inquiry” (p. 10). It was one of my goals to understand mentors’ practices, how they came to those practices and how they changed over time.

In general, the design of interviews can be structured, unstructured, or semi-structured (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). For my own research, I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews. Following guiding questions for the conversations with the freedom to respond to the participants’ responses was ideal.

Semi-structured interviews can often times be more difficult to conduct than structured or unstructured because of the need to improvise. They are flexible in that the researcher can respond to the participant, but the interview needs to be carefully planned for in order to improvise successfully. Under the right conditions, semi-structured
interviews can result in a rich amount of data collected, or under the wrong conditions, nothing at all (Wengraf, 2001). I utilized semi-structured interviews throughout the data collection period with my mentor participants. There were three semi-structured interviews that required a thirty to forty-five minute time period to complete. I conducted the first life history interview at the beginning of the data collection period. This was modeled after Seidman’s (2013) approach to phenomenological interviewing. The second interview was crafted to begin to understand mentoring practices over time with different interns and PDAs and was conducted about a month into the data collection period. The third interview, an espoused platform conference, was conducted at the end of the data collection period. For a complete list of when all interviews were conducted, see Appendix B.

These three interviews moved gradually from global life experiences to specific examples of mentoring with specific interns and then to their specific ideas about mentoring. Accessing the mentors’ backgrounds and their mentoring histories over time was intended to advance the knowledge base in the mentoring literature, in which most studies to date have focused on single episodes of mentoring.

**Life History Interview (See Appendix C).** According to Seidman, the task in the life history interview is to have the participant tell as much as possible regarding herself and the topic of study up to the present time. Since mentoring is about both teaching and teaching preservice teachers, I explained to the mentors that I was interested in understanding the experiences and events from their lives that had some role in shaping who they were as a teacher and a mentor. In addition to the oral piece of the interview, I asked the mentors to physically construct a timeline as they were talking about their
experiences. The production of the timeline may help the mentor to “reconstruct and narrate a range of constitutive events in their past…that place their participation as a mentor in the professional development school in the context of their lives” (p. 21). During the course of this interview, I prompted the mentor to include specific parts of their history including their teacher preparation, their induction experience, as well as any other people they may view as mentors to them. The timeline served as a piece of evidence that was sometimes used in follow-up conversations with the mentor about his/her practices. This interview provided useful data for answering research questions 2 and 3. The length of this interview varied anywhere from 35-50 minutes. Photographs of the timelines are included in Appendix C.

**Photo Elicitation Interview (See Appendix D).** In the second interview, I presented pictures in chronological order to each mentor of the interns and PDAs they worked with over the years, and asked the mentors to talk about their mentoring experiences. The purpose of the second interview was to concentrate on the details of the participants’ present lived experiences in mentoring. In this case study, I wanted mentors to focus on their mentoring experiences specifically. I utilized photo elicitation in this second interview to aid the mentor in providing details about each experience. Photo elicitation is based on the simple idea of inserting photographs to invoke comments, memory and discussion into a semi-structured interview (Banks, 2001). The difference between interviews with photographs and interviews without photographs is the way interviewees respond to pictures versus words. According to Harper (2002):

>This is has a physical basis: the parts of the brain that process visual information are evolutionarily older than the parts that process verbal information. Thus
images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness that do words; exchanges based on words alone utilize less of the brain’s capacity than do exchanges in which the brain is processing images as well as words (p.13).

Photo elicitation was first named in a paper published by the photographer and researcher John Collier who came up with the idea of using photos to address a problem his research team was having. They could not agree on categories of the quality of housing in their research area. The researchers felt that the photos sharpened the informants’ memory and reduced the areas of misunderstanding. “The material obtained with photographs was precise and at times even encyclopedic; the control interviews were less structured, rambling, and freer in association. Statements in the photo-interviews were in direct response to graphic probes and different in character as the content of the pictures differed, whereas the character of the control interviews seemed to be governed by the mood of the informants (Collier, 1957, p. 856).

Photo elicitation may overcome the difficulties posed by in-depth interviewing because it is anchored in an image that is understood, at least in part, by both parties, which can ease rapport between the researcher and the interviewee. Researchers can use photographs as a tool to expand on questions and simultaneously, participants can use photographs to provide a unique way to communicate dimensions of their lives. Another advantage is photographs can lessen some of the awkwardness of interviews because there is something on which to focus. The most common experience conducting PEIs was that photographs spurred meaning that otherwise might have remained dormant in a face-to-face interview. The images may not contain new information but can trigger meaning for the interviewee (Clark-Ibanez, 2004; Harper 2002).
The role of the interviewee is a substantial one when using PEI. The participant is integral in constructing meaning based on the photograph. It is an active and dynamic interaction between the researcher, interviewee and the photograph (Banks 2001).

This interview provided data for answering all of the research questions. This interview lasted anywhere from 45 to 60 minutes. See Appendix E for a sample of the photos used for this interview.

Espoused Platform Interview (See Appendix F). For the third interview, I conducted an espoused platform conference (Nolan & Hoover, 2008). “Every educator, no matter what role he or she plays, operates from a set of values and convictions about the fundamental purposes of education and how those purposes should be translated into the teaching and learning process” (p. 27). This represents their espoused platform. I hold the assumption that mentors have the same implicit beliefs about the fundamental purposes of mentoring and how those purposes should be translated in practice. One way to access their espoused beliefs about mentoring is through conducting an espoused platform conference to make their implicit beliefs explicit. This interview was based on Sergiovanni and Starratt’s (2002) espoused platform model. These authors state, “platform clarification brings great, explicit intelligibility to what a teacher does in class everyday” (p. 140). Similar to teachers, this inquiry also argues that mentors in clinically rich teacher preparation programs have complex roles in mentoring preservice teachers. Conducting this espoused platform conference allowed the mentor to be reflective about his/her mentoring. In addition to probing mentors to reflect about themselves as mentors in this interview, the final questions were linked to Yendol-Hoppey and Dana’s conceptualization of educative mentoring. I directly asked mentors about the kinds of
knowledge they try to develop in their interns, the dispositions they hope the interns develop, and the kind of relationship they try to create with their interns. Directly asking about knowledge, dispositions, and relationships will be helpful for connecting mentors’ beliefs and practices to those domains of the conceptual framework for this study.

The espoused platform conference was conducted at the end of the data collection period for a specific reason. At the time of this interview, I had observed weekly in mentors’ classroom for about ten weeks. The design of conducting this interview at the end of the data collection period was done in the hopes that mentors would be able to reference their mentoring practices during the interview and that I would have a frame of reference for their descriptions since I had been observing in their classrooms for weeks. Similarly, I used examples from my observations to probe their responses. The espoused platform was intended in part to help remove judgment on my part as a researcher because the beliefs were in the mentor’s own words. This interview provided data for all of the research questions. This third interview lasted anywhere from 30 to 45 minutes.

**Check-in Interviews (See Appendix G).** The ongoing conversations were an opportunity for mentors to describe and reflect on their current mentoring practices. I individually met with mentors every week to conduct ongoing conversations based on my weekly observations in their classrooms. I tried to schedule the weekly conversation at the same time each week and tried not to allow more than 7 days to pass between my observation and the check-in interview. My field notes from the observations, which included pictures, were the pieces of data I used to generate the conversations. I was not be able to observe each mentoring instance that occurred during the data collection process, so the conversations were helpful in providing a time for the mentors to share
events they felt were appropriate, even if I had not been present for them. These conversations were helpful in answering research question 1. These conversations lasted approximately 30 minutes and were typically conducted over a mentor’s lunch or planning period. These weekly times provided me opportunities to ask questions about what I had observed, and allowed the mentor to describe what had been observed more deeply.

There were factors that affected the ability to consistently schedule with each mentor such as parent conferences, field trips, or mentors being out of their classroom for personal or professional reasons. Some of the check-in interviews combined observational data from more than one observation. See Appendix B for a complete schedule of my interviews and classroom observations.

It is important to note that my interviews extended beyond the time frame that I had initially planned for. The qualitative nature of the case study allowed me to freedom to collect additional data as needed. While analyzing data, I recognized that some of the mentors had described experiences with struggling interns and how they worked with their PDAs in an authentic way, particularly when they discussed their mentoring histories. I wanted to give each mentor a specific opportunity to discuss this idea because through my analysis, I thought that data would be helpful. During the summer months, I was able to schedule an additional interview with each mentor to ask him/her more specifically about their experiences with struggling interns. The sole question that structured that interview was, “Describe a time when you struggled with an intern”. Additionally, as my analysis became more refined and I wrote about specific mentoring practices, I personally communicated with two of the mentors via email to ask clarifying
or probing questions in order to better understand their voices. These email conversations were conducted in the Fall and Winter of 2015.

**Mentoring Observations**

I spent one day each week over the course of the data collection period observing mentoring practices. The type of data that was gathered from observing in the classroom was different than other kinds of data that I collected. Observations captured what was happening in the moment and generated a picture of how a mentor mentors in the moment. The other forms of data collection in this study did not represent this piece as clearly. The mentor may have had more time to think during an interview. Observational data allowed me to gather evidence for current mentoring practices, and were used during ongoing conversations with the mentor. This type of data was helpful in answering research questions 1. Throughout the data collection time period, I made visits to each mentor’s classroom to observe mentoring in action. See Appendix H for a sample of the mentoring observations.

**Artifacts**

Documentary sources were a meaningful piece of data collection for this research study. “Sometimes documents exist already, prior to the act of research upon them. Others can be generated for our through the research process” (Mason, 2002, p. 103). My study generated artifacts for data in the form of photographs. As I observed mentoring in practice, I realized there were pieces of mentoring that I could not capture with writing. I wanted to illustrate exactly what I was observing in the classroom in terms of where mentors and interns were located during a lesson, or what their interactions looked like throughout a lesson, and in the moment it occurred to me that photographs would capture
what I could not with words. I quickly began to document what I was observing in pictures as well as words during my weekly observations. These artifacts allowed me to generate questions and talking points for each check-in interview, which I tried to conduct within a week of each of my visits. I highlighted these notes to remind myself about what I wanted to ask during those conversations. Later in the analysis process, these field notes provided illustrations of the mentors’ practices and their espoused beliefs. In addition to the field notes and photographs, the mentors created timelines of their personal history to accompany the first interview.

For this research study, the interviews and ongoing conversations with mentors served as the primary sources of data collection due to the phenomenological nature of this case study since they provided the opportunities for mentors to talk about mentoring in their own words. The remaining data collection methods described served as sources of evidence to support and generate the ongoing conversations with mentors throughout the data collection process. These rich data collection methods provided multiple areas where I “mined” the data during the analysis process.

Data Analysis

“One of the most common problems in qualitative studies is letting your unanalyzed field notes and transcripts pile up, making the task of final analysis much more difficult and discouraging” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 104). Data analysis was continuous throughout the data collection portion of my research study. By collecting, analyzing, and reflecting in a cyclical manner, data analysis was an ongoing process instead of a culminating one.

Interview Transcripts
The interviews served as the primary source of data for this research study. Due to the phenomenological nature of this research study, I listened to, transcribed, and analyzed the interview data for each mentor. This included the semi-structured interviews as well as the check-in interviews. I wrote memos after listening to an interview to record my own thoughts and ideas about what I was hearing. See Appendix I for a sample of memos. “You should regularly write memos while you are doing data analysis; memos not only capture your analytic thinking about your data, but also facilitate such thinking, stimulating analytic insights” (Maxwell, 2013, p.105). My first passes through all the interview data were to become as familiar with the data as I could in order to make sense of the data for each mentor individually.

**Mentor Profiles**

In order to reduce the interview data and shape it into material to be shared, I decided to develop individual profiles for each participant. I used open coding to develop my own categories based on what data seemed most important in order to develop mentor profiles that would illustrate each mentor accurately:

In qualitative research, the goal of coding is not primarily to count things, but to ‘fracture’ (Strauss, 1987, p. 29) the data and rearrange them into categories that facilitate comparison between things in the same category and that aid in the development of theoretical concepts (Maxwell, 2013, p. 107).

Open coding allowed me to develop my own coding categories based on what data emerged as most important. As I read the interview transcripts, I marked anything and everything that was interesting to me, and after several passes, I deemed what was essential information and made decisions about what data to let go. This eventually led to
creating the categories that outlined the mentor profiles: mentor as a student, mentor as a teacher, mentoring beliefs, and illustrations of beliefs in practice. These codes seemed to emerge based on the order of the interviews and transformed the interviews into stories.

Profiles are one way of solving the problem of how to share what has been learned from the interviews. The narrative form of the profile allows the interviewer to transform this learning into telling a story (Mishler, 1986). According to Seidman (2013), “The story is both the participant’s and the interviewer’s. It is in the participant’s words, but is crafted by the interviewer from what the participant has said,” (p. 122).

These profiles are presented in the next four chapters. Creating a profile for each mentor was a crucial step because it allowed me to organize each mentor’s data in a similar fashion. I used all of the interview data as well as the classroom observations to conduct this analysis. This process took many passes through each mentor’s individual data to create the consistent structure of the profile and then discern the essential information to include in each profile using as much of the mentor’s voice as possible. The majority of each profile is told with quotes from the mentor speaking, therefore telling the narrative in first person, and honoring each mentor’s experience.

**Cross-Case Analysis**

Once the four profiles were created, I was able to conduct a cross-case analysis of the four mentors to identify similarities and differences across them, which led to the Chapter 8 analysis. I kept the research questions at the helm of my thinking as I read across the profiles and began to identify what mentoring practices they had in common. While analyzing the profile data, I used substantive categories. “Substantive categories are primarily descriptive, in a broad sense that includes description of participants’
concepts and beliefs” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 108). These substantive categories are called “emic” categories because I developed them from the participants’ words (Maxwell, 2013). However, in order for the practices to be recognized and connected to the broader literature, I used some etic labels to refer to their emic practices. For each mentor, I analyzed the data to identify the mentoring practices I thought were present in their data. For example, etic coding categories like co-planning, or co-teaching emerged from mentors’ words, even though they did not always use that terminology. For example, one mentor used the language of “team teaching”. I was careful to insure that the etic labels accurately depicted what the mentors meant. Because this study has phenomenological underpinnings, it was crucial to use the mentors’ voices to understand their mentoring practices and develop those coding categories. Conducting member checks provided me with the assurance that the etic labels accurately represented the emic practices. From the cross-case analysis, four main mentoring practices emerged from the data. As previously described, I still found myself in an iterative process even during the cross-case analysis. I revisited the interview data, revised the profiles, made connections across the mentors, identified a practice and repeated that process often.

It is possible that there are other mentoring practices I did not identify. All of the mentors engaged in the four mentoring practices. Perhaps there were others in which only one, two, or three mentors practiced. This study illustrates the practices of all four mentors in order to unpack similarities and differences among them all.

**Framework for Effective Mentoring**

After the four practices were identified, I used Yendol-Hoppey and Dana’s conceptual framework for educative mentoring as a priori categories for comparison of
the four mentoring practices. The purpose of using the framework was to identify mentoring practices from the study that supported or contributed to the framework. Once the practices had been identified, compared and contrasted across the four mentors, I was able to make connections between the practices and the framework. The mentors’ practices supported the framework in many ways, and in one instance, contributed a new component of effective mentoring.

**Validity**

Due to the nature of qualitative research, it is challenging to control for specifics that may call into question the validity of a study. In qualitative studies, validity or credibility refers to the degree to which the story accurately captures and portrays the perceptions of the participants. The following strategies from Maxwell’s validity checklist (2013) allowed me to test the validity of my conclusions and look for evidence that could challenge my conclusions. These selected strategies are not an exhaustive list of all the ways that I could test my study for validity, but they were ones that I felt were appropriate for my research.

**Member Checking**

According to Maxwell (2013) member checks are “systematically soliciting feedback about your data and conclusions from the people you are studying” (p. 126). Member checking was a crucial part of my research study in order to establish credibility and to ensure that what I interpreted from the data is a recognizable representation to my participants (Lincoln, 1985). According to Erlandson, et al, (1993), member checking occurs throughout the research process in both formal and informal ways. The follow areas below list ways I conducted member checking throughout my study:
1. At the end of an interview by summarizing the data and allowing the respondent to immediately correct errors of fact or challenge interpretations.

2. In interviews by verifying interpretations and data gathered in earlier interviews.

3. In informal conversations with participants.

4. By providing the participants with my interpretations of his/her mentoring profile and allowing them to share their thoughts about it.

In regards to number four, each mentor’s profile was emailed to the mentors in December 2015. I asked each mentor to read his/her profile and then to confirm with me that each mentor profile accurately represented him/her. Three of the four mentors made suggestions regarding clarification of some of their personal experiences or typos. For example, misnaming a course a mentor had taken, or naming a school as an elementary school versus a middle school. I received approval responses in writing from all four of the mentors.

The process of member checking can be challenging as it can be difficult for participants to read and react to descriptions about themselves, especially when the researched topic is so personal. I did not want my understanding of this research to come as a surprise to any of my participants. Including the mentors in the member checking process continuously allowed them to be comfortable reading about themselves and provided me with the confidence to submit my findings.

**Triangulation**

Triangulation of data supported the findings of the research study, establishing credibility. Triangulation can be achieved using different or multiple sources of data,
methods, investigators, or theory (Erlandson, et al, 1993). This research study used multiple sources of data, (four mentors in the study) and multiple methods of data collection (observations, interviews, and artifacts). I triangulated data in regards to mentoring practices with statements from interviews with four mentors, as well as the other methods of data collection like field notes from my observations of their practice, as well as interviews in which they described their mentoring histories, in order to expand each piece of information in the study with at least one other source. Since I am the only investigator in this research study, I was unable to achieve investigator triangulation, and I did not analyze data with multiple theories, so theoretical triangulation was not achieved in my study. I have great confidence in the findings of my study.

**Peer Debriefing**

“Critical friends are trusted colleagues who seek support and validation of their research to gain new perspective in understanding and reframing of their interpretations” (Samaras, 2011, p.5). I am fortunate to be a part of a supportive writing group of graduate students working on their dissertation research. I embraced this support throughout the research process so I was not isolated with my own perspective. I would not be this far in my journey without the support of my peer group. Their presence was critical for my success with my research.

In addition to my peer group to serve as critical friends during this journey, it was imperative to utilize the support and expertise of my committee and advisor. As questions, concerns, or celebrations arise, I kept in close contact with my advisor to seek his feedback and guidance as he was invested in my success. He consistently provided feedback to my writing and guided me through this journey.
It should be the goal of any qualitative research study to capture the story of its participants in an accurate way. I established validity in my research study through the use of the strategies discussed previously.

**Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness and reliability were established in my study in order connect the findings of my study to the data that I collected. I planned thoughtfully for a quality research study, and I recognized that I would return to the idea of trustworthiness throughout the research in order to ensure the most objective interpretation of the phenomena as I can. This phenomenology established trustworthiness through “techniques that provide truth value through credibility, applicability, applicability through transferability, consistency through dependability, and neutrality through confirmability” (Erlandson et al., 1993, p.132).

**Prolonged Engagement**

One of the techniques that helped my research establish trustworthiness is to engage in the research for an extended period of time. I studied the four mentors from March 2015 through May 2015 for a total of three months. This amount of time was purposefully chosen. During the 2015 spring semester, the year-long interns working with the mentors were in the heart of their student teaching, therefore mentoring was at the forefront of the relationship. Spending a prolonged amount of time with the four mentors allowed me to establish reliability in my study. I was able to collect a variety of data and observe them weekly in their classrooms, which allowed me to obtain a more holistic picture of their mentoring practices. The prolonged engagement benefited my
research by tempering any distortions that may have emerged due to the newness of my research and my presence (Erlandson, et al., 1993).

**Persistent Observation**

Spending a prolonged amount of time with the participants of my study allowed me to gain a more holistic perspective of my research, but time was not the only component that built trustworthiness in my study. Utilizing classroom observations of actual mentoring practice provided for “persistent observation” (Erlandson, et al, 1993) to give my study more depth. With consistent observations done in practice, I was unable to discern what was important about the observations from what was unimportant in consultation with the mentor through follow-up conversations. I sought out the mentors’ perspectives in order to make sure that my own perspective did not dominate my interpretations.

**Ethical Considerations**

This research involved participants who were willing to extend themselves beyond their regular professional opportunities to participate in this study. These subjects, and the study itself, deserve the utmost consideration of ethical issues. According to Erlandson et al. (1993), because this research study, deals in the constructions created by the stakeholders in the context being studied, they must be honored and protected from negative effects of the research. The purpose…is to understand the constructions of the respondents on their own terms. The study that damages or destroys the constructed realities in the context of its study in effect destroys itself (p. 132).
I proactively established a code of ethics both by ensuring privacy and anonymity to my participants. I was sure to have permission from my participants to use any piece of data that I collected for my research. In addition, as the study emerged and grew, I revisited the research with the participants and kept them abreast of the developments.

**Researcher Perspective**

It is important for me to address the multiple perspectives that I bring to this research. Having been an intern, mentor, and supervisor in this particular Professional Development School, I have had unique experiences that have led me to this research. As I collected and analyzed data, I needed to address my researcher bias to understand “how a particular researcher’s values and expectations may have influenced the conduct and conclusions of the study” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 124). It was not possible to eliminate my perspectives from this research, but in this section, I describe how I dealt with them throughout the research.

As an intern in the PDS program, I experienced mentoring as a preservice teacher during a year-long student teaching internship. It is difficult for me to speculate about what expectations and beliefs I had about mentors and mentoring at that time, however, I have a level of understanding of the unique perspective of the intern. I did not involve the intern as a participant of the research study however, they were discussed in conversations with the mentors to understand the mentors’ practices with regards to mentoring.

Having been an intern over ten years ago, it is challenging for me to enact my intern perspective as so much has changed in the program since I participated. I was an intern in one of the elementary schools where one of the mentors taught, but she was not
a teacher at the school during my time as an intern. As I reflect on my time as an intern, I acknowledge that it was not the most positive experience for me. However, that was so long ago that it is difficult for me to identify what biases I developed about mentoring during that time.

I have also had experiences mentoring three different interns as a mentor in the PDS. My time as a mentor is important for me to consider during this research because I did develop knowledge and beliefs about mentoring. I mentored two interns in back to back school years and then took a year off when I moved to a new grade level. I mentored my third intern after that hiatus. I acknowledge that I did some mentoring things well during those three experiences, and some things poorly. Those three interns were each unique and presented different strengths and weaknesses. As a mentor, it felt like three different experiences versus being able to group any of them together as being like one another.

During the year that I did not mentor an intern, I was able to participate in a research study of veteran mentors. The purpose of that study was to examine the thinking and practice of veteran mentors within the PDS context via semi-structured interviews. This was my first experience using the photo-elicitation interview method and interviewing veteran mentors turned out to be a powerful experience for me as a mentor and graduate student. It was during this time that I learned about how thoughtful and purposeful mentoring could be. I learned about how strategic mentors were in their practices, how they differentiated their strategies to meet their intern’s needs, and how they thought about their relationships with their interns. This research experience was significant because it caused me to reflect on my own mentoring practice more deeply
and recognize it as something that would grow and progress. I suppose that prior to this experience I had developed an “apprenticeship of observation” in regards to being a mentor. I think I thought that since I had been an intern, of course I could be a mentor, but this research study really halted that thinking. When I went back to being a mentor the following year, I felt I was much more deliberate about differentiating to meet her needs than maybe I had for previous interns. I definitely felt that I was mentoring in a different way.

The following year, I was released from my classroom to work as a Professional Development Associate (PDA) to supervise interns for the PDS program. I had that role for four years, and it afforded me the opportunity to work with over fifteen different mentors in the program. My role was not to evaluate or judge how mentors mentor their interns, but it was my job to be supportive and helpful in any way possible. While I have worked with mentors of varying mentoring styles, I would still categorize them all as a positive experience with mentors. I believe that my work as a PDA was most helpful for me when conducting my research study.

For the past four years, I have experienced a variety of situations where my opinion, or how I might mentor in a situation has differed from what I observe as PDA. That does not mean that I do not allow myself an outlet for my feelings and to receive feedback about my role. In my previous position, I met weekly with other PDAs in the program, and during that time, I had opportunities to vent, problem solve, hear feedback, and receive support. I think this was a crucial element that supported me in being a professional, respectful member of the PDS triad. I believe that peer debriefing was a
supportive piece for me during my data collection. This research study was an opportunity to learn more about what mentors do.

My experiences as an insider in the PDS and this community lent themselves to advantages and disadvantages for this research. I have an established collegial relationship with each of the participants in this study. I think that afforded me advantages when it came time to interview the participants. Often times, researchers are concerned with participants being able to trust them, but I think my professional relationships with these colleagues helped them to feel they were in a safe place during the interviews so they could be open and honest. At the same time, there was also the risk that I am an insider who would not be leaving the context when the research study was over. Knowing they needed to interact with me after this study was may have inhibited them throughout the study, although I will never truly know if it did or did not. During the interviews, my insider perspective allowed me to probe and scaffold my participants’ responses. Having experienced many of the same things as the participants, I was able to better recognize when more details could be provided to an answer or how to rephrase a question so they could successfully respond. I needed to be careful that as an insider I was not imposing my personal mentoring experiences on them, but truly listening to their experiences and voice. As I met with the four mentors over the course of this study, the purpose was to understand their mentoring practices. It was not a time for me to try and relate my personal experiences to theirs in any way, therefore I needed to bracket my own mentoring experiences. I kept my questions open-ended and focused on the mentors and their practices to prevent situations where I might empathize or connect with them through my own experiences.
Limitations

Of course there are limitations to this study. Whereas I was able to consistently observe four different mentors over the course of three months, in the greater picture of the internship year, this time frame is a small portion of the year. As compared to the mentoring literature discussed in Chapter 2, thoroughly studying four mentors in this research study provided detailed illustrations of the mentors that some literature was lacking. At times, it was challenging to observe in each mentor’s classroom on a weekly basis. Mentors were out of their classroom for various reasons throughout the time period of the study and at times this conflicted with my schedule. In order to gain a more substantial picture of what these mentors do in their practice, studying them for an entire year, or longer, would be ideal.

The context of this study was the Central State/Sunshine Valley PDS partnership, which may limit the applicability of the findings of this study. Not all teacher preparation programs are equipped with the same or even similar resources as this program, so there may be limitations in how to actualize these results in other contexts.

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the proposed research study. It included theoretical considerations and established this research as an instrumental case study with phenomenological underpinnings. The specific context site was described as well as the method for participant selection via purposive sampling. Methods of data collection and analysis were described and connected to the conceptual framework that guides this research. Finally, this chapter described ways that validity and trustworthiness was
established in this study and discussed the researcher’s perspective and how it related to the research.
Chapter 4

Rebecca Silverstein: Third Grade Mentor

Introduction

Rebecca Silverstein, a third grade teacher in the Sunshine Valley School District, has been teaching for about thirty years. Rebecca taught in a few other districts before finally settling down in Sunshine Valley, and after four years, she welcomed her first student teacher from a traditional student teaching program. In total, Rebecca worked with three student teachers before becoming involved as a mentor in the Professional Development School collaboration between Sunshine Valley School District and Central State University.

Rebecca as a student

In order to understand Rebecca as a mentor and teacher today, it is important to unpack her personal and professional experiences as both a student and teacher. Rebecca mentored in the PDS program which did not have specific training requirements for its mentors. Rebecca’s life included a variety of experiences that significantly contributed to and shaped the teacher and mentor she hoped to be. While reflecting on her life history and considering important events and experiences in her life that have played some role in the development of who she was as a teacher and as a mentor, Rebecca recounted experiences from as long ago as five decades as significant experiences for her. From as early in her life as fifth grade, Rebecca recalled designing, directing, and performing a play about George Washington as well as the support she received from her fifth grade teacher:
When I was in fifth grade we were studying American History and I went to her [the teacher] and I asked her if I could write a play about George Washington and costume and perform the play for the class. She said, “Sure go ahead,” and I remember, I mean it’s one of those significant things about fifth grade. I got the costumes, I put them together, I made powdered wigs, I got the music teacher to teach us how to do the Minuet because I wrote that into the play and we performed this play and it was a very empowering experience. I mean I think she could’ve easily said no to that, but she didn’t. She encouraged me, and thus began an amazing work with creativity and empowering people to do what they’re dreaming about (lines 3-11).

This illustration is not the sole example Rebecca recounted while reflecting on her history as a student. In sixth grade as well has high school, Rebecca was encouraged to enact the ideas she generated including transforming her sixth grade classroom into an airplane to share her report about Nicaragua. “She [the teacher] didn’t say ‘no, it’s a terrible idea,’ I mean she was very encouraging so she didn’t poo-poo it, (int 1 lines 19-22). Additionally, Rebecca directed a play her senior year of high school because the school’s music director did not like to perform plays. Experiences like these continued on during her years in higher education.

When Rebecca enrolled in a private, liberal arts college, she did so with the intention of being an elementary education major. She credited her undergraduate education with shaping who she is as a teacher because the institution encouraged conceptual understanding and thinking outside the box. For example, instead of a traditional, lecture-style history course that disseminated facts, Rebecca read literature
from different time periods and analyzed the historical themes that emerged from the writing. She was encouraged to understand history conceptually and think about, “What does it mean?” (int. 1 line 42).

As a junior in college, Rebecca recalled open education and open schools as trending topics in the field. She was interested in learning more about those ideas. During one trimester of her undergraduate education, Rebecca’s adviser encouraged her to take a trimester off in order to explore innovative, open schools along the east coast:

So I wanted to explore that and I talked to my adviser about doing that and she suggested that I take off and visit innovative schools all over the east coast. I wrote to innovative schools and talked a friend into doing it with me, and we took off and went all over the east coast visiting innovative schools. We wrote to Departments of Education, like New Jersey, we went to Long Island, Boston, went up into Maine. We got places to stay with alumni so we didn’t really have to pay that much and we traveled and visited these schools. We did interviews, and we did a media project. We took photos, interviewed kids, talked [with them] about their courses and what was going on in schools. In some ways it was more about me learning how to travel and how to do things just getting that kind of empowerment. It was a powerful project. I did that my junior year before I did student teaching and that was significant (int 1 lines 60-63).

**Rebecca as a preservice teacher**

Rebecca experienced empowerment of her ideas in many ways throughout her experiences as an elementary, secondary, and college student. She credited her independent study in college as an impetus for how she approached teaching. “I think it
gave me the kind of confidence to look at curriculum and look at things and say this is what should be happening here, and not be boxed in by what somebody tells me I need to do” (int 1 lines 79-82). However, as a preservice teacher in her student teaching experience, Rebecca felt confined and frustrated by the traditional nature of the school district in which she was placed. She talked about her student teaching experience as a contrasting example to what she had previously experienced in her education:

I was teaching about South America and introducing it speaking Spanish and things like that. But it wasn’t the kinds of things that I might have done like fiestas and cooking and I felt kind of confined by that and I think that’s interesting because I think that may also have affected the way I want to teach and the way I want to supervise because I felt kind of confined and didn’t feel like I was really empowered in that setting as much as I might’ve liked to. It was not really an empowering kind of experience (int 1 lines 93-99).

Describing a contrasting example from her student teaching experience was helpful in that it served to reinforce what she believed to be important as she currently mentors preservice teachers. The confining context she experienced was not something she wanted to replicate in her own classroom.

**Rebecca as a classroom teacher**

After completing student teaching and graduating from college, Rebecca relocated to the Chicago area. Although she did not receive a full time teaching position, she did obtain a position as a Kindergarten para-professional where she worked alongside a veteran Kindergarten teacher. Although the teacher was approaching the end of her career at age 65, Rebecca appreciated her as a role model. “It was also just exciting for me that
someone could be teaching for that long and still be as into what she was doing and really having the kids be immersed in what they were learning,” (Int 1 lines 104-106). Rebecca recalled the students making Paper Mache animals and doing all sorts of things with their senses.

Following her year as a para-professional in Kindergarten, Rebecca received a position as a full time Kindergarten teacher in another school and collaborated with the other Kindergarten teacher at that grade level:

It was just what they expected in that Kindergarten. They just worked together to plan and do things, but she wasn’t like, “You’re doing it my way,” she was very open to “let’s try this” and “let’s do new ideas.” We did a lot of things with literature, and we did a lot of things with acting out. We used the letter people, these blow up people that teach the letters of the alphabet. I had the kids make puppets to go with them. She was very open to all those kinds of ideas. I think I started doing puppets at that point (Int 1 lines 123-128).

After teaching Kindergarten in the Chicago area for two years, Rebecca moved to Maryland and taught first grade in Frederick County for four years. During this time, her passion for puppetry developed and she used a puppet to help her teach first graders all of the time. In addition to puppetry, Rebecca also developed a love for clowning. Her clowning and puppetry skills were especially useful while teaching first grade and she worked with the Kindergarten teacher at her school to coordinate a Kindergarten Circus. Utilizing these passions in her classroom and larger school community earned her recognition from others as a teacher leader. While teaching in Maryland, Rebecca
recalled being asked to collaborate with a local college’s summer program for gifted students:

One of the significant things was I got asked to help at the local college. It was like a gifted program in the summer and that was really empowering for me. It was empowering because the woman who asked me to do it, I felt like she really recognized me as an important teacher (Int 1 lines 148-151).

Rebecca felt encouragement of what she did with puppetry and clowning. Integrating her passions in teaching led to other empowering opportunities for her like this example of working with a local college to design and instruct a summer program for gifted students.

When Rebecca arrived in Sunshine Valley in the early 1990’s, she did not teach in the local school district right away. She began as a Kindergarten teacher in a Montessori school. The time she spent working in a Montessori school did impact her as a teacher and mentor:

They were so good with visual training of kids like gathering everybody together and modeling how to do something. I still do a lot of that when I’m expecting the kids to do things or do something really well. That modeling sense of this is how you do it, this is how you’re going to do it. Often, interns can pick up on that so watching me modeling how to cut, you know when we’re doing those kinds of things. I think Montessori was really important for that (Int 1 lines 163-168).

Rebecca’s Kindergarten position was not a full-time teaching position, so in her free time, Rebecca put her passions to use again. She created a puppet show about
diversity that she presented in classrooms within the local school district when she was not teaching. Pursuing her passion of puppetry is what ultimately led to her first teaching position in the Sunshine Valley School District:

The other thing that I did to help me get a job [was] I wrote puppet plays about diversity and then I volunteered to go around to the schools. There was a big diversity thing going on in town and I’m not sure if it was something about another country, or about understanding others. I had bear puppets and they were arguing. I picked a student from the high school that was part of my church who looked [different]: he had chains, he had half black hair and half blonde hair and he looked like somebody you would be afraid of, somebody the kids would be afraid of. So I had him come, I would introduce him, and then he would be this little cute puppet, this bear puppet and it just blew all the stereotypes so I loved that, that that worked. I did these puppet shows and then a second grade teacher invited me to come to her classroom and the principal saw that and that’s partly how I got into Sunshine Valley (Int 1 lines 190-199).

**Rebecca as a cooperating teacher**

Although Rebecca’s teaching experiences had solely been in Kindergarten and first grade, she was offered and accepted a third grade position at Chestnut Hill Elementary School. As previously stated, Rebecca taught for four years before her principal asked her to work with student teachers from a traditional teacher preparation program. While Rebecca was able to recall specific lessons and units she taught with her student teachers, she was not able to recount many specifics regarding the structure of the teacher education program:
They [the student teachers] were all Central State. And interestingly, I have no memory of the supervisors. I don’t remember them being in the room, I don’t remember who they were, because I mean they’re not around much. I don’t remember it being an issue but you were really kind of left on your own and there wasn’t really many guidelines but luckily I had good people to work with (Int. 1 lines 219-222).

**Rebecca as a PDS mentor**

In the year 2000, Rebecca was enrolled in a conflict resolution workshop that met at her elementary school. She remembered someone asking her what would help her as a teacher, and her response was, “If I had someone else to teach with me,” and it was the next year that the Professional Development School was offered as an option in Rebecca’s elementary school, so she volunteered to mentor a year-long student teaching intern because this program was the answer to what she said she needed to help her as a teacher.

The previous timeline of Rebecca’s life are her reflections on what she voiced as important events and experiences in her life that have played some role in the development of who she is as a teacher and as a mentor. The purpose of providing these specific examples is to unpack how Rebecca’s personal background is connected to who she is as a mentor. The next section of this chapter will describe Rebecca’s mentoring style by outlining Rebecca’s specific beliefs about effective mentoring including examples of those beliefs enacted in her mentoring practice.

**Rebecca’s effective mentoring beliefs**

Rebecca’s thoughts about effective mentoring include five specific beliefs:
1. Find the intern’s passions and ways to incorporate them into the classroom.
2. Involve the intern with teaching and planning from day one and continue throughout the year.
3. Differentiate mentoring expectations
4. Use team teaching where helpful by rotating disciplines or teaching different parts of a lesson.
5. Independence is the goal.

1) **Find the intern’s passions and ways to incorporate them into the classroom.** When asked to identify her effective mentoring beliefs, Rebecca named the number one belief as finding interns’ passions and ways to incorporate them into the classroom. In addition to naming this belief, Rebecca also unpacked how she felt this particular belief developed. Rebecca specifically connected her belief to her previously life experiences as a student and teacher:

I feel like I’ve had experiences where I’ve been able to pick up on things that I was passionate about and the freedom and the okay to use those. I found as I did that with interns it was very reinforcing. It was those things that helped them and I think it helped them to also feel differentiated from me. That they also had things that they were experts and authorities on and I really think that was helpful for them to be able to do that (Int. 3 lines 130-135).

Rebecca described how enacting this belief in her practice is something she finds easy to do. She believes so strongly in nurturing people’s gifts and passions and finding ways to incorporate those passions in the classroom whether that be through their
teaching, their inquiry project, or even the partner classroom experience. “Teaching takes a lot of energy and I think when you can find ways to really engage your own passions it really feeds that energy you need to keep going.” (Int. 3 lines 91-93). Finding interns’ passions and incorporating them into practice is an important belief about mentoring according to Rebecca.

Rebecca tried to enact this belief in her mentoring practice for all of her interns, but she particularly described how utilizing interns’ passions in the classroom was particularly helpful for struggling interns with whom she has mentored:

For interns that are struggling, I also think that’s very important for because if they can begin to feel this sense of passion about things and really focus on that it can help them then in some of the other issues and some of the ways they’re struggling with getting assignments done maybe or journal reflections and those kinds of things. If you can get them to focus on those things; that’s really important (Int. 4 lines 67-72).

Rebecca felt compelled to find interns’ passions and incorporate them into the classroom as much as possible. Her personal life experiences have contributed to this practice and she felt she was able to enact this belief with all her interns, no matter who was in her classroom.

**Belief illustrated in practice.** One of the strategies that Rebecca used to uncover what her interns are passionate about is through asking them during the mentor-intern matching process. During her brief time with each potential intern that may be placed in her classroom, she asked questions such as, “What books do you connect to? What foods
do you like to eat? Where have you traveled or where would you travel? Do you have an artist that you like? I just try to find out things about them,” (Int 2 lines 449-451).

In 2011-2012, she mentored Lisa in her classroom and quickly learned that Lisa had a passion for history and was a gifted writer. Rebecca strategically created successful opportunities for Lisa by allowing her to pursue her passion of history within the classroom:

I mean I really drastically changed some curriculum to go with her passion. I basically changed the way I usually teach the Pennsylvania unit because she had a passion for having kids create their own museums. She was very interested in museum work and she thought maybe she might want to go into educational work in a museum. So we gave her that opportunity and she showed the kids how to do reenactments. We had this amazing museum where the kids picked their own topics and came up with it and I loved it, I mean I love that kind of thing. And being able to nurture what she thought was important and do that was really important to me (Int. 2 lines 391-405).

In addition to supporting Lisa’s passion for history and teaching social studies, Rebecca also recognized Lisa as a gifted writer. Rebecca’s classroom that year contained a number of girls who were also strong writers. Instead of having those particular girls participate in the weekly spelling program, Rebecca had Lisa work with the small group of gifted writers. “Lisa was good at that because she was a gifted writer. She was able to work with gifted kids. I mean she had these particular interests and gifts and I feel like I really just tried to encourage those” (Int. 2 lines 369-371).
Rebecca often tried to utilize the interns’ passions to get her interns up and in front of the students from the very beginning of the school year. One year, an intern who loved kayaking brought her kayak into the classroom and completed a read aloud for the students while sitting in the kayak. Another year, her intern had a love of baseball. Rebecca altered her beginning of the year community building activities with the students to reflect a baseball theme and she specifically had that intern read a baseball book about persistence to the students which featured one of his favorite teams.

Over the years, Rebecca has mentored two interns who had a particular love for dance. During recess, Rebecca encouraged her interns to use that time as a way to share their passion with the students. Rebecca’s very first intern, Christina, had interested students inside during recess and taught them the jitterbug which later was performed as a part of a Cotton Club simulation during a social studies unit.

While participating in the intern-mentor matching process prior to the year she worked with Bobby, Rebecca discovered his passions and felt drawn to work with him: I think on some level I kind of sensed that when we interviewed people and I maybe sort of gravitated even to people like that. I think Bobby was sort of like that. I saw the drummer and the cook, because he struggled with whether to be a chef or a teacher, and I saw that as, wow what an opportunity. Let’s go with that and really encourage him and show him how you could use that in a classroom setting, in teaching. That just seems important to me, to gain that kind of confidence. (Int. 2 lines 381-387). I was thrilled to have Bobby because he was a cook and he was a drummer and I loved all that. I feel like that was really valuable for him to have somebody recognize the value of those skills and that he
could bring that to the classroom and use those. I mean he was very talented and he ended up doing his inquiry project about the cooking and we did these amazing meals and I haven’t done anything that complicated since Bobby (Int 2 lines 246-251).

Rebecca embraced Bobby’s passions and opened her classroom as a space where he could see his passions enacted in teaching. Throughout their year together, Bobby cooked meals with the third grade students that complemented the social studies units they taught. While Bobby struggled with the life decision of whether to be a teacher or a chef, he is teaching elementary students today and Rebecca hoped that her time with him was significant for him to see that his gifts have a place in teaching.

A final illustration of how Rebecca works with her interns’ passions comes from her most current intern, Amanda. Rebecca connected with Amanda during the matching process as Amanda had traveled to Ecuador the previous summer to obtain her Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) certificate. Rebecca could sense Amanda’s passion for ESL learners from talking with her during the matching process. She utilized this passion by suggesting that Amanda complete her partner classroom experience with the school’s English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom. All of the year-long interns have a secondary placement during the year where they spend one day a week. Interns typically work with another grade level that is different from their primary internship placement. Encouraging an ESL placement for Amanda was the first time one of Rebecca’s interns had ever partnered with a classroom that was not a general education classroom.
By asking interns about their interests during the matching process, Rebecca begins to identify what her interns are passionate about and can work to integrate those passions in the classroom or the internship experience. Whether their interests are directly related to curriculum or not, Rebecca commits to finding a place for her interns to shine.

2) Involve the intern with teaching and planning from day one and continue throughout the year. Rebecca is intentional about presenting as a team with her intern to the students from the very first day. Although she believes this philosophy has always been present, she talked about her time as a Professional Development Associate (PDA) being a factor in strengthening this belief. Rebecca became involved as a mentor in the Professional Development School in the year 2000. After mentoring three interns, she had the opportunity to be released from her third grade classroom and work as Professional Development Associate in the program. Rebecca’s primary responsibilities were supervising interns in their year-long student teaching placement, and she also taught the science methods course. Rebecca described how the experience impacted her as a mentor:

   When you’re out and you know all their assignments all the things going on, I know what questions to ask them. “How’s this going, how’s your platform, how’s your inquiry, tell me more about it,” I just know a lot more questions to ask. I didn’t really know anything before. When Christina came to me about methods, I’m like “What? Science? I don’t know what are you talking about,” I think it’s great that we [PDAs] rotate through because you really come back a
lot more prepared to be a mentor and really understanding some of the cycles that interns are going through (Int 2 lines 157-164).

The opportunity to work as a PDA allowed her to see the “bigger picture” of the program and work with many different mentors, (Int 2 line 142):

I noticed that interns were sometimes just more observing for the first couple of months and not connected and that seemed like something intentional. I really wanted to make sure, not that they taught full lessons, but that they had something every day that they were doing to put them in front of the class. I just wanted the kids to see it as a team because that’s how I wanted it to be, if possible (Int. 2 lines 539-544).

In addition to providing her interns with opportunities to be in front of the children every day, Rebecca also believes her interns need to be involved in the planning from day one:

I really think and believe that it’s important from the very beginning, from the very first days of school that the interns are part of the teaching and part of the planning. I sit down, even from the very first week and have them go through the first couple of days with me. We have a Googledoc, [and] we share that together and they’re in on that. In the beginning, I’m writing that but as we go then we’re doing it. It’s much more of a co-document that we both add to and we both write in but that from the very beginning having the kids see them as also a teacher, not just a helper. So I find ways like read alouds or having them bring in something that they did over the summer, something that really engages the kids so they see them as a teacher, that’s very important to me and
varies depending on the intern. Some interns are right there up front helping to think of ideas and planning and some of them it’s a long time before they really begin to enter into that process. I always have them involved in the planning but sometimes I take more of a leadership role, sometimes it’s more of a team role and then my goal is that their independent in the end but wow does that change depending on when they’re ready to do that more independently.

(Int. 3 lines 93-102; Int. 4 lines 101-107).

Rebecca is intentional about involving her intern from the very first day in both the planning and teaching which she describes as opportunities to be in front of the children. The next section illustrates ways she is able to do this in her mentoring practice.

**Belief illustrated in practice.** In addition to describing how Rebecca utilizes interns’ interests in her classroom, some of the previously described practices also illustrate how Rebecca involves her interns in the classroom from the first day of school. Rebecca talked about utilizing read alouds or having interns bring something in to the classroom as ways to integrate her interns. She did this when Jessica brought in a kayak and read a story to the class at the beginning of the year. Bobby also read a baseball read aloud to the students with the theme of perseverance during the beginning weeks of school. These were ways she presented interns as teachers and integrated their interests at the same time.

Rebecca also discussed planning with her interns from the very first day and how Googledocs has improved that practice over the course of her time as a mentor. It is critical for both Rebecca and the intern to have access to and work in their planning Googledoc:
I actually loved when we started going to Googledocs because I felt that was a very effective way to plan with my intern. We could sit together and have the same document, we could both write in it, and use a different color to indicate when she’s teaching. And then it can be updated all the time. That’s part of that philosophy that we both have that same plan right there that we can both write in and both talk about. I think that’s really important. Even from the very beginning, I want my intern to have that document and sit and plan even though I know they don’t always know what’s going on. Talking about what this week is going to be like (Int. 2 lines 569-577).

Rebecca only began utilizing Googledocs in her mentoring practice four years ago when she mentored Lisa. The school district began moving to Google Drive and it eventually replaced Microsoft Office programs. Rebecca realized the value of having a shared document between her and her intern that they could work on either when present together or separately at home. Over time, Rebecca’s interns could take more ownership of the planning document as they began to plan and teach more lessons. “Certainly people like Sophia and Erin and Lisa would get the document ready, and start filling it out. In fact with Sophia, it would all be filled out by the time we would meet because she knew what was happening (Int. 2 lines 577-580).

Rebecca’s belief in involving her intern in the planning and teaching from day one and continuing that practice throughout the year can be seen in how she provided opportunities for interns to be in front of the students at the beginning of the year, as well as how she used Googledocs as a tool for year-long planning with her intern.
3) Differentiate mentoring expectations. Rebecca believed that effective mentoring required differentiating your expectations as a mentor. She believed it was important to remember that interns are not going to be exactly the same from year to year, just like the students in the classroom change every year. When working with her interns she believed in, “looking at what their needs are and how to meet those needs in different ways. Differentiating my expectations, as I don’t expect them to be like somebody else, but to look at them as individuals as I do with students” (Int 3 lines 110-113).

Learning to differentiate her mentoring expectations and how she came to develop this belief is rooted solely in Rebecca’s mentoring experience. Rebecca recalled developing this particular belief when she worked with her very first intern, Christina:

Even from the beginning, I think I could see even if you have a strong intern there are extenuating circumstances. I’ve often found it can be a medical issue that can impact the interns and initially I had an intern that was very strong in many ways, but she also had just some real difficulties completing things on time and getting things in and it took a lot of support to get her to complete things and to really encourage her because she would get anxious. Dan was the PDA and we worked together to really encourage her and give her extra support so she could complete some of the tasks some of the kind of things she needed to get done on a regular basis. When you’re beginning, you don’t really know what the [mentoring] expectations are, but looking back on that I realized that we definitely differentiated the expectations and gave her the support she needed. I think it’s
important to really look at that individual, just as you would with your students.

What is it going to take to help this intern be successful? (Int. 4 lines 1-12).

Rebecca worked with Dan during her first year as a mentor. Not only did she find him to be a source of support for differentiating expectations for her intern, but also a source of expertise for providing feedback to interns:

I feel so lucky to have started with Dan because I think just his gentle persistent wisdom about the way he slowly turns over the letting the intern be able to evaluate themselves. He does that so gradually and so slowly you really have to just pay attention because at the end he’s not really telling them anything, they’re naming it all and he does that so skillfully. I always wanted to do that, but there are parts of me that are too impatient. I think I was able to do it with some people better than others. He’s so talented (Int 2 lines 472-478).

Rebecca described her belief about differentiating expectations as one of the more challenging beliefs to enact in her practice. She cognitively knew she needed to differentiate because each intern is different, yet she acknowledged, “you sometimes are human and you think back and you go ‘man, you know I’m used to having this and it’s not really happening yet’ and it’s hard to let go of sometimes” (Int 3 lines 168-170).

Developing relationships with her interns is another mentoring practice that Rebecca differentiated. She did not have a standard routine for building relationships with her interns. She followed their lead in terms of what kind of relationship was comfortable for her intern:

I try to have a relationship where I feel like I’m supporting them. That we have this sense of mutual, working together in the classroom. I’m going to be really
honest with you. In some ways, I think I differentiate how I relate to my interns, because some interns I actually do more with outside of the classroom because we have more of a connection and it’s just fun and it evolves. It’s not intentional; it just happens. Other interns it’s just very professional, so it kind of depends on what they seem comfortable with. That’s how it feels to me, what they’re comfortable with (Int 3 lines 270-277).

**Belief illustrated in practice.** One of the strongest examples from Rebecca’s practice to illustrate how she differentiated her mentoring expectations for interns came from working with Lisa in her classroom. Lisa had significant medical issues which made it difficult for her to attend school every day or even be on time the days she attended. Rebecca was aware of her needs from the beginning:

Mentoring Lisa felt like an example of really looking at interns as individuals.

What does this intern need? What’s going to help this intern to be successful? To make it through the program? She had some severe health issues. It made it hard for her and I needed to be aware of that and really just be flexible, flexible with her. In addition to that, she had very particular interests. She was very interested in history and social studies and there was this sense that maybe she really belonged in a middle school setting in fact I encouraged her to go and observe at the middle school and look at Social Studies, is that a possibility for her? About part way through it was pretty clear that she wasn’t going to be able to leave the program ready to teach elementary. She didn’t have the stamina to do it and she also didn’t have the passion to teach all the subjects. We kind of knew that so it was really helping her to get through, to finish the program in a good way but I
wasn’t really thinking that I was graduating her to get a job in elementary teaching. In that sense, almost halfway through I realized that’s not going to be our goal to do all the subjects. I tried to really go with her passion and really encourage her to do that so her inquiry project was totally related to history and getting kids to understand multiple perspectives of history. She was able to do that and it turns out even the day she presented her inquiry project she was sick and could hardly talk. She just was so fragile in some ways. On the other hand, she’s really gifted, she’s really brilliant. You could talk to her, in things she’s interested in, she could really go into depth and I loved talking with her about it. She had a good perspective on the students, and she could talk about the students.

This example is significant because Rebecca identified this intern as someone who was not going to be ready to teach elementary school when she graduated. This realization alone may have served as a roadblock for some mentors to continue working with her. While there were medical circumstances underlying this realization, Rebecca did not give up on the intern or find a different placement for her. She mentally adjusted what the end goal would be for Lisa and continued to mentor her. Rebecca used “we” language in the quote above. She is referring to herself and her PDA, Josh who worked with Lisa that particular year. “He totally understood her and really helped so I’m glad because there could’ve been other people that might not have in that setting, so that was important to have that,” (Int. 2 lines 500-502).

Rebecca also worked with Josh when mentoring another intern, Bobby. Bobby had some personal struggles which required Rebecca to differentiate her mentoring expectations, and again, her PDA was a partner with her in that endeavor:
I just feel lucky to have had Josh for both Bobby and Lisa because both of them needed a PDA that was going to be understanding, and was going to help them through tough situations. I mean Bobby was financial family stuff and Josh understood that and we helped him some and got some money to do that and he was great about doing that. And Bobby needed someone to push him at times just to make sure he did those deadlines and got things in and Josh was good about that in a way that, I think if it had been somebody really strict, I think Bobby could’ve left the program because he could’ve backed off of that. But Josh was really good and got him through to do that (Int 2 lines 492-500).

While working with Bobby, Rebecca talked about supporting Bobby with coursework deadlines, his responsibilities as a student, and working with Josh to find avenues for supporting him financially. These examples of mentoring expectations may broaden what is considered to fall under the umbrella of mentor responsibilities in teacher education programs.

Another illustration of how Rebecca differentiated her mentoring expectations came from her most recent intern, Amanda.

Throughout the school year, Amanda struggled to be independent in the classroom. Rebecca wanted her to be planning for instruction more independently much earlier in the year than she did. She had many areas where she needed to grow and early on Rebecca worried whether or not Amanda would have a successful year. Again, Rebecca described working with her PDA as a team to differentiate for the intern:

The PDA has been very supportive and I have really appreciated that. Yes, we did spend significant time talking about it. I’d text her and say, “Hey I really need to
be with you. We need to brainstorm. Can we meet? She’s falling apart at this point. I need some help. I need help being able to articulate with her, what do you suggest?” But the PDAs have always been really great and flexible. I can see that that wouldn’t be the case sometimes but I was really lucky I think that I had PDAs that really had that same sense of feeling that we really need to differentiate here. But I also think that that’s part of the philosophy; my take on the philosophy of the PDS is that the reason we have this full year program is because we have so many differences and people that need different things and this gives them that opportunity to actually go through that full year and be able to be successful. How do we help people be successful? It’s not going to be the same for everyone (Int. 4 lines 87-98).

Because she knew about Amanda’s passion for working ESL students, Rebecca encouraged Amanda to work with the elementary school’s ESL teacher for her partner classroom experience. Amanda was able to spend one day a week in the ESL classroom during the whole school year. Nurturing this passion was especially fruitful when the time came later in the spring for Amanda to independently take on the planning and teaching responsibilities in third grade. Prior to doing so in the third grade classroom, Rebecca and the ESL teacher tried to prepare Amanda by utilizing the ESL classroom:

The first part of the strategy was that she would take a week and go work all morning and teach in the ESL classroom with Tina and she did that and I think really gained confidence. Tina felt very good about the lessons that she taught, she felt like she learned and grew from those. I think that was a really good experience. I like doing it that way before she did this [third grade] full time
because it was a smaller group, and she was more comfortable (Int. check in 3 lines 1-7).

Rebecca differentiated her mentoring for Amanda so she could first gain confidence working in a small group setting, then transfer her confidence to large group teaching in her third grade classroom. Having an intern teach in her partner classroom prior to taking on a majority of responsibilities in her third grade classroom is an example of differentiation Rebecca had never done previously. However, when faced with an intern whose needs were different, Rebecca was able to differentiate her expectations. Her teaching in the classroom had improved so significantly, Rebecca was able to revisit her letter of recommendation to include more specific examples of how Amanda was successful in the classroom.

These three intern examples provide illustrations for how Rebecca considered differentiating her mentoring expectations based on the needs of her preservice teachers. To think of preservice teachers similarly to students in the elementary classroom, mentors need to adjust their teaching of teaching, or mentoring to meet their needs, as they would with a student in their classroom.

4) Use team teaching where helpful by rotating disciplines or teaching different parts of a lesson. Team teaching, or co-teaching, is closely connected to Rebecca’s belief of involving her intern as a teacher early on in the school year and continuing that practice throughout the year. Because the Professional Development School internship begins in August and concludes on the last day of school in June, Rebecca believed the program is conducive to team teaching and described how team teaching might look in her classroom. “That notion of we’re in this together, but of
course how that looks depends on the intern and it depends on the class, too” (Int 2 lines 547-549):

Some of it is both of us teaching in the same lesson or having a role that the intern has in that lesson. Sometimes it’s the intern teaches a part and I teach another part of it, sometimes we break into groups and teach. Continuing to find and incorporate team teaching in many ways, I think, is a valuable part of mentoring and part of their learning process (Int. 3 lines 118-122).

As previously stated, Rebecca originally wanted to be a part of the Professional Development School program as a mentor because she felt having an intern for the entire school year was an answer to her need for someone else with whom she could teach. From the beginning of her time as a mentor, she tried to team teach intentionally, but explained that professional development experiences within the PDS helped her to name her practice and develop her team teaching even more:

We’ve certainly had sessions on that. I think I did some of that, but maybe not as intentionally and naming it as explicitly as after having the team teaching sessions that we’ve had. I think those were really helpful. In the PDS retreats that we’ve had people talked about that and I really tried to pay attention to that. I think this year in particular with having an intern that struggled more independently, team teaching was helpful and we hoped to kind of get her working with smaller groups (Int. 3 lines 139-142;145-147).

Rebecca talked about using team teaching for instructing different disciplines as well as team teaching within the same lesson. The following examples demonstrate what this belief looks like in Rebecca’s practice.
Belief illustrated in practice. In the previous quote, Rebecca eluded to her most current mentoring year and working with an intern, Amanda, who struggled with independence and how team teaching has been very helpful for working with her. As illustrated in Figure 4.1, during math instruction this spring, Rebecca’s third grade students were often divided into two groups with Amanda leading one group and Rebecca leading the other.

Figure 4.1. Rebecca utilizing co-teaching during math class. This photograph illustrates how co-teaching allowed Rebecca to work in small groups in her math class.

For this instance of co-teaching, Rebecca created the two groups based on ability within her classroom. She had a group of third graders who were grasping concepts significantly faster than another. Rebecca worked with the advanced group and her intern worked with the group that needed more support, although that can vary. Sometimes the intern created the groups, and sometimes Rebecca worked with the students who needed more support while the intern worked with the advanced group. When Rebecca described team teaching as breaking into groups and teaching, this was an illustration of that belief in her practice (check in Int 1).
Rebecca also described team teaching by rotating disciplines. An example of this from her practice can be seen in how she team taught social studies with her interns. Rebecca’s first intern, Christina, created a simulation for their third grade students based on the Trail of Tears during a unit of study on Native Americans.

She did a simulation with the students about the Cherokee and she wrote a letter and then had the team leaders in the class sign the letter and gave them pencils for signing it without really reading it because she had written it in cursive and it was hard to read. So she got them to sign the letter and then she read the letter to the class and it basically said that they had signed away recess for the rest of the year because we had a short day and we needed more time to work and the students were up in arms about it. Then she proceeded to have the whole discussion about this is what happened with the Cherokee, this group signed away their land and how would it feel and the students were like “that’s not fair” and she connected back to those kinds of things (Int 2 lines 50-59).

In this example, Rebecca and her intern were not teaching together within the same lesson, however she had also not completely relinquished her responsibilities for teaching the Native American unit to her intern. The intern was responsible for a significant lesson within the unit, but Rebecca was still involved with teaching social studies. Another social studies unit taught in third grade is Festival of the Arts. Teachers have a lot of freedom within this unit to expose students to a variety of arts. During this unit, Rebecca taught about different artists such as Vincent Van Gogh, Georgia O’Keeffe, and Rene Magritte, among others. One year, Rebecca’s intern had a strong interest in the Harlem Renaissance, which Rebecca knew nothing about at the time. Her intern designed
and taught lessons about the Harlem Renaissance, which was incorporated into the Festival of the Arts rotations of different artists (Int 2).

Whether team teaching within the same lesson or sharing lessons within a unit of study, Rebecca’s belief of team teaching with her intern is ever present in her mentoring. She does not talk about leaving her intern to teach on her own, but how they share the teaching responsibilities as a team.

5) Independence is the goal. The final belief Rebecca shared about effective mentoring is the idea that independence is truly the goal of mentoring. While this may seem counter-intuitive to her belief about team teaching, Rebecca described more generally what independence in an intern may typically look like:

More typically of what I expect, I would expect that beginning in January after their finished with their methods courses and as they’re beginning to think about inquiry, that’s when I really think about having them maybe teach a full week of a subject, or take a reading group or two depending on where they are. My goal would be that they’re taking over significant chunks of planning and maybe not by January but certainly by February and March, they’re doing that pretty independently and coming to me with ideas. I’d give them some resources and say okay go ahead and plan a unit on Geometry and then come to me with that.

Some interns have utilized PDAs because I’ve had PDAs that were experts in math to help them I loved working with Katherine. I liked having her because she was so helpful with math and I tried to utilize her expertise and gifts and asked her to help plan math units with them and model, she would model lessons once a week so that felt neat to me to be able to utilize her expertise in doing
that. But then they’d [the intern] come and present their ideas and share their
ideas. That would be, to me, a more normal what to expect interns to be able to
do so then in the end you have a feeling that they can do all subjects and do a
full day (Int 4 lines 112-123; Int 2 lines 504-510).
Rebecca did not simply judge an intern’s independence by their ability to take
over the classroom for a two-week period. She also used their thinking as an indicator to
know how ready interns were for full-time teaching:

Independence in terms of their thinking, really, too that thinking the planning,
the creating, and then independence in classroom management and keeping
things flowing and hope by the end that they really feel very capable as a teacher
and they’re ready to go off and be independent so that’s an ultimate goal (Int 3
lines 123-126).

Some teacher education programs may require a student teacher to be
completely independent in the classroom without the mentor teacher’s help and be
responsible for all of the classroom duties for a certain amount of time. Rebecca talked
about independence in terms of preparing her interns to be able to independent when they
have their own classroom.

Rebecca described more specifically how independence was also an indicator
for when she could identify success in her interns:

When we’re planning and intern comes up with their own ideas, or they go to
the computer, or they just start looking it up and say, ‘Here’s an idea and here’s
an idea, what do you think about this? Do you think the kids would like this?’
Even when we’re planning something and we think about it and then they
continue to think about it, they aren’t just satisfied with it. And Amanda just did this the other day with a lesson. I just loved that that she kept pushing it and thinking about it and to me that’s an indication that they’re successful and on their own. They’re not just going with what you’ve told them or going through the motions in the same way but they’re adding to, creating, looking things up to me is a sign of success. I also feel like when it’s their own, they’re on their way, or they’re getting it is when after lessons, at the end of the day, we have this brainstorm about what do you think, what could we do here, what would happen, and it’s a mutual discussion it’s not just me saying, ‘did you notice this?’ but it’s a back and forth discussion. That’s a real point of their growing and getting there (Int 3 lines 42-62).

Rebecca was able to identify whether or not her interns were able to be on their own in the classroom, without having to “give up” weeks of teaching. She was mindful of the previously described behaviors as ways to gauge independence in teaching.

**Belief illustrated in practice.** Amanda, Rebecca’s most recent intern, was illustrated in Rebecca’s previous belief about differentiating expectations. Because Amanda struggled to be independent this past school year, when Rebecca identified independence indicators in Amanda, she spoke about them at length:

Even just her sense of really holding the kids more accountable. She’ll say, ‘you’re still talking, you’re not going to be able to hear.’ She was really reluctant to take that kind of authority and have that kind of voice. I really hear her getting that teacher voice in a sense of authority and the kids are responding to it which is really exciting (check in 3 lines 238-241).
Not only had Amanda developed her independence with classroom management, but she also demonstrated her independence with planning and teaching:

Like for East Africa [social studies unit], I show her the books and then she takes them, and we were talking about doing a Venn diagram, and she takes them and she decided she wanted to do a Venn diagram on the Masai because she found a book that she thought lent itself. So I said, ‘let’s look for a character web that would go with this,’ and I thought I had one and I didn’t so she Googled it and found it and that was huge because she wasn’t doing that before like searching. She found one, and she copied it. I’m giving her sort of a framework, but really our district is hard because we don’t have a clear framework, so I’m giving her that framework but then she’s really plugging it all in and figuring out how to do it (Check in 3 lines 252-260).

Rebecca’s interns may demonstrate these readiness indicators at all different times during the internship year. Each intern is different. However, identifying her belief about independence, as well as what she considers to indicate independence, allowed Rebecca to stay focused on her goal.

**Conclusion**

This chapter was intended to introduce Rebecca as a teacher and mentor by describing her personal and professional experiences as well as her mentoring beliefs and practices. Rebecca has never received formal training for mentoring, as the Professional Development School does not require that. Examining Rebecca’s beliefs and practices, including their development over time can be helpful for larger audiences of mentors.
Chapter 5
Michael Cain: Fourth Grade Mentor

Introduction

Mike Cain is currently a fourth grade teacher in the Sunshine Valley School District. He has been teaching elementary grades for fourteen years, seven in a southern state and seven in Sunshine Valley. Mike worked with student teachers during the time he taught in the south, as well as in Sunshine Valley prior to becoming a mentor in the Professional Development School program. During his first three years in Sunshine Valley, he worked with one student teacher from a traditional teacher preparation program at a local university the year before he welcomed his first intern. At the time of this data collection, Mike was mentoring his fifth intern. Mike has taught and mentored in grades 1-5 at Pleasant Woods Elementary School.

Mike as a student

Mike’s personal background is important for understanding him as a teacher and mentor. He recounted several significant experiences from his past, starting as early as age five:

I was born into kind of a rougher neighborhood. I was the only white kid in my neighborhood and the only white kid in my school K-12. I had a lot of different teaching experiences, or experiences with teachers, usually negative ones honestly. Even I’d say from my oldest memory, like five years old which is probably where I think I’d start my timeline would be memories of teachers that were basically reverse discriminating against me. I was a gifted student, could read before I started Kindergarten, I actually started Kindergarten at the age of
four, but teachers more held that against me than anything. Even from the very beginning I always felt like teachers were not working for me as much as they were holding me back or keeping me down because they kind of resented the fact that I was succeeding whereas most of my classmates struggled with a lot of things (Int. 1 lines 2-13).

While Mike voiced his negative experiences with teachers while in a school setting, he identified the specific time in his life when he decided to become a teacher himself:

I remember sometime around third grade deciding that I wanted to become a teacher so that I could be the opposite of those people. I basically wanted to be a good teacher for some kid out there and make their school experience be like the opposite of what I had: safe, happy, challenging make school a place where kids wanted to be. That seed was planted in my brain around third grade.

Mike credited his decision to become a teacher from an experience he had during his second grade year. He distinctly remembered a young teacher, fresh out of college who taught his class for a couple of months. She had been a much better teacher than he had experienced up until that point, but after a few months, she left. The short amount of time Mike spent with that teacher made a large impact on his thinking:

Maybe it was because I had a taste of what a good teacher could be, for a second, and then maybe that was what made me start thinking at the beginning of third grade that there can be good teachers out there. I could be one of them if I wanted to (Int. 1 lines36-39).
Mike was able to recount one other positive experience he had with a teacher throughout his K-12 experiences. As a freshman in high school, he had another teacher he remembered fondly, however like his second grade teacher, she did not stay for long:

She was pregnant and she taught English and French and she taught in a portable classroom behind the school and one of her students locked her in the trailer and set it on fire, with her inside it. And she escaped, of course unharmed because it didn’t take long for them to get help, but that experience was enough to make her leave the school. Essentially the good teachers were scared off from my school so my experience was pretty much negative (Int. 1 lines 82-87).

**Mike as a preservice teacher**

Mike held onto his desire to be a teacher, so when the time came for him to choose a university, his goal was to find the best teacher preparation school he could find that would be the furthest from where he grew up. His teacher preparation program began field experiences as early as his sophomore year of college. During his early field experience observations he began to see more examples of what good teaching could be while working with different cooperating teachers. In addition to his course work experiences, Mike worked at the university’s day care in their preschool room to make extra money. While he had some positive experiences during his observations, he acknowledged the cooperating teachers were not all “model teachers” (Int. 1 line 126). He described specifically his student teaching placement:

I was placed to student teach in Kindergarten and I did traditional student teaching so I was only in there the spring semester of my senior year. My mentor, or cooperating teacher was what we called them, basically saw that as an
opportunity to kind of peace out and go work on her Master’s degree. I basically that senior year started teaching Kindergarten for my sixteen weeks that I was in there almost immediately straight through until I left (Int. 1 lines 127-132). I pretty much did everything. On the very first day that I walked into her classroom, it was the first day of the spring semester, early-ish January, she literally introduced me to the kids and then told me that she was going to go to the faculty room. So that first couple of days I was doing what I hate and that was “winging it”. I was trying to figure out what we were supposed to do as a class the moment before we were doing it. I quickly learned that’s not a good way to teach obviously, and so I started making plans and I would look at the way things had been going in the classroom as a model for what I should be planning and that’s when I started seeing that some of the things we were doing in class, especially I think because of my experience in the day care working with the 4 year olds, it was a lot of stuff that in my opinion was really more for 4 year olds and not for spring semester Kindergarten (Int. 1 lines 155-166).

While Mike experienced a challenging student teaching placement, it was not a fair reflection of his undergraduate education. It did, however, fuel his drive to be a great teacher:

The other experiences I had for the most part were very good. The teachers seemed like strong teachers that really cared about their kids and were doing at least what they believed to be the best for their kids and you could tell they loved teaching and that capstone experience would not reflect my whole experience with teachers during this time but it definitely ended my university experience on
a note that made me even more think let’s not be that, let’s not be that kind of teacher (Int. 1 lines 200-205).

**Mike as a classroom teacher**

After graduating in 2001, Mike was offered a Kindergarten teaching position in a metropolitan area. The socioeconomic makeup of his students ranged greatly. He recalled that one student in his classroom was the child of a prominent music producer, and another student in his class was the child of that student’s housekeeper. Both students lived in the same residence, but came from very different backgrounds. Mike was assigned a mentor during his first year of teaching, another Kindergarten teacher who only had three years of teaching experience, but was still the most experienced Kindergarten teacher in Mike’s school:

We more figured things out together that year and we did a lot of work together. We became good friends along with a couple of the other Kindergarten teachers because we had six on the team in that building. We’d often have dinner at each other’s houses and do our lesson plans together. Though she was my mentor, we collaborated on a lot of things it wasn’t much ‘here’s how you should do things’ or anything, it was like, ‘let’s figure out how we should do this.’ I thought that that worked really well and I kind of liked that approach to it (Int. 1 lines 223-229).

Due to the cost of living, after teaching Kindergarten for one year, Mike moved to another district on the outskirts of the city. There he taught second grade and described the population of the new district as much more socio-economically disadvantaged than his first teaching position:
But even those kids came from a similar culture in the sense that about 85% of our student population came out of a trailer park that was near the school that was 500 acres so it was a very large trailer park. Almost all of our kids came from there and kind of had that mentality of taking care of themselves a lot. A lot of my students cared for themselves and their younger siblings almost exclusively; there was drug use amongst our fifth graders. A lot of poverty and things like that. It was kind of like half of my class my first year of teaching, but now that was my whole class (Int. 1 lines 250-257).

When Mike moved to a new district, he completed another teacher induction program and was again assigned a mentor. This time his mentor had a multitude of years of experience teaching second grade. While this relationship was not as collaborative as the previous relationship with his Kindergarten mentor, they worked together and shared ideas. After three years, Mike became the grade level chair for second grade:

So that kind of put me into that leadership role where I needed to sit on the, we called it the Action Team, where I needed to sit on the leadership team and make decisions that affected the whole school and then let people know things. This was also the kind of role where our principal did not have a lot of interaction with teachers about certain things, it was more, “You need to tell your teachers that they need to start doing X,” whatever that thing was. This job kind of came with the role of sometimes, not evaluating teachers, but informing them of what their evaluation was by the principal. “I am not seeing enough guided reading groups in second grade so you really need to get the second grade team on board with guided reading” or whatever it was at the time. That got me into a place where I
had to start giving feedback to people even though I wasn’t always the person that collected the data or information. It put me in a position where I had to talk to people about their teaching more than I would have before (Int. 1 lines 312-325).

**Mike as a cooperating teacher**

It was also around this time that Mike began to become involved with student teachers after being approached by his principal. Mike worked with two student teachers during his time in the south from a local state university and described his reasoning for why he became involved:

I agreed because I had always been interested in collaboration and helping each other and it’s always bothered me that teachers seem to do a lot of the work over and over again when if people would sit down they could divvy up the work and they could help each other more, and especially for my first year of teaching Kindergarten where I had a core group of four teachers, me and three other teachers that we did that very consistently. I always liked the idea of passing on stuff and helping other people. Also, to be honest, I have a lot of opinions about teaching, and how to be a good teacher and I want people to hear my version and not other people’s and in that school there were other mentor teachers or cooperating teachers that I felt that were taking on student teachers as a form of slave labor, kind of, and I had had that experience myself and I didn’t want those people to have that. I knew if I took on a student teacher that that wouldn’t happen. That’s why I agreed to do it (Int. 1 lines 341-353). There was a lot more growing that they [student teachers] needed to do when they left, I felt like. I had a lot of opportunities to work with those student teachers but I just didn’t have the
time, sometimes, to really make the progress because a lot of them were in a situation where they were expected to observe the first week, take on a subject the second week. There was a routine they were expected to follow. It’s not always exactly what I would’ve wished to happen (Int. 1 lines 330-336).

During his experiences with student teachers, Mike described the challenges he faced working with the structure of the student teaching field experience. Those experiences seemed to reinforce his personal feelings about how best to prepare preservice teachers:

These students just were dropped in and told you’re going to start teaching your second week. But that is where I started to develop my attitude about mentoring that I have now. How I feel preservice teachers should be directed to grow and get experience. I had a problem at the time with the system of ‘they’re going to watch you teach for a week and then the next week they’re going to take on Math’ or something crazy. And then they’re just always going to teach math for the next six weeks. Then the third week they’re going to take on reading too and now they’re teaching reading and math and by the end of it you’re not teaching anything and you’re watching them teach the whole time. Co-teaching was not a part of it. I just didn’t like that. I experimented at the time with some different things. Basically was more often than not told, “But that’s not how we do it. You really need to not be a mentor or you need to let them come in and do this.” I do remember a lot of mentors at the time leaving the classroom a lot, just like my mentor had done and I’m not a believer in that either (Int. 1 lines 359-372).

Mike as a PDS mentor
In 2008, Mike moved to Sunshine Valley and began teaching a first and second grade multiage class at Pleasant Woods Elementary School. He had many opportunities to work alongside the Professional Development School interns and those interactions were how he learned about the details of the PDS:

I really loved the idea of the full year experience that they were getting and since I’ve become a mentor I’ve obviously experienced a lot more of it, but before becoming a mentor and knowing a lot about it, I liked seeing that full year and not the expectation that they’re going to be rushed through 16 weeks. Also just the idea of having a PDA you know a person that facilitates between the university and the interns and the mentors and how different that was from what I had had with faculty supervisors, things like that. That’s kind of what led me to agree to take my first intern (Int 1 lines 437-444).

Mike purposefully waited to become involved as a mentor because he was working on acclimating himself to a new state, district, and school. A colleague of Mike’s approached him and suggested he consider becoming a mentor and he volunteered to be a mentor for the 2010-2011 school year.

The next section of this chapter will outline Mike’s specific beliefs about effective mentoring including where his beliefs come from and how they are illustrated in his practice.

**Mike’s effective mentoring beliefs**

Mike holds the following seven beliefs about effective mentoring:

1. I believe it is best for a mentor to get to know their intern a bit and have a personal, but professional, relationship with them.
2. I believe that it is important for a mentor to be willing to spend time on the mentoring process.

3. I believe it is important to provide timely and consistent feedback.

4. I believe it is important to co-teach with the intern.

5. I believe effective mentoring includes being understanding that different people have different skill sets, attributes, learning/teaching styles, and gifts than others and themselves.

6. I believe it is important for the mentor to learn from their intern.

7. I believe it is important for the mentor to try to constantly keep in mind that they are modeling behaviors for their intern just like they are for their students.

1) **I believe it is best for a mentor to get to know their intern a bit and have a personal, but professional, relationship with them.** When reflecting upon his first belief, Mike shared that mentors and interns should feel comfortable talking to each other about teaching, feedback on lessons, questions, and even their personal lives to some extent. He believed mentors should take the lead in this, and should put effort into getting to know their interns, which is something he feels comes easily to him.

   This is a very important belief to Mike. He wants to develop a friendly rapport with his interns throughout the year. Mike struggled with the idea of being “friends” with his interns, but described the value in getting along with his intern:

   I really strive for a friendly relationship. I hate to say friends because we’re not really friends, and I’m still her mentor and still in a supervisory kind of role. So I’m not her friend necessarily, but we are buddies. I feel comfortable talking with her about things that are personal to me. We spend 7-8 hours a day together, so I
feel like it’s really important, that’s why it’s the first one on my list. It’s really important that we get along and have a very comfortable, but still mentor-intern professional relationship. We’re not going to go out for beers or anything, but it’s not uncommon for an intern that I’ve had to come in and complain about her boyfriend or to come in and talk about her roommates. I want them to feel okay to do that. I’ll talk about our adoption process, so I definitely get to know my interns on a personal level and I think that it’s the same for teaching. I’m a firm believer in getting to know your students as people and creating that kind of I and thou relationship with them and it’s the same for interns really. If you know them as a person, it’s a lot easier to understand where they’re coming from and vice versa and it just makes the days go by better. That’s pretty much the type of relationship I try to build. A friendly one (Int. 3 lines 292-305).

Mike identified the relationships he has built with his interns as some of the best parts of mentoring:

The best parts are really having another adult in the room to talk about things with every day. Also, the relationship that I’ve built with them. I feel like I would not describe my relationship with Hayley [current intern] as friends, but I would describe my relationship with Emily and Justine and Katelyn and Stacey [previous interns] as friends since they’re graduated and moved on as teachers. I’m building myself a future friend. I’m building a relationship with someone that I will be friends with. I really appreciate that part of it. I know because the first nine years I taught I did not have an intern and teaching is kind of lonely. You have 20 kids in the room but it’s not the same as having an adult to bounce things
off of. It can make for long days sometimes when the only interaction you have is with kids. I think that it’s just nice to have another adult to run things by. That’s one of my favorite parts to be honest (Int 3 lines 328-337).

Having a personal, but professional relationship with his interns was one of Mike’s most important beliefs. Not only did it make the working environment more pleasant, but it also allowed Mike to feel comfortable communicating hard messages to his interns. Mike was always honest with his intern when giving them feedback, but a good relationship with his intern certainly made that communication easier for him.

**Belief illustrated in practice.** Mike compared the process of developing a personal, but professional relationship with his interns as similar to what he did as a teacher with his students. In order to help his interns feel comfortable, Mike did a lot of storytelling:

I am a storyteller and to be totally honest about it I am a man in a woman’s world. So I think that if I were a 21 year-old girl who is going to come in here and spend eight hours a day with some guy, that it would be weird. So from day one I try to make it not weird by letting them know that I am the kind of guy I am which is pretty laidback. I am the woman in my marriage like I mean, my wife didn’t pick out these cool fabrics [on my bulletin boards], I did that. I decorated our nursery. I make it pretty clear the kind of person I am and I also usually start telling some stories about my life because I think it’s been a weird one and I think that helps break the ice a little bit. I am also very interested in hearing about them just because I really enjoy hearing people’s stories and so that’s where it kind of
starts. We end up spending so much time with your intern that you almost have to either learn to like them or you’re just setting yourself up (Int 2 lines 417-428).

Mike begins the process of building a relationship with his interns during the very beginning inservice days in August. Mike shared how developing a relationship with his intern is helpful to enact his responsibilities as a mentor throughout the year:

I think when it comes down to it; my interns know when it’s business. It’s business if we’re talking about kids, talking about school, talking about teaching, then I’m not going to be afraid to tell you something that I need to tell you just because we get along. But I do like to get along and I think that us getting along makes it easier for when I do have to say those other things, if I have to. I’m thinking of this because this is a real thing. If I’m having to talk to you about your questioning when you’re reading to kids, that can be uncomfortable but the fact that we’re kind of buddies almost, it’s a lot easier for me to come to you with those things and say that. You know I’m not just a mean guy, I’m telling you this because I care about you as a teacher and I want you to grow (Int. 3 lines 295-305).

Mike’s belief about building a relationship with his intern has proved helpful in navigating challenges in his mentoring. As early as his first intern, Mike recalled a struggle he experienced with her and how their solid relationship helped him through it:

The struggle was that her level of motivation to do the level of work that I wanted done wasn’t always there. A lot of times she would do whatever the thing was, but she would do it at a basic level. It wasn’t because she couldn’t do more, it was because she didn’t need to, so she didn’t. That’s hard for me because I usually try
to do the best I can with pretty much everything I do. I understand there are limits. That wasn’t necessarily the case for her. It was kind of this is enough. For example, the very beginning of the year, we kind of got off on the wrong foot with this whole thing because I asked her to put the kids’ name placards on the desks. They were done very haphazardly. She kind of just slapped them down and taped them. So they were covering the pencil wells on some of the desks and very very slanted. I don’t mean a little slant, I’m not that serious okay, but they were like half an inch slant on one side all the way to the top of the desk on the other. No effort put into making them look nice. She was just like, “This is just a job, I’m just going to do it as fast as I can. It doesn’t matter if it’s done well, I just need to get it done.” When it came time to planning lessons, you could tell that some of the lesson ideas that she came up with, she did a Google search and it was the first one on the list. It wasn’t like she put a lot of work into planning out a unique experience for the kids or anything like that. It was more like this is the basic thing I found online so that’s what we’re going to do (Int 4 lines 1-25).

The time and importance Mike devoted to building a relationship, even with his first intern, was helpful as he navigated his struggle:

I think the part of my beliefs that helped with that is I try to get to know my interns and build a rapport with them. Part of how I handled that was I’m kind of a straight talk kind of guy, so I let my interns know that at the beginning of the year I’m not mean, I’m not rude or anything, but I don’t sugar coat. I let them know off the bat that I want what’s best for the kids; that comes first over other things. With her, because we had such good rapport, I was able to say to her,
“Hey did you just Google this or what? How can we make this better? What are the kids going to get out of this and is it really what we’re looking for?” so I would just ask her a lot of questions about the lesson that she presented to me (Int. 4 lines 29-37).

As Mike previously mentioned, once his interns have graduated and moved on to their own classroom teaching jobs, he does continue the personal relationships as friends. Social media is a way Mike is able to stay connected with his former interns. “Actually I am friends with all four of these girls on Facebook and Instagram. We talk all the time. I got an e-mail from Justine last night, but up until they leave the year, it’s a little different,” (Int. 2 lines 436-439).

Developing a friendly rapport with his interns was important to Mike. He was going to be working with his intern throughout the entire school year, so building a relationship was a foundational component of his mentoring beliefs.

2) I believe that it is important for a mentor to be willing to spend time on the mentoring process. Mike believed all mentors should understand that sometimes you "put more in" than you immediately "get out." Whether it is meeting with the intern, looking at lesson plans, writing references letters, etc. the mentoring process is voluntary and shouldn't be looked at as a chore. This was a belief Mike developed from observing what other mentors might not do. He always felt this was a “no brainer” when mentors volunteered to work with interns, however he observed other interns who worked with mentors that did not seem to practice this belief (Int 3).

Belief illustrated in practice. As Mike reflected, he felt this belief was a “must do” for mentoring. His experiences as a mentor in a building with other pairs of mentors
and interns caused him to think more purposefully about this belief:

I talk to other teachers and mentors and sometimes they say things like, “Why do we have to have these three way [evaluation conferences] during school?” and stuff like that and I don’t get that. I think it [mentoring] is a voluntary position. You’ve decided to be a mentor voluntarily; you should be willing to devote a certain amount of time to this. You know that you’re not the one writing the lesson plan, someone else is writing it, so you’re going to have to look at it. Don’t complain; it comes with the job, it comes with the territory. I see interns where there’s no expectation for them to do some of these things, like plan, and I think part of that is because the mentors don’t want to spend time looking at them and so I put that on there because I know it doesn’t always happen. That’s where that came from to be honest (Int 3 lines 153-163).

This was a belief that was ever present in Mike’s mentoring practice, and he alluded to certain components like reading lesson plans, writing recommendation letters, and participating in evaluation conferences as responsibilities that comprise that belief. The following beliefs and practices illustrate more concretely what spending time on the mentoring process looks like in Mike’s practice.

3) **I believe it is important to provide timely and consistent feedback.** To that end, Mike believed an effective mentor is present all the time. This includes helping with the planning of the lessons, ensuring that materials are prepped, and staying in the room during the lesson (Int 3). Mike reflected upon the development of this belief in his practice:
I did not have that when I was a student teacher. My mentor was never in the room, and I never knew if I had done a good job teaching a lesson. I could usually tell if it had bombed, but my experience as a mentor has been that when my interns feel like their lessons have bombed, the reality is they did much better than they think and that maybe a couple of things could’ve been tweaked to improve it. I always wondered how I was doing. I never really knew, so I just had to think about how I thought my students were doing and gauge how I’d done by that. I think it’s really important for mentors to give consistent feedback; to me that’s kind of the whole point of this. To give that feedback you have to be in the room or else you’re giving feedback on things you didn’t see. There’s a lot of research that says consistent feedback is one of the top things you can do for your students and I would imagine that would translate to interns as well (Int. 3 lines 165-177).

During observational visits to Mike’s classroom, he often checked in with his intern regarding the teaching and learning going on in the classroom. A check in occurred during a lesson when Mike and Hayley would briefly connect and talk with one another during teaching.

**Belief illustrated in practice.** Whether Mike or his intern Hayley was teaching the lesson, the two could often be seen periodically talking with one another throughout the course of the lesson. Mike reflected upon the content of some of their conversations:

A lot of time I do it somewhat quietly so the students aren’t involved. Mostly it’s just me telling her some things I noticed that went really well with what she just did and if there is something that maybe she could think about for next time. If
there is something that I would’ve done very very differently and I think that her
doing it the way she did caused some kind of issue with what she’s done then I’ll
tell her that. If it’s something I can tell her super quickly like, “Next time call
them by rows,” or something like that instead of calling them all at once to get
computers because then you end up with 20 kids in the hallway. Those kinds of
things I might just quickly tell her and we’ll hit it again later when we talk. For
the most part, especially this late in the game, it’s mostly, “I love the way you did
this. Great job remembering to have them think, pair, share,” that kind of stuff
(Check in Int. 5 lines 17-27).

While Mike was generalizing about his conversations with Hayley, there was an
observed instance (see Figure 5.1) when Mike and Hayley talked together immediately
following a reading conference that Hayley had completed with a student. Mike
immediately sat down next to Hayley and gave her feedback about her teaching during
the reading conference while other students were reading silently or working
independently.
Figure 5.1. Mike provides immediate feedback to Hayley. This photograph illustrates Mike providing feedback to Hayley immediately after she worked with a student.

I wanted her to see that his real goal needs to be something that he’s been struggling with for a long time which is being able to actually summarize well what he’s read and show comprehension of what he’s read. I talked to her about what I just said right now. That a good fit book is a goal he needs, but it’s not really the main goal he should have. It should be more about the summarizing because of the way he kind of reads so fast and he can’t get any details. So she added it as a goal on his sheet for next time to talk about. Then we went over together and chose a good fit book with him, and again if this were any other student, I would’ve trusted her to go do that by herself, but because of this particular kid, like I know what he does, he would’ve taken her over and he would’ve picked a book that he’s already read two or three times, and she wouldn’t have known that necessarily (check in Int. 4 lines 19-39).
In this instance of providing timely and consistent feedback to Hayley, Mike chose to give feedback to Hayley because of particular knowledge he had about that student, not necessarily because of Hayley’s teaching:

We did talk over in the library a little bit I don’t know if you heard that. That was mostly conversation about why I kind of jumped in and I just wanted her to understand that it wasn’t because I didn’t think she could handle the conference. It was that I was afraid of what this student would try, and that is what happened. I just wanted to let her know that it was more about I really needed him to not take advantage of the situation and make some progress towards his goals and I was afraid that he would try to take advantage of her and that’s exactly what he tried to do (check in int. 4 lines 36-43).

In another example of providing timely and consistent feedback, Mike again described how he debriefed another reading conference with Hayley:

She had chosen a goal for a kid. Two out of the three goals for the kids that we talked about, the goal was right on it made a lot of sense for those kids to have those goals. Then the third kid, she chose an adequate goal for that kid to work on, but she had noticed something else that in my mind would’ve been a more pressing matter so I probably would’ve chosen it as the goal for him (check in int 3 lines 74-79).

When asked to elaborate on how he shared this feedback with Hayley, Mike described his feedback in more detail:

I did tell her that. I said, “The goal you chose is good, that is something he needs to work on, so that would definitely be a goal for him. But maybe if you noticed
this, prioritize the kids’ needs and think about how this one is a more pressing need so maybe it should be his goal first.” Then I told her, because I think maybe part of the reason, this is me, I’m just making a judgment I don’t know if it’s true at all. I think that maybe the reason she didn’t assign that goal was maybe she wasn’t sure how to tell the kid how to practice it or how to do it. So I told her, if you had assigned summarizing as his goal, then here’s a way you could’ve told him he could practice summarizing while he reads to self. Then next time you checked on him here’s what you could’ve done to see if he had improved in his summarizing skills. I gave her an idea of where to go if she met with him again (check in int 3 lines 83-93).

This type of timely and consistent feedback that Mike provided Hayley occurred either immediately following her teaching, or at the very least by the end of the school day.

Not only does Mike provide timely feedback during the actual teaching, Mike also provided feedback on lesson plans submitted by his interns. Interns utilized Taskstream, an online lesson planning resource, to write and share their lessons with their mentor and PDA. While Mike consistently read his interns’ plans, he did not typically make comments online. Rather, he preferred to speak with his intern in person:

When I go on Taskstream, I usually read it, and I usually talk to them in person about it. I don’t really use the comment feature a lot because it’s hard for me to know if they’ve read my comments in the time that I want to know that they’ve read them. If I say it to them face to face then I know they’ve heard me. Also, I’ve had many encounters over the years where I’ve written things and they don’t
come across the way I would’ve said them in real life. So I don’t want them to think I’m being mean or anything. If I say it to them, I can say it in a way that’s like, “Hey what can we do to make this better for the kids” instead of “Hey is this really what’s best for kids?” I just like face to face better than I like written out. If it’s a little thing I’ll leave a comment on a lesson, it’s no big deal, but most of the time I like to go through the lesson in person and talk about it (Int. 4 lines 42-50).

Mike recounted how his mentoring practice played out with his first intern as he struggled with the quality of her lesson plans:

I’d talk to her and say, “You know in the beginning of your lesson you mentioned this. Did you think about where these materials are going to come from? Have you thought about prepping those materials ahead of time?” I’d say that because in her last lesson or two lessons, she hadn’t. In her future lessons, she would not have included a plan for fixing that problem so I kind of talked her through all the things I thought she could do put in her best effort (Int. 4 lines 50-55).

In this illustration, Mike’s belief about developing relationships intertwined with providing feedback to his intern. Mike relied on the relationship he had developed with his intern to feel comfortable to question his intern and push her to complete lesson plans he felt she was capable of doing:

I think part of what let me do that was the rapport. She didn’t become as defensive as she might have because we had a good working relationship, even though she didn’t always put her best effort in, in my opinion. That didn’t have anything to do with how we got along as people. I think that kind of helped.

Eventually she got to the point where she realized she could either put the front
effort in and then avoid the having to rework it with me later as much, or she
could do a basic job and then I was just going to have her redo it anyway because
I needed it to be good enough for the kids. Eventually she got to that point and I
think part of that was providing her consistent feedback throughout the process
and asking her a lot of questions about what she was doing and thinking when she
was making these plans. I’m not going to pick one of her random lessons and tear
it apart. It’s every lesson she presents has to be at a certain level so we
consistently talk about them so she knows that’s the level I expect. Eventually she
got there (Int. 4 lines 55-70).

Because of Mike’s personal experience as a student teacher and what he had
learned from his own experiences as a mentor, providing feedback to his intern was an
important belief. He also reflected about his growth in how he provided feedback as he
has gained experience with the PDS as compared to working with traditional student
teachers:

I just think that because I have thought things through really well or maybe done
research on it or read like 50 blogs about something that I already know the
answer and so why wouldn’t I just tell someone the answer to things? Sometimes
that doesn’t fit within inquiry and the whole idea behind that and so sometimes
directing people to find the answers for themselves can be more valuable than just
telling them the answer. The value in just telling them is it saves them a lot of
time. I remember the first year or two thinking more about how I could get the
interns to find out things for themselves than to just tell them this is what or how
you should do things and I think especially with Katelyn I was more in that mode
probably partially because I was coming off of regular student-teachers. They don’t have the time to inquire the way that our interns do because they are expected to start teaching a new subject every week and how could they take the time to really think about their teaching when they are under those kind of “from above” guidelines (Int. 2 lines 314-331).

When prompted to describe how he has changed as a mentor over time, Mike elaborated about his growth in this area:

I could say that giving feedback has developed over time. It’s probably just my experience working with pre-service teachers period is how I give feedback and what I present to interns as feedback. I think when I first started even with student teachers, I think my feedback was probably more along the lines of here are the things you took wrong and here is what you can probably try to fix those things and I definitely have recognized over time that I don’t really know that’s the best way to get feedback and so now I really try to focus more on, and this is partially because I have heard people in the PDS talk about it and my own interns do it to me and during the first semester, talking about some things that I have observed during their lesson and what do you think that means and now let’s maybe try to make some judgments out of the observations and see where we can go from there and so instead of saying to Katelyn, “See that lesson really didn’t go as well as it could have,” I might now have said something like here are some things I noticed in your lesson: you had some kids up out of their seats walking around instead of sitting on the carpet like you asked them to, or something like that what do you
think we could do next time?” So just the way that I present feedback I think has
definitely developed. I hope has improved over the time (Int. 2 lines 341-356).

These illustrations may deepen the understanding of what is considered timely
and consistent feedback because these examples happened in the real-time of teaching.
They did not take place during a post-observation conference. Also, Mike reflected about
how he has developed in his ability to provide feedback because of his experiences with
year-long student teachers. Additionally, Mike would not have been able to provide this
type of feedback to Hayley had he not been present and attentive in the classroom during
this example. Compared to his experiences with traditional student teachers, Mike was
not pressed for time when providing feedback. He has adapted how he provided feedback
because there was time to process and reflect.

4) I believe it is important to co-teach with the intern. Mike believed interns
will have decades to solo teach, but only one where they have someone to help them
learn as they do it and be a support for them. His interns had opportunities to teach alone
during the year, as he attended district committee meetings during the day, but he felt it
was important to be teaching with his interns:

I think it’s really important to spend time, not just a little time, but like 90% of the
teaching should be co-teaching. They’ll have 35-plus years to teach solo, to be in
a room alone with kids or at least probably in a room where they’re the only
teacher. This is their one year to teach with someone else and have someone there
for safety and help along the way and all the benefits that come along with co-
teaching so why not take advantage of it the one year as much as possible (Int. 3
lines 179-184).
Mike did not begin the co-teaching process right away. He preferred his interns to have a lot of observational time in the classroom. “I really like for my interns to do a lot of observation before they get too involved,” (Check in Int. 1 lines 65-66). Each year, Mike’s interns spend most of the fall semester focused on observing the students and him. While his goal is for his interns to observe, he tried to include them in speaking roles:

I do it to them in the early part of the year because I try to involve them. I kind of believe they need opportunities to be a speaker in front of the kids before they’re expected to teach in front of the kids. I will often even if we plan it initially I will often be talking to the kids when I’m the lead teacher and I’ll say, “Miss T. what do you think about that?” or “Did I forget anything Miss T.?” just to give them a chance to say something in front of the kids (check in Int. 2 lines 39-44).

Mike identified December as the time of year when his interns begin to get involved with classroom teaching. He elaborated about what co-teaching looks like in his classroom:

It’s not as common that we do the co-teaching model where we’re both in front of the class providing [instruction] at the same time. Usually I think that’s just because [of a lack of] content knowledge and confidence of teaching that way for my interns. I might teach that way if I taught with the learning enrichment teacher or the learning support teacher that felt more comfortable doing that. I have found that my interns usually are more comfortable when, this might not be true it just seems to be what I notice, when they get to support me or when I support them, and less likely to be open to us teaching lessons together at the same time in a finishing each other’s sentences kind of way (Check in Int. 2 lines 134-141).
This belief coincides with the previous belief about spending time on the mentoring process. However, Mike was not simply “present” in his classroom by sitting as his desk and completing other work. He was actively engaged in lessons through co-teaching. Mike believed in this mentoring practice prior to mentoring in the PDS, but he credited his professional development opportunities within the PDS to reinforcing and naming the practice for him:

I have always had my personal beliefs about what mentoring should look like. When I started hearing about co-teaching through the PDS, a lot of it lined up with what I already believed. I kind of already had a feeling with myself about what it should look like when two teachers are working together. I didn’t know that you’d call all those different ways or different models of co-teaching necessarily until I learned about it at the intern Jumpstart times. I haven’t taken a class in co-teaching or anything but I have been exposed to it through the Jumpstarts and things like that. I kind of always believed that there should be different levels of it, different types of it that can go on and that mentors should be constantly involved in what’s going on in some aspect of the day. Even if it were a time where I was jumping in and helping with the tables and giving my two cents about stuff, I’d still be present and collecting data or something, at least, on the lowest level of my involvement (Check in Int. 2 lines 55-66).

Belief illustrated in practice. Visually, the following photographs illustrate what co-teaching can look like within Mike’s classroom:
The most commonly observed co-teaching model that occurred in Mike’s classroom was the One Teach, One Guide (Badiali and Titus, 2010). One example of this occurred during a writing lesson Hayley was teaching:

The kids I was observing there at the carpet and talking to, when I asked, “What is your thesis statement?” they were saying things like, “Who were the Egyptians?” and that’s not a thesis statement. A lot of kids were trying to use a question that might be a chapter title as their thesis statement. Part of the reason that I jumped
in and said that to Hayley at that moment was because I’m not sure Hayley, or any of my interns necessarily, always feel comfortable to change their lesson plan midstream or to make such a drastic kind of intervention because it wasn’t in their plan or something. So I thought that would be the best way to handle the problem that kind of arose in the moment that we didn’t expect to happen, but I didn’t feel she would’ve felt comfortable making that change right then (Check in Int. 2 lines 71-74; 93-98).

In another example of Alternative co-teaching, Mike worked with small groups of students in order to target the similar needs they shared while Hayley conducted reading conferences with individual students.

This week we were trying out her doing the reading conferences independently without me kind of sitting there, hovering over her. In the past she has observed me do reading conferences a lot and then we tried about a week and a half-two weeks of her leading the reading conferences while I sat with her and the student and could chime in and kind of help and answer questions about the conference immediately following the conference. But she wanted the chance to do the conference independently and I thought I was a good opportunity because it also freed me up to do kind of this review group. I notice a need that almost every kid in my class had related to citing evidence to support inferences so I was also taking this as an opportunity to meet with four group in two days which is something I don’t always get to do but it was nice that she was here to do some conferences so we’re kind of doubling up on our time. I thought it would be a good chance since she’s seen me do it, we’ve done it together and so forth (Check
The next example provides an illustration of Mike’s planning process for co-teaching. This was a practice that he has enacted with each of his interns. Because he did not believe in preservice teachers “taking over” any particular subject, he strategically planned out the months of the year with his intern in order to visually see the opportunities for his interns to complete the cycle of: observe, teach, observe again, teach again in each of the subject areas.

I kind of do a cyclical thing. I don’t really believe that the interns take over math in November and then just teach math for rest of the year. For me, it’s more like if they have watched me teach math for several months, then they might teach math for a week, and then maybe I will teach math for a week again because after they have taught it it’s different to watch me teach and then maybe they will teach it again for two weeks or something. It’s not just now you are the math teacher and I am going to watch you teach. Or even now we are co-teaching math, sometimes it’s just we are co-teaching math and then sometimes it’s just I am teaching math and you are watching me teach (Int. 2 lines 302-310).

In order to accomplish his goal of enacting these cycles with his intern, Mike was very purposeful in planning the cycles out ahead of time:

We sit down in November, my intern and I, and I started this with Katelyn and I have done ever since. We sit down in November and we make a list of their comfort level with the different parts of our day. We kind of rank them, how you feel about teaching these different things that happen during the day and then we sit down with the schedule from January to June and we look at what process
could we go through to get you to a point where you do have a good week or two weeks of being a lead planner and the lead teacher. My interns have all had the opportunity to have that two weeks where they have you know “taught” the whole day. Now I am always present- that’s another belief that I have about this that I have had since day one. I don’t personally believe the mentors should leave the room to go do things in the faculty lounge. I don’t personally believe that pre-service teachers need a lot of solo teaching time to be honest with you. I think they have 35 years to do that and they only have one year to work with a mentor, that’s something I have always done (Int. 2 lines 369-382).

Utilizing co-teaching in his mentoring practice was crucial for Mike. It required thoughtful planning on his part to ensure his interns had opportunities to engage in the observe, teach, observe again, teach again cycles.

5) **I believe effective mentoring includes understanding that different people have different skill sets, attributes, learning and teaching styles, and gifts than others and themselves.** Mike believed being open to tapping into his intern's uniqueness is important, although, according to him, it was also one of the more challenging beliefs for him to enact:

I feel like I put in a lot of thought and work into everything I do and I try to only do things that I think are the best things. I might think they’re the best things but some other people might not think they’re the best things and I do understand that. But I think that the reason I do all the things that I do is because I’ve done the research and figured out that I should do them because they are at least in theory, the best things. Sometimes, it is, admittedly, difficult for me to say, “Let’s
not do the thing that I’ve researched and instead do some other random thing that you’ve come up with,” but I do recognize the value in that so I do try to do that. But it is a challenge sometimes (Int. 3 lines 116-124).

**Belief illustrated in practice.** While Mike described this belief as one of the more challenging beliefs for him to enact, he elaborated and described how it can be difficult to let someone else teach content in his classroom:

When you don’t feel like an intern is doing quite what you would hope would be happening. I hate to say “good enough,” that’s not what I’m thinking it is, but sometimes I know that if I had taught a lesson, it would’ve gone better and so you have to give that up sometimes. I feel like you’re making a sacrifice sometimes for the kids in your class for the sake of your intern’s learning and that can be hard sometimes. If they read a book aloud to the class and they missed so many opportunities to get the kids thinking, that’s hard to sit and watch sometimes, that’s one of the hardest things. But you just make that sacrifice for the sake of the intern’s learning. It’s not like it’s going to kill the kids or anything, but it is hard to see missed opportunities and missed teachable moments and stuff like that. My first ten years of kids probably had that happen to them with me being the teacher, but now it’s harder for me to watch, so that’s tough. (Int. 3 lines 311-321).

Mike’s description was a general one without mention of specific lessons or interns. One way Mike’s practice reflected his belief was through his approach to giving feedback differently with different interns. His interns had different learning styles and he learned to differentiate his feedback to meet their needs:
Stacey, you know, I needed to say things to her in a way that would make her not cry after school and [with] Emily, it really didn’t matter. I could say things as uncouth as I needed to say them and she would get it and be okay with it. So individuals have needed to have softer hands than others when it came to delivering feedback, I guess, but that’s been more because of their personalities and me developing every time (Int. 2 lines 336-341).

6) I believe it is important for the mentor to learn from their intern.

Previously, Mike described that mentors sometimes “put more in” than they immediately “get out”. There does come a time when a mentor’s hard work pays off through what a mentor can learn from their intern:

I think it’s really important for the mentor to learn from their intern because for me, all the time you put into mentoring, well this is where that kind of pays off. It helps me feel better about all the time and work I put into her, not just because I get to feel good because I helped another teacher become a teacher, but also because I’m getting something out of it, too. I’m hearing about things they’re studying in methods or I’m getting to listen to another brain in my room think about how to tackle problems or ideas of how we could teach things or different things like that. If think if you’re a mentor and you’re not tapping into the potential that is there, then you’re missing an opportunity. And also, it’s just nice to get something in return for your efforts (Int. 3 lines 186-194).

In addition to learning from his intern, it is interesting to note that Mike also spoke about learning from his PDA. While the PDA is not specifically named in his belief, he did describe his PDAs as resources he sought after as a mentor:
I felt like when Dan was my PDA especially I felt like I wanted to tap into him as a resource for myself and since he was in there watching me teach so much why not ask for his feedback? I would often seek feedback when Dan was around. I didn’t do that as much with Joan and I definitely did not do that much with Jessica because I was definitely new to the whole thing. Even with Joan and now with Iris who was Justine’s PDA and is my current intern’s PDA, I definitely have started to ask them their thoughts and kind of use them as a resource for my own teaching. I mean they are going to be in here as much as they are, and they see me teach, they must have thoughts about it. So why not figure out what their thoughts are because these are people that have a wealth of experience that should be drawn from (Int. 2 lines 266-275).

When reflecting about the different interns he worked with over time, Mike was able to share about different practices he used in his teaching that he learned from working with his interns.

**Belief illustrated in practice.** Hayley, Mike’s most current intern, introduced interactive reading notebooks to his fourth grade classroom as part of her inquiry project. Mike had never used interactive reading notebooks in his literacy instruction prior to this, however he used a similar practice in math as a result of working with a former intern:

I’ve used them in math before so I’ve had interactive math notebooks and that was actually a product of one of my intern’s inquiries from a couple of years ago. I have been intrigued by the interactive reading notebooks and I think I mentioned sometime last semester to Hayley as something I was interested in trying out and she kind of kept that on her list of possible things and then that’s what she decided
to go with so it’s been interesting for me to see how they work this year. I am planning to implement a little differently next year, but still have them (Check in Int. 1 lines 37-43).

For Mike, it was not simply about having interns introduce a new practice in his classroom on their own and he continued it. He also reflected about working together with his interns to try new ideas in their teaching:

I was able to spend more time working together with them on pedagogy and how we are going to do these things? What methods we are going to use? And even [being] willing to take more risks with them in my own teaching because with Justine last year we introduced this whole new mentor sentence thing. I don’t know, if I hadn’t had an intern then maybe I would not have taken that on, but having another person that I grew to respect the opinion of, I could bounce ideas off of, and could give me their thoughts on something definitely made it a task that I was going to take on (Int. 2 lines 195-202).

Three teaching practices that Mike used in his classroom and will continue to use as a result of learning from and working with interns include: interactive math notebooks, interactive reading notebooks, and mentor sentences.

7) I believe it is important for the mentor to try to constantly keep in mind that they are modeling behaviors for their intern just like they are for their students. Mike reflected that some examples of these behaviors include the mentor’s own planning process, how they deal with management of students, parent communication, their own professional growth, maintaining composure in front of students, and maintaining professionalism with colleagues.
Sometimes it’s hard because you do build that personal relationship with the intern a little bit, so sometimes it would be a little easier to slip into complaining about a parent or even a colleague. Say there’s only two weeks left of school, let’s phone it in, those kinds of things. You can’t do that. You have an intern. You need to make sure they’re seeing you as a model teacher even when you don’t want to be one. The reality is every teacher has their moments. There are times when a parent ticked me off and I’ll go home and tell my wife all about it, but I need to remember my intern is not a person to rant to. I think it’s important to remember that (Int. 3 lines 197-204).

**Belief illustrated in practice.** Mike’s belief of modeling these behaviors is connected to preventing his interns from getting “burnt out” from teaching in the future. He identified negative parent and administration interactions as top causes for teachers leaving the profession and he described what he modeled in his practice to prevent those negative experiences:

I think one of the things that people get really sick of, I have a lot of friends across the country that teach that I’ve met through blogging and stuff and I think one of the most common things I hear from them are either parent interactions that are burning them out or administration interactions that are burning them out. So to me, the way that I would handle both of those things, what I try to model for my interns on the administration side is basically a “cover yourself” mentality of document, document, document. Get it in writing, always have yourself covered so there doesn’t have to be any kind of interaction with an administrator that you can’t support yourself in. Also I hope I model just positive personality. Coming
into the job with a good mentality and interacting with people in a friendly way will help them get along with their administrator as well. I know that it doesn’t matter necessarily what your relationship is with an administrator, parents say crazy things, crazy things occur in a classroom. If you have watched out for yourself you don’t have to worry about those negative administration things for the most part and it’s kind of similar with parents. I try to have a very good relationship with my kids’ parents because you never know which kid it’s going to be that has a parent that has an issue one day and hopefully they’ve had so many positive interactions with me that if one negative thing were to come up with them, they would give it a second thought before they jumped to conclusions which is what I hear a lot of happening. Which I understand, when it’s your kid you are going to get in the fighting stance if something comes up with your kid. But I think most of my parents, if a kid came home and said “Mr. Cain was not fair to me in some way today” I think that most of my parents would say “let me see what he says about that,” before they would say, “oh that Mr. Cain he’s always doing things”. One of the things I do for that is on Friday afternoons, I usually sit down and I email two parents a week off my list with something positive. My kids’ parents hear from me a couple times a year and the whole point of the email is just to brag on them and I think that goes a long way. I think my interns seeing me do that kind of thing is a good model for building a good relationship with parents. Also just keeping parents in the loop, have consistent parent emails about everything else going on in the day, I have an open door policy, and I think I model how to keep parent and administration relationships
good. I think those are two of the main things that burn people out (Int. 3 lines 256-288).

As described previously, Mike was strategic in how he planned for the year with his intern. He hoped his interns would develop a value for planning, if they did not have one already. “I really hope they leave here feeling and understanding how important planning is and I say that because I believe we owe it to our kids to be well planned and well prepped,” (Int 3 lines 238-240). The Googledoc that Mike and his intern created in December to map out the remainder of the school year was another example of how Mike modeled a planning behavior for his interns. Mike attributed this belief to have grown out of his first experience as a mentor when he struggled with his first intern’s level of motivation not meeting his level of expectation:

In fact, every year I still kind of think back to that year. I have started the year off now when I’m in that “get to know you” phase with my intern, I make it really clear my expectations for something I want. Also I definitely have found myself, you know with that nametag thing, I have modeled exactly how I want it to be. Not covering the pencil well, lining it up with the bottom, lay down flat without ridges in it. I try not to make a big deal about it. I don’t want my intern to think I’m OCD about this stuff, but it does need to look decent so I’m clear about what I want it to look like. I definitely think that has developed more (Int. 4 lines 75-83).

In addition to modeling his expectations for tasks that need to be completed, Mike also modeled his expectations for lessons:
I think I do a better job of modeling what I want lesson plans to look like. What components of a lesson plan I expect to be in place. My interns usually, we start planning together right at the beginning of the year, so we do our check-ins, and we do that on the day that I plan which is usually Thursday. After we do the check-in we sit down and they sit down with me while I plan and then usually we get to the point where we’re planning together. I didn’t necessarily do that my first year. I had had several student teachers and I was still in the mode of thinking of PDS as student teaching rather than how I am now. Now it’s much better because they see from the very beginning, this is how I do things and it seems to work. I think they pick up on that. My first intern had not had the opportunity to sit down with me every single week and plan; definitely she had not had that. And that’s something I started doing with my second intern, actually because the plans for my first intern were so lacking consistently that I wanted to make sure that didn’t happen again. I wanted to make sure from the very beginning that the intern knew that planning is very important to me. I’m a big believer that it’s our duty to plan. I make that really well known to my interns now (Int. 4 lines 83-97).

Modeling positive parent and administration interactions, as well as modeling his expectations for classroom tasks completion and lesson plans are four behaviors that can be illustrated from Mike’s practice. While he believed in modeling other professional behaviors, these four examples were ones discussed by Mike.

**Conclusion**
This chapter was intended to introduce Mike as a teacher and mentor by describing his personal and professional experiences as well as his mentoring beliefs and practices. Understanding Mike’s personal experiences growing up and teaching in the south, teaching in Sunshine Valley, as well as his seven beliefs regarding mentoring can be helpful for larger audiences of mentors.
Chapter 6
Amy Miller: Fourth Grade Mentor

Introduction

Amy Miller is a fourth grade teacher in the Sunshine Valley School District. She began her teaching career in Sunshine Valley as a kindergarten teacher in 2007. She recently completed her eighth year of teaching. Amy participated as an intern in the Professional Development School program for her undergraduate student teaching experience at Central State. She is currently teaching and mentoring in the same district where she completed her internship.

Amy welcomed her first intern in 2009-2010. Although she did not have three years of teaching experience or tenure, Amy received principal approval to mentor a PDS intern. She was approached by the PDS and asked to be a mentor the summer before the school year began. Another mentor in her building had become pregnant and could not fulfill her commitment to be a mentor.

Amy is the youngest and least experienced teacher in this study although she is the only one who is a National Board Certified teacher. The fact that she participated as a PDS intern herself may communicate something about who she is as a teacher and mentor. Like the previous mentors, Amy reflected upon her experiences as a student and teacher.

Amy as a student

Amy’s background story began as a third grade student when she recounted her first experience with a student teacher:
I’m going to start back in third grade. I was in third grade and my teacher was Mrs. Smith. She was kind of a mean and cranky lady, although I loved her a lot but I knew she was mean and cranky. I think I liked her because she liked me. But she had a student teacher that I remember so vividly. It’s weird that it’s been so long and I still remember her and her name is Miss Melillo. I remember what a big deal it was for her to come into our classroom. My perceptions about her teaching were I remember thinking that she was a better teacher than Mrs. Smith and being excited that there was someone new and not as mean and cranky. Someone who had, you know, the excitement. So that’s kind of my vision of student teachers and what it was like and what they brought to the classroom (Int. 1 lines 1-10).

Amy reflected that in eleventh grade, she had to take the Myers-Briggs and Strong interest inventory as a graduation requirement from high school. “I would say now that I always wanted to be a teacher, but I don’t think I knew that I always wanted to be a teacher until I took that test,” (Int. 1 lines 14-15). The test confirmed for Amy that teaching would be her future. Her mother also served as an influential individual in the teaching profession. Amy’s mother was a teacher and had a variety of experiences as both a teacher and eventually a guidance counselor. Although her mother did not work in Amy’s school at this time, her mother proved to be an insider to the career and had many conversations with Amy about what it meant to be a teacher:

We had a lot of conversations about what it meant to be a teacher. I remember just watching the relationships that she had. She was very very close to the people in Ridgeway [Middle School]. Even as a kid it helped me to understand the
relationships that teachers have and what it means to rely on each other, and the kinds of problems they would have. The building wouldn’t have toilet paper, so they would all bring toilet paper from home so the kids could have toilet paper. All sorts of food fights. I remember [when I visited one day], I was in the cafeteria and there was a food fight. Chocolate milk used to come in bags and you had to poke it with a straw and kids would throw the bags of chocolate milk and it would create a chocolate milk bomb. So Ridgeway was a really interesting place. There were diabetic kids in the school and the nurse had to keep food in the building to feed the kids who were diabetic because they needed to eat. Those conversations were always happening. And at that same time a lot of the years that my mom worked in Ridgeway she would bring kids home with her, often, because if they couldn’t get home or there was no one home she would bring them home with her. I remember just a lot about watching her go through that and what it meant to be part of a team (Int. 1 lines 23; 39-55).

Amy’s observations of her mother in the educational system influenced Amy’s personal understanding of what it meant to be a teacher working in a school. Additionally, Amy’s mother’s knowledge as a guidance counselor proved to be helpful when it came time to select a college to attend. “We picked Central State because of its reputation for producing strong teachers. Part of that was PDS. We had known when I went to Central State that PDS was probably just starting,” (Int. 1 lines 80-82). Amy’s mother was in close contact with admissions counselors at many different universities, so she was able to obtain information about the Professional Development School from her relationships with them.
Amy as a PDS intern

During Amy’s spring semester of her junior year at Central State, she decided to study abroad in Spain. Prior to studying abroad, she remembered applying to be a part of the Professional Development School, although not in a very purposeful way:

I had forgotten about PDS, the Professional Development School, so I don’t know how I found out. I don’t remember how I decided to apply, but I remember it being very passive like, “Oh, I might as well throw my name in the hat. I don’t really know what I’m getting myself into.” So I threw my name in the hat. This sounds like a good program, it definitely sounds better than doing it for part of the year and if I want to be a good teacher and I want all those relationships and things I saw my mom got to do then I’ve got to work at this (Int 1 lines 94-105).

While still studying abroad in Spain, Amy learned through email she had been accepted to be a PDS intern for the 2006-2007 school year. However, she also quickly learned that while she was overseas, her fellow interns who were at Central State were busy meeting the potential mentors and participating in the intern-mentor matching process:

I realized through the emails that interns had the opportunity to go and visit. Once they had been selected for the program, they had gotten to go to the schools and visit. They had been in the school where the interviews were held, they knew where all of these schools were, and they were starting to become acquainted with the school district. I had missed that whole part of it. I hadn’t met these people who were running the interviews, they were nothing more than a voice, or some words on a page. Back then I didn’t even have a laptop. In order to use the
computer I went to the Internet Café. It wasn’t this constant thing that I was thinking about, so I was starting to feel nervous, “What did I get myself into?”. I also realized that I hadn’t been part of intern selection. There had been a social where the mentors and the interns who were assigned to a certain school had met and I had missed that social because I was in Spain and that all happened. All of a sudden, out of nowhere to me, I get an email from my mentor, who was Karen Prescott. (Int. 1 lines 121-135).

Amy was not able to meet and visit her mentor at Pleasant Woods Elementary until she returned from Spain. The summer before the school year started, Amy made a trip to Central State and was able to coordinate meeting her mentor for the first time:

I remember I had dressed all up professional, as professional as you can get in Sunshine Valley in the summer. I expected that for the next year I was going to be some sort of, I keep saying a professional, but something more, something other than what I think of as a teacher now as, something more developed I’m searching for the right words, or something more refined something more even fake might be the word. I’ve learned since then that a lot of teaching is about having authentic relationships, but I was trying to be something I wasn’t at that point. I realize that now; I don’t think I realized that then. I was taking it so seriously that I was trying to be the professional that I thought teaching was, but I didn’t quite understand which I thought had something to do with how you dress which now I realize it doesn’t (Int. 1 lines 145-157).

Amy learned over the summer that she and Karen would be teaching first grade together for the 2006-2007 school year. In addition to having a mentor, Amy worked with
Josh, her supervisor or Professional Development Associate (PDA). During this particular school year, Josh was only assigned to one school, Pleasant Woods Elementary. He was able to be at the building all day, every day. Amy reflected about the significance of the close-knit triad:

The great thing about Josh being my PDA that year and me being at Pleasant Woods was there was ten of us [interns] at that building, and Josh was there all day long. Josh didn’t have other buildings to travel to; all of the people that he supervised were in the building. He showed up every day at 8:00am and left every day like a teacher would, so I got to see him every day. I had an immense amount of support. Most student teachers when something happens you have to send an email and wait until that person can get to you and I could literally walk out the door and shout down the hallway and find Josh if I thought that I needed him. I think the mentors, I realize now, probably received that same support because he was there all the time. The kids in the class also got to know him, so there really was a real sense of community among my mentor, my PDA, myself, and our students (Int. 1 lines 162-172).

The feeling of community that Amy experienced was not solely confined to her triad relationship with her mentor and PDA. She also felt closely connected in the classroom to her mentor and the para-professional who had worked together for years:

I remember never feeling like I was the outsider. That was really impressive that these two people, and they were friends outside of school, would welcome someone that was from such a different walk of life. I mean I was at least 30 years younger than both of them and yet we always had something to talk about. And it
wasn’t always about the kids. It was about what we were doing on the weekend and what books we were reading. I remember being shocked and that made me realize that what was happening at Ridgeway for my mom. It wasn’t necessarily always about the kids and that was important. Feeling close to people even if there wasn’t a reason to be close and feeling close to a lot of people (Int 1 lines 180-188).

Amy’s mentor, Karen, was a veteran teacher in the Sunshine Valley School District. Not only did Karen mentor Amy that year, but she was also the assigned mentor for a new teacher in the building, Jenny, who was completing new teacher induction, and also happened to be a former intern. At times, Karen mentored both Amy and Jenny at the same time:

We would sit down and talk about stuff all at the same time. I was getting it from Jenny’s point of view as a new teacher, and I was getting it from Karen’s point of view as an experienced teacher and then there was me who it was all new to (Int. 1 lines 192-195).

In addition to time spent with Karen and Jenny, Amy also witnessed how Karen worked with fellow colleagues:

She had a good friend who taught next to her for years named Diane. She also taught first grade with her and they would co-plan. Every week they would sit down at a planning time and Jenny and I would also join them because we were being mentored. Diane also had an intern. Diane and Karen put into place for me where you sit and plan as a group and we would all have our planning books open and everyone was throwing out ideas all the time. I realize now I was a little
spoiled with all these people who wanted to collaborate and would make the time to be together (Int. 1 lines 214-221).

Many other teachers in the primary division mentored interns. Not only was collaboration modeled between Karen and her close friend, Diane, but the primary division as a whole modeled collaboration for all of the interns:

They [the teachers] also had division meetings. They would get together once a week to talk about things that were happening in first and second grade together and the people who were teaching on that team at the time had all been there for a really long time. Karen and Diane had been teaching together for a long time, but a lot of the other teachers had all been there together. They knew each other really well and they weren’t scared to share ideas. So there was a lot of back and forth, a lot of sharing that would happen that I would see at the time. And that modeled for the interns that were there. We all started doing that too because a lot of people on that division had interns, so we would sit at those division meetings together. When we were more responsible for planning, we would meet after school sometimes without our mentors because we were all teaching the same things and doing the same things (Int. 1 lines 225-233; 238-241).

**Amy as a classroom teacher**

After completing her year-long internship in the PDS program, Amy was hired by the same district, Sunshine Valley School District to teach kindergarten, but in a different elementary school than the one in which she had interned. As a new teacher in the district, she was assigned a mentor who was a fellow kindergarten teacher, Shelley:
I was teaching a new grade level, kindergarten this time, so a lot of it felt new and overwhelming even though I had what we had been told was a whole year of experience, so you know what you’re doing, but it didn’t feel like that. Everything felt new and so Shelley was a wonderful mentor. The first day I got the job she said, “Don’t worry about it I have all of your print shop orders. I have the first month of school planned. You can use what I have or you can do your own stuff. My feelings won’t be hurt,” but she walked in and plopped down a whole month of work on my table like, “I got you covered,” (Int. 1 lines 295-303).

Amy raved about her experiences working with Shelley as a new teacher. The only negative she shared concerned her classroom’s physical location in the school compared to Shelley’s room. The classrooms were not close to one another:

I couldn’t just pop my head through the door if I needed help like when I was an intern and needed help. I couldn’t just shout for Josh the way I could when I was an intern, because I was surrounded by all these other teachers who were teaching in this pod with me, but none of them were teaching Kindergarten. They were all teaching first and second grade. So I kind of kept to myself quietly that year because I didn’t have a lot to interact with them about. There was no reason for me to ask to collaborate with them or ask what they were doing because we were teaching different grade levels. So I spent a lot of time running up and down the hallway to see Shelley (Int. 1 lines 315-323).

As a first year teacher in the district, Amy began to realize how her role as a teacher was different from her role as an intern. Some experiences she had as an intern, like the collaboration and being able to receive support so quickly, did not necessarily
happen as a first year teacher. In addition to that, she began to develop a picture of the
district on a larger scale because she had experiences in two different elementary
buildings. She learned that veteran teachers in her new school had existing relationships
with teachers from the elementary school where she was an intern:

Shelley always prepared and gave me what she was doing but we didn’t go back
and forth and sit with our plan books and plan together. We would share ideas but
we weren’t actually actively planning together the way we had the year before.
Although whenever I asked Shelley to make time or that I needed help she always
gave it to me. She was always in on the weekends so even when I thought I didn’t
need her, she would always magically appear. There was also another
Kindergarten teacher that year who had been teaching Kindergarten for something
like 30 years, a really long time. She had actually taught with Iris [a teacher from
Pleasant Woods] originally, so I started to put together these connections across
the district of how people knew each other. I started to really understand that
education is a business of relationships and knowing people and using whatever
you can as a resource more often than knowledge. Knowledge of people,
knowledge of how to get things, knowledge of who best knows what and how can
you use what they know to teach your kids. Making connections with people. I
learned that a lot from the veteran Kindergarten teacher when she would be
talking to Shelley or I, she was a lot of the times saying, “Well have you asked the
ESL teacher? Have you emailed this person at this other building?” She had been
around a really long time so she had known a lot of those people (Int 1 lines 333-348).
As a new teacher, Amy also received support from the district’s Curriculum Support Teachers (CST). She worked with two CSTs during her first year of teaching. One CST worked on literacy and social studies with her, and another supported Amy in science and math. Carrie, her science and math CST often visited her classroom while she was teaching. This was significant for Amy because it was the first time she experienced a new kind of co-teaching model:

I had told Carrie, “Come in anytime,” and she would. She would just come in and teach with me. She would sit down on the carpet in the middle of a lesson and interject things which was the first time I had experienced that type of co-teaching model. When I had been an intern, we would do a lot of stations, you teach one group, I’ll teach the other, then we’ll switch. Carrie was the first person who really did the back and forth teaching with me (Int. 1 lines 372-377).

After Amy’s first year of teaching in Kindergarten, she was moved to first grade in the same elementary school. Now all of the teachers who had physically been in close proximity to her classroom during her first year of teaching were now her teaching colleagues. She was no longer assigned an official mentor by the district, but Amy still worked closely with the more veteran first grade teachers:

There were two other first grade teachers. They were both phenomenal that even though they weren’t being paid to do it, even though there wasn’t an expectation, they were always coming and asking, “What do you need? What would help you the most?” We would often, not every week, not weekly planning, but we would sit down in chunks. The next month or the next holidays coming up, or look at this math unit and kind of talk through the ideas (Int. 1 lines 391-397).
Similar to her experiences as an intern at Pleasant Woods Elementary, Amy described not only her relationships with her first grade colleagues, but also the relationships of the larger primary division:

We would have division meetings once a week where we would get together. The other teachers had been teaching together a long time. I had realized, I keep saying that, and I’m realizing that your familiarity with someone and your comfort level is something that I keep noticing about the people that I talk about. They had a really good system about how they ran things and how they got things done. Without ever talking about it or without me ever seeing them talk about it, they had kind of devised these roles to help each other and it seemed as if each person had gotten the thing that they were best suited for. From where I was sitting, it was amazing in how they were all so good at what they were doing and they did it for each other without ever asking if it needed to be done (Int. 1 lines 399-404; 409-413).

**Amy as a PDS mentor**

After her second year of teaching, Amy received an intern interest form from the Professional Development School in her mailbox at school. Every year, the PDS invites all teachers, K-4 to voice their interest in mentoring an intern the following year. While Amy was very interested in being a mentor, she was not sure she had the necessary credentials to be one:

I was totally willing to do it. I had loved my experience as an intern. I so much missed that. I felt very lonely in the classroom. For so many years surrounded by
so many people, and not that I still didn’t have support, but I love that feeling of someone teaching with me (Int. 1 lines 456-459).

As previously mentioned, another mentor in Amy’s building became pregnant and was unable to fulfill her commitment to mentor the following year. With principal approval, Amy was able to welcome her first intern during the 2009-2010 school year. Amy continued to teach first grade for the next five years. At the time of this study, Amy was mentoring her sixth intern, but she had moved from teaching first grade to fourth grade. It was her first year in a new grade level.

**Amy’s effective mentoring beliefs**

When asked to reflect and communicate her beliefs about effective mentoring, Amy shared the following beliefs:

1. **It’s built on a trusting relationship. It goes beyond just teaching.**

2. **The goal of mentoring is to create teachers who are capable of solving problems and making sound decisions.**

3. **Listening to an intern and prompting reflection is more powerful than telling an intern a “right answer”**.

   **1) It’s built on a trusting relationship. It goes beyond just teaching.** Developing a trusting relationship involves multiple components including: frequent communication, building an equal partnership, and willing to be vulnerable. As Amy reflected about the origin of this particular belief about relationships, she drew upon her experience as an intern in the Professional Development School:

   I think this belief began when I was an intern. I had relationships with both my mentor and the PDAs where I felt supported in everything I brought to the
It's rooted in the belief that as teachers we bring our own experiences, lives and schemas to the classroom that affects us as teachers. I've experienced this plenty of times: being tired and realizing I wasn't giving it my best or how having a connection to what a child or family is experiencing gives me more empathy for them. By building a relationship with an intern that's based on trust you share your whole self with each other which makes you a better connected team (Email conversation 7/15/15).

In addition to naming her intern experience as a factor which contributed to this belief, she also connected this belief to the responsibility she has as a teacher to support the students in her classroom to the best of her ability:

I also think this goes back to building a connection with students and caring so much about them. I have experienced being a mentor and being disappointed when an intern doesn't rise to my expectations of how to support students best. For example, an intern should arrive on time or be prepared for a lesson. In order to work with an intern you have to trust that they will support the students to the same level as I'd hope to (Email conversation 7/15/15).

While unpacking this belief, Amy described many components she believed were necessary in building a trusting relationship with her intern. Amy believed that communication was an essential component of the relationship. She also wanted a relationship where she and her intern can be equal partners in the classroom. Finally, Amy felt you must be able to be vulnerable with one another in order to learn and grow together.
**Communication.** Amy reflected that at times the communication component of this belief can be challenging to enact for a few different reasons, including her age and time. Since beginning to mentor, Amy has been fairly close in age to the interns she worked with and when she first began mentoring, she struggled to develop relationships with them:

I am certainly a lot closer to my interns now, and I am more able to share openly about myself and I think that’s one because I have aged and so now the age gap between the interns and myself is a lot larger. When I first started mentoring they were only 2 years younger than me so I felt the need, because I was a young teacher, to maintain my professionalism to separate my personal life from my professional life. I mean once I got married and became a Mrs., parents really did start treating me differently. Other teachers, other principals, they assume that because you are Mrs. that you are older and more mature and as I realized that that was happening in my professional career, I think I became more comfortable talking about my social life with them or just things outside of school (Int 2 lines 528-538).

Amy learned over time that sharing about her personal life was important for establishing relationships with her interns. Another piece of communication is time. Even though the PDS is a year-long internship, time was still a challenge, but a necessary component for building a trusting relationship:

There’s a confusion of roles or ages and sometimes they share things that aren’t appropriate for school or sometimes they don’t share things because they think there needs to be line there. I think sometimes personalities just don’t click. I
think sometimes you never really know. It requires so much time and
communication. You could see something one way and the intern could see it
differently. Because time’s so limited, to communicate those things I think
becomes really hard (Int 3 lines 169-175).

**Equal partnership.** In addition to developing a relationship where communication
is valued, Amy elaborated that she tried to develop a trusting relationship by creating an
equal partnership between her and her intern in the classroom:

> We’re both two teachers in a classroom who are trying to teach. Who both have
> valuable knowledge. It’s hard to create that if the interns don’t see themselves that
> way so a lot of creating that starts with building them up and getting them to find
> their own strengths so they know they have something to bring to the table (Int 3
> lines 261-265).

**Vulnerability.** The final component of a trusting relationship according to Amy is
the idea of being vulnerable. “We’re both willing to be vulnerable so they know if they
[my interns] share something that is, or if I share something that feels like a weakness,
this is a place where that’s okay and the goal is just to get better,” (Int 3 lines 275-278).

When asked if she is purposeful in being vulnerable with her interns, Amy elaborated
about this component. “I think I do, not necessarily always purposefully, but I think it’s
something I’m comfortable with because I’ve always been in this situation where I’ve
had great mentors and I’ve been an intern,” (Int. 3 lines 282-284). Amy’s experience as
an intern impacted her reasoning for vulnerability as a component of a trusting
relationship.
Belief illustrated in practice. The examples that follow are illustrations of how Amy has enacted this belief in her mentoring practice.

Communication. In order to devote time to communication, a weekly check-in was a strategy Amy has utilized with some of her interns, but not all of them. A weekly check-in is a dedicated time each week, sometimes after school, before school, or during a planning period, when Amy sits down with her intern to talk about what is going well in the relationship and what concerns each might be feeling. If Amy cannot find face-to-face time with her intern for a weekly check-in, she has used a written communication log. Amy also spent time with her interns outside of school and made sure to ask about their personal lives:

I think the weekly check-in has been helpful. I’ve tried that for years and it just always came down to time. We did use it this year, but in the past we’ve always had a communication log- a place to jot down the things that you’re thinking about that we need to get to at some point, usually during weekly planning. I always try to take them out to dinner a couple of times a year and just spend some time outside of school. On Mondays asking them about their weekend and their family. Just trying to have conversations besides about school and trying to give lots of positive feedback so they do hear lots of good things and feel safe (Int. 3 lines 180-187).

During the year of this study, Amy was successful using weekly check-ins with her intern, Jamie, for two reasons. First, Jamie had some needs she shared with Amy early in the internship. Second, it was Amy’s first year as a fourth grade teacher:
Jamie and I have certainly done a better job of checking in every week than I have ever done with any other intern. I think because she was very up front in the beginning about how much she keeps inside. So I knew that and I was always cognizant of if you don’t push her to talk about things she won’t. She bottles things up. I think because I was new to a grade, I did a lot more thinking out loud, “I’m going sit here and work through all this, so sit down next to me.” It was a lot easier to brainstorm with someone because I didn’t have a set solution that had worked before. That was new and different (Int. 3 lines 38-44).

Amy recounted a particular example of a weekly check-in she had with Jamie. The following discussion concerned Jamie taking on more responsibility and building confidence:

We have said in our weekly check-ins that, “One of my wishes is that you [Jamie] would take on more of the responsibility,” and her wish is often, “I wish I had more confidence.” The beginning of the year she [Jamie] would say, “I wish I’m not stepping on your toes.” So we’ve been pretty open about it. She often doesn’t want to make decisions because she thinks that I want to make the decision and so we talk through that (Check in Int. 3 lines 20-25).

Sometimes, Amy was able to check-in with her interns after a lesson and gave her interns direct feedback about something that could have been done differently:

After lessons we often talk about what went well, what didn’t go well. Sometimes we do Stars and Wishes, “I wish I would’ve done this differently.” I have said very directly to her, “next time could you sit near other students or make sure
you’re not sitting in the same corner of the carpet that I am,” (Check in Int. 3 lines 63-66).

It has not always been easy for Amy to communicate with her interns which negatively affected her overall relationship with her intern. When reflecting upon previous interns she worked with, Amy described the challenges in her relationship with Melissa:

In the beginning, the relationship was the same as other interns, but as there became struggles you could tell she was tense around me. She couldn’t hold a conversation. There were things about her family that I would ask her and she would say, “I don’t know,” like, “What are the names of your brothers?” and her answer was “I don’t know”. Which I was reading as kind of pushing me away, later to find out that wasn’t true that there were some other things going on that I didn’t know about, but there was not that trusting relationship. She didn’t feel that relationship was there to share those things. So I backed off of those things because it became tense for me too. No one likes to be rejected in any relationship (Int. 4 lines 41-49).

Ultimately the inability to establish a trusting relationship with Melissa negatively affected the relationship that year.

*Equal partnership.* Another piece of developing a trusting relationship with her interns is to access what knowledge her interns have in order to create an equal relationship in the classroom. In order to do this, Amy described how she tried to engage her intern during planning:
I think just asking them questions and not just sitting down at the table and saying, “Okay today we’re going to teach math and this is how we’re going to do it.” Getting to the point, “Well have you seen anything?” Just asking them about what they’ve experienced and encouraging them to look, search for resources or places they can go to for information to then share. That could be visiting a classroom or what they saw in their methods classes (Int. 3 lines 270-275).

This planning developed over the course of the year-long internship. In the fall, during the months of September and October, Amy shared that planning was more her modeling and explaining to her intern. As she reflected on her previous teaching experience in first grade she elaborated:

Depending on the intern, and more so in first grade, there is a lot of "stations" co-teaching in October, November and December or "pull out" where I would coach the intern on how to work with students who need more support. The part of this that isn't really co-teaching is the ahead of time planning is mostly mine but there is some on the spot let me try this, or asking questions to think through it on the intern’s part (email conversation 1/11/16).

Amy continued to unpack this belief by describing how she has learned to be comfortable letting interns be who they are in the classroom. Amy purposefully tried not to use judgmental language when interns are sharing ideas with her. “It’s okay to be different which sounds like something you say to first graders, but can be very hard when you’re sharing a space with someone,” (Int. 3 lines 299-300).

The year of this study was a new mentoring experience for Amy because she mentored a preservice teacher while teaching a new grade level with content that was
unfamiliar. However, she was able to utilize knowledge Jamie had during a science unit about Air and Aviation. Jamie had experienced, as a student, a particular lesson about air strength during her science methods course in the fall. In April, Amy and Jamie taught the same lesson to the fourth grade students. “She had done this lesson before in her science methods class before, so she was the one who had more experience with it, I had never taught it or even seen it,” (Check in Int. 3 lines 119-120). Experiencing a school district science lesson as a student in her methods course, gave Jamie particular knowledge that Amy could utilize when they taught the lesson together in the spring. In this instance, Amy was able to have an equal partnership with Jamie because of her content knowledge.

**Vulnerability.** Amy recalled how she modeled vulnerability and learning together when mentoring her first intern, Ashley. Amy was only in her third year of teaching, and her second year of teaching first grade. The year she mentored Ashley, her assigned PDA was Margaret, a veteran primary teacher in the school district. In the following excerpt, Amy shared an example of when Amy utilized her PDA, Margaret, as an experienced teacher who could serve as a valuable resource in her classroom:

Margaret would actually come in and model reading lessons a lot, and my intern and I would be sitting there together taking it in. So in a lot of ways it felt like we were in the same place as opposed to me being much more experienced and her not. There was one particular time, Margaret had given Ashley feedback on her lesson about the kids fiddling with the table and stuff on the table. She told Ashley to not teach reading at a table, and that blew my mind. [I thought], Oh my, that’s how I have my classroom set up, that’s how everyone else in this
school has their classroom set up. So Margaret showed us how to put the chairs in the same shape as the table, but without the table, and then there is nothing for the kids to touch and they weren’t on the floor, so they weren’t rolling and doing all those things (Int. 2 lines 65-76).

During the data collection period, Amy was teaching a new grade level. As a fourth grade teacher, Amy’s PDA was again a reassigned classroom teacher from the district, but not one who had previous teaching experience in fourth grade:

Working with Colleen was different than the PDAs I had worked with in first grade because most of the PDAs I had worked with had experience with 6 and 7 year olds. Colleen had not taught fourth grade before, so I would say there was less "sharing" of experience she had before. In first grade, PDAs and I would often swap favorite read alouds or activities but that didn't happen as much. Instead in fourth grade there was more "brainstorming" and reflecting on ideas. In that sense, Colleen, Jamie and I were all on a level playing field (personal communication 1/31/16).

In another example, Amy recounted how her intern, Molly utilized systematic observations of Amy’s teaching to investigate student behavior during reading workshop. This example represents Amy’s willingness to be vulnerable, a component of building a trusting relationship:

I had taken the mentoring class, and as I was taking a mentoring class from the university, I was learning about using systematic observation. She was at the same time trying to get data for her inquiry. I had suggested systematic observation as a way to do that. I really saw the value through her inquiry project
and how that helped in my own practice realizing that what you think happens isn’t always what is happening. She had been studying time on task with kids and what was really happening. When she had gotten the information back from her inquiry, I had all these beliefs about what was happening in my classroom and her data collection had really challenged what I thought was happening, along with which she thought was happening (Int. 2 lines 195-202).

Amy was willing to allow her intern to collect data on Amy’s teaching in order to learn about the on-task behaviors of her students. The data revealed that although Amy and Molly thought the students were on-task during this time, they actually were not.

Amy believed it was important to develop a trusting relationship with her intern in which they communicate, create a sense of equal partnership in the classroom, and can be vulnerable as they learn together. Weekly check-ins, sharing knowledge, and learning alongside her intern have all been illustrations of how Amy enacted those goals with her intern.

2) The goal of mentoring is to create teachers who are capable of solving problems and making sound decisions. “If I always tell her, then she’s never going to have that ownership of the decisions,” (Check in Int. 3 lines 94-95). The development of this mentoring belief is rooted in both Amy’s experience as a classroom teacher, as well as her experience as a mentor:

Time and time again as a teacher, I’ve been confronted by situations where the solution isn't found in a book or it's a situation where I've never encountered something similar before. There are so many decisions teachers make in the moment. This belief comes from watching interns at the beginning of the year
where we would discuss options for dealing with situations and interns would defer to what's most comfortable or based on what they understand. When I would be able to play devil’s advocate or ask, "Did you consider…?" I would watch them reflect and change their answers often with the newly provided information. I realize as a mentor that I cannot possibly teach interns everything about content because I don't know what grade they will teach, or about the students they will have because I don't know where they'll end up. But I can help them learn to gather information and use that to inform their decisions (Email conversation 7/15/15).

Amy tried to best prepare her interns to be successful for entering any teaching context. However, this was a challenging belief for Amy to enact because there are often many different ways to solve a problem:

The problem in that is that it’s so subjective about what a good decision is and that could vary district by district, classroom by classroom. It incorporates so many factors on what a good decision is and so it’s such a complex task to get interns to understand, taking in the perspectives of all the different stakeholders (Int. 3 lines 124-128).

When prompted to define what she meant by “sound” decisions, Amy shared that she wanted her interns to consider both the stakeholders and the context of the situation when attempting to make the best decision. Sometimes the decision is in regards to what is best for the students; sometimes it is a financial decision about what supplies need to be purchased (Int 3).
Belief illustrated in practice. One way that Amy described how she mentored interns to make sound decisions was by playing devil’s advocate with them. Recently, Jamie decided she wanted to have an Inquiry Fair at the school so the students could showcase their individual inquiry work in their unit of study on Japan. Amy challenged Jamie by posing questions about her idea. “Who are you going to invite? If you only invite the other fourth grade classrooms, how might the parents feel? What space will we need for this event?” (Int. 3 lines 133-135). While Jamie made a decision to have an Inquiry Fair, Amy was able to probe her thinking about the logistics of the idea and its impact on all of the stakeholders. Jamie was able to consider these ideas when making the best decision she could.

In another example of supporting her intern’s decision making, Amy and Jamie were observed during a planning period while the students were at a special. Amy and Jamie discussed homework:

The beginning of the year it would’ve been me showing her what I was doing and telling her why. It’s been a slow progression and now I’m trying to push her. She’s very great about taking on the responsibility now of, “Oh we need to get homework,” but then she’ll ask, “What should it be?” So it’s me trying to ask her questions, “it could be this or it could be this” or “I have this, do you have another option?” (Check in Int. 3 lines 10-15).

As mentioned, during the time period of this study, Amy was teaching a new grade level for the first time. During an observed reading lesson, Amy explained that some of what was being observed was not typical of her mentoring as when she had been in a grade level for an extended period of time:
Reading is certainly the thing I have the hardest time giving up and I’m having a hard time giving it up because I don’t know what direction to push her in. I don’t know what even the right answer is. I don’t know what good instruction in fourth grade reading looks like. I don’t know how to make reading instruction good in fourth grade. I’m still playing with it so I’m trying to include her in that process because she’s struggling with what to do because she doesn’t have a picture of what it should look like because I don’t have a picture. We keep changing. It has evolved so much this year. I’m trying to find things I can hand her and not just pull this out of thin air and make up an idea for and teach her the answers are in books. As a teacher your job isn’t to invent things it’s to find the right pair between what you know about your kids and what resources you have (Check in Int. 1 lines 32-39; 53-56).

In the past, Amy utilized co-teaching more often in her mentoring in order to develop her interns’ abilities to make sound decisions, but struggled to co-teach during this year of study in fourth grade:

Co-teaching in first grade was different from fourth last year because in first grade when I knew the content well, I had a better understanding of how to differentiate and how different needs could be met by different teachers. In fourth grade, I struggle anticipating sticky spots, variables in pacing, and how to incorporate student interests and learning profiles. My lack of experience with the content has left me less flexible in my first year of fourth as opposed to first grade where I saw multiple paths to the same learning. Because I don’t have those multiple pathways in my mind, it was harder to support an intern in co-
teaching methods I might have used in first grade like stations, guide on the side like having the intern work with a small handful of struggling students, pre-teaching a skill to certain kids, etc. There is also the fact that first graders demand more interaction and fourth graders work more independently. In first grade I relied on having an extra set of hands where in fourth students need some "alone time" to grapple with their work. Jamie's path into being the teacher was mostly doing a lot of 1 on 1 or side work with subsets of kids in the Fall, to then her taking over the smaller routines like Morning Meeting or Calendar at the beginning of Spring, and then moving on to whole class and small differentiated group lessons where she would see everyone. This is in contrast to in first grade where in the beginning of the Fall my interns were already meeting with every student and "in charge" of certain routines where they would connect with every student consistently (email conversation 1/1/16; 1/31/16).

These illustrations demonstrate how Amy utilized questioning to support her interns in making sound decisions. By framing her questions to include thinking about stakeholders, as well as the context of the situation, Amy hoped her interns would be able to continue making sound decisions wherever they are teaching in the future. Co-teaching was a strategy she had utilized more in the past, but her struggles with learning a new grade level and mentoring at the same time made co-teaching more challenging for her. Amy is not only preparing her interns to teach in the Sunshine Valley School District, she is preparing her interns to consider factors she considers to be non-negotiable no matter where they end up teaching. Amy’s experience as a brand new fourth grade teacher required her to model this process side-by-side with Jamie.
3) Listening to an intern and prompting reflection is more powerful than telling an intern a “right answer”. Similar to Amy’s belief about supporting her interns to make sound decisions, the development of this belief was also connected to preparing her interns to be independent when they are first year teachers:

I realize that what is right for me and within the context of my school, might not be "right" where an intern ends up. Reflection allows interns to work through the information and realize all of the moving parts and learn how to prioritize and weigh those parts. If I just told an intern the right answer, they wouldn't come to understand how to make those decisions (Email conversation 7/15/15).

Additionally, Amy has experienced, “doing something someone else told me to do or told me would work, only to not be successful,” (Email conversation 7/15/15). Amy has learned that she, as an individual, brings experience and perspective to each decision she makes and these largely impact what makes something “right” for her. Experience and perspective is unique to each individual and could be vastly different for every teacher (Email conversation 7/15/15).

Amy reflected upon her growth in promoting reflection, and also acknowledged it as an area where in which she could continue to grow. “I do think I’m getting more comfortable with not giving interns a right answer. I could probably improve on actually getting them to reflect deeply. But I’m comfortable with not telling them what I think and getting them to reflect,” (Int. 3 lines 152-155). Amy identified three factors that have helped her enact this belief with her interns. 1) The impact of teaching and learning with the PDA in her classroom, 2) allowing interns’ lessons to fail, and 3) completing the National Board Certification.
The first factor that contributed to Amy enacting this belief was the impact of teaching and learning with the Professional Development Associate. Amy described the role reflection played when Margaret was her intern’s PDA:

She also would take the time, after each lesson, she would always pull the interns out right after a lesson to go talk to them. She always created time- making sure that interns got time to reflect. It was something she valued which taught me to value that as well. They need a chance to talk it out (Int. 2 lines 289-293).

The second way Amy was able to enact reflection with her interns was by letting them “fail” in their teaching. She believed this was a way to demonstrate that there is no right answer in teaching.

I think knowing that there is no right answer and having fallen and failed myself, I’m more comfortable with letting them fail because they try something different, or what I wouldn’t have considered the right answer. Also, because I’ve done it and I’ve seen interns who I thought were going to fail, then succeed with something, so what I thought was the right answer turned out not to be the right answer (Int. 3 lines 159-164).

Amy described an instance with a particular intern, Brianne, whom she mentored and allowing her to “fail” for the first time. Coincidentally, Brianne’s PDA that year was Josh, who also happened to be Amy’s PDA when she was an intern. When prompted to elaborate on what contributed to Amy allowing Brianne to “fail”, Amy drew upon her experience as an intern and what she learned from Josh:

Josh was very supportive in letting her try things and reflect on her own teaching and I guess I had learned this from Josh, when Josh had been my PDA. He would
always say, “One, kids can smell fear, and two, kids are the most forgiving creatures on the planet.” So you can’t mess them up. Josh very much felt that way and as long as you are kind and respectful to children, then it doesn’t matter what else you do. So letting Brianne “fail,” it wasn’t so much letting her fail as much as it was letting her really see what she was getting herself into (Int. 2 lines 382-388).

The third way in which Amy learned how to encourage her interns to be reflective was through her own experience working on her National Board Certification. Many of the requirements for completing the National Board Certification allowed Amy to empathize with her interns’ challenges with reflection:

Last year, when I was working on my own National Board Certification, videotaping myself and really having to force myself to reflect on my teaching for someone else and doing it publicly. It made me realize how hard it really is and having someone else judge my reflections and explaining things that you take for granted happening become very difficult. So it made me realize how much interns need to talk about it, write about it, read about it, do it in so many different ways and do it so often (Int. 2 lines 446-452).

Amy’s belief of allowing interns to reflect versus telling an intern the “right” answer is complicated. It is closely linked with her belief about developing a trusting relationship with her intern. Amy learned there are times when a negative message needed to be delivered to an intern, and if Amy herself was not trusting enough of the relationship she had with her intern, delivering the negative message could be difficult. At times, interns may not be able to reflect upon a situation and come to a hard
conclusion themselves. From Amy’s experiences, she has learned she needed to be honest with an intern when it is necessary and she needed to rely on the trusting relationship to be able to do that.

Amy’s experiences working with PDAs in her classroom, allowing interns’ lessons to fail, and completing the National Board Certification were identified as contributing factors to enacting the belief that listening and prompting reflection is more powerful than telling an intern a “right answer”, but this belief can be challenging to enact as she has learned it requires a trusting relationship.

**Belief illustrated in practice.** Amy described how she encouraged her current intern, Jamie, and her experiences getting Jamie to reflect upon her teaching. First, she described Jamie’s style of reflection:

She is someone who takes multiple times to process. She is someone who needs time to think. Will I come out and tell her some things? Usually, but usually they’re more about management. When it comes to content there are so many options. I guess there are a lot of options with management, too. There is no one right way so I usually listen to her ideas and then say, “Or we could…” and give suggestions. It’s not often that I say there was a right or a wrong (Check in Int. 4 lines 95-105).

In an observed lesson during this study, Jamie was teaching the fourth graders how to write inquiry questions. Jamie wanted the students to generate ideas for questions that could not be answered with a simple yes or no. She had three student-generated examples of inquiry questions on the board. During the lesson, Amy encouraged a student to share his question:
He had come up with a really great question by himself. He’s not usually a strong student and able to do that. He is one that we discussed and thought might struggle and he was one that had been struggling when we circulated. I wanted her to know, here’s a great example to call on (Check in int. 4 lines 65-68).

Amy further explained her purpose for calling on him during the lesson to share: I wanted her to get more examples on the board and although I never said that, she did reflect about that after the lesson. I didn’t want to directly say that to her, “Keep going, they need more examples” but that’s what I was kind of hoping (Check in Int. 4 lines 72-74).

After the lesson, Amy debriefed with Jamie about her thinking regarding the lesson on inquiry questions:

Afterwards I asked her how it went. She was saying on Friday, “I have no idea how this lesson on Monday is going to go. I don’t know what we’re going to do on Tuesday” So I had said, “Okay, we’ll play it by ear,” so I was kind of asking her, “How did today go? What are you thinking for tomorrow?” I was proud of her because she realizes things can improve, but she didn’t think the lesson went bad. She’s realizing about teaching up and making everything that everyone does hard and it’s talking about how to scaffold and how to make challenging things but how to get kids there and that’s where she’s struggling (Check in Int. 4 lines 79-88).

This example illustrated how Amy encouraged reflection in her intern without providing specific feedback about what is “right”. This was also something that Amy tried to model for her interns when she planned and taught lessons:
I’ve tried lessons from certain resources, like I tried teaching a lesson from the district math resource and that didn’t work for teaching fractions, so what am I going to do today? I’m going to look for a different resource or I’m going to talk to someone about what they used to teach it. So modeling that and coaching them through it. After we would reflect on the lesson I would ask, “Well what are you going to try next?” I think sometimes reframing their self-thought. A lot of times my interns will say to me, “Oh that was a terrible lesson” I’ll ask them, “How else can we say that rather than putting yourself down, can we think of better words that mean exactly what you say?” (Int. 3 lines 242-249).

Enacting this belief in practice is often intertwined with the trusting relationship Amy tries to establish with her intern. Amy described a struggle she had with a previous intern, Melissa:

We just struggled a lot with was I not being clear enough with what was expected? Was she not asking the right kinds of questions? Was she not remembering what needed to be done? It was frustrating when we would be working on something with her teaching and this is where one of those beliefs comes in, listening to and prompting reflection rather than telling, she was struggling with reflecting and you couldn’t get her to vocalize her own thoughts and why she was feeling the way she was feeling or why she did what she did. I always kind of felt like I was in the dark because I didn’t know how to help her because I was just telling her everything and then she wasn’t doing what I told her (Int. 4 lines 13-21).
During this description, Amy used the language of “we”. When asked to elaborate on who she meant by “we”, she described how she worked with her PDA that year to negotiate the struggle:

The PDA and I kept strategizing, “well how about we go this route?” so we tried things like maybe if we keep a communication log, maybe if I write it down for you, you can take home what the expectations are, maybe we start a Googledoc so you can see all the questions written down so when you go home you can have them. So we tried different interventions to support her and try to scaffold her own reflection. We extended deadlines or I would try to meet her after school to help her do some of her school work so I could take some of the pressure off of that. It continued to be a struggle I think because I didn’t trust her and I didn’t feel like a colleague I felt like a parent or a superior where I had to lead her through it as opposed to work toward something together. That was hard. I don’t feel like we ever really resolved the issues, I felt like it went on until the end (Int. 4 lines 27-37).

Amy did not have to tackle her struggle alone, she utilized her PDA to help her try and work through the issue with Melissa.

In a different example, Amy recounted how it can be challenging for her to navigate between letting interns reflect and trusting the relationship enough to speak up when she needs to:

My intern this past year, around graduation and the inquiry conference she didn’t realize how stressed she was and the emotions of graduating and moving on and not knowing what was going to happen. So she started to fall apart a little and I
was trying to rely too much on letting her reflect on what was wrong rather than relying on building a trusting relationship and saying what I needed to say. We sat down during our weekly check-in and I asked her how she was doing with graduation and she said, “Oh things are fine,” and I asked her if she was feeling overwhelmed and she said, “Oh things are fine”. So we would talk about situations and I would let her talk, but she didn’t know what she didn’t know and I wasn’t trusting enough to just tell her. Look you’re not doing what you need to be doing. Her priorities were different than what they needed to be if she was going to be subbing for me or taking on other responsibilities. I should’ve, in that instance, pointed out why I knew things weren’t fine, why I was asking that question. I was hoping for her to realize and come out and say and trust me and say, “I’m feeling overwhelmed about graduation,” and then I would’ve said, “What can we do to make you less upset?” I should’ve brought up the points, “I’ve noticed you’ve been showing up five to ten minutes later than you usually are. I notice you saying you’re tired all the time,” I should have put that in her face but because she wasn’t there and I thought she couldn’t reflect on it. It’s an interesting balance between those two between trust, sometimes you just have to be honest and say things. I was not as forthright with what I needed to say because I was relying on her reflecting and figuring it out for herself and so what reflection is a little more clear in my head. It’s not letting them think what they think it’s challenging their thoughts in a very specific way. And learning to be more specific and more direct in what I want them where I need their thoughts to go to solve issues (Int. 4 lines 83-97; 103-109).
Amy believed in allowing interns to reflect rather than provide a “right answer” for them. By modeling for her interns and prompting them with questions, she tried to encourage her interns to gain confidence in their decision-making which is closely related to her previous belief. Amy also described how she is learning to navigate the balance between allowing her interns time to reflect and process and communicating her own thoughts and concerns for the sake of the trusting relationship. She also described how working with her PDA has helped her to navigate some of the challenges.

**Conclusion**

This chapter was intended to introduce Amy as a teacher and mentor by describing her personal and professional experiences as well as her mentoring beliefs and practices. Understanding Amy’s personal experiences as a student, as an intern in the Professional Development School, as a teacher, and as a mentor may be helpful for larger audiences of mentors. Additionally, her beliefs about mentoring may be useful when developing strategies for effective mentoring.
Chapter 7

Tara Murphy: Third Grade Mentor

Introduction

Tara Murphy is a third grade teacher at Rockville Elementary School in the Sunshine Valley School District. She began her teaching career in 1999 as a fourth grade teacher at Pleasant Woods Elementary School. She spent three years at Pleasant Woods teaching fourth grade, third grade, and then fourth grade again. After her third year of teaching, Tara had the opportunity to move to a brand new elementary school that was built in the district, so in 2002, she moved to Rockville Elementary where she has been teaching ever since.

Tara was an intern in the Professional Development School program as an undergraduate at Central State University. Tara participated in the pilot year of the PDS program as second grade intern at an elementary school that has since closed. Tara was hired by the Sunshine Valley School District in 1999. She became a mentor for the PDS program in her fourth year of teaching. While Tara did not have tenure, she did have three years of teaching experience, and had been an intern herself. She received principal approval to be a mentor and has continued mentoring over the years.

Tara is considered a veteran mentor in this study because at the time of the study, she was mentoring her twelfth intern. All of her years of teaching experience have been in third and fourth grade, but nine of them have been in third grade specifically.

Tara as a PDS intern
When asked to reflect and discuss the significant experiences in her life prior to becoming a mentor, Tara began with her experiences as a PDS intern. She talked about how she came to be matched with her mentor, Susan Rubin:

I can’t quite remember how the matches were made at that time. I don’t remember it being as organized as it is now. I think it was kind of a social thing. I honestly think I ended up with my mentor, Susan Rubin, because she took pity on me because I got really nervous during my interview and she had liked the way I answered one question. She had tried to soothe me in a way like, “What if one of your students was nervous?” and I think I said something in my interview to the effect of, “I don’t feel like I’m doing very well.” It was my first interview experience and I did not do well. So she asked me that question, “What would you say if your students felt like they weren’t doing very well?” This sticks out in my mind I said, “I would find something they did well and relay that to them,” so I think after the interview I probably didn’t come across as one of the strongest candidates, I’m sure, because when you say during an interview “I don’t feel like I’m doing very well”, that doesn’t just show confidence (Int. 1 lines 28-40).

Tara spent her year as an intern in second grade with Susan Rubin, and she continued to reflect about what she remembered from her year in the PDS program:

Everyone was just trying to figure it out as they went along. They [the university professors] had ideas for how they wanted it to go. Our classes were kind of similar to how it is now. We had a day where we would take classes, but we were in the classroom a lot. I remember a lot of journaling. I worked with my PDA and I remember a lot of journaling and feedback from her. We would sit down and
talk about different lessons that she would come in and obviously observe, but a lot of journaling, intense journaling. There was inquiry. That was the first year they were kind of giving it a shot. I inquired about one of my students who had Asperger’s and then I connected it with technology because that was something that he was really into. It was a powerful experience because I wasn’t expecting that part of it and I don’t think we all knew what we were getting into at the time (Int 1 lines 55-67).

Feedback, journaling, and her experience conducting an inquiry project were all significant memories Tara recounted from being an intern. She also elaborated about the mentoring she received from Susan Rubin as well as working with another second grade teacher, Linda:

I worked with Susan Rubin but I also worked with Pamela Rogers, too because she was right across the hall. Susan Rubin was kind of old-school in her demeanor. Her demeanor was very, and still is quiet, and it amazes me because I’m so different from Susan Rubin because I’m really loud and boisterous. Susan Rubin was very quiet and she just had this soothing quality about her and every once in a while I put on my Susan Rubin. I change my voice and get a little more quiet. She’s very organized and that was interesting for me to see because I struggle with organization sometimes. She had done things the same way for a while. I could tell because she would kind of like pull things out, so I think having an intern was probably a big deal for her because I had gotten the impression that she had kind of done things the same way for a long time so I think it was probably a great learning experience for her as well (Int. 1 lines 76-88).
Susan Rubin and Pamela were the only two second grade teachers at the school, and Pamela also had an intern. All four worked together throughout the year:

Pamela was another second grade teacher and she had an intern as well so they [Susan Rubin and Pamela Rogers] worked together constantly. Literally there was a door opening between the two classrooms. So we would mix our kids up a lot. They would plan together so much. I almost felt like she was a second mentor in a way because some of the things that I remember doing. I remember doing my lessons in my classroom in second grade in Mrs. Rubin’s class and then Pamela being like, “Oh that was great can you come over and do it in my class?” so it was really cool to have that experience and just see them work together so much. It was almost like having two mentors and I worked closely with the other second grade intern and honestly, the interns were such a family: weddings, I was in three of the six people in my building’s weddings. We were so close going through this experience together. (Int. 1 lines 97-105; 109-112).

Fifteen interns had been accepted for the pilot year of the Professional Development School, therefore the community was much smaller than the current number of interns in the PDS program which is usually between 50 and 60 students.

Inquiry was a powerful experience for Tara as an intern. After the very first inquiry conference where all of the interns had shared their inquiry projects from the year, Tara remembered the emotion. “I remember just crying and feeling so relieved and so proud of what we had all done, collectively,” (Int. 1 lines 123-124). Her experience with her inquiry project continued beyond her year as an intern. All of the interns from the pilot year of the PDS submitted proposals and were accepted to present their projects
at a national conference for the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE). During their first year of teaching, they all reunited at the ATE conference and shared their inquires in a professional setting.

**Tara as a classroom teacher**

Tara was hired in the Sunshine Valley School District to fulfill a maternity leave, fourth grade position at Pleasant Woods Elementary beginning in October of 1999 through the remainder of the school year. She believed her experience as an intern helped her to get that job:

I think what was appealing about me at that point was they [the school district] had just started the goal-setting conferences that year that I worked with Susan Rubin. I don’t know it came out of some initiative at the time but students would sit down in the fall and they would think of their goals. They would set their two or three goals for the year, and they would collect data along the way to prove they were working on these goals. It was a three way kind of thing, so it was teacher, student, and parents but the actual conference was run by the student. Then the teachers would say this is our plan, this is what we can do to support you along the way and parents committed to their end of the bargain so we were all really a team. That was a new idea during my internship year (Int. 1 lines 165-180).

As a first year teacher in the district, Tara was assigned a mentor. She worked closely with another fourth grade teacher, Mary:

When I came in, I continued to work really closely with Mary because she knew what was going on. She was probably like five years older than me, so she had
some experience. My experience to this point was second grade, so in fourth grade I needed a lot of help, so we worked really closely together. She taught fourth grade, too. At the time, there were not induction classes necessarily that I went to. I did meet with her weekly. We met like every Monday, so we met weekly. I mean we met officially each week but we worked together really closely. I had no idea what fourth grade was all about (Int. 1 lines 197-202; 207-208).

Tara went into more detail about what it was like to learn a different grade level than the one in which she had interned:

I really remember my first year teaching coming in and I specifically remember reading Charlotte’s Web with all of my kids and I had a mom call me on it. “My daughter can read better than this,” and I was just trying to get to know the kids. I started right before the goal setting conferences too and she just tore me apart at conferences. After that point I was thinking, “Okay, I really don’t know what fourth graders should be reading.” I just wanted to get to know the kids as readers and that was my go-to. Everybody was reading the same book and I’m going to listen to you read, we’re going to talk about it, what are your thoughts? I used Mary a lot. A lot was, “What’s appropriate? What are your high kids doing? What are you doing with your struggling kids?” A lot of those questions on materials and what’s appropriate for 4th grade reading-wise (Int. 1 lines 212-222).

While Tara could not recall specific induction classes to attend as a first year teacher, she continued to described the support she received from Mary, as well as her larger teaching team:
There was also a great team that I worked with which are still people that I’m close with today. Mary was roommates with another girl, and they were really good friends. They were about the same age and had been teaching for about five years. Then I had Jack Wallace and Marcy Powers who were super experienced teachers, so they were all a support to me. We had our division meetings each week and they would share a lot of things with me. A lot of us did the same kinds of things in terms of projects as far as social studies or science. There was a lot of sharing of ideas and collaborating all around for the whole team (Int. 1 lines 240-250). My first three years teaching I had the greatest team ever and we did things socially; we hung out. I still know their families. We did a lot together. I just remember thinking, “Wow I so lucked out with this team. Everyone works together, we hang out together even though we came from all different life experiences and ages” but it was a really tight group of people. Everyone was like, “This is what I’m doing. I’m going to share this.” I loved my first couple years of teaching. So much sharing (Int. 1 lines 259-267).

**Tara as a PDS mentor**

After her first three years of teaching, Tara made the difficult decision to move to the brand new elementary school in the district, Rockville, where she came together with teachers from around the district who decided to be a part of the new building. With that move came Tara’s first mentoring experience. During the summer of 2002, someone who had agreed to be a mentor was not able to fulfill their commitment to mentoring. Tara was approached to be a mentor, which she happily agreed to do:
I believe in the program and I went through the program. This is a high-caliber school district and I love the connection with the university. I like to be able to still be involved with the university because I think it makes you a better teacher when you’re involved with the PDS so closely. You have to constantly think about why you make the choices that you do, you have to verbalize that to somebody else and you can learn from them, too. I think I wasn’t too far out of college and I really liked learning, I mean I still do, but I kind of missed that so I think that was part of my reason for taking an intern (Int 1 lines 372-379).

Tara began mentoring in 2002 and continues to be a mentor today. Over the years, she has developed beliefs about mentoring.

**Tara’s effective mentoring beliefs**

Tara shared the following five beliefs about mentoring:

1. I believe effective mentoring begins with building a relationship. An intern needs to know that you are a team and committed to their development and success as a teacher. An intern also needs to know that you generally care about their well-being.

2. I believe that effective mentoring is about communication. Thinking out loud is crucial. Expectations need to be clear and assumptions need to be avoided.

3. I believe that effective mentoring is about specific feedback and systematic observation.

4. I believe that effective mentoring is about allowing freedom to try new things, speak freely, and also allows the intern to develop into their own teaching personality.
5. I believe that effective mentoring is about helping interns embrace content and that content is important. Learning is fun!

1) I believe effective mentoring begins with building a relationship. An intern needs to know that you are a team and committed to their development and success as a teacher. An intern also needs to know that you generally care about their well-being. Building a relationship with her intern was extremely important to Tara. It was something she hoped her interns will remember about their time in her classroom:

[I hope they remember] that they were cared about. They had a relationship with me that was really based on their success and their growth and their well being overall and cared about. I think that’s the same with any teacher with their class and their own students. You want your kids to feel that someone cares about them and it’s important to them [the teachers] that they’re [the students are] successful (Int. 3 lines 121-126).

As Tara continued to unpack the development of her belief about building a relationship with her interns, she continued to make connections to her own classroom students:

I’ve been a mentor with an intern before, or once or twice, that either I did not really get along with, or I had an intern that I personally did not like very much, but I think it’s important to try and build a relationship and know that you’re there for a common purpose, which is your children. I also have a commitment to them to make sure they are learning how to be a teacher. It’s like with anybody else. It’s like with your students. Maybe you have a couple students that might rub you wrong, but you start with trying to get to know each other personally, like
interests and passions. It comes from that’s what I think is really important about your students. I spend a lot of time with Morning Meeting and getting to know my students as learners and as people, so I think that’s important (Int. 3 lines 185-197).

The relationship is not limited to the relationship between Tara and her intern. Tara also described how she wanted the relationship to be between her intern and her students and how trust was a crucial component:

I think trust is really important. They’re [the interns are] putting a lot of trust in me and I’m also putting a lot of trust in them when it comes to thinking about our students. One relationship is I want them to be seen as a teacher in our classroom and I want our students to see them as a teacher in our classroom. I think that’s really important. Anyone in our classroom, like a para-professional, these are the people that are the teachers in our classroom. Also building that relationship of I care about you; I care about your success as an intern and I think that you have to put a lot of trust in each other. They have to be able to trust that they can ask me questions and that I’ll support them. I have to trust that they’re going to make some smart decisions when it comes to our kids, but ultimately, my kids because I’m the one that’s legally responsible for them (Int. 3 lines 342-352).

As a mentor, Tara values building a relationship with her interns because it is something she also values as a teacher. She wants her interns to know she is committed to their learning and growth for the entire year. Tara also wants to be able to trust that her intern is doing their best for the students in the classroom. The following section describes the ways in which Tara builds relationships with her interns.
Belief illustrated in practice. Tara described the different ways that she worked on building relationships with her interns each year. One particular strategy she shared was follow through. “I’m not always the best on following through with things, I’ll admit, but looking at their lesson plans, providing them feedback. That’s saying, ‘Hey I support you,’” (Int. 3 lines 356-358). Taskstream is an online lesson planning resource used by the PDS program which provides a forum for students to write and submit lesson plans. This technology has not always been available for PDS interns. Tara has been mentoring long enough to be able to identify how Taskstream has impacted her ability to provide feedback and follow through on interns’ lessons. “I do want to mention Taskstream because that has made things so much easier because you can comment on your own time. That’s super helpful. It can be instantaneous,” (Int. 3 lines 471-472; 556).

Other examples of how Tara developed relationships with her interns included eating meals together, listening, and sharing with one another:

We usually do lunches during the beginning of the year or during an inservice.
We’ll go to dinner. If we’re going to start a new unit, I’ve had interns to my house before so we can plan some things outside of school. I think a lot of follow through and listening. Knowing your ideas are being heard. Interns have a lot to share and sometimes it’s about their methods. It’s not that they’re being unprofessional, but they have some gripes. I have some gripes as a teacher and sometimes you need to air those and that’s within our trust that we’re not going to be running back to PDAs or principals. It’s okay to be frustrated together because you’re a team (Int. 3 lines 358-366).
In addition to following through with lesson plan feedback, listening, and spending time together outside of school, Tara also described some of the strategies she used within the classroom to communicate that she and her intern were a team as a part of developing a relationship:

I feel like I work hard to make sure that it’s welcoming and it starts in those first couple of days. You have your own space. I try to get to know them, like about their family members or their interests. I try to make sure they feel welcome in the classroom because this is their classroom, too. I mentioned from the first day you have her [the intern] in Morning Meeting, just like little roles that make sure that they know that they’re a teacher here, too (Int. 2 lines 674-679). That’s probably very typical of the very beginning of school. Just to be present and to have some sort of task sometimes it’s to call on people because I get tired of calling on people or I call on the same people so she might mix it up more than I would (Check in Int. 3 lines 80-83). Having two chairs, instead of saying “me”, I always say “we”. I think those are the subtle things the interns pick up on as far as we’re in this together. I’m not “the teacher” and you’re “the intern”. We’re a partnership in this (Int. 2 lines 679-682).
Figure 7.1. Tara and her intern sit together with the class. This photograph illustrates how Tara uses two chairs for the intern and the teacher to communicate they are a team.

Having two chairs in her classroom has always been a part of Tara’s mentoring, ever since she had her first intern. When Tara was an intern, her mentor did not have the same set up. “I don’t even remember Susan Rubin having a chair in the front. She stood. She was a stander. I like to sit,” (check in Int. 1 lines 39-40). The chairs are a physical representation of her belief that they are a team of two teachers in the classroom:

If you want to be present as two teachers in the classroom, then you can’t just have one hanging out in the back. We want a united front. This is important to both of us. Even if one person is taking the lead, I think it’s important for the kids to know that if one person’s teaching, that doesn’t mean that the other person doesn’t know what’s up, or what’s going on, and what’s expected of the students, and what’s coming next. From the beginning of having an intern it was just automatic, like, “Oh, I need two chairs”. It just seems simple. I didn’t put too
much thought into it. How would they feel if they didn’t have a chair to sit on?
That’s horrible (Check in Int. 1 lines 44-52). If she’s in the back, she’s not as
engaged in what I’m doing. At the beginning of the year when you’re [the intern]
doing more observations and you’re thinking about task journals and how your
mentor teacher does things, to remove someone from that wouldn’t make any
sense to me. I think when you’re together it makes you more present (Check in
Int.1 lines 47-52).

Two chairs in the classroom extend beyond the intern having a designated place
in the classroom. It is also connected to the co-teaching that occurred in Tara’s
classroom. On several classroom visits, Tara and Allison were observed co-teaching
subjects together like reading, math, and science. Tara responded to how typical that was
of her mentoring:

You mean for us to be with the group together? I think so. I think in general we
have a togetherness with the exception of times where I’m like, “Allison I need
you to do this because I have to finish something up”. Sometimes she’ll take
control. Like morning meeting because there’s some little things I have to take
care of but if there’s not those moments and I don’t have those emails to respond
to I think we do pretty much. I think we’re both present when the kids are
learning. What you see in that one picture is we are both definitely on top of those
kiddos (Check in Int. 1 lines 11-18).

In another observation, Tara’s third grade class was reviewing concepts for the
upcoming state assessment. Both Tara and Allison each worked with small groups of
students. Tara explained what happened during that observation, as well as how it could be different:

   It could look different from day to day. It’s not like there’s any set routine, there are many variations of the routine. Right now, what you saw yesterday was more of, “Hey Allison take this group,” because we’re just trying to gear up for the PSSA. So it was just independent work with a variety of different questions that were review questions, so I can look at them over the weekend and see who needs what specific things. Allison had mentioned something about the word problem that we did the previous morning for our morning math work and reflecting, “They’re just not reading the question and thinking about what it’s asking.” So I could’ve given her estimation but I provided her with a paper this explains step by step: read the question, circle the math words, make a plan, just very specific so she did that with them yesterday and then today she’s going to take that and have it be less specific and see if they can apply those skills and do that. I kind of threw that at her. Sometimes I’ll say, “Okay we’re going to do area and perimeter, do you want to work on area?” and she’ll make the plan for area for that (Check in Int. 2 lines 8-12; 15-23).

   In this illustration, Tara planned for what Allison would teach or review with the third grade students based on Allison’s reflections of student understanding from the math lesson. Sometimes, co-teaching happens in the moment with her interns, too. The following example of co-teaching speaks to the relationship that Tara does develop with her interns. Because she knew Allison so well, she was able to weave Allison’s personal experiences into her teaching:
That came about because I threw her under the bus and mentioned that I knew Allison had lived other places so maybe she could speak to having the experience of temperature being different or thinking about traveling differences being different; she had no idea I was going to say that, she just fielded that really naturally. I probably said something to the effect of, “Miss Adams would you like to talk about what it was like to live in Europe where metric is commonly used?” and she just briefly talked about her experiences. That was definitely not planned at all it was something I though of because the video was talking about living somewhere else or traveling somewhere else or something like that. It made me think of Allison having an experience somewhere else (Check in Int. 3 lines 11-19).

Tara reflected about the development of her co-teaching over time, and how she implemented co-teaching changed over the course of her mentoring:

Co-teaching has changed significantly for me throughout my time as a mentor. As an unseasoned mentor, I believed my mentoring role was to take the lead in terms of teaching and that I held more of the knowledge of what it meant to be a teacher. A few years after my first mentoring year, I took a PSU course dedicated to co-teaching. During this course, I learned different types of co-teaching and opened up to experimenting with various co-teaching models. As my confidence grew as a teacher and mentor, so did my willingness to open myself up to exploration and implementation of these models. I was willing to take more risks and trust more in terms of my interns, as well as open myself up to being vulnerable in my role as a teacher (email conversation 1/18/16).
The previous illustrations provide examples for how Tara worked to build a relationship with her intern and was committed to the teaching success of her interns. Some of Tara’s strategies like providing feedback, listening, and eating meals together helped her to develop a relationship with her intern and communicate that she cared for them. Having two chairs in the classroom, the language she chooses to use in the classroom, and co-teaching were strategies she used to demonstrate that she and her intern are a team.

2) I believe that effective mentoring is about communication. Thinking out loud is crucial. Expectations need to be clear and assumptions need to be avoided.

Working with interns over time has contributed to this mentoring belief. Tara has learned over the years that clearly communicating with her interns is of the utmost importance. Being a part of the PDS community, both as an intern and as a mentor has also supported her communication belief:

I realize sometimes I dump things on my interns and I ask, “Would you be able to work on this or do this for me?” and I’ve not been great at communicating exactly what I wanted and then I found myself being a little disappointed that it’s not the way I would’ve done it or the way I wanted it or what my vision was because I wasn’t exactly clear about what I wanted. I think you have to watch out for assuming that they’re coming with this experience or learned this in their methods. They’re here kind of as a fresh slate. That came probably from being part of the PDS and the weekly check-ins, although I didn’t use them this year. Allison and I were good. Although at the beginning of the year we did do this “Grow and Glow” because we were at this PDS event where the “Grow and
“Glow” idea was shared and we thought, “Oh we should do Grow and Glows” so we did it for a little bit but then that went away because we were just such a team. But that just comes with it being drilled into our heads from the PDS that it’s important to communicate, especially at the beginning of the year. “Make sure you’re thinking aloud about why you’re making some of the decisions” I just heard myself doing it again this morning. We were making groups and I was saying, “I think these kids will be great together because they won’t be goofy together” and Allison was thinking the same thing (Int. 3 lines 199-215).

**Belief illustrated in practice.** Tara had conversations with her interns at the beginning of the year, or even before the school year starts about how important it is to communicate with her about anything:

I feel like I do this at the beginning of the year. I say, “I expect you to communicate with me. If something is challenging for you, let me know. If something is bothering you, let me know. If I’m throwing you into something, I do that a lot at the beginning I realize, something comes up and I throw you into something and you’re not comfortable, if it’s too much, let me know. If there’s something you’re passionate about and you want to teach, let me know.

Communication, (Int. 3 lines 162-167).

Over the years, Tara incorporated a weekly time to sit down and plan with her intern. While weekly check-ins or Tara’s “Grow and Glow” times may have been centered on concerns about the relationship, she also described how she communicates about the teaching plans:
I like to set a time aside each week and some years had been nicer than others because we have a double planning period, but I like to set a time aside each week where we set up the plan for the week. This is what the week’s going to look like next week. And then I like to model at least our big ideas I would like to accomplish. For example, photography for social studies, or I would like to accomplish static electricity for science, or we absolutely need to get into our new book groups. Then as the year progresses, right now I think we’re in the second unit of the year. The last unit of the year is more where I see that the interns take over a little bit more. So right now I like to think of it as co-planning, but I’ll still kind of take a lead in like modeling how to do that (Int. 2 lines 341-351). Interestingly, this was not always a practice in Tara’s mentoring. She recalled the year when this practice began to emerge as a result of her intern’s needs:

I think I probably started with Deana because I remember she was also one of the first people that I had started putting the schedule on the board for us. I think at some point I felt like interns had a need to know what was going to happen for the week, to not be left in the dark about the week, and wonder what are we doing? I didn’t know that was going to happen. I didn’t even know that was your plan. I feel like at the beginning of the year, the very beginning of the year not so much, but there was a point in the year probably like November where we say these are the big ideas for the week and I then I might share my plans but then at some point it becomes sitting down and just walking through that process together. Let’s plan for the week. I’d like to do this, oh maybe you’d like to take charge of that (Int. 2 lines 366-376).
Part of Tara’s reasoning for communicating about the plans with her intern is because her intern had coursework and assignments that needed to be scheduled throughout the week:

I need to know that therefore, I as a mentor need to share the plans. Also, as they’re taking on more and more, they need to be involved in the process of assigning lessons. What do you have to accomplish? What is it that you have to do as an intern next week? Do you have any course work or lessons that you need to teach? Well, let’s plug those in. At the beginning of the year, I plug the other stuff in, middle of the year we sit down and I model these are the big ideas for next week, this is what I want to have accomplished, and then by the end of the year, what do you think the big ideas are for the week, or what would you like to see us accomplish, and then what part are you responsible for accomplishing that, and what part do you want me to be responsible for? (Int. 2 lines 393-402).

Tara described her communication about planning throughout year as “scaffolding” At the beginning of the year, she believed interns did not need to know about everything in the plans and so Tara had the plan for the week. By the end the year, she did want her interns to be able to successfully plan a scope and sequence for an entire unit, so she tried to keep that goal in mind throughout the year (Int 2).

Communication was also something that can be observed in Tara’s mentoring practice. In particular, Tara communicated with her intern during a lesson.

3) I believe that effective mentoring is about specific feedback and systematic observation. Tara gave credit to a mentoring course that she took early on in her mentoring for teaching her about systematic observation. While not required, a mentoring
course is offered to PDS mentors, as well as other teachers working with preservice teachers, or even teachers considering working with preservice teachers:

I think I took a mentoring class, probably my fourth or fifth year mentoring, and that’s when systematic observations were introduced to me. Your interns want that from you. That’s what they want the most. I mean they love their PDAs information too, but they really want to know day to day what they’re doing well and what they can work on. Your interns want to know how they’re doing.

I became a mentor really early. There are still some people who become mentors that early, but I didn’t have a lot of experience to base my mentoring off of because I was a relatively new teacher. I still feel like I’m a new teacher, but as far as mentoring there were a lot of things I was figuring out myself or doing for the first time. When I took that class it definitely helped because I know I felt that I had failed my first intern that I had some issues with as far as helping her.

Providing feedback that’s not judgmental. If you have somebody that’s sensitive and you don’t want to hurt someone’s feelings over this, it just makes it easier. It was kind of a mind-blowing thing. Because I had tried saying, “Have you considered this?” I tried using pluses and question marks, but it took the pressure off of that, “in my opinion”. It’s like inquiry. It’s much more powerful when you come to that realization on your own. “Oh I’m not calling on any of the people that are to the right of me” or whatever (Int. 3 lines 217-234).

Tara named this belief as the most challenging for her to enact in practice due to the time it takes to do it well:
It’s so so so hard to get that time. To do that specific pre-conference, let’s collect the data, let’s break down the data. You’re also trying to figure out who is teaching what for the week or what do you have to do for your science classes. So finding the time to do systematic observations is really challenging, especially when there’s coursework involved in the first semester. It’s still hard. There’s still things that come up (Int. 3 lines 257-262).

PDAs have been helpful in this area for Tara because while she is not always able to give her interns specific feedback right away, the PDA is usually available to talk with the intern:

I think something that’s been really helpful that’s happened in the last few years, is when a lesson is taught and you have a few minutes to take someone out and decompress that whole lesson because I don’t have time until much later to talk about a lesson. If Allison has just taught something, I really appreciate when the PDA can take the intern right away and talk about that lesson. Sometimes I don’t get to it until after school, sometimes I don’t get to it until the day after that. It could take awhile (Int. 2 lines 545-550).

**Belief illustrated in practice.** While this belief was not specifically observed during the data collection time period, Tara did describe what this belief has looked like in her mentoring practice:

Typically, I’ll have my intern think about what they want to work on for the week and at the beginning of the year it might look like something straight up from their teaching practice journals. As times goes by maybe we have our first midterm evaluation. We’ll set some goals about what kinds of things you [the
intern want to work on, and then we’ll pick one of those goals, work on it for the week and reflect about it on Friday. When I had that double planning period there was really a lot of time to address those things. This year was really challenging without that solid, over an hour amount of time, but that’s one way I provide feedback is using planning periods. Another way might just be in the morning or in passing when an intern has a lesson planned: going on Taskstream, maybe anticipating some hiccups in the lesson or further questions, and then talk about that in the morning. Sometimes I don’t always get a chance to break down a lesson afterwards. Sometimes it might just be some notes I jotted down or a real quick chat after school (Int. 4 lines 3-15).

As previously described, Tara learned about systematic observations when she voluntarily took a mentoring course during her fourth or fifth year of mentoring. Tara described how systematic observations are used in her mentoring:

A colleague made a giant list of different things you could observe on a Googledoc. For example, lining up, boys versus girls that you’ve called on. One of the things we’ll do is look at the list and think about the intern’s goal for the week too and talk, “Okay, which one of these systematic observation ideas on the list address that? What do you want to look at this week? How should we look at it? Do we have a plan for collecting data or do you want me to just make up my own thing?” Then after the lesson, I usually just give the data over and have them look at it and come back and talk about what they noticed on Friday; just really open ended. I’ve had some interns be really comfortable with me doing something
on the fly and then some interns that are more wanting to know and prefer to know what I’m looking at (Int. 4 lines 19-26; 39-42).

As she described, Tara did not dictate which systematic observation topic was used. She wanted her intern to be able to provide her input. “For some interns, right off the bat, I think it helps boost their confidence because they have a say in what’s going on and how they’re being evaluated or looked at,” (Int 4 lines 52-54).

Tara provided feedback to her intern in different ways. Taskstream, planning periods, and before or after school time are some designated ways she provided feedback. Tara also utilized systematic observations to provide objective feedback to her interns.

4) **I believe that effective mentoring is about allowing freedom to try new things, speak freely, and also allows the intern to develop into their own teaching personality.** While reflecting about the development of this belief, Tara described her own experience as a PDS intern, as well as her personal teaching beliefs as factors that influenced this mentoring belief:

Working with Susan Rubin, she was very set in her ways. I remember my science lessons, my three science lessons being inquiry-based. I remember being so excited about that. There were a lot of things that Susan Rubin had put in place that were just kind of the way she did things, so I guess I didn’t always feel like I had freedom to shake things up a bit or try my own things, so I think that’s probably where I decided that that’s important. Freedom to make mistakes, freedom to go for things that I’m pretty sure isn’t going to work out, maybe I’ll be surprised. But basically just being your own person. I remember specifically interviewing for my position here in the Sunshine Valley School District and it
was one of my beliefs that I still hold true is everybody comes with different strengths, personalities and passions and that’s who you are as a person and a teacher and that’s going to shine through no matter what. I don’t want someone to walk in and be a mini-me for the whole year. I want them to be able to find out who they are (Int. 3 lines 238-253).

This is a belief that has remained constant in Tara’s mentoring practice over the years. As previously mentioned, Tara communicated to her interns that if they have any particular passions they want to teach about, they are welcome to do so:

All of my interns come in with some sort of special talent or interest. I always think that’s great when that can be incorporated into the classroom because you are who you are and that’s what makes everybody great as a teacher. You bring yourself and your personality to your classroom. Everyone’s unique. So just showcasing those special interests and talents, I think I’m all about that (Int 3 lines 45-49).

Tara wanted to insure that her interns have space to be themselves. While replicating some of her techniques is fine, she wanted her interns to discover who they are as teachers:

One of the things that I believe about mentoring is that I’m comfortable letting people try new things and experiment, and make mistakes, and make it their own. Always one of the things that stays the same is you see that your interns kind of act like you. They use your same kind of techniques as far as getting attention in their routine and that’s their comfort zone. I’m really okay with people stepping outside of their comfort zone, and I want them to try new things. I want them to
have their new ideas. I definitely allow my interns, if they like, they can try their own things and they don’t have to do it my way. I’m pretty flexible (Int. 2 lines 637-644; 650-652).

Tara also discussed inquiry and its impact on her as an intern and teacher throughout the time period of the study. Inquiry was a way that Tara could support her interns in trying new ideas in their teaching practice:

I have to stop and talk about inquiry. I think inquiry is so exciting that’s one of the things that I love about still being involved with the PDS and still being here and working with interns is that going through the inquiry process on my own, I think I mentioned there were tears we were so proud of each other. So their inquiries, I can remember a lot of them (Int 2 lines 254-258).

During the spring semester of the year-long internship, interns conduct inquiry projects where they investigate a wondering about their teaching practice. Tara believed in allowing interns the freedom to try new things in the classroom, and inquiry provided an opportunity for that.

**Belief illustrated in practice.** Tara’s intern at the time of the study, Allison, had a particular love and talent for photography. Allison’s passion was integrated into her teaching during a social studies unit titled Festival of the Arts. During this unit, teachers have the freedom to study a variety of art of their choosing:

For Allison in particular it was photography. She takes amazing pictures. We’re studying Festival of the Arts and she said, “I’d love to do a photography unit,” and in the past I’ve done Ansel Adams but wouldn’t it be cool to do something really modern and she said, “I’m a real big fan of Humans of New York, so I’d
love to do photography and then do a Humans of New York project,” which was really cool. She did Ansel Adams which was amazing, I’m totally stealing her ideas and the slide show that she made and present him the way that she did. I love that she did Ansel Adams because she didn’t have to. I gave her the freedom to just do modern kinds of photography but she went back to the beginning and tied in with my interests too. I could hear her talk and she’d say, “Maybe Miss Murphy could join us in the circle and talk about National Parks and Ansel Adams’ influence on that?” It was cool because she knows my interests too so she included me on that conversation which I wasn’t expecting and then she did the Humans of Rockville project (Int. 3 lines 49-62).

Festival of the Arts provided an opportunity for Allison to share her passion with their third grade students. Her photography was also utilized in other areas of teaching. During an observed visit to Tara’s classroom, a slideshow of pictures featuring a particular student was playing for the whole class. It was a reward for that particular student who had recently reached her behavior goal:

Allison is really great at photography. It’s one of her talents, her many talents which I love. I think it was kind of delegating a little bit or sharing the responsibility a bit, but since she’s got a little bit more of photographic eye than I do because I don’t even know how to edit pictures, she took the lead in taking pictures of the kids in costume. It was for Lilly who met her Super Improver goal and since she [Allison] had the pictures it just seemed natural to say, “Hey Allison would you mind putting those into a slideshow and throwing up the music to go with it?” That’s how that happened (Check in Int. 1 lines 57-64).
Tara described other talents her interns have had over the years and how they have been utilized in the classroom:

Some of my interns have been super artistically talented, which is another fail of mine. I cannot draw well at all, like stick figures we’re talking about. I’ve used artistic talents before if someone is really good at drawing. Two people come to mind. One person, we had a cave art unit and we talked about how we could make it more. Instead of me just reading this book, how can we make it more interactive? So she drew all this cave art and we put it up on the walls so it was like a cave and we were discovering the art, and I have it to this day because she let me keep it. Holly, last year would do all the anchor charts for me. I’d be like, “Hey can you put this into a chart and make it all pretty?” She also was a talented artist. The same one that did the cave art ended up doing her inquiry on power drawing and drawing through while learning (Check in Int. 1 lines 69-79).

Each year bring a new intern with a unique set of interests and passions. Because this belief is so important to her, Tara purposefully asked interns during the mentor-intern matching process, “What are you passionate about? What do you enjoy doing?” (Int. 3 line 193). She can begin to learn more about who her intern is and how her intern’s talents can be showcased in the classroom.

Tara described several inquiry projects her interns conducted over the years. Not only does inquiry provide an opportunity for interns to try new things in the classroom, but Tara learned from her interns as well:

I learned from Shannon’s inquiry because we were starting a school garden. I had gotten a grant, actually from Lowe’s, and it was to create a garden. Shannon was
super into this – she came from a farm town. Her parents owned a dairy farm, and she was really into being outdoors and really into farming, our earth and environment. So she was one that wanted to really latch on and build this garden, which was great because I could use some help. And she wanted it to be her inquiry. I just remember this conversation about inquiry. Is it a project of let’s build a garden, or is it a process of learning something? So she made it so she could think about how you could use a garden to meet these ecology and environment standards. She went from the standards point of, if we would do this, can we reach all these standards and she totally made it happen. That was cool (Int. 2 lines 259-269).

Not only did Shannon’s inquiry try something new by teaching standards through the use of a school garden, but Shannon was able to inquire into a topic she was passionate about. During another year, Tara’s intern Maria inquired about the use of blogging during independent reading and how to incorporate reading standards:

Maria did too, as far as reading when she did blogging. How are we reaching different standards if we’re blogging? I learned a lot about blogging because of Maria. It was something she was interested in trying. She wanted to inquire like what are the benefits from blogging? I don’t remember her specific question, but there was a lot to say about blogging. I realized that they [the students] weren’t really doing much as far as recording their ideas and their reading, but when they blog, because it is interactive, there were amazing conversations. I think part of it was our morning meeting too. Because of her inquiry that was on blogging she had kids talking about books and suggesting books to other people or even just
responding to same read aloud book and it was just a really super cool way to think about like reading and speaking and listening and pulling all that together. So those two [Shannon and Maria], I really liked their inquiries as far as wow those are things that I want to do every year (Int. 2 lines 272-285).

Inquiry was an important component for Tara’s classroom teaching. It was an opportunity for interns to try new ideas in the classroom, and Tara learned along with her intern and received new teaching ideas to use in the future.

5) **I believe that effective mentoring is about helping interns embrace content and that content is important.**跪 Learning is fun! Content was a very important piece of Tara’s teaching. Even though Tara had a lot of experience teaching third grade content, she still valued researching and learning about third grade content. She expected the same of her interns. Her interns needed to be prepared not only for when they were teaching themselves, but also to be able to support Tara and the students when Tara was teaching:

I expect content. I don’t expect them at the beginning of the year to know everything but it really means a lot at the beginning of the year when interns do. For example, this year we’re studying Africa and then also ecosystems. Maybe you’re not responsible for teaching all of that but your students will still look at you as some sort of expert in this area. When someone goes above and beyond and reads about the topic, even though it’s not expected of them because they’re not the one “teaching” it, I like that. And if you’re going to teach something in my classroom you have to know the content. Please don’t just wing it in my classroom. That’s what I say. I’m a teacher because I love kids, but I love learning. I love learning a lot. So when I’m teaching something you better believe
I’m looking up information and reading about what I’m talking about. It’s also okay not to know everything, I don’t expect you to know everything but I do expect someone to put in their time learning the content to present that or answer questions from kids. That’s important to me (Int. 3 lines 168-180).

As Tara unpacked the development of her content belief, Tara generally reflected about a struggle she had experienced in her mentoring on more than one occasion:

There’s a certain point each year where I feel like not enough effort is going into lesson planning and the delivery of instruction. I don’t know if that’s just because there’s so much expected of these interns, if they’re overwhelmed. They’re being pulled in so many different directions. They’re trying to work on inquiry at the same time they’re trying to apply for jobs, at the same time full time teach or take on more responsibilities in the classroom. Where do you put that effort? For me, obviously I want them to get a job, I want them to have a great inquiry project, but ultimately these are my students and I want them [the students] to be successful and I don’t want you to cheat them out of great lessons. I know that’s probably not the intent of my interns, but at some point each year, I’m not sure how much thought or planning went into that lesson or thought of our students and our diversity and content. I always come back to content. Did you really spend time thinking about the content and how you would plan your lesson to deliver that? Or what is your knowledge of the content? I was reading a blog today about, “If you want to be a really great teacher,” and it had some silly stuff on it, but it’s just be a learner. I’m a learner; I’m smarter every single day because I’m a teacher. I keep coming back to content and you have to be able to represent
the content accurately. Again, I know I’ve said it’s okay if you don’t know everything, but you have to anticipate and be prepared (Int. 4 lines 68-87).

Tara also hoped her interns learned to love learning as she does as a result of her mentoring. Content and learning did not have to be arduous, Tara believed it should be enjoyable:

Life long learning. To be a learner. Teaching is such a weird word because it implies that you have the knowledge to teach somebody else. But it’s really about the joy of learning and discovering information and questioning. I think modeling that with your students is important but also talking about that process. We’ve talked about it so much this year with this class because during recess they’re actually building roller coasters and doing their science experiments. They’re not on the computer and they’re not playing checkers. That joy of learning. I think that’s a disposition to really enjoy learning and bring it out in your practice and into your kids. I don’t know if that’s something you can teach but that would be my hope that their disposition would be to guide their students to a love of learning. Teaching. Weird word. Facilitating I think would be a better word (Int. 3 lines 310-320).

It was important to Tara that interns embraced and learned the content they needed to teach, but she also hoped her interns learned to see that process as an enjoyable piece of the teaching profession.

**Belief illustrated in practice.** To illustrate her belief about content knowledge, Tara recounted her first year as a mentor. This was when her beliefs about teaching content began to take shape as a result of her experiences working with her first intern:
We were studying Pennsylvania and she had wanted the kids to draw a picture of Pennsylvania and place different cities and things on the map. As a new teacher, I’ve done this pre-assessment before, but I think to her it sounded like a simple idea, “Oh yeah we’re just going to draw a picture of Pennsylvania and put some cities on it,” but she really came with no plan of… she herself was not able to say three major rivers to put on this map. I said to her ahead of time to her pick a couple of major cities, the capital, some rivers and I felt like she didn’t have things completely thought through or written down so when she was asking the students to complete this task, she herself did not know a river. She couldn’t come up with the Susquehanna in Pennsylvania; she just drew a blank on all rivers. Even how many states border Pennsylvania, that kind of thing (Int 4 lines 91-100).

As Tara reflected about that experience during her first year of mentoring, she acknowledged how long ago the experience was and how the PDS program has evolved since that time:

In retrospect, and even now, I mean I was a very young mentor. I wouldn’t have let that lesson even happen. But that was before the 24-hour rule or the 48-hour rule of turning in lessons ahead of time. It was before Taskstream. I think now I do make it a point to look at each lesson and the way PDS is now it’s more structured towards that. I remember her specifically making and gathering supplies in the moment. I remember thinking, “This is really going to crash and burn.” and also thinking, “Maybe I should call it. She’s clearly not prepared.” But I made that ultimate decision to let it go because sometimes those crash and burn
moments teach you a lot. And it was just a pre-assessment, but I remember being really frustrated (Int. 4 lines 104-111).

In addition to the experience with the pre-assessment during the Pennsylvania unit, Tara remembered a sequence of lessons on thrust in an airplane:

There was another science one, too and again it had to do with gathering supplies and even knowing how to make connections to what was happening. It was a thrust lesson, but how does that even tie into our Air and Aviation unit? What creates thrust in an airplane and what works against thrust? It’s not just going through the motions and doing fun activities. It’s so much more than that. Content is important (Int. 4 lines 112-117).

Because content is such an important piece of teaching for Tara, she needed to navigate her struggle with her intern. She was not simply noticing this lack of preparation here and there. It was becoming consistent. Tara reached out to her PDA, George:

It was about a month. We tried different things. George was great. He was a fantastic PDA all around. Hugely supportive. He sometimes said some of the hard stuff that I wasn’t able to say or he said it in a different way, but he was also very understanding. I remember sitting down with George and just saying, “Hey I really don’t feel like the time and effort is being put into the classroom experience and ultimately these are my kids and I don’t mind letting interns fall on their face if it’s a good experience. Like make some mistakes. That’s a great experience, because you can learn from that. But at this point in the year, it wasn’t good for my kids and it was a strained relationship (Int. 2 lines 108-110;129-138).
Ultimately, George and Tara decided on implementing a strategy of requiring her intern to show evidence of three different resources she used to learn more about the topic before teaching. Since those experiences during her first year mentoring, Tara has drawn upon that strategy for a couple of interns. However, she did describe the science methods course specifically which also has evolved and requires interns to prove their content knowledge before teaching three consecutive lessons in science. Tara hoped to bridge the gap between coursework and teaching by upholding her belief that content is important:

I think it’s something that’s set up in the beginning of the year when they have to do those three consecutive lessons in science methods. They have to prove where they’ve researched and come up with their different materials. But also that’s not just a hoop you have to jump through for the PDS assignment. That’s something that I do as a teacher (Int. 4 lines 137-141).

Tara’s first experience as a mentor presented significant struggles with her intern’s lack of knowledge of teaching content. From that experience her belief about content knowledge emerged and was still prevalent twelve years later.

During the most recent mentoring year, Tara described how she mentored her intern, Allison, in becoming comfortable with teaching science. She modeled her own process for learning content, including the different resources she utilizes:

Allison was really nervous to teach science, for example, until I suggested that she take over some energy and electricity lessons. She mentioned that she didn’t feel very strong in the area of science and that she wanted me to do it because I had taught it for awhile and I understood. And I said, “No,” but explained to her
that I love science but I don’t always remember how this stuff happens. We just literally had this conversation ten minutes ago how to go and look for a scientific explanation. I have conversations about how I don’t always remember the content and I have to go back and research it every other year. I will share websites I have gone to. Kid websites too for content, like Study Jams. I love Study Jams for science. I have to go and research to make sure I’m knowledgeable about it. I don’t necessarily show her everything I do but I tell her that I’ve spent time with websites. And video. I’m big on multimedia, so finding videos that can explain it to kids in creative ways, too. Then also morning meeting too, and coming back to things. We make up our own songs. She sees me model coming back from the library and then during morning meeting I share a snippet from this book about energy. So going out there and finding resources. It’s not over when I teach something. It’s not over it can come back up, “Oh by the way you asked this question,” just showing interns how you keep coming back to content or you find information and different sources (Int. 3 lines 271-289).

Tara’s first year of mentoring taught her that content knowledge was also one of her beliefs about mentoring. Tara’s ultimate responsibility is to her third grade students. She worked with her PDA to support her intern and to mentor her to understand the importance of content knowledge. Tara believes mentoring should guide interns to a solid knowledge of teaching content. At the same time, she hoped to demonstrate that learning can be fun and modeled how even veteran teachers need to research and constantly learn with the students.

**Conclusion**
This chapter was intended to introduce Tara as a teacher and mentor by describing her personal and professional experiences as well as her mentoring beliefs and practices, including her mentoring struggles. Understanding Tara’s personal experiences as a student, as an intern in the Professional Development School, as a teacher, and as a mentor may be helpful for larger audiences of mentors. Additionally, her beliefs about mentoring may be useful when developing strategies for effective mentoring.
Chapter 8
Cross Mentor Comparison

The four previous chapters depict each mentor personally in order to gain a sense of what each is like as an individual. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the mentoring practices of the participants by comparing and contrasting four mentoring practices across all four mentors, or at times, subgroups of mentors. This chapter seeks to respond to the research questions:

1. What are the self-reported practices of mentors in the PDS context?
2. Why do the mentors engage in these practices?
3. How have these practices developed and changed over time?

This analysis draws upon both interview data stated from the mentors as well as data from observations of their mentoring in the classroom to identify four practices of mentors in the PDS context. The four practices are presented in the following structure: descriptions of the practice for all four mentors, reasons why the mentors engage in the practice, and how the practice has evolved over time. It is not the intent to evaluate the mentoring practices in any way, but to describe and compare the practices among the mentors. These four practices provide illustrations of the self-reported mentoring practices and are not intended as recommendations for what mentors of preservice teachers should do. Throughout the analysis, Dana and Yendol-Hoppey’s (2006) Effective Mentoring framework will be used as a lens to identify where the mentoring practices align with the framework and where the mentoring practices suggest something new. While this framework is designed for mentors of novice, inservice teachers, it has implications for mentoring preservice teachers, as well.
Practice 1: Co-planning

Describing the mentors’ practices

One of the mentoring practices that occurred across all four PDS mentors who participated in the study was the involvement of the intern during planning for teaching, which I have named, co-planning. While they all engaged in this practice, with the same end goal in mind, i.e., developing an intern who was capable of planning independently, there were similarities and differences among them in terms of how they involved the intern in co-planning early in the process. The next section describes how the mentors are similar and different in their co-planning by comparing the practice to models of co-teaching as depicted by Badiali and Titus (2010). While the mentors’ co-planning practices are not an exact match to the co-teaching models, they do provide a framework for both describing them and depicting how the co-planning practices differ among them. The three co-teaching models represented in the co-planning practices are: “Mentor Modeling”, “One Teach, One Guide”, and “Synchronous Teaming”.

Mentor Modeling. Mike described a standard procedure for planning with all of his interns. In similar fashion to the “Mentor Modeling” co-teaching model in which novice teachers intentionally observe a veteran teacher to learn more about delivering instruction, Mike’s interns begin their involvement in co-planning by observing Mike’s planning:

We start planning together right at the beginning of the year, so we do our check-ins, and we do that on the day that I plan which is usually Thursday. After we do the check-in we sit down and they sit down with me while I plan and then usually we get to the point where we’re planning together. I didn’t necessarily do that my
first year. I had had several student teachers and I was still in the mode of thinking of PDS as student teaching rather than how I am now. Now it’s much better because they see from the very beginning, this is how I do things and it seems to work. I think they pick up on that (Int. 4 lines 84-90).

At the beginning of the year, which according to Badiali and Titus is when mentor modeling is most prevalent in the relationship (2010, p. 76), Mike modeled his planning process for his intern in order for his intern to intentionally learn how he does things and to instructionally plan for students. The intern’s main purpose is to observe Mike’s planning. During the third month of school, Mike and his intern developed a timeline for what subjects she would teach for the remainder of the school year. He has followed this procedure since his second year of mentoring. Mike did not describe how his co-planning model evolves over the course of the school year once a timeline is developed, just that “usually we get to the point where we’re planning together”.

For Amy, she described her early co-planning model as similar to Mentor Modeling as well. At the beginning of the school year, Amy did more of the planning and routinely explained her reasoning to her intern. “The beginning of the year it would’ve been me showing her what I was doing and telling her why,” During the months of September and October especially, planning involved Amy “modeling and explaining,” (Check in Int. 3 lines 9-10, personal communication, April 13, 2015; January 11, 2016). She further explained that her co-planning practices differed during the years she taught first grade as compared to her first year teaching fourth grade:

More so in first grade, there is a lot of "stations" co-teaching in October, November and December or "pull out" where I would coach the intern on how to
work with students who need more support. The part of this that isn't really co-teaching is the ahead of time planning is mostly mine but there is some on the spot let me try this, or asking questions to think through it on the intern’s part (email conversation 1/11/16).

Amy’s co-planning practice as a previous first grade teacher eluded to a development from Mentor Modeling to perhaps more of a One Teach, One Guide model, but she did not describe that same development for fourth grade, perhaps because of the differing contexts. In first grade, station teaching provides more opportunities for the intern to be engaged in delivering instruction, but Amy rarely utilized stations as a fourth grade teacher.

One Teach, One Guide. The other two mentors described early involvement in the co-planning process as dependent on the intern; which determined how they scaffolded the planning process for the intern. Rebecca described the intern’s involvement level in planning as dependent on the intern’s level of readiness:

In the beginning, I’m writing that but as we go… It’s much more of a co-document that we both add to and we both write in but not from the very beginning. Some interns are right there up front helping to think of ideas and planning and some of them it’s a long time before they really begin to enter into that process. I always have them involved in the planning but sometimes I take more of a leadership role, sometimes it’s more of a team role and then my goal is that they’re independent in the end but wow does that change depending on when they’re ready to do that more independently (Int. 3 lines 96-99; Int. 4 lines 101-107).
Rebecca explained that sometimes she may be the lead planner, at other times the intern may be the lead planner, and at yet other times throughout the school year, the practice developed into co-planning when there is an expectation for the intern to contribute to the planning, as opposed to early in the year where participation is welcome, but not expected. An important co-planning distinction as compared to Mike and Amy is that Rebecca was open to her interns’ contributions to the plans at any point throughout the year. If an intern was ready to suggest ideas early in the process, Rebecca welcomed that, but it was entirely dependent on the intern. She did not see the intern solely as an observer who learned how the mentor planned. Similar to Rebecca, Tara also described a gradual release of planning over the course of the year. Also, like Rebecca, Tara encouraged her interns’ suggestions early in the co-planning process by purposefully including her intern to plan for any coursework assignment she needed to complete in the classroom:

I as a mentor need to share the plans. Also, as they’re taking on more and more, they need to be involved in the process of assigning lessons. What do you have to accomplish? What is it that you have to do as an intern next week? Do you have any course work or lessons that you need to teach? Well, let’s plug those in. At the beginning of the year, I plug the other stuff in, middle of the year we sit down and I model these are the big ideas for next week, this is what I want to have accomplished, and then by the end of the year, what do you think the big ideas are for the week, or what would you like to see us accomplish, and then what part are you responsible for accomplishing that, and what part do you want me to be responsible for? (Int. 2 lines 393-402).
The co-planning practiced by Mike and Amy early in the internship year is similar to Mentor Modeling while Rebecca and Tara’s practices are similar to the One Teach, One Guide co-teaching model. For Mike and Amy, the mentor was solely responsible for planning and communicating the plans early in the process while the intern’s purpose was to observe and learn the planning process. In their model, co-planning model was a more passive process from mentor to intern. For Rebecca and Tara, the mentor was primarily responsible for planning for instruction, however their co-planning practice was more of an active interaction as they welcomed their interns’ contributions at any time.

**Synchronous Teaming.** While the previous models described co-planning early in the internship year, during the data collection time period there was an opportunity to observe Amy and her intern engaged in co-planning during one of the classroom observation visits.

*Figure 8.1.* Amy and her intern co-planning. This photograph illustrates what co-planning looked like in Amy’s mentoring practice.
The two were engaged in planning for math homework as well as math instruction for the next day.

Amy: “Do we let them choose? Do we make enough copies and explain what each one is and let them pick? Is that…”

Jamie: “…the right thing to do?”

Amy: “My ultimate goal is perimeter so no matter what they choose they’re getting that.”

Jamie: “So we’ll just make copies. For math tomorrow, maybe not leaving a math talk for the guest teacher since we won’t be there, but leaving a performance test and then doing the math talk later?”

Amy: “Should we pull groups?”

Jamie: “I think that went well today.”

Amy: “I need to be more clear with what I’m doing. I need to teach kids who need area.”

These field notes and accompanying photograph illustrate how Amy and Jamie worked together to talk through their ideas for math homework, as well as the best course of action for the following day’s instruction. Both of their voices contribute to the conversation, and Jamie even finished Amy’s sentence at one point. It is a conversation between colleagues and it is not clear from their dialogue who is the teacher and who is the intern. Because Amy was observed planning with her intern toward the end of the school year, she described it as more of a “back and forth” between them:

It’s been a slow progression and now I’m trying to push her so she’s very great about taking on the responsibility now of, “Oh we need to get homework,” but then she’ll ask, “What should it be?” So it’s me trying to ask her questions, “it
could be this or it could be this,” or, “I have this, do you have another option?”

(Check-In Int. 3 lines 10-15).

Her co-planning practice was similar to the co-teaching model of synchronous 
teaming where the mentor and intern have the “greatest amount of shared responsibility,”
(p. 78). Again, it is important to note that this model of co-teaching often appears later in 
the school year and evolved into a model where there was an expectation for both to 
contribute. This example provides an illustration of what can be possible with co-
planning towards the end of the internship year.

The previous section described three co-teaching models: mentor modeling, one 
teach, one guide, and synchronous teaming and how they are useful models for thinking 
about the co-planning practices among the four mentors. Mike and Amy’s Mentoring 
Model of co-planning early in the year seemed to have different goals than the One 
Teach, One Guide co-planning model the other two mentors utilized early in the year. 
There seemed to be three goals: 1) to keep interns informed of the instructional plan for
the class and 2) to model the overall expectations for the planning process, and 3) explain
the thinking behind the planning decisions being made. When Mike and Amy described
modeling their planning processes for their interns, they did not mention interns being
actively involved early in the year. Mike and Amy’s planning practices seemed to involve
the intern in more of a passive way. Tara and Rebecca described how co-planning might
evolve over the course of the year, but they are different from Mike and Amy’s planning
early in the year because there seemed to always be a place for the intern to contribute to
the plans no matter what time of year it was. Amy was the only mentor who was
observed planning with her intern in April of the school year. A classroom observation
happened to coincide with her planning time. Her comments described the co-planning at that time of year seemed to closely align with synchronous teaming, but she alluded to the fact that there is a progression of the practice over the course of the year. The data from the mentors’ co-planning practices compared to the co-teaching models depicted by Badiali and Titus provide useful illustrations of how mentors in a PDS model engage in co-planning.

The previous section described the co-planning practices of mentors in a PDS model. The next section responds to research questions 2 and 3. Why do the mentors engage in this practice, and how has it evolved over time?

Reasons why

Both Tara and Mike learned from their experiences as a mentor that co-planning was important so that the intern was aware of both what the planning process should look like and also what the weekly schedule of responsibilities looks like. Mike described wanting to model his lesson planning process from the beginning in the hopes that his own intern’s lesson plans would improve. Tara realized from asking an intern to put the class schedule on the board that interns should also be aware of what is happening during the school day. Additionally, interns have methods course assignments that require them to plan lessons in their classroom with the support of their mentor. Mentoring experience impacted this practice for Tara and Mike.

Both Rebecca and Amy’s espoused beliefs about mentoring resulted from a desire to create a perception of two teachers sharing an equal partnership in the classroom and impacted how they co-planned. Rebecca’s belief that she and her intern represent two teachers in the classroom required her to include her intern in the planning. She believed
this was one way she could communicate to her intern and to the students that there were two teachers in the classroom. However, Rebecca did not necessarily expect her intern to contribute to the planning, but rather left the door open for that to happen. Likewise, Amy believed in creating an equal partnership in the classroom, which resulted in the synchronous teaming co-planning observed later in the school year. By enacting this belief and practice, she communicated to her intern that they have valuable knowledge to share.

**Over Time**

Rebecca and Tara, the two veteran mentors, were the two mentors who described a change in this practice over time. Both of them identified different technology resources, such as Google Docs and Taskstream that impacted their practice of planning with interns. They were able to recall the time in their mentoring when these resources did not exist. Both Mike and Amy have always had access to these resources as mentors and therefore may not have experienced as significant an impact as Rebecca and Tara.

Mike described following the same process for co-planning with each of his interns after his experience as a first year mentor. As a cooperating teacher to student teachers, he recalled not having as much time with his student teacher to delve into planning. He treated his first intern in the same way, which resulted in ineffective plans from his first intern, according to Mike. Since that first mentoring year, Mike’s practice has not changed over time, but instead stayed consistent. As for Amy, she spent several years teaching first grade and talked about how her co-planning progressed as there was more “station” teaching in first grade. Over time, as she has moved to a new grade level, her co-planning practice had to adjust to a new setting where station teaching is not as
prevalent. “My lack of experience with the content left me less flexible in my first year of fourth [grade] as opposed to first grade where I saw multiple paths to the same learning,” (email conversation 1/11/16).

Both personal and mentoring experiences, as well as beliefs about effective mentoring influenced the reasons why these four mentors engage in co-planning. The veteran mentors in the study were able to identify a particular change in their practice over time as they have mentored long enough to experience a technological change in their co-planning. Amy described change due to teaching a new grade level. She is the only mentor who experienced a significant grade level change i.e., moving from the primary division to the intermediate division while mentoring.

**Connections to the Yendol-Hoppey and Dana Framework**

The co-planning practice of Rebecca and Tara early in the year and Amy at the end of the year included space of some kind for their intern to be actively involved in the planning process. This practice enacted one of the components of the Effective Mentoring framework. By providing their interns space, this co-planning practice allowed for these mentors to create an educative mentoring context by ascertaining their intern’s prior knowledge during planning. “A mentor needs to identify ways to encourage the novice to exercise agency rather than act as a passive recipient in the learning-to-teach process,” (Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, p.17). Rebecca relied on the intern’s readiness level for when they began to actively contribute to the planning. This readiness level varied across all of her interns, however Rebecca always encouraged her interns to take an active role in the planning process. Tara considered her intern’s needs for completing assignments when planning. She left a space to invite her intern to contribute to the plans
based on what coursework they may need to complete in the classroom. Similarly, Amy used questioning to actively involve her interns during synchronous teaming co-planning. By asking her interns to share what they learned in methods courses or experienced in other ways as a student, she provided a space for her intern to have an active voice in the planning.

While the mentors did not specifically name the types of knowledge they try to develop via co-planning, it is highly likely that while co-planning contributed to creating an educative mentoring context, it also developed the intern’s professional knowledge. Through modeling and explaining and engaging the interns in the co-planning process, certainly many, if not all of the knowledge domains with the Effective Mentoring framework were developed.

Labeling this practice as co-planning provides some insight into how mentors and interns might plan together in a PDS context, however the specific illustrations of different mentors’ practices demonstrate the nuances within this practice. While all four mentors co-plan, how it is enacted in practice varies across the four. All of the models of co-planning may not be illustrations of Creating an Educative Mentoring Context which is why it is important to share examples from practice with a larger mentoring community. By providing examples from mentoring practice, more depth is given to an umbrella practice like “co-planning”. Illustrations can help mentors recognize similar and different co-planning practices in their own mentoring.

**Practice 2: Providing “Teacher” Opportunities**

**Describing the mentors’ practices**
All four of the mentors engaged in this practice, but in different ways. The two veteran mentors in this study engaged in a mentoring practice that is connected to but different from involving the intern in the planning process. This practice goes further, especially at the beginning of the year, by providing opportunities for the intern to be viewed as a “teacher” and develop his/her own identity in the classroom. One of the novice mentors, Mike, was also cognizant of providing his interns opportunities to be a “speaker” in the classroom. Amy compared this mentoring practice as a first grade teacher and fourth grade teacher.

The two veteran mentors in this study shared in their espoused platform conferences, beliefs about creating opportunities early in the year for the intern to be seen as a teacher in the classroom. It was important to these two mentors that their interns develop teacher identities unique to themselves. These mentors did not want their interns to be carbon copies of them. Unlike traditional models of student teaching where preservice teachers do not have the opportunity to be in a classroom from the beginning of the school year until the end, PDS interns are present from a teacher’s first inservice day until the very last day of school. Their continual presence in the elementary classroom provided opportunities for the intern to develop his/her own teacher identity. Rebecca and Tara both described their beliefs about the practice of providing interns opportunities to develop a teacher identity.

**Rebecca.** One of the ways that Rebecca provided opportunities for interns to develop their teacher identity was by tapping into her interns’ passions. Utilizing their passions helped Rebecca’s interns be comfortable in front of the classroom. For example, in the beginning of the year, an intern might complete a read aloud or community
building activity connected to her/his interests. This practice allowed Rebecca to help her intern build a teacher presence in the classroom with an identity that was different from her own. “It was those things that helped them and also feel differentiated from me. They had things that they were experts and authorities on and I really think that was helpful for them to be able to do that,” (Int. 3 lines 130-135). There were several examples of this practice in Rebecca’s classroom. Bobby read a book aloud to students that was connected to his interest in baseball and the community building activities at the beginning of the year took on a baseball theme. One of Rebecca’s interns, who loved to be outdoors and kayak, actually brought her kayak into the classroom and read aloud to students while sitting in it. In a third example, Rebecca’s intern Sophia, taught dance to her third grade students during indoor recess time.

**Tara.** Tara was also intentional about having her intern be in front of the classroom as a teacher. “I want them to be seen as a teacher in our classroom and I want our students to see them as a teacher in our classroom. I think that’s really important,” (Int. 3 lines 344-346). Tara was able to enact this goal by involving her intern in smaller teaching opportunities like Morning Meeting or calling on students at the beginning of the year:

> I mentioned from the first day you have her [the intern] in Morning Meeting, just like little roles that make sure that they know that they’re a teacher here, too (Int. 2 lines 674-679). That’s probably very typical of the very beginning of school. Just to be present and to have some sort of task sometimes it’s to call on people because I get tired of calling on people or I call on the same people so she might mix it up more than I would (Check in Int. lines 80-83).
Like Rebecca, Tara encouraged her interns to showcase their talents which provided opportunities for her interns to develop a teacher identity:

I’ve used artistic talents before if someone is really good at drawing. Two people come to mind. One person drew all this cave art and we put it up on the walls so it was like a cave and we were discovering the art, and I have it to this day because she let me keep it. Maria, last year would do all the anchor charts for me. Allison is really great at photography; she took the lead in taking pictures of the kids in costume (Check in int 1).

**Mike.** Mike engaged in this practice in a different way with his interns. During the fall semester, Mike’s priority for his interns was to observe. “I really like for my interns to do a lot of observation before they get too involved,” (Check in Int. 1 lines 65-66). This goal was also described previously within his co-planning practice. The way Mike described involving his intern in the classroom teaching during the fall was to provide speaking opportunities for them:

I kind of believe they need opportunities to be a speaker in front of the kids before they’re expected to teach in front of the kids. I will often, even if we plan it initially, I will often be talking to the kids when I’m the lead teacher and I’ll say, “Miss Ricketts what do you think about that?” or “Did I forget anything Miss Ricketts?” just to give them a chance to say something in front of the kids (check in Int. 2 lines 39-44).

**Amy.** Amy first described the opportunities her interns had to be viewed as a “teacher” during the years she taught first grade. “More so in first grade, there is a lot of "stations" co-teaching in October, November and December or "pull out" where I would
coach the intern on how to work with students who need more support” (email conversation 1/11/16). None of the participants in this study were primary teachers where stations tend to be utilized on a regular basis as opposed to fourth grade:

Jamie's path into being the teacher was mostly doing a lot of one on one or side work with subsets of kids in the fall, to then her taking over the smaller routines like Morning Meeting or Calendar at the beginning of spring, and then moving on to whole class and small differentiated group lessons where she would see everyone. This is in contrast to in first grade where in the beginning of the fall my interns were already meeting with every student and "in charge" of certain routines where they would connect with every student consistently (personal communication 1/31/16).

Amy continued to describe how she learned to be comfortable letting interns be who they are in the classroom. Amy purposefully tried not to use judgmental language when interns are sharing ideas with her. “It’s okay to be different which sounds like something you say to first graders, but can be very hard when you’re sharing a space with someone,” (Int. 3 lines 299-300).

There seem to be two dimensions to providing “teacher” opportunities from these mentoring illustrations, external and internal. Mike and Amy provide external opportunities for the intern to be viewed as a teacher in the classroom primarily by the students or other adults working in the classroom. For Mike he provided his interns speaking opportunities in front of students early on, and Amy as a first grade teacher utilized stations in her classroom which provided opportunities for her interns to be viewed as a “teacher” by students and other adults. In fourth grade she also described
working one on one with students or small groups, but not to the same degree as first
grade. Rebecca and Tara’s practice illustrated an internal dimension to “teacher”
opportunities. They also provided chances for interns to speak and be in front of the
students, but their practice went further. By orchestrating those early teaching moments
to provide opportunities to showcase interns’ interests, passions and talents, they were
purposeful in helping their interns develop teacher identities that were separate from
them. Yendol-Hoppey (2007) referred to this internal dimension as a “space to be”, a
psychological safe space where the intern can feel like a teacher (p. 12). Feeling like a
teacher and developing a unique teacher identity is qualitatively different than externally
being seen as a teacher by students and other adults. Similarly, Awaya et al. (2003)
identified this as “Providing space to let the protégé ‘show their stuff,’” in which mentors
assist student teachers in realizing their own teaching styles and strengths, (p. 54-55).

**Reasons why**

Rebecca’s experiences as a student herself are connected to why she believed in
couraging her interns’ passions:

I feel like I’ve had experiences where I’ve been able to pick up on things that I
was passionate about and the freedom and the okay to use those. I found as I did
that with interns it was very reinforcing (Int. 3 lines 130-132).

Rebecca’s experience as a PDA strengthened this belief as she observed
classrooms where interns were not necessarily engaged with students in a teacher-type
role. While Rebecca did not expect her interns to plan and teach significant lessons in the
beginning of the year, she was purposeful about providing them opportunities to be in
front of the children in order to develop a teacher identify in the classroom:
I noticed that interns were sometimes just more observing for the first couple of months and not connected and that seemed like something intentional. I really wanted to make sure, not that they taught full lessons, but that they had something every day that they were doing to put them in front of the class. I just wanted the kids to see it as a team because that’s how I wanted it to be, if possible (Int. 2 lines 539-544).

Rebecca purposefully provided opportunities for her intern to utilize their passions with the students in some way, in order to develop a teacher identity in the classroom. She utilized her interns’ interests throughout the year so interns would feel comfortable being a “teacher” in the classroom and also differentiated from Rebecca.

Utilizing her interns’ talents was connected to Tara’s belief that interns need to be authentically themselves in the classroom:

I remember specifically interviewing for my position here in the Sunshine Valley School District and it was one of my beliefs that I still hold true is everybody comes with different strengths, personalities and passions and that’s who you are as a person and a teacher and that’s going to shine through no matter what. I don’t want someone to walk in and be a mini-me for the whole year. I want them to be able to find out who they are (Int. 3 lines 245-253).

Tara was an intern in the PDS during the very first pilot year. When reflecting on her experience with her mentor, Bonnie, she seemed to recognize that she and her mentor had different teacher identities in the classroom:

Susan was kind of old-school in her demeanor. Her demeanor was very, and still is quiet, and it amazes me because I’m so different from Susan because I’m really
loud and boisterous. Susan was very quiet and she just had this soothing quality about her and every once in a while I put on my Susan. I change my voice and get a little more quiet (Int. 1 lines 77-81).

Tara did not seem to feel that she needed to be exactly like Susan during her internship experience. She was able to be different from her, but still respect Susan’s differences and recognize them as strengths.

Mike did not elaborate about his practice of providing his interns speaking opportunities in the classroom. As a first grade teacher, Amy utilized station teaching throughout the year in order to provide small group instruction to her students, and that context provided many opportunities for her interns to be viewed as a “teacher” in front of the students in her class, but she did not describe utilizing her interns’ passions or talents the way Rebecca and Tara described.

**Over time**

For the three mentors, this practice seems to be something that has always been in place over the course of their mentoring. Rebecca and Tara described believing in this practice prior to their own classroom teaching. Rebecca clearly articulated her personal experiences which empowered her as a student and how they had impacted her mentoring practice. Tara also recognized, as an intern herself, the idea that teachers had separate identities as she described herself as being so different from her mentor, Susan. Mike suggested that he always believed his interns should have opportunities to speak in front of the student prior to teaching them. For Amy, there seemed to a shift in what the teacher opportunities looked like in fourth grade compared to first grade. While she
valued her intern being themselves in the classroom, she grappled in fourth grade figuring out what that looked like exactly.

**Connections to the Yendol-Hoppey and Dana Framework**

Tara and Rebecca were both committed to helping their interns discover themselves and develop a teacher identity all their own in the classroom in a different way than compared to Mike and Amy. According to Rebecca, “Teaching takes a lot of energy and I think when you can find ways to really engage your own passions it really feeds that energy you need to keep going.” (Int. 3 lines 91-93). One of the components of effective mentoring is Nurturing the Development of a Mentee’s Professional Dispositions. According to Yendol-Hoppey and Dana:

> When we recognize that teaching is not simply what one does, but who one is, it becomes critical to examine the professional dispositions that are a part of our mentee’s makeup. Professional dispositions refer to a prevailing frame of mind or spirit that is part of the fabric of not just who one is as a teacher, but who one is as a person as well (p. 24).

Rebecca and Tara’s practice of developing teacher identity in their interns is at the heart of developing professional dispositions. Yendol-Hoppey and Dana describe four dispositions: Commitment to Equity, Commitment to Inquiry, Commitment to Collaboration, and Commitment to a Strong Work Ethic. Perhaps this dedication to development of a teacher identity would add to the professional dispositions component. Commitment to Teacher Identity would be a disposition where mentors are purposeful about helping their interns find ways to bring who they are as people to the teaching career.
This practice also illustrates how these mentors create an educative mentoring context by developing a strong relationship with their interns. “A mentor needs to identify ways to encourage the novice to exercise agency rather than act as a passive recipient in the learning-to-teach process,” (Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, p.17). These mentors did exactly this by encouraging their interns to bring their passions to their classroom teaching. Rebecca and Tara learn about their interns on a personal level which contributed to their strong relationship. They taught their interns that teaching does not have to be solely about teaching the curriculum provided to you. There were opportunities for the interns to combine their personal interests and talents with their teaching.

Rebecca and Tara were purposeful in providing opportunities for their interns to not just be viewed as a “teacher” in the classroom by others, but begin to develop their own “teacher identity” by pursuing their interests and passions, therefore fulfilling an internal dimension to this practice. Interns spend an entire school year in their classroom and do not have responsibilities for significant teaching in the fall semester. Rebecca and Tara utilized the fall semester time to gradually develop a teacher identity in their intern so the transition to significant teaching responsibilities in the spring was seamless for both the intern and the students in the classroom. Mike and Amy seemed to have a similar goal of building their interns’ confidence levels for teaching, and for Amy the “teacher” opportunities provided small group instruction for her students. Their practices reflected a more external dimension of “teacher” opportunities. They did not seem to consider the internal dimension of “teacher identity” like Rebecca and Tara who utilized
the talents and interests of their interns as a strategy for helping their intern develop a 
teacher identity that was separate from the mentor.

**Practice 3: Co-teaching**

**Describing the Mentor’s Practices**

The data from this study shows that all of the four mentors engaged in the practice 
of co-teaching with their intern. One mentor in particular identified the struggle of 
moving to a new grade level and its impact on her mentoring. The next section describes 
what co-teaching practices looked like in each mentor’s classroom.

**Rebecca.** Co-teaching existed in a variety of models in Rebecca’s classroom. At 
times she described utilizing the models of One Teach, One Guide, Parallel Teach, 
Alternative Teach, or Station Teach (Badiali and Titus, 2010). It depended on the intern, 
the subject matter, and the classroom of students. Rebecca engaged in co-teaching to both 
support her third grade students, and as a mentoring practice to support her interns:

Some of it is both of us teaching in the same lesson or having a role that the 
intern has in that lesson. Sometimes it’s the intern teaches a part and I teach 
another part of it, sometimes we break into groups and teach. Continuing to 
find and incorporate team teaching in many ways, I think, is a valuable part of 
mentoring and part of their learning process (Int. 3 lines 118-122).

**Mike.** Co-teaching was a central practice in Mike’s mentoring. He believed that 
ninety percent of the time in the classroom should be spent co-teaching as interns have a 
lifetime of solo teaching ahead of them. He believed co-teaching provided safety and 
support for his intern during the year-long internship.
In Mike’s classroom, co-teaching often followed the models of Mentor Modeling or One Teach, One Guide. As previously described, Mike’s interns spent much of the fall semester observing which is when he would use Mentor Modeling. Like Rebecca, Mike described his co-teaching practice as one that could help support his intern. Below he discussed an illustration of One Teach, One Guide with Hayley:

Part of the reason that I jumped in and said that to Hayley at that moment was because I’m not sure Hayley, or any of my interns necessarily, always feel comfortable to change their lesson plan midstream or to make such a drastic kind of intervention because it wasn’t in their plan or something. So I thought that would be the best way to handle the problem that kind of arose in the moment that we didn’t expect to happen, but I didn’t feel she would’ve felt comfortable making that change right then (Check in Int. 2 lines 93-98).

Mike elaborated about why this is the most prevalent co-teaching model in his classroom:

It’s not as common that we do the co-teaching model where we’re both in front of the class providing [instruction] at the same time. Usually I think that’s just because [of a lack of] content knowledge and confidence of teaching that way for my interns. I might teach that way if I taught with the learning enrichment teacher or the learning support teacher that felt more comfortable doing that. I have found that my interns usually are more comfortable when, this might not be true it just seems to be what I notice, when they get to support me or when I support them, and less likely to be open to us teaching lessons together at the same time in a finishing each other’s sentences kind of way (Check in Int. 2 lines 134-141).
In another illustration of co-teaching in Mike’s classroom, he utilized “Alternative” teaching during language arts workshop. Mike was able to meet with small groups of children to target their specific needs, while Hayley conducted individual reading conferences with students who were independently reading:

This week we were trying out her doing the reading conferences independently without me kind of sitting there hovering over her. In the past she has observed me do reading conferences a lot and then we tried about a week and a half to two weeks of her leading the reading conferences while I sat with her and the student and could chime in and kind of help and answer questions about the conference immediately following the conference. But she wanted the chance to do the conference independently and I thought I was a good opportunity because it also freed me up to do kind of this review group. I notice a need that almost every kid in my class had related to citing evidence to support inferences so I was also taking this as an opportunity to meet with four group in two days which is something I don’t always get to do but it was nice that she was here to do some conferences so we’re kind of doubling up on our time. I thought it would be a good chance since she’s seen me do it, we’ve done it together and so forth (Check in Int. 3 lines 11-23).

**Tara.** Unlike Rebecca and Mike, Tara did not specifically name co-teaching in her espoused beliefs about effective mentoring. However classroom observations of her mentoring practice, as well as follow up interviews of the observations revealed this mentoring practice. In her espoused beliefs, she articulated that the intern needs to know they [Tara and her intern] are a team and she is committed to her intern’s development
and success as a teacher which is similar to how Mike and Rebecca utilize co-teaching to support the intern. Co-teaching is a mentoring practice Tara used in order to execute that belief. Some of the co-teaching models that were observed in Tara’s practice included: One Teach, One Guide, Station Teaching, and Synchronous Teaming.

According to Tara, regardless of who is “leading” the lesson, both teachers are aware of the content of the lesson in order to be engaged in student learning. When this type of co-teaching occurs, it most aligns with One Teach, One Guide where one teacher is primarily responsible for instruction, while the other supports students during the lesson.

Some of the classroom observations that occurred during the data collection time period happened to be times when classrooms were preparing or reviewing for the upcoming state assessments. Tara and her intern were observed in the co-teaching model of station teaching:

I provided her with a paper this explains step by step: read the question, circle the math words, make a plan, just very specific so she did that with them yesterday and then today she’s going to take that and have it be less specific and see if they can apply those skills and do that (Check in Int. 2 lines 18-21).

Allison was able to work with students on specific skills, which was something different than what Tara was working on with her students. Tara utilized co-teaching to both support her intern and her classroom students.

Finally, Tara and Allison also engaged in a version of Synchronous Teaming during a classroom observation. The observed example was not a pre-planned lesson as the model dictates (Badiali and Titus, 2010, p. 78), however it did occur later in the
school year after Tara and Allison had learned about each other’s teaching styles and comfort levels:

That came about because I threw her under the bus and mentioned that I knew Allison had lived other places so maybe she could speak to having the experience of temperature being different or thinking about traveling differences being different; she had no idea I was going to say that, she just fielded that really naturally (Check in Int. 3 lines 11-15).

Interestingly, Tara commented that she “threw her under the bus” when in reality, this example probably occurred because of how the relationship between Tara and Allison had grown and evolved over the course of the internship year. While this is a brief and simplistic example of Synchronous Teaming, it is an illustration of what it can look like in PDS classrooms.

**Amy.** As described in her profile, Amy was teaching a new grade level for the first time and serving as a mentor. It was a challenging experience for her. During an observation late in the year, Amy was observed teaching a small group reading lesson while her intern sat next to her and observed following the Mentor Modeling model of co-teaching. When asked if that was typical of her mentoring during this time of year, she explained:

Reading is certainly the thing I have the hardest time giving up and I’m having a hard time giving it up because I don’t know what direction to push her in. I don’t know what even the right answer is. I don’t know what good instruction in fourth grade reading looks like. I don’t know how to make reading instruction good in fourth grade. I’m still playing with it so I’m trying to include her in that process
because she’s struggling with what to do because she doesn’t have a picture of what it should look like because I don’t have a picture. We keep changing. It has evolved so much this year. I’m trying to find things I can hand her and not just pull this out of thin air and make up an idea for and teach her the answers are in books. As a teacher your job isn’t to invent things it’s to find the right pair between what you know about your kids and what resources you have (Check in Int. 1 lines 32-39; 53-56).

In another example, Amy was observed in more of a One Teach, One Guide co-teaching model during a science lesson. In this example, her intern was taking the lead with teaching the lesson, and Amy supported small group and individual students during the lesson. Again, Amy attributed it to her content knowledge of the subject. “She [Jamie] had done this lesson before in her science methods class before, so she was the one who had more experience with it, I had never taught it or even seen it,” (Check in Int. lines 119-120). According to Amy, being new to a grade level impacted some of the co-teaching that was observed in Amy’s room.

Prior to teaching fourth grade, Amy utilized Station Teaching as a first grade teacher. For example, Amy might use stations to teach literacy. Student would work through four stations all focused on reading and writing instruction in some way. As a primary teacher, Amy had a para-professional to work with as well as an intern, so station teaching was prevalent. Each “teacher” had separate responsibilities for their station but related to literacy.

**Reasons why**
Rebecca’s motivation for being a mentor was to have another teacher in her classroom, therefore co-teaching was a practice that supported her goal of two teachers in the classroom supporting her third grade students. One example of this occurred during math instruction. Rebecca was able to group students homogeneously and work with a small group of students at an advanced pace, while her intern supported students who may need more guidance. In another example, Rebecca utilized co-teaching within a unit of study using the model of One Teach, One Guide as she and her intern shared the responsibilities of teaching different lessons.

Working with different interns, Rebecca has learned that co-teaching can be a helpful practice for supporting interns who may need to develop more confidence in solo teaching. “I think this year in particular with having an intern that struggled more independently, team teaching was helpful and we hoped to kind of get her working with smaller groups” (Int. 3 lines 145-147).

One of Mike’s beliefs about effective mentoring was about the importance of co-teaching with his intern. Mike spent much of his student teaching experience alone in the classroom, so he has always believed in providing the opposite experience for his preservice teachers. Professional development provided by the PDS helped him to affirm his practice and give it a name:

I have always had my personal beliefs about what mentoring should look like. When I started hearing about co-teaching through the PDS, a lot of it lined up with what I already believed. I kind of already had a feeling with myself about what it should look like when two teachers are working together. I didn’t know that you’d call all those different ways or different models of co-teaching
necessarily until I learned about it at the intern Jumpstart times. I haven’t taken a class in co-teaching or anything but I have been exposed to it through the Jumpstarts and things like that (check in Int. 2 lines 55-61).

While Mike’s personal experience with student teaching impacted his belief about co-teaching in the classroom, the professional development opportunities provided by the PDS impacted his learning by providing him professional language for what he believed to be the best model for his intern to learn. Like Rebecca, Mike used co-teaching as a practice to support his intern, but unlike Rebecca did not describe it as a practice to support the students in his classroom. He previously described that in his mentoring experience, his interns did not seem to be as comfortable with co-teaching models like Synchronous Teaming.

Like Rebecca, Tara utilized co-teaching to support both her intern and her students. During the math lesson where she used station teaching in preparation for the upcoming state assessment, small group instruction supported the differing needs of her students. As she has previously stated, regardless of who is leading a lesson, both she and her intern need to know what is happening. Co-teaching provided her intern opportunities to assess the needs of small groups of students and contribute to planning for subsequent instruction.

The co-teaching examples from fourth grade seem to stem from Amy’s admitted struggles with content and student learner knowledge in a new grade level. She used Mentor Modeling during a reading lesson because she was not confident enough with her own content knowledge to utilize different co-teaching methods. During an example when Amy utilized One Teach, One Guide, the intern had more knowledge about the
lesson to be taught since she experienced it as a student herself. As for co-teaching in first grade, station teaching allowed Amy to support her student and differentiate based on their needs and interests.

**Over time**

Rebecca credited her involvement with professional development sessions provided by the PDS to developing her knowledge of co-teaching and giving her practice a name:

> We’ve certainly had sessions on that. I think I did some of that, but maybe not as intentionally and naming it as explicitly as after having the team teaching sessions that we’ve had. I think those were really helpful. In the PDS retreats that we’ve had people talked about that and I really tried to pay attention to that (Int. 3 lines 139-142).

Rebecca utilized co-teaching as a mentoring practice to both support her students and her interns. She is able to have two teachers in the classroom and group students in ways they could receive more support from an adult and provided small group instruction opportunities for her interns to build their teaching confidence. The professional development opportunities provided by the PDS throughout the year impacted Rebecca’s practice to learn more about co-teaching.

During Mike’s years of mentoring, he seemed to describe a consistency in his co-teaching models. Most of the fall semester, his interns are consistently observing his practice so they are mostly engaged in Mentor Modeling. He described utilizing One Teach, One Guide as the prominent co-teaching model throughout the rest of the year because it allowed Mike to be present in the classroom and the lesson, and his interns
seemed to be most comfortable with that particular model. The idea of a co-teaching model was always how Mike envisioned that preservice teachers should be prepared, and his participation in the PDS provided him the language of the models that he did not previously know.

Tara experienced growth and change in her co-teaching practice during her time as a mentor:

Co-teaching has changed significantly for me throughout my time as a mentor. As an unseasoned mentor, I believed my mentoring role was to take the lead in terms of teaching and that I held more of the knowledge of what it meant to be a teacher. A few years after my first mentoring year, I took a Central State University course dedicated to Co-teaching. During this course, I learned different types of co-teaching and opened up to experimenting with various co-teaching models. As my confidence grew as a teacher and mentor, so did my willingness to open myself up to exploration and implementation of these models. I was willing to take more risks and trust more in terms of my interns, as well as open myself up to being vulnerable in my role as a teacher (email conversation 1/18/16).

For Amy, the grade level change from first to fourth grade had a significant impact on her co-teaching practice:

Co-teaching in first grade was different from fourth last year because in first grade, when I knew the content well, I had a better understanding of how to differentiate and how different needs could be met by different teachers. In fourth grade, I struggle anticipating sticky spots, variables in pacing, and how to
incorporate student interests and learning profiles. My lack of experience with the content has left me less flexible in my first year of fourth as opposed to first grade where I saw multiple paths to the same learning. Because I don’t have those multiple pathways in my mind, it was harder to support an intern in co-teaching methods I might have used in first grade like stations, guide on the side like having the intern work with a small handful of struggling students, pre-teaching a skill to certain kids, etc. There is also the fact that first graders demand more interaction and fourth graders work more independently. In first grade I relied on having an extra set of hands where in fourth students need some "alone time" to grapple with their work (email conversation 1/1/16).

For Rebecca, Mike, and Tara, they all described ways their participation in PDS impacted co-teaching. Rebecca and Mike identified professional development retreats this highlighted the language and named the strategies for them. Tara participated in a university course through the PDS where she learned more about what co-teaching is and the different models. Amy described how teaching different grade levels impacted her co-teaching over time.

**Connections to the Dana & Yendol-Hoppey Framework**

The mentors’ co-teaching practices represented a variety of models as depicted by Badiali and Titus, 2010. Across all of the mentors was a theme of using co-teaching to support interns as they develop into competent teachers at some point in their mentoring. Amy as a fourth grade teacher, described the challenge of supporting her intern with co-teaching without having a level of content knowledge she was confident in when teaching a new grade level. In addition, Rebecca and Tara specifically described
how they are able to support the needs of their students and interns in different ways by utilizing different models of co-teaching, something Amy described doing as a first grade teacher. Mike’s purpose for co-teaching seemed to focus on support for his intern in learning to teach. The use of co-teaching emphasized a commitment to collaboration, one of the dispositions of a successful educator:

> Novice teachers need to learn how to collaborate within their work environment so that they can contribute to ongoing improvement in their professional practice. A mentor can help build the foundation for novices to collaborate with other professionals (Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, p. 26).

Co-teaching exposed interns to collaborating with another professional in order to meet the needs of all students. While interns may not move on as inservice teachers in co-teaching settings, the foundation for collaboration was modeled and practiced during the internship year.

In addition to developing a commitment to collaboration, co-teaching can support an educative mentoring context. When considering Tara’s example of synchronous teaming, certainly one can conclude that Allison and Tara must have established a strong relationship in order to be able to co-teach in that way. The way Tara described Allison as “fielding it naturally” demonstrated the existence of a strong relationship between the two. Co-teaching can also be utilized to ascertain prior knowledge. In Amy’s example of using One Teach, One Guide during a science lesson, she recounted how the intern had more knowledge of the content and lesson than she had herself because she had experienced the lesson as a student in her science methods course.
Practicing 4: Collaborating with the Professional Development Associate (PDA)

Describing the Mentors’ Practices

Another practice that occurred across all four mentors in this study was their utilization of the Professional Development Associate (PDA) assigned to their intern. All four mentors engaged in this practice, but there were similarities and differences in what this practice looked like across the mentors. Unlike the previous practices described, collaborating with the PDA was not a key practice the mentors articulated explicitly in interviews about their mentoring beliefs. This practice emerged from the data analysis process. When the mentors articulated practices, I asked them why they engaged in those practices and how they had changed over time. As a result, the preceding sections described reasons why some of the mentors engaged in those practices, as well as how some of them had changed over time. Because none of the mentors articulated using the PDA as a specific mentoring practice, I could not ask them why or how the practice had changed over time. Thus, the section that follows explains only what the practice looks like.

Rebecca. Rebecca utilized her PDAs to support her as a mentor and a classroom teacher. As a mentor, she described receiving support from her PDA during challenging times with her interns, as well as learning how to mentor in order to provide feedback to her intern. She also utilized the PDA to support her interns. Finally, as a classroom teacher, she described how she used the PDA’s expertise to use in her classroom for supporting students.
During Rebecca’s most recent year of mentoring, she described working with her PDA to strategize how to best support Amanda, a struggling intern. In this example, Rebecca received mentor support from her PDA:

The PDA has been very supportive and I have really appreciated that. Yes, we did spend significant time talking about it. I’d text her and say, “Hey I really need to be with you. We need to brainstorm. Can we meet? She’s falling apart at this point. I need some help. I need help being able to articulate with her, what do you suggest?” (Int. 4 lines 87-91).

Rebecca needed to talk with her PDA about Amanda’s struggles prior to helping Amanda. The PDA became a sounding board for Rebecca to vent about her frustrations and solicit ideas for how to best support the intern.

In addition to receiving mentor support from her PDA, Rebecca, also described learning how to mentor from her PDAs, specifically in regards to providing feedback. Rebecca admired Dan’s abilities to provide feedback to the interns and strived to provide feedback in the same way. He served as a model for gradually releasing the responsibility of evaluation from himself to the intern. “He does that so gradually and so slowly you really have to just pay attention because at the end he’s not really telling them anything, they’re naming it all and he does that so skillfully” (Int. 2 lines 474-476).

Over the years, Rebecca has mentored a number of interns, including some who have struggled in different ways and she has always utilized her PDA to support her interns. Her profile describes Christina, Bobby, Lisa, and Amanda, four interns who experienced different struggles during their internship. Through interview transcripts, the language of “we” was often used when describing her work with the different PDAs
assigned to her over the years. With her first intern, Christina, Rebecca describes working with her PDA, Dan, to differentiate expectations:

I had an intern that was very strong in many ways, but she also had just some real difficulties completing things on time and getting things in and it took a lot of support to get her to complete things and to really encourage her because she would get anxious. Dan was the PDA and we worked together to really encourage her and give her extra support so she could complete some of the tasks some of the kind of things she needed to get done on a regular basis, (Int. 4 lines 4-7).

Examples also occurred during the years Rebecca worked with Bobby and Lisa with Josh as her PDA. In the year Bobby was her intern, Josh was sensitive to Bobby’s family and financial needs. In the year Lisa was her intern, Josh was sensitive to Lisa’s medical needs. Like Rebecca and Dan, Rebecca and Josh adjusted deadlines and responsibilities in order for Bobby to be successful with coursework and classroom assignments, and found resources to help him with his financial needs. While mentoring Lisa, Josh and Rebecca worked together to provide Lisa the best experience she could have knowing she would not pursue a multi-subject elementary teaching position.

These examples illustrate how Rebecca utilized her PDAs to best support her interns who have struggled in different ways over the years. She reflected about the positive experiences she had when working with her PDA to meet her interns’ needs:

But the PDAs have always been really great and flexible. I can see that that wouldn’t be the case sometimes but I was really lucky I think that I had PDAs that really had that same sense of feeling that we really need to differentiate here. But I also think that that’s part of the philosophy; my take on the philosophy of the
PDS is that the reason we have this full year program is because we have so many differences and people that need different things and this gives them that opportunity to actually go through that full year and be able to be successful. How do we help people be successful? It’s not going to be the same for everyone (Int. 4 lines 91-98).

Finally, Rebecca utilized her PDA in her classroom to support content and student learning while simultaneously supporting her intern. In her experience, Rebecca has worked with two PDAs, who had particular content expertise in mathematics. These PDAs have worked with Rebecca and her interns to plan and teach math units:

I’ve had PDAs that were experts in math to help them [interns]. I loved working with Katherine. I liked having her because she was so helpful with math and I tried to utilize her expertise and gifts and asked her to help plan math units with them and model, she would model lessons once a week so that felt neat to me to be able to utilize her expertise in doing that (Int. 2 lines 504-510).

It is important to distinguish that Rebecca did not utilize the PDA to learn about math instruction herself in this example, but as a way to support her students and her intern. Rebecca volunteered to mentor in the PDS program because she wanted another teacher in her classroom. She did not solely work with her PDA from the perspective of a mentor. She recognized the expertise her PDAs had and worked with them as teachers, as well. In the example of working with MJ to plan and model math lessons in her classroom, Rebecca had the opportunity to have two additional teachers in her classroom, her intern and her PDA. The use of the PDA in this way enacted the first of the 4 E’s of
the CSU/SVSD PDS program: Enhance the educational experiences of all learners; in particular, Rebecca’s third grade students.

**Tara.** Tara described collaborating with her PDA for mentor support and intern support. She identified working with her PDA during a struggling time with an intern. She also relied on her PDA to provide feedback to her intern when teaching responsibilities did not allow Tara to sit down immediately and debrief with her intern.

When Tara worked with her first intern, she experienced struggles related to her intern’s lack of preparation for teaching content. She recounted how supportive her PDA, George, was in helping her navigate that struggle.

We tried different things. George was great. He was a fantastic PDA all around. Hugely supportive. He sometimes said some of the hard stuff that I wasn’t able to say or he said it in a different way, but he was also very understanding (Int. 2 lines 108-110).

Tara did not feel alone when she needed to have tough conversations with her intern. She genuinely appreciated when George was able to communicate things to her intern that were difficult for Tara to say. She utilized the PDA as a source of mentor support during this challenging time. In this year-long PDS partnership, mentors are with their interns day in and day out throughout the year-long internship. While the PDAs are present week to week, often seeing their interns for at least two hours per week, PDAs are not “living with” the intern on a daily basis. George’s willingness to have hard conversations with Tara’s intern may have relieved Tara of experiencing hurt feelings from her intern in the classroom the very next day. Collaborating with the PDA in this way can help to develop or preserve a relationship between the intern and the mentor.
The PDA was willing to sacrifice his relationship with the intern temporarily in order to support the mentor.

One of Tara’s beliefs about effective mentoring was to provide specific feedback and to conduct systematic observations, but she struggled with the challenging time constraints in the school day. One solution to this problem was for Tara to utilize her PDA as a resource to provide feedback to her intern during these challenging times which supported both Tara and the intern. After her intern is finished teaching a lesson, Tara sometimes did not have time to debrief with an intern because she may be teaching the next lesson. In these circumstances, Tara appreciated when the PDA could debrief the lesson with her intern so feedback could be provided in a timely manner:

I think something that’s been really helpful that’s happened in the last few years, is when a lesson is taught and you have a few minutes to take someone out and decompress that whole lesson because I don’t have time until much later to talk about a lesson. If Allison has just taught something, I really appreciate when the PDA can take the intern right away and talk about that lesson. Sometimes I don’t get to it until after school, sometimes I don’t get to it until the day after that. It could take awhile (Int. 2 lines 545-550).

In terms of collaborating with the PDA as a resource for her mentoring, Tara described receiving mentor support from her PDA while working with a struggling intern, as well as having the PDA available to provide immediate feedback to her intern when she could not which supports Tara’s mentoring as well as the intern who desired and deserved feedback. Tara’s collaboration with of the PDA included both mentor and intern support.
**Amy.** Amy described collaborating with her PDA in both different and similar ways from Rebecca and Tara. As a new mentor, she identified instances of learning from her PDA, alongside her intern, about classroom teaching. Additionally, she learned about mentoring from her PDA. She also described receiving mentor support and intern support from her PDA when she worked with struggling interns.

As shared previously in her profile, Amy’s described being vulnerable with her intern in order to develop a trusting relationship. For example, she recounted learning effective teaching strategies from her first PDA, Margaret, a veteran teacher within the school district. Amy was able to use Margaret’s expertise to help herself and her intern develop these types of knowledge about their students. As a new teacher and mentor, Amy learned teaching strategies from utilizing Margaret’s expertise in her classroom by having her model reading lessons. Margaret had taught second grade for many years in the district and her knowledge of primary learners was valuable to both Amy and her intern:

There was one particular time, Margaret had given Ashley feedback on her lesson about the kids fiddling with the table and stuff on the table. She told Ashley to not teach reading at a table, and that blew my mind. [I thought], Oh my, that’s how I have my classroom set up, that’s how everyone else in this school has their classroom set up. So Margaret showed us how to put the chairs in the same shape as the table, but without the table, and then there is nothing for the kids to touch and they weren’t on the floor, so they weren’t rolling and doing all those things (Int. 2 lines 68-76).
In addition to learning about effective teaching strategies from her PDA, Amy described what she also learned about effective mentoring strategies. During Amy’s first year as a mentor, Margaret modeled how she valued making time and space for thoughtful reflection. Margaret would always take Amy’s intern aside after a teaching experience to debrief the lesson and allow space for reflection. “It was something she valued which taught me to value that as well. They need a chance to talk it out” (Int. 2 lines 292-293).

In addition to working with Margaret, Amy specifically recalled working with her PDA Josh, who supported her intern Brianne in trying her ideas in the classroom, and taught Amy about mentoring:

Josh was very supportive in letting her try things and reflect on her own teaching and I guess I had learned this from Josh, when Josh had been my PDA. He would always say, “One, kids can smell fear, and two, kids are the most forgiving creatures on the planet.” So you can’t mess them up. Josh very much felt that way and as long as you are kind and respectful to children, then it doesn’t matter what else you do. So letting Brianne “fail,” it wasn’t so much letting her fail as much as it was letting her really see what she was getting herself into (Int. 2 lines 382-388).

Josh was the impetus for supporting Brianne in trying new ideas in the classroom. More than that, Amy learned about what allowing her interns to “fail” actually meant for her mentoring.

In addition to learning from her PDA as both a classroom teacher and mentor, Amy described collaborating with her PDA for both mentor and intern support when her
Amy struggled to develop a trusting relationship with her intern, Michelle. When she spoke about working with her PDA to problem solve this situation, Amy often used the term “we” language in her interview when referring to her mentor-PDA partnership:

The PDA and I kept strategizing, “well how about we go this route?” so we tried things like maybe if we keep a communication log, maybe if I write it down for you, you can take home what the expectations are, maybe we start a Googledoc so you can see all the questions written down so when you go home you can have them. So we tried different interventions to support her and try to scaffold her own reflection (Int. 4 lines 27-31).

Amy did not have to navigate these types of struggles on her own. She was able to receive support for her mentoring by strategizing one on one with her PDA to brainstorm strategies for supporting her intern in being successful. These examples of collaborating with the PDA illustrate how Amy both learned from her PDA as a teacher and mentor and how she worked with her PDA to support struggling interns.

Mike. Mike described how he utilized his PDA as a resource for learning about his teaching. When he was a brand new mentor in the PDS, Mike did not utilize his PDA in this manner. Over time, however, he recognized the wealth of expertise his PDAs had, and began to seek out their feedback about his teaching:

I felt like when Dan was my PDA especially I felt like I wanted to tap into him as a resource for myself and since he was in there watching me teach so much why not ask for his feedback? I would often seek feedback when Dan was around. I didn’t do that as much with Joan and I definitely did not do that much with Jessica
because I was definitely new to the whole thing. Even with Joan and now with Iris who was Justine’s PDA and is my current intern’s PDA, I definitely have started to ask them their thoughts and kind of use them as a resource for my own teaching. I mean they are going to be in here as much as they are, and they see me teach, they must have thoughts about it. So why not figure out what their thoughts are because these are people that have a wealth of experience that should be drawn from (Int. 2 lines 266-275).

Mike utilized the PDA in order to receive feedback about his classroom teaching versus learning new ideas for teaching, receiving support as a mentor, or receiving support for his interns. He is unlike the other three mentors because according to Mike, he had not experienced a struggling intern during his years as a mentor, which would explain why he did not have examples of collaborating with the PDA for support.

**Comparing the Practice Across all mentors**

All four mentors in this study utilized the PDA as a resource in some way. Across the four mentors, there were similarities and differences among the ways in which they utilized the PDAs. Sometimes, the mentor learned mentoring techniques from the PDA. In other cases, the mentor learned strategies related to teaching. There are other examples when the mentor received support from the PDA when working with struggling interns. The following section describes those similarities and differences in how the mentor, as both a mentor and teacher, utilized the PDA.

**Mentors.** Three of the four mentors used their PDA as a resource to support their mentoring in two ways. First, three mentors described how they used their PDA as a resource for mentor support. Rebecca, Tara, and Amy all utilized their PDA for mentor
support during times with struggling interns. Whether they needed to vent, brainstorm strategies, or needed the PDA to have hard conversations, they all described receiving mentor support during those difficult times. When asked to describe a particular struggle with an intern, these mentors used “we” in their language without hesitation to indicate they were not in the struggle alone. As a result, this practice allowed these mentors to be able to create an educative mentoring context by providing emotional support to the intern and developing a strong relationship with the intern. Have a third person to relieve the mentor of navigating struggles on their own was a common use of the PDA among Rebecca, Tara, and Amy. Tara also received mentor support when her PDA was available to provide feedback to her intern immediately following a lesson. Second, these mentors described how they used their PDA as a resource to learn about mentoring. Both Rebecca and Amy described instances when they used their PDA as a resource to learn how to mentor. For example, Rebecca talked about the manner in which Dan provided feedback to her intern and how there was a gradual release of responsibility from him providing feedback to the intern reflecting about her teaching. Rebecca admired that process and tried to enact it herself as a mentor. Amy learned from Margaret about valuing reflection as an important component of providing feedback to interns. Watching Margaret provide time for interns to talk about their teaching consistently taught Amy to value that as well. Josh also taught Amy about allowing her interns to “fail” and what that meant for her mentoring.

**Interns.** Rebecca, Tara, and Amy all used their PDA to support their interns. When navigating different strategies for struggling interns, the mentor and PDA worked as a team to implement strategies to support the intern. In addition to using their PDA to
navigate struggles with different interns over the years, Tara talked about using her PDA as a resource to support her interns by providing feedback. When Tara was unable to provide timely feedback to her intern following a teaching episode, she appreciated when her PDA would debrief with her intern, providing immediate feedback. This feedback provided support to both the intern and to Tara since it created an opportunity for the intern to get immediate feedback, something which Tara believed as a mentor was important. Rebecca also used the PDA to support her intern in planning for instruction by utilizing the PDA’s teaching expertise.

**Teaching.** Data from the mentors indicated that mentors also use their PDA as a resource for their classroom teaching to support student learning. They did not solely view PDAs as resources for mentoring, but as resources for their own teaching. Rebecca described this practice when speaking about her years working with Katherine and utilizing her math expertise in the classroom. Katherine would model and teach math lessons in order to support the math instruction for the students in the classroom. Amy also described using her PDA as a resource to learn teaching strategies that impacted her classroom teaching and her students. As a new teacher and mentor in the school district, Amy and her intern would watch the PDA, Margaret, model and teach reading lessons. Amy received professional development from the PDA that impacted her classroom teaching strategies in addition to her mentoring.

**Feedback.** Mike utilized the PDA differently from the other three mentors. He described using his PDAs as a resource to evaluate and enhance his own teaching performance. Mike did not necessarily have PDAs teach in his classroom, nor did he describe new teaching strategies that he learned from his PDAs. He did, however, share
that as he became a more seasoned mentor in the PDS, he sought feedback about his own teaching performance from PDAs whom he felt valuable expertise to share. Again, he did not perceive any significant struggles with the interns he had mentored which may explain his limited use of the PDA.

**Connections to the Yendol-Hoppey and Dana Framework**

The second component of Yendol-Hoppey and Dana’s effective mentoring is Guide a Mentee’s Professional Knowledge Development. The authors describe seven different types of knowledge within this component: curriculum, pedagogical, content, student learner, context, pedagogical content, and classroom management. Rebecca certainly utilized the mathematical content knowledge expertise of her PDAs to support her interns, and arguably many of the other types of knowledge. Amy’s examples of working with Margaret, the veteran primary teacher, to learn alongside her intern about teaching first grade, were illustrations of guiding the mentee’s knowledge in the areas of student learners and classroom management.

In addition to collaborating with the PDA to develop particular knowledge bases in their interns, Rebecca utilized her PDAs to support her interns’ mathematical planning and instruction, which demonstrated a Commitment to Collaboration, one of the Dispositions of a Successful Educator, as depicted by Yendol-Hoppey and Dana. This practice modeled how to collaborate with other professionals in order to support the needs of students.

All of the examples of collaborating with the PDA to provide intern support from Rebecca, Tara, and Amy are connected to Developing an Educative Mentoring Context.
The year-long internship is a demanding commitment. Collaborating with the PDAs to support interns likely provided emotional support, especially to the interns who struggled.

Thus far, this chapter has described four specific mentoring practices among the participants in this study. Illustrations accompany each of the practices to understanding what each practice looks like in each mentor’s classroom. First, co-planning, which all four mentors practiced in different ways. Second, providing opportunities for the intern to be seen as a teacher. All four mentors in the study engaged in this practice, although the two veteran mentors developed an internal dimension of “teacher identity” in their interns while the novice mentors focused on an external dimension of this practice. The third practice was co-teaching which three mentors in the study practiced. The final practice was collaborating with the PDA as a resource. All of the mentors practiced this in different ways as mentors and classroom teachers. After analyzing these practices, the following section describes two claims that can be made from the data.

Claims

1. Mentors’ practices in the PDS can be characterized as mentor-focused or intern-focused, or sometimes both.

Through analyzing the practices of theses mentors, characterizations emerged regarding the practices. There were some practices among mentors that seemed to be primarily focused on the intern as the beneficiary. These practices are labeled as intern-focused. Other practices seemed to be more focused on benefits for the individual mentor or the mentor’s students. These practices are labeled as mentor-focused. These practices might be conceptualized through the use of a Venn diagram where one circle encompasses mentor-focused practices while the other encompasses intern-focused
practices (See Figure 9). It is not the intent to claim that mentors themselves are solely mentor-focused or intern-focused. They might engage in practices in both circles of the Venn diagram. It is also possible for a mentor to engage in practices where the two circles may overlap and focus on both the mentor and intern simultaneously. It is not the practice per se that determines whether it is primarily mentor or intern-focused, but rather the way in which the practice is used and who is the primary beneficiary of the practice. The following sections first describe the mentor-focused practices, followed by the intern-focused practices, and finally, practices that might be characterized as focused on both the mentor and intern.

![Figure 9. Venn Diagram of mentoring practices. This diagram illustrates how the mentoring practices can be conceptualized as mentor-focused, intern-focused, or both.](image)

**Mentor-focused practices**

**Co-teaching**

All of the mentors utilized co-teaching, and at times did so in mentor-focused ways. For Mike, co-teaching is a major focus of his mentoring. He believes effective
mentoring requires him to be present and co-teach with his intern as often as possible. He needs to be able to fulfill his mentoring responsibilities and if he is not co-teaching with his intern, he will not be able to do that. When Mike utilized Alternative teaching in classroom, his students benefitted because he used small group instruction in order to target specific needs he saw as the teacher. While Mike taught small groups of students, Hayley was available to conduct individual reading conferences with students about their independent reading.

In some ways, Rebecca used co-teaching with a focus on herself as both a mentor and classroom teacher. She believes that co-teaching is a valuable practice for mentoring interns, but she also used co-teaching as the key to having more than one teacher in her classroom. By using models like station teach, parallel teach, and others, she can support the needs of the students in her third grade classroom.

Similarly for Tara, using co-teaching in her classroom can help her as a classroom teacher. Station teaching and One Teach, One Guide, are examples of co-teaching models she has used to support her students. She can differentiate lessons, and be available to support individual students who may need her attention while her intern is teaching. Tara also described how learning about co-teaching through a university course, helped her to become a better mentor. The more she learned and experimented with co-teaching, she learned to trust her intern more rather than feel that she had to provide her intern with all of the answers.

Amy did not utilize co-teaching as much during her first year as a fourth grade teacher to identify her co-teaching practice as mentor-focused or intern-focused. Her examples of using station co-teaching as a first grade teacher were mentor-focused as
she was able to support her students in a variety of ways in small group instruction. As a fourth grade teacher, even though she minimally used co-teaching, the focus was on Amy as a mentor, struggling through the content and learning curve of teaching a new grade level:

I don’t know what even the right answer is. I don’t know what good instruction in fourth grade reading looks like. I don’t know how to make reading instruction good in fourth grade. I’m still playing with it so I’m trying to include her in that process because she’s struggling with what to do because she doesn’t have a picture of what it should look like because I don’t have a picture (Check in Int. 1 lines 34-38).

The focus was on Amy as a mentor and classroom teacher. Learning a new curriculum and mentoring an intern simultaneously was challenging, but she included Jamie in her journey of trying to figure it out.

**Collaborating with the PDA**

All of the mentors engaged in collaborating with the PDA in ways that could be characterized as mentor-focused. These practices focused on the mentor, or classroom teacher in some way, e.g., the mentor learned about mentoring, classroom teaching, received support for their mentoring by working with the PDA, or sought feedback about their teaching.

**Learning how to mentor.** Rebecca’s practice of collaborating with the PDA helped her to learn about an aspect of mentoring. When Rebecca worked with Dan as her PDA, she admired his ability to give feedback to her intern and tried to use those
skills in her own mentoring. Rebecca used Dan as a resource for learning about how to
provide feedback to interns in her role as a mentor:

I feel so lucky to have started with Dan because I think just his gentle persistent
wisdom about the way he slowly turns over the letting the intern be able to
evaluate themselves. He does that so gradually and so slowly you really have to
just pay attention because at the end he’s not really telling them anything, they’re
naming it all and he does that so skillfully. I always wanted to do that (Int 2 lines
472-476).

For Amy, the year she worked with Margaret taught her to value reflection as a
mentor. “It was something she valued which taught me to value that as well. They need
a chance to talk it out,” (Int 2 lines 292-293).

In addition to working with Margaret, Amy recalled working with Josh, who
supported her intern Brianne in trying her ideas in the classroom. Amy learned what
letting her intern “fail” meant for her mentoring:

Josh was very supportive in letting her try things and reflect on her own teaching
and I guess I had learned this from Josh, when Josh had been my PDA. He would
always say, “One, kids can smell fear, and two, kids are the most forgiving
creatures on the planet.” So you can’t mess them up. Josh very much felt that
way and as long as you are kind and respectful to children, then it doesn’t matter
what else you do. So letting Brianne “fail,” it wasn’t so much letting her fail as
much as it was letting her really see what she was getting herself into (Int. 2 lines
382-388).
**Support for mentoring.** Rebecca’s profile also described examples of times when her interns struggled for various reasons. She discussed collaborating with the PDAs as sources of support for her mentoring during those challenging times:

The PDA has been very supportive and I have really appreciated that. Yes, we did spend significant time talking about it. I’d text her and say, “Hey I really need to be with you. We need to brainstorm. Can we meet? She’s falling apart at this point. I need some help. I need help being able to articulate with her, what do you suggest?” (Int. 4 lines 87-91).

Tara also utilized the PDA in mentor-focused ways. Like Rebecca, Tara utilized her PDA as a source of support for her mentoring when her intern struggled:

Hugely supportive. He sometimes said some of the hard stuff that I wasn’t able to say or he said it in a different way, but he was also very understanding. I remember sitting down with Rodger and just saying, “Hey I really don’t feel like the time and effort is being put into the classroom experience,” (Int. 2 lines 129-132).

Amy also described how she used the PDA for mentor support when working with a struggling intern:

The PDA and I kept strategizing- well about we go this route so we tried things like maybe if we keep a communication log, maybe if I write it down for you, you can take home what the expectations are, maybe we start a Googledoc so you can see all the questions written down so when you go home you can have them (Int. 4 lines 27-30).
The time Amy spent strategizing with the PDA was prior to executing the actual strategies they brainstormed together and that one on one time served as mentor support.

Tara also utilized her PDA to support one of her specific beliefs about mentoring: providing specific feedback:

If Allison has just taught something, I really appreciate when the PDA can take the intern right away and talk about that lesson. Sometimes I don’t get to it until after school, sometimes I don’t get to it until the day after that. It could take awhile (Int. 2 lines 547-550).

In the previous three examples from Rebecca, Tara, and Amy, the PDA was utilized to support the mentors both with intern struggles and to enact mentoring beliefs.

Learning about teaching. Mentors also utilized the PDA for learning about teaching. For Amy, when she worked with Margaret as her PDA, she learned a lot about effective teaching strategies since she was a novice teacher herself:

Margaret would actually come in and model reading lessons a lot, and my intern and I would be sitting there together taking it in. So in a lot of ways it felt like we were in the same place as opposed to me being much more experienced and her not (Int. 2 lines 65-67).

Working with Margaret impacted Amy’s mentoring when she learned to value reflection and was supported while working with a struggling intern, and classroom teaching as she learned effective teaching strategies for reading.

Feedback about teaching. Mike’s description of how he utilized the PDA as a resource was different from the other mentors. He discussed seeking feedback about his
own teaching and soliciting advice for himself as a classroom teacher in a different way than Amy described learning effective teaching strategies from working with Margaret:

I felt like when Dan was my PDA especially I felt like I wanted to tap into him as a resource for myself and since he was in there watching me teach so much why not ask for his feedback? I would often seek feedback when Dan was around. Even with Laura and now with Marion who was Chelsea’s PDA and is my current intern’s PDA, I definitely have started to ask them their thoughts and kind of use them as a resource for my own teaching (Int. 2 266-268; 270-272).

Mike was different compared to the other three mentors as his practice was focused solely on himself as a classroom teacher. It may be that Mike utilized the PDA to learn about and support his mentoring as well, but it did not emerge in this study.

The two mentor practices that seemed to be mentor-focused were collaborating with the PDA, for all of the mentors and co-teaching for Mike, Rebecca, and Tara. The PDAs were utilized in similar and different ways among the four mentors. Co-teaching in Mike, Rebecca, and Tara’s classrooms was also mentor-focused at times due to beliefs about mentors’ responsibilities as well as supporting classroom instruction.

**Intern-focused practices**

**Co-planning**

There were also practices in which mentors engaged which seemed to be primarily focused on the intern. Some of the practices are the same practices that appeared in the previous mentor-focused section, and there are also additional practices which seemed to have an intern focus.
All of the mentors practiced co-planning in an intern-focused way. Rebecca leaves the opportunity available for her intern to contribute to their planning document whenever they feel comfortable:

We could sit together and have the same document, we could both write in it, and use a different color to indicate when she’s teaching. And then it can be updated all the time. That’s part of that philosophy that we both have that same plan right there that we can both write in and both talk about. In the beginning, I’m writing that but as we go then we’re doing it. It’s much more of a co-document that we both add to and we both write in (Int. 2 lines 569-573; Int. 3 lines 93-98).

Where Rebecca used the language of “could” in the previous quotes, demonstrates that she provides a space for her interns to contribute, but she does not necessarily expect it of them right away. Rebecca elaborated on how this practice is differentiated depending on the intern:

Some interns are right there up front helping to think of ideas and planning and some of them it’s a long time before they really begin to enter into that process. I always have them involved in the planning but sometimes I take more of a leadership role, sometimes it’s more of a team role and then my goal is that their independent in the end but wow does that change depending on when they’re ready to do that more independently (Int. 4 lines 102-107).

It seems from Rebecca’s explanation there is progression throughout the year where the co-planning eventually develops into her intern planning on her own.

Rebecca’s practice had more of a focus on her intern than on Rebecca as a mentor.
Interns were welcome to contribute to the plans at any point when they felt comfortable to do so. In addition, she planned using a shared document with her intern, so they felt some ownership in the process.

When Amy engaged in co-planning, she intentionally asked her intern questions to engage them in planning:

I think just asking them questions and not just sitting down at the table and saying, “Okay today we’re going to teach math and this is how we’re going to do it.” Getting to the point, “Well have you seen anything?” Just asking them about what they’ve experienced and encouraging them to look, search for resources or places they can go to for information to then share. That could be visiting a classroom or what they saw in their methods classes (Int. 3 lines 270-275).

At the beginning of the year, Tara purposefully considered her interns during co-planning. She provided time for her interns to share what course work needed to be a part of the plans for the week. In addition to their responsibilities as a student, she felt that as another teacher in the classroom, her interns needed to be aware of what was happening throughout the week.

For Mike, the purpose of co-planning was for his intern to observe exactly how Mike planned for instruction and then use that model in their own planning:

I think I do a better job of modeling what I want lesson plans to look like. What components of a lesson plan I expect to be in place. My interns usually, we start planning together right at the beginning of the year, so we do our check-ins, and we do that on the day that I plan which is usually Thursday. After we do the check-in we sit down and they sit down with me while I plan (Int. 4 lines 83-87).
Teacher Opportunities

There were opportunities for interns to be seen as a “teacher” in each of the mentor’s classrooms. While this practice looked different among the mentors, it was a practice that focused on the intern.

Mike was thoughtful about providing opportunities for his interns to speak in front of the students throughout the fall semester, even though their primary responsibility was to observe in his classroom. He recognized that his interns would need those moments in order for the students in his classroom to view his intern as another teacher in the classroom.

As a first grade teacher, Amy reflected about the opportunities her interns had to lead small group stations during the fall semester. This provided times for her interns to be independent with a small group of students and execute Amy’s plan. Being on their own did provide chances to make small decisions with their small group and build their confidence as a teacher in the classroom. As a fourth grade teacher, Amy’s intern worked one on one and with small groups of students at times, but did not have significant “teacher” opportunities until January when she began to take on Morning Meeting, Calendar Math, and more of the routine types of teaching.

While all of the mentors provided opportunities to be viewed as a teacher in the classroom, Rebecca and Tara, the two veteran mentors, provided opportunities for their interns to develop a separate teacher identity in the classroom that utilized the interns’ strengths and passions. This is considered an intern-focused practice because they intentionally considered their interns’ strengths and passions when trying to find opportunities for them to be seen as a teacher in the classroom.
One particular year, Rebecca had a small group of third grade girls who were talented writers. To provide an alternate curriculum for those students, Rebecca encouraged her intern, Lisa’s strength as a writer. “Lisa was good at that because she was a gifted writer. She was able to work with gifted kids. I mean she had these particular interests and gifts and I feel like I really just tried to encourage those” (Int. 2 lines 369-371). Other examples include an intern who loved kayaking brought her kayak into the classroom and completed a read aloud for the students while sitting in the kayak. Another year, her intern had a love of baseball. Rebecca altered her beginning of the year community building activities with the students to reflect a baseball theme and she specifically had that intern read a baseball book about persistence to the students which featured one of his favorite teams.

Rebecca described that one of her goals is for her interns to feel differentiated from her in the classroom and combining their passions and strengths with opportunities to be seen as the teacher in the classroom contributes to that goal.

Tara also focused on providing opportunities for her intern to be seen as a teacher in the classroom early and often. At the beginning of the year, she purposefully finds ways for her intern to be a partner in the classroom:

I mentioned from the first day you have her [the intern] in Morning Meeting, just like little roles that make sure that they know that they’re a teacher here, too (Int. 2 lines 677-679). That’s probably very typical of the very beginning of school. Just to be present and to have some sort of task sometimes it’s to call on people because I get tired of calling on people or I call on the same people so she might mix it up more than I would (Check in Int. lines 80-83). Having two chairs,
instead of saying “me”, I always say “we”. I think those are the subtle things the interns pick up on as far as we’re in this together. I’m not “the teacher” and you’re “the intern”. We’re a partnership in this (Int. 2 lines 679-682).

Tara also reflected about several interns where she, like Rebecca, encouraged her interns’ passions in teaching. Allison pursued her photography in Tara’s classroom, Holly and others utilized their artistic talents, and Lauren explored her love of the environment. Like Rebecca, Tara wanted her interns to be their own person in the classroom, and not just be a carbon copy of her, but it truly is something that comes from her interns, “I want them to have their new ideas. I definitely allow my interns, if they like, they can try their own things and they don’t have to do it my way. I’m pretty flexible,” (Int. 2 lines 650-652).

Providing interns opportunities to be seen as a teacher was an intern-focused practice among the mentors. As seen with the illustrations, this practice varied in the classrooms, but each mentor recognized the importance of supporting their interns in their role as a teacher in the classroom.

**Co-teaching**

All of the mentors engaged in co-teaching, enacting a variety of co-teaching models like: One Teach, One Guide, Station Teaching, Synchronous Teaming, and Alternative Teaching. The language the mentors used to explain or elaborate upon their co-teaching supports co-teaching as an intern-focused practice. Their language makes it clear that the intent is to use co-teaching as an opportunity for interns to develop specific teaching skills or practice specific kinds of teaching in a small group environment.
For Rebecca, “continuing to find and incorporate team teaching in many ways, I think, is a valuable part of mentoring and part of their learning process,” (Int. 3 lines 120-122). In particular, during the observed mentoring year, Rebecca worked with an intern who had some struggles with independence. Rebecca was able to focus on the development and growth of her intern by using co-teaching. She gave Amanda opportunities to work with small groups and build her confidence with teaching the whole group of students.

In Mike’s examples of co-teaching, his reasoning entirely stems from his negative experiences as a student teacher himself when he was left alone to navigate teaching. Mike believes the interns should have mentor support during the entire experience. While, his interns will have opportunities to solo teach during days he is absent or at district meetings, he believes it is his responsibility to engage in co-teaching with his intern so they have every opportunity to learn and grow.

Tara’s belief in being committed to the development and success of her interns as teachers is evident in how she used co-teaching to focus on her intern to achieve this goal. She provided many co-teaching opportunities to Allison during observed classroom visits. She is also sensitive to the fact that a relationship must be developed in order to co-teach with her intern. In one particular instance, Allison’s reflections about a particular math concept, word problems, was the impetus for the co-teaching that followed in their math class:

Allison had mentioned something about the word problem that we did the previous morning for our morning math work and reflecting, “They’re just not reading the question and thinking about what it’s asking.” So I could’ve given
her estimation but I provided her with a paper this explains step by step: read the question, circle the math words, make a plan, just very specific so she did that with them yesterday and then today she’s going to take that and have it be less specific and see if they can apply those skills and do that (Check in Int. 2 lines 15-21).

Tara demonstrated her commitment to Allison’s development and success as a teacher by incorporating her reflections of their math students into a subsequent lesson and utilized station teaching for Allison to work with small groups of students on a specific skill.

Amy as a first grade teacher utilized co-teaching to support her interns, as well. When Amy planned opportunities for interns to work with small groups of students, it allowed interns to think on the spot with their small group of students. Interns also asked questions of Amy both before and after their station teaching as they reflected about the lessons. Later, this would lead to interns feeling comfortable in their own planning for stations, as well as whole group teaching.

Collaborating with the PDA

In examples of collaborating with the PDA in intern-focused ways, Rebecca, Tara, and Amy all described examples of this from their practice. For Rebecca, she described working with her PDAs to differentiate expectations and support some of her interns:

Dan was the PDA and we worked together to really encourage her and give her extra support so she could complete some of the tasks some of the kind of things she needed to get done on a regular basis (Int. 4 lines 7-9).
I just feel lucky to have had Josh for both Bobby and Lisa because both of them needed a PDA that was going to be understanding and was going to help them through tough situations. I mean Bobby was financial family stuff and Josh understood that and we helped him some and got some money to do that and he was great about doing that. And Bobby needed someone to push him at times just to make sure he did those deadlines and got things in and Josh was good about that (Int. 2 lines 492-497).

Similarly, Amy described working with her PDA to support her struggling intern. The example was also previously used to describe supporting the mentor during challenging times. The strategies they brainstormed together were eventually used to support the intern:

The PDA and I kept strategizing, “Well how about we go this route?” so we tried things like maybe if we keep a communication log, maybe if I write it down for you, you can take home what the expectations are, maybe we start a Googledoc so you can see all the questions written down so when you go home you can have them (Int. 4 lines 27-30).

Tara described how she utilized her PDAs to provide feedback and debrief a lesson with her intern, when she was unable. Again, this example was previously described as a way Tara received support as a mentor. It is also an example of the PDA providing intern support:

I think something that’s been really helpful that’s happened in the last few years, is when a lesson is taught and you have a few minutes to take someone out and
decompress that whole lesson because I don’t have time until much later to talk about a lesson (Int. 2 lines 545-547).

Amy shared a similar example of how her PDA supported her interns by debriefing with them after a lesson:

She also would take the time, after each lesson, she would always pull the interns out right after a lesson to go talk to them. She always created time- making sure that interns got time to reflect (Int. 2 lines 289-291).

Rebecca also spoke about collaborating with particular PDAs because of their expertise. For example, when Rebecca worked with Katherine, she tried to capitalize on Katherine’s mathematical knowledge to support her intern in planning and teaching:

I liked having her because she was so helpful with math and I tried to utilize her expertise and gifts and asked her to help plan math units with them and model, she would model lessons once a week so that felt neat to me to be able to utilize her expertise in doing that (Int. 2 lines 504-507).

As previously described in the mentor-focused section, Amy worked with Josh, who supported her intern Brianne in trying her ideas in the classroom. “Josh was very supportive in letting her try things and reflect on her own teaching and I guess I had learned this from Josh, when Josh had been my PDA,” (Int. 2 lines 382-384).

Collaborating with the PDA is also a practice that could be intern-focused especially when the PDA is supporting the intern in some way. The previous examples described times when the intern was struggling and expectations needed to be differentiated, situations where PDA could provide feedback in a timely manner to the intern, and support interns in their planning and teaching.
**Both Mentor-focused and Intern-focused Practices**

As illustrated by the Venn diagram earlier in this section, there were also examples of practices that could be in the cross-section of the circles and focused on both the mentor and the intern at the same time. Collaborating with the PDA and co-teaching are examples of when that might happen. For example, a mentor might utilize the PDA for support when the intern is struggling for some reason. At the same time the mentor is supported by the PDA, the intern is also supported by the PDA in his or her struggles. Rebecca, Tara, and Amy described examples of how co-teaching could be focused on both the mentor, or classroom teacher and intern at the same time. Station teaching and One Teach, One Guide are two co-teaching models that allowed these mentors to support students in their classrooms with small group instruction and at the same time that co-teaching instruction helped the interns build their confidence with teaching.

2. **When a mentor changes grade levels and needs to learn an entirely new curriculum, it impacts some of her mentoring practices.**

Amy’s mentoring practice stood out to me throughout this study. Her words about the struggles of teaching a new grade level while simultaneously mentoring an intern cannot be ignored. In the Sunshine Valley School District, moving from teaching first grade to fourth grade is a significant change. There are different curricula for all subject areas, plus the developmental needs of fourth graders are vastly different than first graders. Of all of the mentors in this study, Amy was the only mentor who had experienced a significant grade level change while mentoring a preservice teacher.
As Amy reflected on her experiences as a mentor in first grade, she felt confident in her teaching and therefore confident in her mentoring practices, specifically co-teaching. Station teaching was a large part of her practice in first grade, and fourth graders did not have the same needs, therefore station teaching was not as appropriate as fourth graders are much more independent than first graders.

Co-teaching in first grade was different from fourth grade because in first grade when I knew the content well I had a better understanding of how to differentiate and how different needs could be met by different teachers. In fourth grade, I struggle anticipating sticky spots, variables in pacing, and how to incorporate student interests and learning profiles. My lack of experience with the content left me less flexible in my first year of fourth as opposed to first grade where I saw multiple paths to the same learning. Because I didn't have those multiple pathways in my mind, it was harder to support an intern in co-teaching methods I might have used in first like stations, guide on the side (having the intern work with a small handful of struggling students), pre-teaching a skill to certain kids, etc. There is also the fact that first graders demand more interaction and fourth grader work more independently. In first grade I relied on having an extra set of hands where in fourth students need some "alone time" to grapple with their work (email conversation 1/16/16).

Amy articulated clearly how the grade level change impacted her mentoring. This is supported by the observations of her practice during reading and science. When I observed a reading lesson at the end of the year, Amy utilized “Mentor Modeling” and had her intern observe during the small group lesson. Upon reflection, Amy explained
that this practice was typical of her mentoring that year, but not in previous years:

I don’t know what direction to push her in. I don’t know what even the right answer is. I don’t know what good instruction in fourth grade reading looks like. I don’t know how to make reading instruction good in fourth grade. I’m still playing with it so I’m trying to include her in that process because she’s struggling with what to do because she doesn’t have a picture of what it should look like because I don’t have a picture. We keep changing. It has evolved so much this year. I’m trying to find things I can hand her and not just pull this out of thin air and make up an idea for and teach her the answers are in books. As a teacher your job isn’t to invent things it’s to find the right pair between what you know about your kids and what resources you have (Check in Int. 1 lines 34-39; 53-56).

Providing opportunities for the intern to be viewed as “teacher” was another practice impacted by the grade level change. In first grade, Amy utilized station teaching from the very beginning of the year, which allowed her interns to engage in instruction with small groups of students. These daily opportunities allowed her interns to enact her plans but at times required them to make decisions in the moment, building their confidence in front of the students. Teaching fourth grade does not provide nearly as many opportunities for station teaching.

Two practices that did not seem to be impacted by Amy’s grade level change were co-planning and collaborating with the PDA. Amy did not describe changes in these practices as a result of moving grade levels. She primarily followed a “One Teach, One Guide” model for co-planning with her interns in the beginning of the year, and even
though she was in a new grade level, she was observed in a “Synchronous Teaming” model of co-planning later in the school year. While collaborating with the PDA was not impacted due to Amy’s changing grade levels, it was impacted because her assigned PDA had different teaching experience:

Working with Colleen was different than the PDAs I had worked with in first grade because most of the PDAs I had worked with had experience with 6 and 7 year olds. Colleen had not taught fourth grade before, so I would say there was less "sharing" of experience she had before. In first grade, PDAs and I would often swap favorite read alouds or activities but that didn't happen as much. Instead in fourth grade there was more "brainstorming" and reflecting on ideas. In that sense, Colleen, Jamie and I were all on a level playing field (personal communication, 1/31/16).

Previously when Amy had worked with PDAs who had experience teaching the grade level, there were examples of learning from the PDA and the PDA sharing her teaching experience. When she worked with Colleen, the whole triad collaborated together, just in a different way.

In regards to Yendol-Hoppey and Dana’s framework for effective mentoring, the two practices that were impacted seem to mostly involve the Guide a Mentee’s Professional Knowledge Development domain. Amy’s herself described several of the indicators as major roadblocks in her mentoring. Curriculum, pedagogical, and content knowledge were at the forefront of her challenges. She was learning a brand new curriculum and best practices for a new age group of students. It was harder for Amy to mentor Jamie about these components because she was a novice fourth grade teacher.
Yendol-Hoppey and Dana’s Knowledge domain has implications for mentors who significantly change grade levels. Creating an educative mentoring context and cultivating the dispositions of a successful educator seem to be more universal domains that may transfer more easily no matter the grade level taught. More specific research in this area would be beneficial for deeper understanding of this speculation.

Throughout the data collection and analysis of this study, there seemed to be something different about Amy’s experience with mentoring this year as compared to the other mentors. I believe honoring her voice with this claim acknowledges a component of mentoring that is important to share. In this study, when a mentor changed grade levels, it impacted her two of her mentoring practices, and for Amy, that led to some challenging experiences during the year.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the practices of the PDS mentors. Four major practices emerged from the data: co-planning, providing “teacher” opportunities for the intern, collaborating with the PDA, and co-teaching. Similarities and differences among the four mentors are described in those sections. Some of the practices occurred across all four of the mentors, and some of the practices occurred among subsets of the mentors. These practices have been illustrated in order to describe the complexity of mentoring. The same practice can look different among different mentors and classrooms. It is not the intention of the study to recommend or identify these practices as what mentors should do with preservice teachers.

As a result of the analysis, two claims were made. First, the practices could be characterized as mentor-focused, intern-focused, or sometimes both. Second, changing
grade levels appeared to have an impact on some mentoring practices for one mentor. As Amy navigated new curriculum and a new age group of students, co-teaching and “teacher” opportunities were impacted.
Chapter 9

Summary and Discussion

Introduction

This study examined the practices of four mentor teachers in a PDS context over the course of three months from March 2015-May 2015. Two of the mentors, one veteran with over ten years of mentoring experience and one novice with five years of mentoring experience, completed the PDS program as interns for their undergraduate teacher preparation. The other two mentors, a veteran with over ten years of mentoring experience and a novice mentor with five years of experience, did not complete the PDS program as their undergraduate teacher preparation. The mentors were chosen as matched pairs in order to provide for differences to compare. The purpose of the study was to better understand and answer the following research questions:

1. What are the self-reported practices of mentors in the PDS context?
2. Why do the mentors engage in these practices?
3. How have these practices developed and changed over time?

In addition to classroom observations of practice, qualitative interviews were conducted with each mentor to learn more about each mentor’s life history as a student, time spent as a mentor, and espoused beliefs about effective mentoring. As a result of the data collection, a profile of each mentor was written to describe the mentor’s experiences as a student and teacher leading up to the time he or she became a mentor, as well as each mentor’s beliefs about effective mentoring including examples from practice to illustrate the beliefs. The following section summarizes the claims from the study, as a result of the data analysis.
Summary of Claims and Contributions to Literature

1. Mentors’ practices in the PDS can be characterized as mentor-focused or intern-focused, or sometimes both.

As a result of examining the practices of the four mentors: co-planning, providing “teacher” opportunities, co-teaching, and collaborating with the PDA, there emerged three ways to characterize the practices: 1) mentor-focused, 2) intern-focused, or 3) both mentor/intern-focused. Not only do these four practices illustrate specific examples of what mentors do in actual practice, conceptualizing the practices as mentor-focused or intern-focused, or both, provides a deeper level of unpacking the mentoring practice.

At the beginning of the study, I considered mentoring practices as practices that were done “to the intern” or “with the intern”, i.e., one-directional, from mentor to intern. The analysis of these practices led to a new way of considering how some mentoring practices can benefit the mentor or the mentor’s students primarily, some can benefit the intern primarily, and some practices can simultaneously benefit the intern and the mentor or the mentor’s students.

Much of the mentoring literature focuses on mentoring first year, inservice teachers, some focuses on mentoring traditional student teachers while very little focuses on mentoring PDS candidates (Clarke, Triggs, & Nielsen, 2014; Fairbanks, Freedman, & Kahn, 2000; Jones & Straker, 2006; Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992). The importance of conceptualizing the mentoring practices as mentor-focused, intern-focused, or both, is important for generating discussion in the larger teacher education and mentoring communities to develop a common language for communication about mentoring
practices generally and more specifically with teacher candidates within PDS or partner school contexts.

One of the most powerful practices to emerge from this study is collaborating with the PDA as a mentoring practice, which is a practice that can benefit both the mentor and intern. The PDS is designed to include triads: mentor, intern, and PDA working together throughout the year-long student teaching experience. This study found utilizing the PDA was a significant and widespread practice of these mentors. Not only were the PDAs useful in supporting the interns, but they also supported the mentors as well as the students in the classrooms. Collaborating with the PDA benefitted the mentors in learning how to mentor, support for mentoring, learning about teaching, and feedback about teaching. This practice benefitted the interns through support and differentiation for struggling situations, providing feedback in a timely manner, and supporting interns with planning and teaching. This study supports the notion that mentoring is not solely a dyadic relationship between mentor and student teacher and indicates that mentoring practices include embracing the triad relationship to utilize the PDA in different ways. In fact, research conducted by Burns (2012) with novice supervisors, found a similar result in PDS supervision practice:

By assuming this burden, Helen felt that the intern and mentor’s relationship would be salvaged; she was willing to make sacrifices for what she perceived to be a benefit to her mentors and interns. Although Helen believed that the intern was her domain, she knew that she sometimes supported mentors when she supervised. All of these examples showed how Helen’s supervision was supportive of children, interns, and mentor teachers (p. 176).
In Burns’ research, supervisors conceptualized their role and responsibilities to include the mentor teacher. This current study also indicates that mentors may conceptualize their mentoring work as inclusive of the classroom supervisor as evidenced by the mentoring practice of collaborating with the PDA. The literature reviewed in regards to mentoring practices, roles and responsibilities, and knowledge does not mention the supervisor as a part of those components. By including the practice of collaborating with the PDA as illustrated in this PDS, mentors and supervisors of undergraduate preservice teachers may begin to envision their work together as a triad team versus two, separate dyadic relationships, mentor-intern and supervisor-intern. This finding largely impacts the research on mentoring practices as it may encourage teacher education programs to closely consider how to utilize their supervision resources in order to achieve a functioning triad relationship in non-PDS contexts.

2. When a mentor changes grade levels and needs to learn an entirely new curriculum, it impacts some of her mentoring practices.

Amy was the only mentor in the study who significantly changed grade levels, from first grade to fourth grade, prior to the school year in which this study was conducted. This move required Amy to learn completely new curriculum content from what she had previously taught, in addition to learning about how to teach fourth graders as opposed to first graders.

Of the four mentoring practices discussed in this study, co-teaching, “teacher” opportunities, and collaborating with the PDA were three practices affected by the grade level change. Amy struggled with co-teaching in fourth grade due to fact that she was a novice in regards to the content she was teaching. It was challenging for Amy to mentor
her intern in this area because she was still learning herself. Amy’s learning in fourth grade was different from a teacher or mentor who continues to learn year after year in the same grade level. Teachers and mentors who remain in the same grade level each year have the opportunity to tweak and revise their teaching strategies without having to attend to learning totally new content and trying to understand the general developmental patterns and needs of students. Amy was not tweaking old knowledge, she added brand new knowledge about fourth grade content for all subject areas. In addition, she needed to accumulate knowledge simultaneously about both the general patterns of development among fourth graders as well as the specific developmental needs of her classroom of fourth grade students.

As for providing opportunities for her intern to be seen as a “teacher” in the classroom, changing grade levels from first to fourth grade essentially eliminated how Amy implemented this practice as a first grade mentor. In primary grade levels, station teaching is a common practice, and Amy’s interns often had opportunities to lead small groups of students through station teaching. Amy did not utilize station teaching much, if at all, and therefore those “teacher” opportunities were not available during the fall semester for Jamie:

My lack of experience with the content has left me less flexible in my first year of fourth as opposed to first grade where I saw multiple paths to the same learning. Because I don’t have those multiple pathways in my mind, it was harder to support an intern in co-teaching methods I might have used in first grade like stations, or having the intern work with a small handful of struggling students, pre-teaching a skill to certain kids, etc. There is also the fact that first graders
demand more interaction and fourth graders work more independently. In first
grade I relied on having an extra set of hands where in fourth students need some
"alone time" to grapple with their work (email conversation 1/1/16).

According to Amy she did not seem to know how to integrate what she knew
about station teaching with fourth grade curriculum and the developmental needs of
fourth graders compared to first graders were influencing factors on the lack of station
teaching in Amy’s classroom.

Amy was the only mentor in this study who described learning about teaching
from her PDA. As a new first grade mentor, Amy often collaborated with Margaret, her
PDA, to learn about best practices for teaching first graders. She sat side-by-side with her
intern as a learner to observe veteran teaching skills. Margaret had taught primary grade
levels for many years. During Amy’s first year in fourth grade, Colleen was her assigned
PDA. Amy discussed the fact that Colleen did not have intermediate teaching experience
and therefore how they collaborated was different. Perhaps if Amy had been working
with a PDA who had intermediate experience, she would have collaborated with him/her
in ways similar to how she collaborated with Margaret in order to learn about her new
grade level.

One of the issues this claim raises is whether or not an intern placed with a mentor
who is teaching a new grade level for the first time is as adequately prepared as an intern
who is placed with a mentor who is a veteran teacher of a particular grade level. An
opposing argument can be made that being present and mentored throughout a mentor’s
process of learning to teach a new grade level is invaluable to the intern who will likely
go through the same process in his/her first year of teaching. Which learning is more valuable?

Admittedly, Amy described her specific challenges with reading and science and how she struggled to mentor Jamie in these content areas. “Mentees should receive equitable mentoring in their designated teaching subject areas, which requires subject-specific mentoring skills,” (Hudson, 2007, p. 212). The mentors of preservice teachers in this study had a huge responsibility. They were charged with teaching and mentoring across multiple subject areas versus a singular content area. Amy’s experience in changing grade levels may speak to the quality of preparation Jamie received in certain content areas as opposed to Amy’s previous interns in first grade. According to Hudson (2013), “an effective mentor can articulate to the preservice teacher applicable content knowledge for a lesson and where they sourced this content knowledge,” (p. 5). When Amy reflected about mentoring Jamie in reading instruction, she identified that she did not know what direction to point Jamie in and what resources she should use because Amy herself was navigating those elements:

I don’t know what direction to push her in. I don’t know what even the right answer is. I don’t know what good instruction in fourth grade reading looks like. I don’t know how to make reading instruction good in fourth grade. I’m still playing with it so I’m trying to include her in that process because she’s struggling with what to do because she doesn’t have a picture of what it should look like because I don’t have a picture (Check in int 2 lines 33-38).

While Jamie’s experience did not include strong mentoring in content areas, her intern had the opportunity to observe learning how to learn by watching Amy acclimate
to a new grade level. While Amy felt that she struggled to mentor Jamie because she did not know the content well, she was still modeling how to locate resources and find answers as a “new” teacher. Just because an intern completes a year of preservice teaching in fourth grade, does not necessarily mean she will be a first year teaching in fourth grade. The intern may find herself needing to navigate a brand new curriculum and could draw upon the experience of being mentored by a teacher who did the exact same thing. That experience would provide the preservice teacher with some fundamental tools for locating resources to help her plan and prepare for new content. If an intern receives strong mentoring about specific content at a specific grade level, is that preferable to receiving a significant experience of watching an experienced teacher learn how to learn?

Teacher preparation programs may want to consider more closely placing preservice teachers with mentors without experience teaching their particular grade level. Perhaps support can be provided in other ways. For example, pairing Amy with a PDA with intermediate teaching experience may have resulted in Amy and Jamie learning together about teaching fourth grade. The content knowledge of the PDA could supplement the pedagogical knowledge of the mentor teacher to provide quality preparation in these instances.

The previous section summarized the three claims of this study and discussed their significance and connections to the literature. The following section describes how the practices complement and contribute to the conceptual framework used in this study.

**Framework for Effective Mentors**

The result of this study revealed many connections between the mentors’ practices and Yendol-Hoppey and Dana’s components of effective mentors. It is
important to remember that their framework focuses more directly on mentoring beginning, inservice teachers. All four of the mentoring practices: co-planning, teacher opportunities, collaborating with the PDA, and co-teaching serve as illustrations of what the framework’s components might look like in the classroom. Appendix J is a visual that represents both the original effective mentoring framework by Yendol-Hoppey and Dana, in black text, as well as the addition of where the mentoring practices from this study supported the framework, in green text. Finally, there is also a new addition to the framework in red text within the component of Cultivate the Dispositions of a Successful Educator, Commitment to Identity. As a result of the data from one of the mentoring practices, I propose this descriptor as a valuable contribution to this component of the framework. The following section summarizes how each of the practices illustrates components of the effective mentoring framework, as well as how Commitment to Identity contributes to the framework.

**Create an Educatve Mentoring Context**

All four of the mentoring practices appear in this component and provide illustrations of how the mentors in this study created an educative mentoring context by the ways they developed a strong relationship, ascertained a mentee’s prior knowledge, and provided emotional support through co-planning, providing “teacher” opportunities, co-teaching, and collaborating with the PDA.

Interestingly, in their mentoring portraits, three of the four mentors espoused a mentoring belief in developing a relationship with their intern. While one of the mentors did not specifically identify building a relationship as a mentoring belief, clearly it is a part of all of their mentoring practices because of what is evident in the mentoring
practices. Relationship building is probably a much greater focus of mentoring during the early part of the relationship and school year and likely served as a foundation for these later mentoring practices.

Mentors developed strong relationships with their interns by providing “teacher” opportunities, co-teaching, and utilizing the PDA. Rebecca and Tara were the two veteran mentors in this study who provided opportunities for their interns to develop a “teacher identity” by encouraging their passions and talents to be used in their teaching. The way Rebecca and Tara encouraged their interns to “exercise agency” in their teaching in order to differentiate themselves from the mentors illustrates a result of creating a strong relationship. If mentors do not take the time and interest to learn what talents their interns bring to the classroom, it is not possible to encourage those passions in teaching. The mentors were committed to helping their interns develop identities that were differentiated from them, in order for all members of the classroom: students, teachers, parents, and other adults, would view the intern as another teacher all his/her own.

Co-teaching can also illustrate a strong relationship between the mentor and intern. Tara and Allison’s example of synchronous teaching would not be possible without a trusting a respectful working relationship. The classroom examples of One Teach, One Guide demonstrate the trust that is needed in order to allow for the intern to take the lead in classroom teaching while the mentor supports, or vice versa.

Interns spend an entire school year in their mentor’s classroom, and many have likened the relationship to one of being “married” for the school year. Collaborating with the PDA revealed more than one member of the “marriage”. Tara utilized the PDA in a way that prevented her from having to have hard conversations with her intern that may
have resulted in hurt feelings for the intern. The PDA was a crucial piece of Tara’s mentoring in order to develop a strong relationship with her intern. Her PDA was willing to be the “bad guy” and shoulder the burden for Tara by being the communicator in the relationship.

Mentors ascertained the intern’s prior knowledge through the mentoring practice of co-planning. Yendol-Hoppey and Dana suggest mentors help novices create a teaching platform to uncover their beliefs about teaching. Co-planning was another strategy the mentors used to understand the prior experiences interns brought to the classroom. Rebecca, Tara, and Amy particularly invited their interns to be a part of the co-planning process from the early on in the internship year. Depending on when interns felt comfortable, Rebecca always welcomed their input into their Googledoc plan. Tara also encouraged her interns to be involved by including conversations about their coursework assignments during the planning time. Amy was also purposeful in how she asked her interns about their experiences and what they had seen as a student when planning for instruction. “Given the complexity of teaching, the mentee must be an active participant in the construction of the complex knowledge of teaching” (Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, p. 17) These mentors encouraged their interns to be active participants in appropriate ways dependent on their readiness. Co-planning allowed the mentors to ascertain their interns’ prior knowledge.

Provide emotional support is the third descriptor to create an educative mentoring context. Like much of the research on mentor roles, emotional support connects with many of them. The data from this study showed that at times, mentors collaborated with the PDA to provide emotional support to the interns. For example, Tara, Amy, and
Rebecca all described times when they worked with an intern who struggled for some reason or another. In each of their experiences, they recalled collaborating with the PDA in order to support the needs of the intern. Often, the mentor and PDA worked together to brainstorm strategies or ideas for how to best support the intern. The mentors were not left alone in these situations to figure it out for themselves. While certainly, mentors are likely providing emotional support on a daily basis when PDAs cannot be present, when serious issues arose, they were able to collaborate with someone else who also wanted the intern to succeed. Throughout the recounts of their experiences, mentors often used the language of “we” when detailing these times. It was clear they felt they had a partner to work with towards the same goal for the intern.

**Guide a Mentee’s Professional Knowledge Development**

Yendol-Hoppey and Dana (2007) outlined seven different types of knowledge bases that mentors’ draw upon during teaching: content, pedagogical, student-learner, curriculum, pedagogical-content, context and classroom management. In order to engage in educative mentoring, these are the domains to which mentors need to attend. Three of these knowledge bases: content, student-learner, and classroom management, were evidenced in one of the mentors’ practices, collaborating with the PDA. I would speculate that more than these three knowledge bases were developed through mentors’ practices, but direct evidence supported the named three. First, Rebecca developed content knowledge in her interns the years she utilized the mathematical expertise of her PDAs. She had the PDAs plan and model lessons with the intern, which supported their mathematical content knowledge. Amy provided an example of how she utilized her PDA, a veteran teacher in the district, to develop two types of knowledge, student-learner
and classroom management knowledge within herself and her intern. Being a new primary teacher, Amy and her intern learned from the PDA about how to best manage a small reading group. The PDA is a critical piece of mentoring in the framework. To rely on one person to attend to all seven of the knowledge bases is quite an overwhelming task. Mentors in the PDS context were able to share the responsibility for developing content, student-learner, and classroom management knowledge with the intern’s PDA.

**Cultivate the Dispositions of a Successful Educator**

Three of the four mentoring practices appear in this domain. Two mentoring practices, collaborating with the PDA and co-teaching support the existing descriptor, Commitment to Collaboration. Providing “teacher” opportunities is a practice that I believe fits within this domain and contributes an additional descriptor that is not present in the framework.

Commitment to Collaboration was illustrated through co-teaching and collaborating with the PDA. “Novice teachers need to learn how to collaborate within their work environment so that they can contribute to ongoing improvement in their professional practice,” (Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, p.26). Mentors are able to model this commitment with these two practices and provide a foundation for their interns to take with them into their first years of teaching. The very essence of co-teaching demonstrates a commitment to collaboration as the mentor and intern collaborate together within their school community to instruct their classroom of students (Badiali & Titus, 2010). Some may argue that preparing interns within a co-teaching model inadequately prepares them to teach on their own in the future, as very few teacher candidates enter into a co-teaching context their first year of teaching. However, there is no reported data to date that
supports this argument, in fact co-teaching can only better prepare interns to collaborate with colleagues and team members.

Collaborating with the PDA also illustrates the Commitment to Collaboration descriptor. When the triad works together to support a struggling intern, or support the classroom of students, interns are seeing examples in action of how to utilize colleagues outside of their immediate classroom walls to support them as professionals. According to Yendol-Hoppey and Dana, “To address the needs of an increasingly diverse population, teachers must possess the sophisticated skills to support each other, facilitate learning, and problem solve together,” (p. 26). The ways that mentors utilize the PDA, may expose interns to the possibilities for collaboration and lay the foundation for collaboration with their colleagues in the future.

As a result of this study, I would argue for a new disposition to be added to Cultivate the Dispositions of a Successful Educator: Commitment to Teacher Identity. This seems especially important in the case of mentoring preservice teacher candidates. Beginning inservice teachers may already have a good start in developing a unique teacher identity. The ways that Rebecca and Tara provide opportunities for their interns to be seen as a “teacher” in the classroom and encourage them to develop their own identity separate from the mentors speaks to this new descriptor. As Rebecca stated, “Teaching takes a lot of energy and I think when you can find ways to really engage your own passions it really feeds that energy you need to keep going.” (Int. 3 lines 91-93). Commitment to Teacher Identity supports the combination of finding oneself as a teacher and as a person and bringing that combination to the classroom.
After using the framework as a level of analysis for the mentoring practices, one particular practice can be found in all of the domains of the framework. Collaborating with the PDA is the most prevalent practice across the framework. Again, I believe this speaks to the powerful impact the PDAs have on mentors’ practices. Mentors and PDAs could use this framework together to think about how to best support the interns they work with each year. I believe the presence of the PDA in all aspects of the mentoring framework will be validating for PDAs to see how critical their work with mentors is.

**Unpacking Initial Assumptions**

When this study was designed, two of the mentors were purposefully chosen because they were former interns in the same PDS context in which they currently mentor. Initially, I thought their preparation in a PDS would be a significant factor that emerged in their mentoring practices and could be compared with the data from the two mentors who were not former interns. However, the results of the study did not find significant differences between those two subgroups. Perhaps their PDS preparation impacts their mentoring in different ways than I focused on during the course of my research, or perhaps if Amy not been in a new grade level during the study more similarities may have emerged. I cannot be sure, but these are reasons to consider. They did have general similarities in how they engaged in the mentoring practices. Their co-planning was similar and they collaborated with their PDAs in order to support struggling interns. During the time of the study, Amy and Tara differed in how they engaged in co-teaching and providing teacher opportunities to their interns.

As for Rebecca and Mike, the two mentors who were not prepared as PDS interns, they seemed to be most alike in how their personal experiences as students impacted their
mentoring practices. Rebecca had many experiences in her educational career in which her ideas were encouraged and she was supported in exploring her passions and talents in school and teaching. Those experiences are connected to how she encouraged her interns’ passions and talents in her classroom, in order to help them develop a teacher identity separate from her. Mike had negative experiences in his personal background, particularly during his student teaching experience. According to Mike, his cooperating teacher left him on own to navigate student teaching in Kindergarten. Like Rebecca, this experience impacted his mentoring. Mike was very clear about his belief in not leaving his intern alone during the internship year. He felt a great responsibility to be present in order to support and give feedback.

Rebecca and Tara were more similar in their mentoring. Their practice of providing opportunities for their interns to develop teacher identities in the classroom was powerful. For Rebecca, that practice stemmed from her personal experiences as previously described. For Tara, she always had a belief about being authentic in the classroom. She believed it was important for herself, as well as her interns to figure out how they could incorporate their personal self with their teacher self in the classroom.

The veteran mentors also described their co-teaching practice as one that could simultaneously benefit them as mentors and teachers, and the intern. They identified how co-teaching impacts their mentoring, their students in the classroom, and their interns. Perhaps their years of mentoring experience were a reason they similarly engaged in this practice. It would be interesting to further explore the practices of veteran mentors and what can be learned from their experience.
Amy and Mike were similar in how they provided teacher opportunities to their interns. Again, Amy’s practice seemed to be affected by her move to a new grade level. Amy and Mike seemed to purposefully consider providing opportunities for their interns to build confidence by speaking in front of the students early in the year, in order to transition them to more significant teaching roles later in the school year. Neither mentor discussed a deeper level of developing a teacher identity the way that Tara and Rebecca described the practice.

Throughout the analysis of the four mentoring practices, Mike’s data was the most different from the other mentors in regards to three of the four practices. While he did engage in each of the practices discussed, he did so in different ways than the other mentors. In regards to co-planning, Mike purposefully had his interns observe his planning practice in the fall so they would experience fewer instructional mishaps in the spring. He did not describe co-planning like the other mentors who co-planned in such a way that their interns had opportunities to engage in co-planning. Mike also provided opportunities for the intern to be a teacher during the fall semester, but only in the form of “speaking” opportunities. Again, he described how important it was for his interns to observe for most of the fall semester, but recognized they needed chances to speak in front of the children prior to being asked to teach the children. Utilizing the PDA was perhaps the practice that most differentiated Mike from the other mentors. He did not describe any instances of using the PDA for mentoring purposes, only to seek feedback about his classroom teaching. Mike shared during the study that he had not experienced any significant struggles with interns. From Mike’s perception, he has not experienced needing support from his PDA regarding his mentoring. It is not to say that Mike will
never utilize the PDA for his mentoring. Perhaps in the future when Mike perceives a struggle with an intern that he is unable to navigate on his own, he will reach out to his PDA.

There are several possible considerations as to why these differences exist. First of all, Mike is the only male represented in this study. There may be some differences in regard to gender and mentoring practices in preparing new teachers. This may be an interesting area to explore in future studies of mentoring. Second, Mike’s background experiences in terms of the PDS context are different than the other three mentors. While Tara and Amy were both prepared as preservice teachers in the same PDS context, and Rebecca also had experience working as a PDA for three years. Mike was the only mentor without any additional PDS experiences beyond mentoring. Clearly, Mike’s experiences as a student teacher impacted the way he mentors his interns. He seemed to have a different perspective about how to prepare teachers for the classroom than the other mentors. There is a focus on him as a mentor throughout some of his mentoring practices. Since the time of this study, Mike accepted a two-year position as a PDA with PDS. He will be released from his classroom for the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years. The opportunity to participate with the PDS on a larger district scale, and observe mentoring practices of other mentor teachers may have an effect on his mentoring practice when he returns to the classroom. It would be interesting to follow Mike in his transition back into the classroom after completing his PDA responsibilities to see if his participation in the larger community impacts his mentoring practices in any ways.

An additional insight from engaging in this research study was the complexity between beliefs and practices. Espoused beliefs were not always evident in direct
observation of practice, and not all observed practices were articulated as espoused beliefs.

At the start of this research journey, my intention was to study the beliefs of mentors in the PDS. The research study evolved into a variety of data collection methods to learn about the mentoring practices of mentors in a PDS context: 1) an interview in which mentors described their personal timelines in education leading up to the point of becoming a mentor, 2) an interview in which mentors described their experiences working with previous interns, 3) an espoused platform conference, 4) weekly observations and interviews. These four data collection methods regarding practice allowed a more holistic picture of the mentors’ practices to emerge than would have been the case if I had relied only on direct observations and espoused platform interviews.

One of the complexities in understanding the relationship between beliefs and practices is that beliefs are not always evident in direct observations of practice, even observations over a three-month period. Had this research been limited to an espoused platform interview and observations of current practice, I might have concluded that some espoused beliefs were never used in practice. For example, one of Tara’s beliefs about effective mentoring was providing specific feedback and systematic observations, and another was about the importance of interns learning teaching content. During my time in Tara’s classroom, I did not observe her engage in this practice directly.

However, the interviews in which Tara described experiences with different interns and PDAs allowed her to elaborate on her practices over time and she provided examples from her mentoring work over the years. Beliefs are not necessarily revealed in a one on
one espoused platform interview. They are revealed through a variety of tools and methods as evident from this study.

Conversely, observing Tara’s mentoring practice revealed beliefs she holds about mentoring but did not articulate during her espoused platform conference. For example, many classroom observations revealed that Tara practices co-teaching with her intern on a regular basis. She did not verbalize co-teaching as an effective mentoring belief during her espoused platform interview. Observing Tara’s practice revealed this significant mentoring practice that did not appear in her singular interview about effective mentoring.

Similarly, there was also a particular practice that emerged from the data that did not appear in any mentors’ espoused beliefs. Collaborating with the PDA was a common practice across all four mentors in this study. While they utilized the PDA in different ways, it was one of the practices all four mentors shared. This was a powerful result of this study. It is interesting that mentors did not consider collaborating with or partnering with the PDA when they communicated their beliefs about effective mentoring, but clearly it is a practice in which they all engaged. Interviewing the mentors about their practice over time and experiences with different interns and PDAs allowed the mentors to reflect about their experiences and revealed the practice of collaborating with the PDA.

This qualitative study included observations of mentors’ practice, as well as interview data. Combining these types of data collection allowed me to ascertain a more holistic picture of the four mentors. This research represents a small portion of the entire internship year and a sliver of these mentors’ practices. When combined, the four
mentors represent over thirty years of mentoring experience in a PDS context, so there is certainly more to their mentoring than what has been found in this study.

Argyris and Schon (1974) described theories-in-use versus espoused theories. Theories-in-use govern actions and behaviors in actual practice and espoused theories are the words used to communicate what we do, or would like other to think that we do. The mentors in this study participated in an espoused platform conference in order to understand, in their words, what they believed about effective mentoring. Some of what I learned about mentoring came solely from their espoused beliefs conference. Conducting espoused platform conferences is a strategy used in supervision to elicit espoused theories (Nolan & Hoover, 2011).

I also believe that participating in this research study had a powerful impact on at least one of the mentors and her consideration of her espoused theory and theory-in-use. Toward the end of the research study, in an interview with Rebecca, I asked her to identify the origin of her espoused beliefs. In response to her espoused theory about finding and encouraging interns’ passions she said:

This one came from my conversations with you. I certainly realized that I did this “finding interns’ passions” but I might not have identified it as number one. After I talked with you and really thought back, it seemed like a very important part of my mentoring (Int. 3 lines 84-87).

Reflection is a crucial component for unpacking theory-in-use. Rebecca’s participation in this study required her to reflect on her mentoring career in different ways, and as a result she strengthened her awareness of what she believes is effective
mentoring. It was rewarding for me to learn more about mentoring, but also rewarding to see a veteran mentor that I look up to learn more about herself.

**Implications**

The findings from this dissertation study suggest implications for different groups involved in teacher education: mentor teachers, supervisors, and teacher preparation programs. The following section describes what these different subgroups can take away from the results of this study.

**Mentor Teachers**

There is a need to explicate mentoring practices of effective teacher education programs (Hudson et. al., 2013) and the results of this study may provide mentor teachers with language to discuss with one another the mentoring practices they use with interns. Mentors are teacher educators and illustrations of what happens in their classroom with interns is important to study and share with a larger mentoring or teacher education community.

Some mentors crave specific guidelines for how to mentor. I believe the Effective Mentoring framework can be very useful to share with mentors as it can provide them with a guide for thinking about all they are already doing in their practice and what areas may need attention. For example, if more PDS mentors could contribute illustrations of their practices to the framework, that could be a powerful collection to share with larger audiences at national conferences.

Rebecca’s participation in this research study helped her to be more reflective about the purposeful things she has done as a mentor over the years. More mentors should be encouraged and supported to reflect upon their espoused theories and theories-
in-use to understand themselves better as mentors, similarly to how they might think about their teaching practices.

**Supervisors**

Supervision in this PDS context is quite atypical (Nolan et. al, 2009). On average, a PDA in this context has two hours of face time per week with each intern. At the beginning of the year, part of the PDA’s role is to observe the mentor teaching, hopefully alongside the intern, to unpack what is being observed. What kinds of teacher decisions does the mentor appear to be making? What does the intern notice happening in the lesson? What is the intern missing? Under the best circumstances, the triad would later debrief and communicate together about what was observed. There is not always time immediately in the school day to do that.

I believe that supervisors of student teachers should be invigorated by the findings of this study. The PDAs who have worked with these four mentors over the years have impacted their mentoring practice. Supervisors in more traditional context may experience frustration; as they are often not the ones who make decisions about how much time they are able to spend with their student teachers. Without significant, dedicated time with the mentor, it is very difficult to achieve the kind of presence a PDA is able to achieve in the PDS context. It seems that any movement teacher preparation contexts can make towards a closer supervisor-mentor relationship may have real benefits for all three members of the triad. The effective mentoring framework illustrates how supervisors can be more intentional about aiding the mentor teacher throughout the student teaching experience. Perhaps supervisors can be more purposeful in sharing their content knowledge in a collaborative way with mentors and student teachers. Supervisors
are also modeling how to collaborate with other professionals through their interactions with mentors and student teachers, which may encourage them to consider those interactions more carefully.

**Teacher Preparation Programs/PDS**

As previously stated, one of the implications for teacher preparation programs may be how they consider spending their supervision resources. Often, supervisors in traditional student teaching contexts have large loads of student teachers and are not able to spend as much face-to-face time with their mentors and student teachers; perhaps two to four times a month. Supervisors can have an impact on mentors by working together in a triad if the supervisor is given ample time to be able to do so. This PDS context has committed to the fiscal and human resources needed to support triad relationships, and it is making a difference in the mentors’ practices.

Professional development for mentors and supervisors may be the largest implication for those who work within teacher preparation programs. Teacher educators are limited in the ways they can support mentors without detailed understandings of mentor teachers’ work (Clarke, Triggs, & Nielsen, 2014). The illustrations of the mentoring practices in this study, particularly in regards to collaborating with the PDA, can influence how teacher educators support mentor teachers. Mentors need to know and feel that they too are teacher educators and what happens in their mentoring is valuable to share with others. The Central State/Sunshine Valley PDS partnership has professional development opportunities built in throughout the internship year, and studying mentors’ practices may be a useful topic to consider. Whereas some mentors opt to take a
mentoring course for credit from the university, many do not and professional
development opportunities may be a way to reach the larger community.

**Future Research**

At the conclusion of any research study, there are new directions to explore with subsequent research. This study offers new ideas to consider for future research in regards to mentoring.

First, this study was limited in terms of the number of participants as well as the length of time of the study. It would certainly be worthwhile to consider studying more mentors over a longer period of time, preferably the entire internship year, to better understand how mentoring practices begin and evolve over the course of the school year. Earlier, I discussed possibly missing the opportunity to observe relationship-building practices in action due to the time of year of the study. Perhaps mentor practices could be conceptualized through the use of a timeline over the course of the entire internship year. Are certain practices more prevalent at the beginning, middle, or end of the school year? How, if at all, are the same mentoring practices over the course of the year? Does utilizing the PDA look different in the fall as compared to the spring?

Second, a follow-up study of Mike would be an interesting study. He had articulated through the data that he had not experienced any struggling interns during his mentoring years, which impacted his utilization of the PDA. He also has strong personal experiences and beliefs that have impacted his mentoring. He will soon be released from his classroom for two school years to work as PDA within the larger PDS context and will return to his classroom in 2018-2019. He was the only mentor who had not experienced the PDS context in a different way other than mentoring. Rebecca had
experience as a PDA and both Tara and Amy had previously been interns themselves. Will Mike’s released time as a PDA impact his mentoring practices when he returns to the classroom? What experiences as a PDA, if any, affect mentoring practice upon the return to the classroom? In addition to Mike, there are other mentor teachers within the PDS community who have previously been released as PDAs and returned to their classrooms to work as mentors. Specifically focusing on these mentors would be useful data for understanding these hybrid educators.

Third, a study more focused on understanding how a PDS preparation does or does not impact mentoring could be a worthwhile study. Although two of the participants in this study were former interns, that may not have been enough participants to understand the impact of a PDS preparation on mentoring. In addition, one of the two was teaching in a new grade level for the first time. I was thinking something might naturally emerge from the data about their time as interns, but my research was about understanding mentoring practices and I did not directly ask questions about the PDS. Over the years, a significant number of former PDS interns now teach and mentor in the same context and could provide a pool of participants for such a study.

Fourth, including the voices of the PDAs or interns in conjunction with the mentors could be an interesting study to compare the self-reported practices among different members of the triad. Are the mentors self-reported mentoring practices similar to or different than what the intern or PDA perceives as the mentoring practices? As more research is conducted to understand mentor practices in a PDS context generally, I imagine this type of study could be conducted in a few years once the mentoring practices were more established and able to be studied.
The previous four ideas offer suggestions for further research as a result of the findings from this dissertation. Extending the time period and participants to understand the practices over the course of the internship year, a study of mentors who are released to be PDAs and then return to their classrooms as mentors, a more focused study of previous interns and how the PDS preparation impacts their mentoring, and including other voices of the triad in a study of mentoring practices would all be worthwhile research to conduct in order to contribute to a larger body of teacher education research.

**Conclusion**

This chapter focused on the claims of this study and their implications, as well as suggestions for future research. The four mentoring practices: co-planning, providing teacher opportunities, co-teaching, and collaborating with the PDA were practiced by all of the mentors and the data showed the practices could be conceptualized as mentor-focused, intern-focused, or both. Depending on who primarily benefitted from the practice determined the focus of the practice. The variety of data collection methods utilized in the study allowed me to glean a holistic picture of each mentor’s espoused beliefs about mentoring, as well as their actual mentoring practices. Practices and interviews revealed beliefs about mentoring that were not necessarily specifically articulated, and some beliefs were not evident in actual practice but emerged in interviews. The mentor who changed grade levels prior to the year of study experienced challenges to three of her mentoring practices as a result of her new teaching assignment. The three claims have implications for mentor teachers, supervisors, and teacher preparation programs. The results from the study were also merged with Yendol-Hoppey and Dana’s Effective Mentoring Framework. The practices provide additional
illustrations of mentoring in practice, and contribute a new disposition for developing a Teacher Identity in mentees. All stakeholder invested in teacher education may find the framework useful for their practice.
References


Appendix A

Yendol-Hoppey and Dana’s (2007) Framework for Effective Mentoring
## Appendix B

### Dates of Interviews and Observations

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<th>Mentors</th>
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<th>Interview #2</th>
<th>Interview #3</th>
<th>Interview #4</th>
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<td>March 18, 2015</td>
<td>June 1, 2015</td>
<td>July 30, 2015</td>
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<tr>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor</th>
<th>Classroom Observations</th>
<th>Check-in interview dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Appendix C

Life History Interview Protocol

1. Mentoring is about both teaching students as well as teaching interns how to teach students. I’d like you to focus today on constructing a timeline that represents the important events and experiences in your life that have played some role in the development of who you are as a teacher and as a mentor. What I’d like you to do is create a visual representation of those experiences up to the point when you became a mentor. I’d like you to keep three things in mind as you construct this timeline: 1) your teacher preparation experience, 2) your induction experience as a new teacher, 3) and people you view as mentors to you.

2. We will talk about your actual mentoring of interns at another time. As you create the timeline to represent your experiences, please talk me through it. If you can “think out loud”, that would be great. I won’t interrupt you until you finish the whole timeline. (Spread the paper and markers in front of the participant.) I’m looking forward to learning about your past experiences.

3. You may begin the timeline at any point in your past that you feel is the appropriate place to start. There is no “wrong” starting point.
Sample of mentors’ personal timelines:
Appendix D

Photo Elicitation Interview Protocol

1. Last time you created this timeline of your experiences. Now that you’ve had time to reflect and think about that experience, take a few minutes to look over it. Is there anything you would like to change or add to your timeline?

2. Today, I would like you to tell me as much as possible about the details of your experiences as a mentor. (Repeat.) I have brought along photographs of the previous interns and PDAs you have worked with over the years. Their pictures may help you talk about your beliefs and practices as a mentor. I also have your timeline here in case you’d like to reference it at all.

3. You talked a little about this last time, but I think it will help us get started. How did you come to be a mentor in the PDS program?

4. I’d like you to look at these pictures of interns you have mentored and try to recall specific things about mentoring from each one.

5. You may have had to work with several different PDAs over time, can you talk about how those experiences affected your mentoring?

6. Has the way you mentor interns changed over time? If so what has influenced you to change?

7. Over the years, working with different interns, you’ve talked about how you’re different with different interns. Can you talk about what always stays the same in terms of you as a mentor no matter who the intern is?

8. Is there anything else you’d like to say?
Appendix E

Amy’s history of interns and PDAs
Appendix F

Espoused Platform Conference

*Prior to the interview, I will ask mentors to create a bulleted list that represents their beliefs about what effective mentoring is (I believe effective mentoring is…) and ask them to bring that to this interview.

Today we are going to talk more about you as a mentor.

1. Five years after your interns have left your classroom, what would you like them to be saying about you? About your mentoring? About their learning in your classroom?

2. What indicators tell you that you have been successful with an intern? How do you know when an intern has learned what you hoped to convey?

3. Can you talk about some dilemmas that you face as a mentor?

4. If I were your new intern for next school year, what would you say if I asked, “What will you expect from me?”

Now we are going to look at the bulleted list you created of effective mentoring beliefs.

5. What components on this list are the most challenging to enact as a mentor? Which are the easiest to enact as you mentor?

6. What kinds of knowledge do you help your interns develop?

7. What attitudes/dispositions/values do you hope they eventually develop?

8. Talk about the kind of relationship you try to create with your intern.
Appendix G

Check-in Interview Protocol

Possible prompts for generating conversations with mentors through the data collection process:

1. Tell me how things have been going in terms of mentoring…
2. What are some major things that have gone on since I last met with you…
3. Has your thinking about mentoring changed…

Using classroom observations:

1. Help me understand…
2. Tell me more about…
3. Tell me about any feedback you’ve given I don’t have access to…
Appendix H

Sample of Mentoring Observations

5.6.15

9:40

Students are working individually on computers throughout the room. Amy and Jamie are checking in with students and providing feedback.

“Oh so it sounds like you’re getting different information from different teachers”

“Maybe Miss L. and I have different opinions about what sounds good.”

Even after Amy made those comments, she did not talk with Jamie, she moved on to another group. Why didn’t she talk to Jamie about the mixed signals?

After checking in with some more students, Amy pulls Jamie over and chats with her. I believe about another student.

Jamie did the read aloud then gave directions for what would happen next.
Jamie worked with a small group up front on the carpet and Amy read with students one at a time.

4.9.15

Math

1:25

Allison is teaching a small group on the carpet and Tara is teaching a small group by the door to the classroom. They are on opposite sides of the classroom.

How do they plan/debrief this co-teaching?

1:33 clean up to talk about recess

Allison and Tara check with each other at the carpet prior to Tara making announcements about an upcoming fact test, homework (took picture) and recess

“Your dear sweet teachers were hoping that we could stay inside today for recess…”

A- I have student 1, student 2, and student 3 for photo shoot

1:35 Indoor recess

Allison is managing Karaoke Kids
A-This was way easy for them, was it supposed to be? I tried to extend the best I could.

Five easy points right?

T-My idea was to use the skills here to do the challenge. So we have a plan for tomorrow…bam. Done.

A has a lesson for writing territories to help students know where to go if they’re stuck with writing. **Tara is “creeping” in on her lesson because they’re getting ready for PSSAs, and the practice writing prompt didn’t go well. Tara wants to be clear about a writing structure that kids can use from her whole brain teaching techniques.** Allison brought the writing territories from a PD she attended and it’s what she thinks the kids need and it’s being meshed with what Tara thinks they need so this afternoon will be a lot of going back and forth between A and T since the plan has changed as of now. A was “totally flexible” with it.
Appendix I

Sample of Memos

Amy Memo Int. #1 (6/24/15)

So Amy talked a lot about relationships stemming from what she remembered about her mother’s experience as a teacher in a school that was in a low-socioeconomic area. She had a lot of examples of professionals (not just teachers) coming together as a team to do things for students, that weren’t always about teaching (e.g. toilet paper, Disney get togethers, bringing students home)

Collaboration seemed to be key as an intern. Lots of conversations with lots of people and relationships again (para, Diane, Iris) co-planning with teachers and interns. Learning about teachers personal lives from her husband’s experiences. Josh always being available to her.

Shelley supported her, but wasn’t within proximity to her as a first year teacher. She was physically separated from colleagues so couldn’t call down to them whenever she needed. Induction not helpful at all. Other first grade teachers also phenomenal colleagues.

She specifically talks about sitting down and planning together as an intern. Carrie is important because she is the first person who exposed her to a different co-teaching
model than she was used to where you just teach with someone else versus what she experienced with Karen.

She was lonely in the classroom and wanted to take an intern to have someone with her again.

Tara memo Int. #1 (6/24/15)

I’m thinking about a connection somehow to the pilot year of PDS and everyone just trying to figure it out as they went along. Is that reflected in Tara at all? Maybe not.

Also, I’m noting that both she and Amy’s moms were teachers.

Collaboration modeled by their mentors for both Amy and Tara.

Both Amy and Tara mentioned the closeness with other interns in the building.

I wonder if her early professional conference experience will mean anything?

Tara mentions her love for learning, which I think there will be evidence of that in subsequent interviews.
Appendix J
Adapted Framework for Effective Mentors

- Develop A Strong Relationship
- Co-teaching
- Collaborating with the PDA

- Create an educative mentoring context
- Ascertaining a Mentee’s prior knowledge
- Co-planning
- Collaborating with the PDA

- Provide Emotional Support
- Curriculum
- Pedagogical Content
- Collaborating with the PDA

- Guide a Mentee’s Professional Knowledge Development
- Content
- Student Learner
- Context

- Commitment to Equity
- Commitment to Inquiry
- Classroom Management
- Pedagogical Content

- Commitment to Teacher Identity
- Cultivate the Dispositions of a Successful Educator
- Commitment to a Strong Work Ethic

- Providing “Teacher” Opportunities
- Commitment to Equity
- Commitment to a Strong Work Ethic
Kelly was born and raised in northern New Jersey. She received her B.S. in Elementary and Kindergarten Education, with a minor in Psychology, from the Pennsylvania State University in 2004. As an undergraduate, she participated in the Penn State/State College Area School District Professional Development School for her preservice teaching experience. Kelly also received her M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction from the Pennsylvania State University in 2007 while teaching full-time in the State College Area School District. As a mentor teacher to PDS interns in State College, she worked with Dr. James Nolan who encouraged her to pursue a doctoral degree. Kelly continued to work closely with the Professional Development School, both as a released classroom teacher and graduate assistant during her doctoral work, which furthered her interest and passion for mentor teachers working with preservice teachers.