“WE’RE JUST KIND OF WALKING SIDE BY SIDE”: MUSIC TEACHER MENTOR/MENTEE RELATIONSHIPS IN CONNECTICUT’S TEACHER EDUCATION AND MENTORING PROGRAM (TEAM)

A Dissertation in
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by
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ABSTRACT

Mentoring is an essential component of novice teacher development, providing opportunities for more experienced teachers to guide the development of novice teachers. The mentoring relationship gives support and guidance to novices by helping them grow professionally, helping mentors become more reflective educators, and reducing feelings of isolation. Mentoring’s overall effectiveness is determined by the quality of the relationship. Mentoring programs can fail because of a lack of interpersonal mentor/mentee relationships. A greater emphasis on the mentoring relationship would be beneficial to more effective mentoring overall.

The purpose of this multiple case study was to examine the relationships between music teacher mentors and mentees within the context of Connecticut’s state-wide novice teacher induction program, Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM), a two-year induction program for beginning teachers that includes mentoring and professional development. This study sought to understand how participants described their relationships, what was meaningful in the relationships, and the impact of these relationships on professional growth and development.

Each case was a music teacher mentor mentee pair in their second year of the mentor/mentee TEAM relationship; there were two cases for a total of four participants. Second year teachers were selected to focus on the established relationships, rather than the experience of creating relationships. Data were gathered from five journal entries, three individual interviews, and one joint interview with the mentor/mentee pair. Data collection and analysis were designed to gather rich data about each case (the mentor/mentee pair) and the individual participants (the unit of analysis).
Data were analyzed and presented first by detailing the mentoring relationship of each case, and second through cross-case analysis. Emergent themes were: roles and responsibilities in the relationship, trust, communication, judgment, reciprocity, personal aspects, and the challenges of time and proximity. Findings revealed that mentors and mentees believed they had specific roles and responsibilities in the relationship. Mentors established trust and communication early in the relationship and provided support without judgment. This helped the mentees feel comfortable approaching the mentors with questions and challenges. Both relationships were collaborative and reciprocal. The mentoring relationship helped combat feelings of isolation for all participants. Although each relationship was successful, time and proximity were challenges in both relationships.

Roles and responsibilities must be communicated early in the relationship to foster success. Mentors must be dedicated to the professional growth of the mentee, and properly prepared to take on their role. Observing and providing feedback via video can be beneficial when mentors and mentees are not in close proximity and time to observe in person is not possible.

Mentoring relationships should continue to be examined with pairs in various proximities—same school, same district but different schools, or across districts or even states. Future research should also continue examining music teacher mentor/mentee relationships where mentor and mentee are matched in various ways—music teacher mentor with non-music teacher mentee, non-music teacher mentor with music teacher mentee, and music teacher mentor with music teacher mentee.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Personal Reflection

My first public school job was teaching grades 6-8 band and general music at a very rural middle school. Teacher attrition rates at this school were much higher than the other schools in the county, but none higher than the position I held. I was the seventh music teacher in five years. Like many novice teachers, I was eager to start the school year. I felt well-prepared and excited to take on this new role. However, once the school year began my enthusiasm for teaching music quickly dissipated. I faced issues that felt insurmountable. These challenges were so overwhelming that I could only focus on making it through each class period. My first year became about just surviving day-to-day rather than developing as a teacher.

No formal mentoring program existed in my county. However, because of the high attrition rates at my school, two retired teachers were brought in to serve as mentors for all first-year teachers. I do not know anything about the process of gaining these two teachers as mentors—how they were selected, if or how they were prepared to be mentors, if they were required to spend a set amount of time with each mentee, if they had to complete any type of paperwork, or of if they had any other formal responsibilities as part of their duties. I do not know if they were compensated in any way.

My mentor was not a music teacher and knew very little about music content, instruction, or materials. However, she worked extremely hard to help me find instructional materials, plan meaningful lessons, and create relevant assessments. Her consistent presence during my first year was extremely valuable. At the time, I could not
articulate exactly what I needed as a novice teacher. I knew I was struggling and needed help; I was just so overwhelmed I did not know where to start. She knew exactly what I needed even when I could not articulate it. She would observe and offer one or two things to try at a time so I could focus on improving bit by bit rather than bombarding me with too many ideas and tasks. She put a positive spin on everything. She would often stop in my classroom to listen to the band or participate in a general music lesson, afterward leaving notes of encouragement or praise. My mentor made me feel better about my teaching and encouraged me to work harder to help myself. I was so thankful she was there to help me.

In addition to struggling instructionally, I struggled to relate to my students. The school was in a low socioeconomic community; the majority of students were on free and reduced lunch. Many came from single parent homes, where the parent often worked long and inconsistent hours to support the family, so students were regularly left home alone. Many parents did not place a high value on education, and very little value on the arts. This was quite different from what I knew, so perhaps most beneficial to me was my mentor’s knowledge of the school and community culture. She had lived in that community her whole life. She grew up there, attended a nearby university, and returned home to teach and raise her children. Helping me understand the culture and climate of the community helped me better relate to my students, build better relationships with them, and improve classroom management, all of which were big challenges for me.

Based on my first teaching experience, I can relate to the struggles and frustration that often occur in the first years of teaching that can, in turn, lead to one wanting to change careers. Because teaching music was something I had wanted to do
for so long, I cannot say that I would have left the teaching profession after my first year or two of teaching if I had not had a mentor. However, I can say that having a consistent professional presence in my first year provided invaluable support. My interest in researching mentoring derives from my experiences as a novice teacher, particularly the relationship I had with my mentor.

**Attrition and Retention**

Teaching is a challenging career. No matter how prepared a teacher feels entering the profession, or how positive the pre-service experience was, the early years of teaching can be quite difficult. The first two years of teaching are particularly critical. It is during these years that the foundation for what could be a satisfying and productive career are built (Jonson, 2008). In addition, the teaching and professional responsibilities of a first-year teacher and a veteran teacher are often similar (e.g. same teaching load); easing into the profession is not possible. Novice teachers may experience some successes. However, these successes may be sporadic, and the challenges may far outweigh them. Rather than trying to improve practice and become reflective educators, many novice teachers feel like they are just trying to survive day-to-day (Blair, 2008).

Without assistance and support novice teachers burn out early, and if they stay in the profession, periods of frequent burnout are common. Teacher attrition has a far-reaching impact. The school community and district that must recruit new teachers, the novice teachers who invested years in a teacher preparation program but are now not teaching, and the students themselves are all affected by attrition (Jonson, 2008). Teacher attrition can also have a costly impact on school district budgets, costing millions of dollars annually (Moir, Barlin, Gless, & Miles, 2009). According to the Alliance for
Excellent Education (2014), approximately half a million teachers leave the profession each year, costing the United States up to $2.2 billion dollars annually.

One solution for combating teacher attrition is consciously retaining teachers. Retention efforts have led to an increased focus on mentoring as a support system for novice teachers (Conway, Krueger, Robinson, Haack, & Smith, 2002). Teachers who participate in a mentoring program are much more likely to remain in the profession (Ingersoll, 2003). If teachers are provided more opportunities to become effective in the classroom, they want to remain teaching. However, if no support structures are in place to increase effectiveness teachers will likely leave the profession. High-quality mentoring is one of the support systems that can reduce teacher attrition rates as well as assist novice teachers in becoming more effective educators (Moir et al., 2009).

**Novice Teacher Challenges**

Novice teachers face a number of challenges. At the beginning of the year novice teachers experience excitement and tend to be idealistic. However, early in the school year novice teachers are faced with issues and situations they had not anticipated, including establishing classroom routines and managing organizational tasks (Villani, 2002). Adjusting to a new environment, working with students of varying needs and abilities, and developing their own competencies and confidence can be overwhelming to a novice teacher (Pitton, 2006). Curriculum, instruction, lesson planning, use of resources, instructional strategies, and student assessment aspects of a lesson can also be challenges (Portner, 1998).

Novice teachers’ instruction is somewhat inflexible and requires purposeful concentration. They may struggle as they work to apply their knowledge and skills to the
classroom, question their ability, and become frustrated if lessons or assignments do not work the way they had planned (Rudney & Guillaume, 2003). A novice teacher often finds it difficult to establish a classroom environment that is a safe and orderly place to learn. This is especially true in a classroom comprised of students with various abilities and needs. Other challenges include pedagogy, incorporating technology into instruction, assessment, communicating and building relationships with parents, and understanding school and district policies, routines, and procedures (Kumi-Yeboah & James, 2012; Portner, 1998). Novice teachers may begin to question their competence and commitment as they face various challenges, finding themselves running to keep up with their obligations, but not running fast enough (Villani, 2002).

Daresh (2003) categorized novice teachers’ needs into four categories: management, personal, instructional, and socialization. Management concerns included planning lessons, dealing with student behavior, and complying with school district policies. Personal concerns included establishing residence, paying student loans, making financial arrangements, and taking care of family tasks. Instructional concerns centered on the student and how to best meet and serve their needs in the classroom. Socialization concerns focused on fitting into the new role as a teacher and what that means and figuring out the social realities of the job.

Novice music teachers also face challenges unique to their subject. They often feel large amounts of daily stress that can lead to burnout faster than classroom teachers (Benson, 2008). Music teachers in many states are certified to teach every aspect of K-12 school music, including instrumental, choral, and general music (Haack, 2003). However, their teacher preparation program is no longer nor more extensive
than any other teacher preparation program. Depending on the school schedule the music teacher may only see students once a week or less, and teach almost every student in the school which is far different from seeing the same group of students each day as other subject area teachers do (Haack, 2003). Elementary and secondary music teachers often teach large ensemble classes comprised of students in multiple grade levels (Haack & Smith, 2000). In instrumental ensemble classes, each student is equipped with an object (musical instrument) that has the potential to be used as a noisemaker.

Further, music teachers often have unique classroom arrangements that can change daily or by class period according to the activities. A general music classroom may be set up with the floor empty so the students have room to dance; another day it may be set up with drums and other instruments spaced throughout the room with the students sitting on the floor to play them. In addition, not all music teachers even have a classroom. It is not uncommon for a music teacher to move from classroom to classroom with all instructional materials on a cart.

Administrative and organizational duties are additional challenges for novice music teachers. Administrative duties may include requesting transportation to performances outside of school, preparing budgets, and maintaining the inventory and upkeep of very costly instruments, equipment, and uniforms. Music teachers are responsible for organizing and preparing for numerous performances throughout the school year at athletic events, concerts, or school and community events. Multiple performances leave a music teacher’s work open to continuous evaluation (Haack, 2003).

Interacting and building relationships with colleagues is often difficult. Many times, only one music teacher is in the school. Music teachers are outnumbered among
the staff at most, if not all, schools. Even if other music teachers are in the same school, music teachers still represent a very small percent of the faculty population (Sindberg, 2011). Travel among or between schools is also common. Music teachers are more likely than other teachers to teach in multiple buildings within one school district (Gardner, 2010). Therefore, a music teacher who teaches at different schools has to work with different sets of administrators and different faculties (Haack, 2003). Making connections, having conversations, and building relationships may be an issue when one is constantly traveling between buildings.

**Isolation**

Because of music’s specialization, music teachers are especially vulnerable to isolation (Krueger, 1999). Krueger (2000) found isolation a factor frequently influencing satisfaction among music teachers, negatively influencing a teacher’s desire to continue teaching music. The majority of teachers in Krueger’s (2000) study were not provided any sort of support network; they were responsible for building their own. One participant commented, “I’m tempted to become a classroom teacher just because they are surrounded by a peer group to work with” (Krueger, 2000, p. 24).

Sindberg and Lipscomb (2005) examined the extent to which public school music teachers expressed feelings of professional isolation. Like Krueger (1999, 2000), they found their music teacher participants reported feeling isolated in their school, and further, that less experienced teachers felt the greatest sense of isolation compared to more experienced teachers. Their participants believed that isolation was related to the subject taught, and that professional isolation had a negative effect on their teaching.
The lack of opportunities to engage in professional dialogue with music colleagues and receive pedagogical support from other music teachers can increase feelings of isolation (Krueger, 1999). Music teachers’ desire to reduce feelings of isolation by connecting with other music teachers is evident in other literature (Ballentyne, 2007; Davidson & Dwyer, 2014; Sindberg, 2011). Novice teachers need to feel part of the teaching community (DeLorenzo, 1992) and that can be difficult for music teachers when they are the only one in a school or traveling among multiple schools. Therefore, an exploration of how mentoring as part of a novice teacher induction program can build community among music teachers and improve retention rates is necessary and one focus of this study.

**Novice Teacher Induction**

Induction is a critical period in a teacher’s career. Formal induction programs, which began during the school reform movement of the 1980s (Strong, 2009), were developed by local school district personnel, university education departments, and state agencies to assist novice teachers as they transitioned to the profession (Conway, 2003; Feiman-Nemser, Carver, Schwille, & Yusko, 1999). According to Strong (2009) “induction refers to the initial stage of one’s career, or to the system of support that may be provided during that phase” (p. 6).

Moir et al. (2009) described induction as a crucial period in a teacher’s career, best understood within a framework comprising three features: a phase of teacher development; a period of socialization and enculturation; and, a formal program for beginning teachers. In the teacher development phase teachers learn to combine the theory and knowledge gained in their preservice experiences with the day-to-day practice
of teaching. Additionally, they learn to solve problems, establish routines, and deepen skills. During this phase novice teachers are likely to return to strategies and methodologies they experienced as students, especially when under stress, rather than use the theories and practices learned in the teacher preparation program (Moir et al., 2009).

Novice teacher induction is also a period of socialization and enculturation. During this time teachers’ professional attitudes and behaviors are shaped by the culture in the school and community. The culture often is difficult to resist, especially if it is a negative one (Moir et al., 2009). In a negative culture teachers tend to become negative. Attitudes and behaviors of the staff change novice teachers’ perspectives and behaviors; teachers in the induction time begin emulating behaviors within the culture (Moir et al., 2009).

The third aspect of induction is a formal program for beginning teachers. Teacher induction programs vary in scope and length. They can be a three-day orientation period where teachers are welcomed and become acclimated with district protocols, or paired with a veteran teacher (possibly a mentor) to learn about school resources and administrative duties. Or they can be a comprehensive, multi-year effort to give teachers intensive instructional guidance, provide opportunities to network, and provide resources crucial to support them in the transition to in-service teaching. The first two features of induction—teacher development and socialization and enculturation—happen whether or not a formal program is in place (Moir et al., 2009).

Induction programs can be key to retaining and developing novice teachers (Brock & Grady, 2006). These programs’ retention results are best when the program supports teachers in a comprehensive and sustained manner (Wong, 2005). Formal, high-
quality, and comprehensive induction programs can influence novice teachers’ development, socialization, and enculturation and benefit them through their entire career (Moir et al., 2009). Novice teacher induction programs have continued to grow throughout the United States. Prior to 1984 only eight states had implemented novice teacher induction programs, but by 1992, 26 states had started programs. The states that did not mandate a statewide program did implement pilot programs or provided grant money to local districts for novice teacher programs (Strong, 2009).

**Historical Roots of Mentoring**

The terms, “induction” (described above) and “mentoring”, are often used synonymously; however, they are not the same. Mentoring is only one aspect of induction (Strong, 2009). Historically, a mentor has been a teacher, sponsor, and advisor. A mentor takes on many roles, serving as a model to enhance the mentee’s skills and intellectual development and facilitate the mentee’s advancement in the field. Additionally, a mentor’s role has been to initiate the mentee into a new occupational and social world by acquainting them with values, customs, and resources (Barondess, 1995).

The concept of mentoring can be traced back to ancient Greece. In Homer’s epic *The Odyssey*, Odysseus, a distinguished warrior, went to fight in the Trojan War and left his young son Telemachus in the care of his trusted friend Mentor (Smith, 2005). Mentor was responsible for Telemachus’s education, shaping his character, and guiding his choices. Because Odysseus was gone for 20 years, Mentor guided Telemachus as he transitioned into manhood, accompanying him on a journey to find his father that helped Telemachus grow in wisdom and be able to function independently (Barondess, 1995).
Mentoring relationships can be found throughout history. In the Old Testament Moses mentored Joshua. The guild system of medieval times went beyond master-apprentice skill-building relationships to include social and religious issues and personal concerns. During the Renaissance, DaVinci mentored Raphael and Ghirlandaio mentored Michelangelo, largely because studio relationships between master and student provided skill development, protection, and encouragement that fostered creativity and allowed experimentation. In the musical world, Haydn mentored Beethoven, Clara and Robert Schumann mentored Brahms, and Schoenberg mentored Berg (Haack & Smith, 2000). At its core, mentoring is a relationship between a caring and experienced individual (the mentor) assisting in the development of a less experienced colleague (the mentee). While the relationship may vary in intensity, it must always be based on respect for the professionalism of the mentee and it must guide the mentee to find his/her own professional voice (Smith, 2005).

**Mentoring in Education**

Novice teacher mentoring programs were part of induction programs developed during the school reform movement in the 1980s (Strong, 2009). These programs developed from an increase in research on mentoring in general (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009). The Mutual Benefits model of mentoring programs, developed by Michael Zey, is one example of an early mentoring program model. His program was based on social exchange theory, which states that people enter into and maintain relationships in order to meet particular needs. Zey’s program extended the model, adding the idea that the organization containing the mentor and mentee also
benefits from the relationship. In education, the organization could include the district, the school, and the students (Strong, 2009).

Novice teacher programs have continued to grow in number since the 1980s. Currently, 29 states require some type of novice teacher support in the form of induction or mentoring (Goldrick, 2016). Mentoring requirements vary from state to state. Variations exist on whether or not there are eligibility requirements for becoming a mentor, how mentor selection is structured, and whether or not mentor training is required. Variations also exist as to whether or not mentors are offered continued professional development, or whether or not a set amount of time for mentor/mentee interaction is established (Goldrick, 2016).

**Benefits of Mentoring**

Mentoring is an essential part of novice teacher development, providing opportunities for more experienced teachers to guide the development of novice teachers. This support and guidance helps novices grow professionally and effectively contribute to the goals of the district (Daresh, 2003). However, the benefits reach beyond those of just novice teachers. Kimpton (2003) stated:

A high-order communication and learning process, mentoring is built on the analysis of professional-environment experiences, a learning cycle that includes observing, analyzing, and comparing known experiences and situations and applying them in new situations. Mentoring is not a short-term or once-in-a-while activity; its value grows because mentoring helps to develop an individual’s experience, knowledge, and eventually, wisdom. What sets mentoring apart from other activities is learning how to synthesize and apply knowledge to new
situations. Done well, mentoring nurtures a reflective behavior in teaching that is essential to the growth of this art. (p. vii)

In the above quote, “individual” is used, suggesting that the individual could be the mentor or mentee. This mentoring process involves both the mentor and the mentee, each involved in developing knowledge and experience and gaining reflective behaviors. With mentors and mentees involved in this learning cycle, teaching improves, leading to improved student learning and achievement and strengthened school districts.

Benefits to Mentees

Mentees benefit from mentoring in a number of ways. Aside from providing professional support, mentoring provides emotional support, increased job satisfaction, greater effectiveness working with students with diverse needs and abilities, and improved instructional problem solving, leading to higher teacher retention rates (Boreen, Johnson, Niday, & Potts, 2009). Mentees who have been part of a formal mentoring program have stated that they feel more confident about their professional competence, finding that others respect their work. They also felt a sense of belonging, as if someone cared about their personal and professional well-being (Daresh, 2003). The emotional and psychological support provided to mentees allows them to put challenging experiences into perspective (Hobson et. al, 2009).

In their literature review, Hobson et al. (2009) found a number of benefits for mentees including increased confidence, self-esteem, self-reflection, and problem solving capacities. Mentees also benefit from improved classroom management skills, time management skills, and the ability to effectively deal with their workload. Increased
socialization helps mentees adapt to standards and expectations in teaching and in their individual schools.

**Benefits to Mentors**

Mentoring has a positive impact on the professional and personal development of mentors as well. They learn through self-reflection or critical reflection on their own practice. Mentors learn from mentees, gaining new ideas and perspectives, new teaching styles and strategies, all while becoming more knowledgeable about the needs of novice teachers. The increased collaboration in which mentors take part builds confidence in their own teaching and improves relationships with students and colleagues. Mentoring helps mentors identify strengths and priorities, solidify their teacher identity, and feel a newfound sense of worth (Hobson et al., 2009).

While mentors typically have more knowledge and experience than their mentees, being a mentor also means taking responsibility for listening and learning from the mentee; it does not mean passing down wisdom and knowledge and providing all the answers to mentees (Boreen et al., 2009). Mentors reported greater overall job satisfaction after serving as a mentor. Other benefits of mentoring for the mentor included increased recognition from peers for being organized helpers, opportunities for career advancement, and a new enthusiasm for teaching (Daresh, 2003).

**Benefits to School Districts**

Mentoring relationships create a climate of collegial support that reaches across the district. Mentoring programs energize all teachers, helping to create a more capable, collegial, stable, and collaborative school staff (Daresh, 2003; Hobson et al., 2009). Teachers show an increase in self-esteem, and higher levels of job satisfaction and
motivation are present among the entire staff when mentoring programs are in place. Attitudes of life-long learning are created among the teachers, and all of this leads to greater productivity: When other benefits are realized, people do a better job, and the overall organization is more productive (Daresh, 2003). Perhaps most importantly, mentoring leads to increased teacher effectiveness, which leads to improved student learning (Boreen et al., 2009).

**Characteristics of Effective Mentoring Programs**

The quality and duration of induction programs may vary but successful programs share many characteristics; all novice teachers participate, the program lasts at least one year, all novice teachers are assigned qualified mentors, novice teachers have reduced teaching loads, and a summative review completes the program. According to the American Federation of Teachers (2001) guidelines, mentors should meet designated criteria, mentors and mentees should be matched according to grade level and subject area whenever possible, mentors should be given a reduced teaching load and a reasonable number of mentees, and mentors should be compensated in some way.

Exemplary mentoring programs focus on helping novice teachers learn to teach according to professional standards for teaching and learning and are responsive to the changing needs of both the mentees and their students (Odell, Huling, & Sweeny, 2000). The program centers on learning to be an effective teacher as a developmental process that includes preservice training, induction, and continual professional growth. Mentoring is a professional practice that must be developed over time and includes mentors in program design and evaluation. Mentors are carefully selected, prepared and provided ongoing development. Exemplary mentoring programs are also collaboratively planned,
implemented, and evaluated by a group of stakeholders including university faculty, school district personnel, and community members. They contribute to improving school and district cultures for teaching and learning to teach (Odell, Huling, & Sweeny, 2000).

Jacobs (2008) presented a model for the effective mentoring of music educators, beginning with the foundation of state government funding and administration of a mentoring program. Support from professional organizations is the next layer, because of their ability to affect lawmakers and policy as well as their ability to assist with the implementation of programs. A combination of mentor selection, training, and compensation comes next. Appropriately selecting and properly training mentors is essential for mentoring programs. Compensating mentors helps retain them and recognizes the time and effort invested in assisting mentees. Mentor-mentee release time and a multiyear program design are the next two layers. The opportunity for observation is important and time should be provided for mentors and mentees to observe and offer feedback. Because learning to teach is continuous throughout one’s career, mentoring beyond the first year is valuable. The final layer of the pyramid is requiring mentees to complete the program to finalize permanent state teacher certification. Jacobs stated that this model can result in a formalized system of mentoring that is beneficial to all new music teachers.

Jones and Pauley (2003) provided a model of an effective mentoring program consisting of various phases. The program design can vary depending on the context, lasting anywhere from one to three years, with the goal of transitioning the mentee to working independently and developing relationships with staff members. The first phase is the introductory phase where the relationship is fostered through sharing philosophies
and ideas, via informal social gatherings, games, and other activities that allow personal interactions and communication. The second phase is the establishment phase where the purpose of the program and desired outcomes of the relationship are clarified. The second phase focuses on the framework of the mentoring process and the expected roles of the mentors and mentees.

Next is the unity phase where the mentor and mentee are brought together through simulated classroom experiences and activities. The mentors and mentees are seen as partners, working collaboratively to prepare the mentee’s classroom for the start of the school year, develop instructional and classroom management plans, and analyze issues relevant to the school. This phase focuses on forming and implementing strategies and problem-solving skills, with the realization that results must be continually reflected on. Building a strong relationship is necessary during the first three phases and necessary for success in the last two phases.

The fourth phase is the application phase. The mentee applies what has been learned in the first three phases to the classroom with student interactions and classroom situations. Risks are taken and new strategies are tried while the mentee builds confidence and develops better practitioner decisions. The mentor is available to assist as needed. The critical reflective phase is the final phase. It focuses on praxis—reflecting on individual practice, implementing new ideas, and engaging in reflective dialogue to examine successes and areas for improvement. This is a continuous process.

In summary, effective mentoring programs last at least one year, but preferably last multiple years. They provide compensation, training, release time, and ongoing development to mentors. Multiple stakeholders are involved in the design and
implementation of effective mentoring programs, including professional organizations. Additionally, mentors are carefully selected based on specific criteria, and matched with mentees by subject and grade level.

**Quality of Mentoring Programs**

The New Teacher Center (NTC) is a national organization dedicated to providing educators support and resources. Since it was founded in 1998 the NTC has designed and implemented research-based induction programs to help schools support novice teachers. This organization also believes in the importance of measuring states’ progress and bringing attention to research-based practices that will strengthen the teaching profession.

Since 2012 the NTC has monitored state policies regarding novice teacher support (Goldrick, 2016). For each state, NTC reviews the presence or absence of policies related to nine key criteria that are most crucial to the provision of universal, high-quality induction and mentoring support for beginning educators (Debra Raffin, personal communication, April 12, 2016). The nine criteria include that state policy:

1. Require that all beginning teachers receive induction support during their first two years in the profession.

2. Require a rigorous mentor selection process and foundational training and ongoing professional development for mentors; establish criteria for how and when mentors are assigned to beginning educators; and allow for a manageable caseload of beginning educators and the use of full-time teacher mentors.

3. Encourage programs to provide release time for teacher mentors and dedicated mentor-new teacher contact time.

4. Address the overall quality of induction programs by requiring regular observation of new teachers by mentors, the provision of instructional feedback based on those observations, and opportunities for new teachers to observe experienced teachers’ classrooms; encourage a reduced teaching load for beginning teachers; and encourage beginning educators’ participation in a learning community or peer network.
5. Adopt formal program standards that govern the design and operation of local educator induction programs.

6. Authorize and appropriate dedicated funding for local educator induction programs; and/or establish competitive innovation funding to support high-quality, standards-based programs.

7. Require beginning educators to complete an induction program to move from an initial license.

8. Assess and monitor induction programs through strategies such as program evaluation, program surveys, and peer review.

9. Adopt formal standards for teaching and learning conditions, conduct a regular assessment of such conditions, and incorporate the improvement of such conditions into school improvement plans. (Goldrick, 2016, pp. 4-5)

Their latest report, a 50-state review of policies on new educator induction and mentoring, summarized what actions have been taken to strengthen novice teacher support. It found that few states have comprehensive policies requiring high-quality induction for novice teachers. Twenty-one states do not currently require support for all novice teachers. Twenty-nine states do require novice teachers to participate in some type of induction or mentoring. Eleven of those states require only one year of support for novice teachers and three states require mentoring or induction of indeterminate length. Therefore, only 15 states require a research-based, multi-year novice teacher support program (Goldrick, 2016).

No state met all nine criteria for high-quality induction. However, three states—Connecticut, Delaware, and Iowa—did meet what the NTC deemed the three most important criteria: requiring schools and districts to provide multi-year support for new teachers, requiring teachers to complete an induction program for a professional license, and providing dedicated funding for new teacher induction and mentoring. Eleven states—California, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey,
North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina—have policies addressing three important components of induction programs: classroom observations of and by beginning teachers, formative assessment of or feedback on teaching from mentors, and participation in a professional learning community or novice teacher peer network (Goldrick, 2016).

Delaware met seven of the nine requirements for high quality induction in their two-year program for all novice teachers. Additionally, one year of support is provided for all teachers new to the state. Mentors must meet specific requirements: they must have satisfactory teaching evaluations, and to qualify to become a lead mentor one must successfully complete a series of observations and questions. Policy states that mentors and mentees are required to meet for a certain amount of time, and mentors must conduct a minimum number of observations of the mentee teaching. Delaware has detailed program standards, and dedicated funding for the program. All of the funding is reserved for mentor stipends; no money remains for induction program funding. Finally, all novice teachers must complete this program in order to advance from an initial to an advanced teaching certificate (Goldrick, 2016).

Iowa met five of the nine criteria for high-quality induction. All first and second year teachers are required to participate in an induction program, and an optional third year is allowed at the expense of the individual school district. Each district is required to provide release time for mentor teachers. The state dedicated over four million dollars in funding, guaranteeing $1,300 per novice teacher. Of that money, $1,000 goes toward mentor compensation. Iowa is one of only six states to provide funding for local induction program costs. Detailed program standards exist, and participation in the
induction program is required in order to move from an initial teaching certificate to an advanced one (Goldrick, 2016).

Connecticut also met seven of the nine NTC criteria. The program is two years, and details specific requirements for mentor selection, training, and professional development. Mentor teachers must demonstrate effective teaching, the ability to work cooperatively to assist in the professional growth of a novice teacher, professional commitment to improving the induction of novice teachers, the ability effectively work with adult learners, and the ability to be reflective and articulate about teaching (Goldrick, 2016). It also requires districts to provide release time, ensuring substitute teacher coverage, for both mentors and mentees to be able to participate in required activities. A minimum amount of contact time between mentor and mentee is established, and formalized induction program standards are in place. Connecticut also has dedicated funds for induction and mentor training. Participation and program completion is required in order to obtain a professional teaching license, and the Connecticut State Department of Education oversees an outside evaluation of the program every three to five years (Goldrick, 2016).

Although much is being done to support novice teachers in many states, much is still to be done. More than 20 states do not require all novice teachers receive mentoring support. Even states with existing programs in place “have more work to do to strengthen their policies and practices. While a majority of states address many of our nine policy criteria, many of their policies are weak, often serve purely as guidance, and sometimes only apply to programs in districts that choose to offer them” (Goldrick, 2016, p. 5).
Connecticut Teacher Education and Mentoring Program

Of the programs reviewed, Connecticut was selected as the focus for this study because of my knowledge of literature on its former mentoring program. The Connecticut Beginning Educator Support and Training Program (BEST) was a program designed to help novice teachers improve the effectiveness of their instruction, which would lead to improved student learning. All teachers participated in the program for two years. BEST had four purposes:

1) to provide opportunities for novice teachers to strengthen content knowledge and instructional strategies and to enhance their understanding of learners;

2) to prepare novice teachers to successfully develop and demonstrate necessary skills and competencies, and discipline-specific teaching standards defined by Connecticut’s Common Core of Teaching;

3) to help novice teachers understand school and district curricular goals and standards, and the state standards for student achievement;

4) to provide a foundation for continuous learning and professional growth (Strong, 2009).

In BEST, all teachers worked with a mentor or a support team regularly during their first year. Mentors were required to participate in 24 hours of professional development related to new teacher development, the state teaching standards, and the BEST portfolio assessment process. They continued teaching full-time but did receive release time to provide instructional support to novices and help them reflect on their teaching. Mentors also received continuing education credits and in some cases, a stipend. At least one support team member must have been a trained BEST mentor, and
at least one should have had teaching experience in the appropriate content area (Strong, 2009).

When BEST was first implemented in 1989, it was a one-year mentoring and classroom-based observation program (McQuillan, 2008). It evolved into a two-year program with school and state-based support. In their second year in BEST, teachers were required to complete a content-specific portfolio designed to assess pedagogical content knowledge and skills. This portfolio was designed around a unit and included a description of the teaching context, lesson plans, teaching videos, samples of student work, as well as teacher commentaries on planning, instruction, and assessment of student progress. The teaching portfolio, which documents the relationship between teaching behaviors and student learning within an instructional unit, was a critical component of BEST (Strong, 2009).

In 2008, the Connecticut state legislation passed a Public Act which called for the replacement of BEST (McQuillan, 2008), making it was necessary to develop a new structure that would help Connecticut teachers improve student achievement. This included the need to better align BEST with evaluation and professional development policies and practices and allowed principals to be more active in the induction process. Responsibility for induction was to be shared between the state and local school districts and accountability needed to remain a central part of the program (McQuillan, 2008). The new program, which began in 2010, is the Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM). It is also a two-year induction program for beginning teachers and it includes mentoring. All novice teachers participating in the program are assigned a trained mentor. TEAM is discussed further in Chapter 3.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this multiple case study was to examine the relationships between music teacher mentors and mentees within the context of Connecticut’s state-wide novice teacher induction program, Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM). The research questions were:

1. How do the mentors and mentees describe their relationships?
   a. What do they identify as successes in their relationships?
   b. What do they identify as challenges in their relationships?
2. What do the mentors and mentees find meaningful in their relationships?
3. How have the relationships impacted the professional growth and development of the mentors and mentees?

The purpose of this study was not to generalize music mentor/mentee relationships in all novice teacher induction programs. This study sought to understand music teacher mentor and mentee relationships as experienced by these four music teacher participants. However, results from this research can be useful to other state-wide induction programs in their efforts to best support mentors and mentees within their respective programs. More specifically, this study seeks to inform music teacher mentoring, and the understanding of the aspects of a mentoring relationship for music teachers.

Need for the Study

Mentoring as part of a novice teacher induction program has been shown to have a positive impact on the professional growth and retention of teachers. A significant amount of literature on novice teacher mentoring exists. Much of this literature has
centered on designing programs and model programs (Blair-Larsen, 1998; Bower, 2005; Jacobs, 2008; Moir, 2005; Villani, 2002); the content or status of various programs (Conway, 2003; Conway et. al, 2002; Strong, 2009; Weimer, 2011); and the effects of mentoring (Andrews & Quinn, 2005; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Mentoring relationships have also been examined in previous literature (Abell, Dillon, Hopkins, McInerney, & O’Brien, 1995; Jewell, 2007; Mastapha, 2011; Mathur, Gehrhe, & Kim, 2012), and found to be crucial to mentoring. Mentoring’s overall effectiveness is determined by the quality of the relationship (Portner, 2001). Zuckerman (1999) found the personal and mutually respectful mentoring relationship to be a critical factor in helping a first-year teacher transition from dependent to self-reliant. Abell et al. (1995) found that the mentor/mentee relationship may have influenced participants more than the detailed guides and training sessions required by the school districts’ mentoring programs. Mentees wanted to be successful and mentors wanted them to succeed, so their relationships were individually constructed to ensure success, therefore making the mentoring program successful.

Hawkey (1998) suggested that a greater emphasis on the mentoring relationship would be beneficial to more effective mentoring overall. Benson (2008) noted that mentoring programs have failed because of a lack of interpersonal mentor/mentee relationships. The value of mentor/mentee relationships in music education has been discussed (Conway, 2003; Schmidt, 2005; 2008). Krueger (1999) found that music teachers who had strong mentoring relationships with experienced music teachers did not describe isolation as an issue. Quality mentoring relationships helped two different novice music teachers improve and receive tenure after struggling in their first years.
(Schmidt, 2005; 2008). Because of the importance of the mentoring relationship there is a need for further study. Tarnowski and Murphy (2003) examined reasons experienced elementary music teachers entered and remained in the profession. While participants were not specifically asked about mentoring, one participant did discuss the role of mentoring, prompting the researchers to note mentoring relationships as a key factor in retaining teachers and calling for further investigation of such relationships in future studies. This study sought to gain a deeper understanding of the mentoring relationship, specifically the music teacher mentor/mentee relationship.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Novice teacher mentoring has been examined in numerous studies. The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationships between music teacher mentors and mentees within the context of Connecticut’s Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM). In this chapter, I provide a synthesis of research on mentoring relationships in general education and music education fields, meaning making in relationships and other contexts, and the impact of mentoring on professional development.

Mentor Mentee Relationships

Establishing and fostering a healthy mentoring relationship is crucial to the overall mentoring experience (Benson, 2008). The quality of the relationship determines its effectiveness (Portner, 2001), and could affect teaching success. A negative mentor/mentee relationship inhibits professional growth, and can even motivate one to quit teaching (Denis, 2015).

Wang and Odell (2007) noted three theoretical perspectives underlying mentoring programs that emerged from the field of teacher mentoring. The first is a humanistic perspective, where the underlying goal of the relationship is to help a novice teacher transition smoothly into teaching. The mentor assumes the role of counselor who helps the mentee identify and resolve conflict, define their needs, and feel confident about teaching. The mentor gains social recognition and psychological rewards from this relationship. The second is a situated apprenticeship perspective. In this perspective, the relationship goal is to help mentees connect theory to practice. Mentors are experts with strong teaching skills and great practical and conceptual knowledge of teaching and
resources. They understand the contexts and cultures of teaching and help mentees develop knowledge and skills. The third perspective is a critical-constructivist relationship, where the goal is to critique existing knowledge and structures, develop commitment toward reform-minded teaching, and work together to transform knowledge and practice.

**Mentor/Mentee Pairing**

The way a mentoring program matches mentor and mentee can impact the success of the mentoring relationship. Having a mentor who teaches the same subject (Carter & Francis, 2001; Mathur, Gehrhe, & Kim, 2012; Wildman, Magliaro, Niles, & Niles, 1992) seems to consistently benefit the mentee. Further, proximity of the mentor to the mentee seems to also be helpful. Zuckerman (1999) found that a mentor whose classroom is proximal to the mentee’s is able to frequently drop in, adding to their support of the mentee. Time to interact was compromised when pairs were not in the same building and able to meet as often (Wildman, Magliaro, Niles, & Niles, 1992). Similarly, Mathur, Gehrhe, & Kim (2012) noted that mentors in the same school, frequency of contact, and ideally even sharing some of the same students as the mentee seemed to be effective.

**Compatibility and Characteristics**

Compatibility and personality characteristics of both mentor and mentee have been found to be important factors in effective mentoring relationships (Carter & Francis, 2001; Wildman, Magliaro, Niles, & Niles, 1992; Zuckerman, 1999). Hellsten, Prytula, and Ebanks (2003) explored mentoring experiences of novice teachers in Saskatchewan and found the compatibility of mentor and mentee and the engagement of the mentor emergent themes. All novice teachers reported learning from their mentoring experiences.
However, the effectiveness of the experience was partly guided by whether or not the mentees believed they had a compatible relationship with the mentor. While an incompatible relationship did cause disengagement in the relationship, getting along with a mentor did not always equate to an engaging relationship. One participant got along with their mentor, but the mentor was not engaged in the experience, leaving the mentee feeling unsupported and seeking other means of support. Connecting with an engaged mentor leads to a better overall mentoring experience.

Wildman, Magliaro, Niles, and Niles (1992) examined second-year mentees and found that personality characteristics impacted the relationships. The success of the relationship was based on the mentor’s ability to be available, helpful, committed, diplomatic, proactive, encouraging, trustworthy, enthusiastic, and provide good models. Personality characteristics of mentees often undermined the relationship; mentors noted mentees were often unable to open up, admit problems, ask for or accept help, and reciprocate in the sharing process. Mentees would often take from the mentors (time, resources, ideas) without sharing anything in return.

Zuckerman (1999) portrayed the mentoring experience of a first-year science teacher in a formal mentoring program. A personal and mutually respectful relationship assisted the mentee in transitioning from a dependent to a self-reliant teacher. Regular encouragement, respect for the mentee’s own teaching beliefs and practice, and sharing personal interests promoted the transition. The author noted the necessity of having a mentor who was available and able to adapt and evolve according to the characteristics of the novice teacher and the teaching context. In Zuckerman’s study, the mentor was a caregiver, fellow learner, and friend. According to Carter & Francis (2001), mentoring
relationships are most effective when mentors are available, empathetic, approachable, friendly, interested in collaboration, foster reflection, and are actively interested in helping mentees develop.

**Mentor and Mentee Benefits**

A mentoring relationship with a clear purpose and goals benefits mentors and mentees (Mathur, Gehrhe, & Kim, 2012). Mastapha (2011) described the experiences of participants in a school-sponsored mentoring program regarding enhancing their professional development and meeting novice teacher challenges. The mentor/mentee relationship benefitted all participants. Mentors learned new strategies, gained new ideas, became more self-reflective, and improved their own teaching while guiding and supporting mentees. The support mentees received helped them meet professional demands: Instructional support, classroom and school procedures, and classroom management skills were cited areas of growth as a result of mentoring. Mentors and mentees spoke about the personal satisfaction gained through mentoring. The relationship was not only professionally beneficial, participants also forged new and lasting friendships. Overall, the mentoring relationships improved teaching; more effective instruction impacted student learning, which benefitted the entire school.

Mathur, Gehrhe, & Kim (2012) examined differences in mentor and mentee perceptions regarding aspects of the relationship’s value and effectiveness. Both mentors and mentees perceived benefits of the mentoring experience. Mentors saw their role as beneficial in improving their ability to reflect, and mentees benefited from increased knowledge of policy and assessment.
Zuckerman (1999) discussed the importance of a shared appreciation for the complexities and challenges of teaching and the promise in new instructional approaches. A shared appreciation for the complexities of teaching benefits the mentee, who is more likely to ask for and accept help when attributing the need for help to the challenges of teaching rather than personal insufficiencies. The promise in new instructional approaches benefits the mentor; the promise of new instructional techniques keeps the mentor interested in improving their own teaching and valuing a novice’s ideas.

Mentoring relationships are fragile (Scandura, 1998), and therefore need care and attention. The nature of the mentoring relationship is highly personal and conducted under a variety of circumstances depending on the school and/or program (Wildman, Magliaro, Niles, & Niles, 1992). Establishing and maintaining a relationship based on collegiality, community, and commitment is necessary to help novice teachers successfully navigate the field. Collegiality helps all teachers support each other and respect working together; community assists in sharing a collective sense of purpose. Each requires commitment and dedication to working with others (Cooper, 2015).

**Summary**

The development of the mentor/mentee relationship is influenced by variables such as personalities and shared history (Healy & Welchert, 1990). The effectiveness of the mentoring relationship depends on many factors. Time, proximity, subject, and grade level may all affect the relationship, as does mentor and mentee personalities and compatibility. Mentor/mentee pairs teaching in close proximity allowed frequent contact and more time for interactions. Mentees with a mentor who taught the same subject perceive the relationship as more valuable. Compatibility between mentor and mentee
results in more effective mentoring experiences. Successful mentoring relationships need formal and informal opportunities to develop and sustain. They are mutually beneficial; ideas and materials are shared, teaching is improved, and teachers become more reflective.

**Music Teacher Mentor/Mentee Relationships**

Music teacher mentor and mentee relationships have also been examined in previous literature. While not always considered in discussions of mentoring, the cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship is a mentoring relationship. That literature is included in this section.

Conway (2003) examined descriptions of mentoring relationships from the perspective of 13 mentees in Michigan. Four of the 13 participants perceived their relationship as valuable, seven perceived it as somewhat valuable, and two participants did not perceive their relationship as valuable. The degree and type of contact was one reason for these perceptions. Interactions between mentor and mentee were related to the program requirements, proximity, teaching area, and whether or not the pair had a previously established relationship. The two mentees who did not perceive their relationship as valuable also had no real contact or interactions with their mentors. All mentees who were paired with a music teacher mentor, rather than a mentor who taught a different subject, perceived the relationship as somewhat valuable or valuable. Teachers also felt that opportunities for social engagement helped develop the mentor relationship, suggesting the significance of the mentoring program providing opportunities for mentors and mentees to get to know one another.
Schmidt (2005) examined one novice teacher’s journey to receiving tenure. This teacher, Chris, had a mentor, yet still struggled for two years as a novice and received near-failing teaching evaluations. Being paired with a different mentor who was able to provide more effective assistance greatly improved Chris’s teaching. The difference in his eventual success may have been the mentoring style of his two supervisors. The mentor who made a difference recognized the novice’s efforts and provided limited suggestions at one time in order to help simplify things and build off small successes. The mentor was able to identify gaps in pedagogical knowledge and work in small steps to build knowledge. Results from this study reiterate that mentoring relationships are unique and negotiated by the people in the relationship. Schmidt called for further study of mentoring relationships to provide a greater understanding of factors contributing to successful or unsuccessful relationships.

In a similar study, Schmidt (2008) explored one novice teacher’s experiences as he worked with mentors to improve his teaching. This novice, Jelani, had struggled through his first two years and was in danger of not being rehired the following year if his teaching did not improve. The mentor assigned to Jelani during his first two years would often visit his classroom unannounced, and each time Jelani was observed he was given a different list of ideas and strategies to try. As time went on, his mentor began to believe that Jelani was clueless and either incapable or uninterested in receiving help. Jelani was seen as having too many problems and his mentor, although successful with other mentees, did not know how to help.

Jelani’s second mentor took a different approach. He asked more questions, searched for the cause of difficulties, and questioned Jelani about his musical skills and
teaching goals. After each observation Jelani was presented with a short list of focused goals to work on, so he would not be overwhelmed. The mentor spent hours with Jelani, observing, listening, and helping him develop appropriate teaching techniques and materials. The author found that a sustained relationship with a mentor believing in and encouraging the mentee and providing consistent feedback was crucial for success.

**Cooperating Teacher/Student Teacher Relationships**

Communication and collaboration encourage the development of positive music teacher mentoring relationships (Draves, 2013). Denis (2015), in his literature review, examined personal relationships in the student teaching context of both general and music education. Results from studies reviewed point out the need for proper and supportive personal relationships, noting that the overall success in student teaching depends highly on the relationship between cooperating and student teacher. Intentionality in developing personal relationships is necessary. Promoting discussion about curriculum, procedures, and personalities during mentor/mentee meeting times provides a foundation for developing positive relationships. Interaction outside of a formal schedule creates an interpersonal foundation that encourages and fosters participation in the relationship. The informal nature of these meetings may create a more beneficial understanding of the collaborative nature of the relationship.

Draves (2008) examined cooperating teachers’ perspectives on their relationships with student teachers, asking how they viewed their relationships, described satisfying or unsatisfying relationships, and what contributed to a satisfying or unsatisfying relationship with student teachers. Cooperating teachers described how power was shared in the relationship, which the researcher put on a continuum from least power sharing to
most power sharing—a student/teacher relationship, a team-teaching relationship, and a collaborative partnership. One participant maintained a student/teacher relationship with her cooperating teacher for the entirety of the student teaching experience. In this relationship, the cooperating teacher held most of the power; the student teacher learned by observation and shadowing. The other two cooperating teachers enjoyed collaborative partnerships with their student teachers. All aspects of teaching from planning to reflection were shared. Benefits of this relationship included mutual learning and reduced feelings of isolation. It seems all mentor/mentee relationships would benefit from these suggestions.

**Summary**

Studies from the music education literature regarding mentoring during the student teaching experience reinforce several themes from the education literature. Mentoring relationships can affect teaching success at the student teaching stage and the novice teacher stage. Collaborative and communicative relationships promote teaching success and reduce isolation, particularly when mentor/mentee pairs are in close proximity to each other and teach the same subject. Building a personal relationship is important, as is personalizing the experience to meet the needs of the mentee and maximize the relationship’s effectiveness.

**Mentoring Experiences in Formal Programs/Induction Programs**

Formal state, district, and other induction and mentoring programs have been studied. While not all programs examined are still in existence, they offer unique perspectives to mentoring. The Novice Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) was a system-wide program involving the seven universities in the Texas State University
System. The purpose of this program was to mentor novice teachers to improve teaching effectiveness and retain novices in the profession. Resta, Huling, and Yeargain (2013) investigated the long-term effects of NTIP and reported findings focused on mentoring experiences. Teacher participants stated that support from a mentor was critical in helping during the first year of teaching; many indicated that they would not have continued teaching if it were not for the support of a mentor. “Relationships with others” was mentioned as the determining factor to remain teaching in the school more than twice as often as any other factor. Instructional and emotional support was noted as being the greatest help during the first year.

Findings revealed that these mentoring relationships benefitted the culture of the school as well as the mentees and mentors. The novice teachers benefitted from having the support of a mentor. As a result of having a mentee, mentors became more reflective and analytical of their own teaching. When teaching was improved, student learning improved. Teachers who received substantial support from this organized mentoring program recognized the importance of mentoring support from other teachers. Since being mentored, the majority of participants (94%) had been mentors to other teachers in their school.

Another program, The Induction Program, was a partnership between a large university and 22 school districts within a state. It was part of the Comprehensive Teacher Induction Consortium. Gilles, Carrillo, Wang, Stegall, and Bumgarner (2013) examined the perceptions of mentoring received in this program. Each year mentees in the Induction Program were surveyed in November, when the program previously found them to be at a low point in teaching due to stress from the demands of the job. In this
study, five years of survey data (2006-2011) were examined to determine what teachers at their lowest point identified as the types of mentoring that have been provided and how successful each was.

Findings revealed positive feelings about the mentors. Mentors were described as amazing, wonderful, supportive, and outstanding, encouraging, and someone to vent to. Emotional support was most often named when mentees thought of mentors. This finding was possibly due to when the survey was given, at a time when mentees were stressed and felt low.

The emotional support mentors provided was found to be essential to building trust. A trusting relationship must be developed early. In the Induction Program mentors and mentees met during the summer and were encouraged to meet in a non-school environment to begin building a relationship. This study reinforced that relationships require time and opportunities to develop, and these both must be provided early on so when mentees are faced with challenges and difficulties they are able to trust the mentors enough to ask for help.

Pedagogical support was another theme that emerged from the study. Mentors provided support in teaching and classroom management strategies, team teaching, observation, modeling, providing feedback, and help with assessments. Classroom instruction was strengthened when mentees had a mentor who would ask about the planning process and reflect with the mentees on how the lesson went. Mentors who provided advice, listened, and assisted with problem-solving, lead to mentees feeling overwhelmingly positive about their mentors and the overall Induction Program.
Nielson, Barry, and Addison (2012) investigated a novice teacher induction program called Great Beginnings. The goals of Great Beginnings were to improve the teaching effectiveness of all new hires and increase teacher retention. Each program participant was assigned an Instruction Resource Teacher (IRT) who served as an instructional mentor. Their job was to observe, provide feedback, model effective teaching strategies, co-plan lessons, and help teachers analyze student data to guide instruction.

The study’s authors described their findings regarding novice teachers’ views of the most beneficial components of Great Beginnings. The IRTs emerged as a key component. The role the IRT played was crucial to the perceived success of the novice teachers, for both emotional and instructional support. Discussions of interactions with IRTs were consistently positive; mentors were seen by mentees as supportive, encouraging, available, and trustworthy. The new teachers reported the most beneficial aspects in the relationship were observation and feedback. In addition, mentoring was extremely important to the novice teachers in this program. These findings reinforce the importance of mentors, not only for instructional support but for emotional support too.

**Summary**

Mentoring programs vary in structure and content. In the programs discussed here mentoring relationships provided instructional and emotional support to mentees. Participants spoke of mentors assisting with pedagogical knowledge and being encouraging. Even teachers assigned to only provide instructional assistance, as was the case with the Great Beginnings, still ended up being described as supportive and encouraging.
Types of Mentoring Relationships

Various types of mentoring relationships have been identified and explored. Leshem (2012) examined mentor/mentee relationships to gain insights on what types of relationships could be identified. Participants were 15 pairs of cooperating teachers and student teachers at different secondary schools. These student teachers were in their second year of practice teaching, spending one day a week at a Professional Development School as part of their teacher preparation program. Each participant individually completed an open-ended questionnaire on topics designed to gather views on mentoring relationships.

Findings identified four types of relationships: evolving, compliance, learning, and coaching. An evolving relationship indicated process. The relationship developed “gradually into an agreement of acceptance” (p. 417), meaning participants learned throughout the relationship how to trust each other and accept different opinions. A learning relationship indicated mutual learning, where participants recognized the importance of sharing congruent perspectives. Mentors in this type of relationship in particular spoke of the responsibility of being a good role model, which included improving their own teaching, or “practicing what they preached.”

A relationship of compliance indicated agreement and acceptance between the mentor and mentee. Pairs realized different views and opinions existed but chose to resolve them with respect to a different way of thinking. Mentees were able to respect the knowledge and experience of the mentor, choosing to view parts of the process as learning opportunities rather than disagreements. The mentors were also able to respect the mentees’ ways of thinking and allow them to teach according to their beliefs. A
coaching relationship indicated support and sensitivity and was based on patience and consideration. Mentors felt their role was to encourage and help the mentee succeed in any way possible. Mentees felt the mentor should be someone who is there for whatever is needed.

While the authors identified four different types of relationships among mentor/mentee pairs, only small differences in each type were described. The patterns in the relationships show supportiveness based on dialogue between mentor and mentee, with tendencies toward agreement within the pair. While mutual learning was indicated, the orientations of these relationships tended to be of compliance and compromise, even though mentors’ perceptions leaned toward an inquiry-oriented relationship. The mentees did identify dissonances but chose not to challenge them, instead remaining silent and accommodating the mentor out of respect. While this did create a harmonious relationship, it did not provide opportunities for participants to question beliefs and values. Leshem called for an “up-grade” of the mentor/mentee relationship, achieved by questioning the “systems of beliefs that underlie practice while bringing about a theorized practice where learning and development can take place” (p. 419).

While Leshem (2012) identified positive aspects of mentoring relationships, dissonances in mentoring relationships have also been examined. Using border crossing as a theoretical framework, Bradbury & Koballa Jr. (2008) explored tensions in two mentor/mentee relationships. Central to border crossing is the idea that people must cross borders to transition from one culture to another. In this study the authors used border crossing as a “lens to interpret the transitions and expectations that must be negotiated between a mentor and an intern in order to develop a successful working relationship” (p.
Relationships are developed as novice teachers evolve into classroom teachers and mentors transition into their role as a teacher of a teacher; as a result, new cultural patterns are established. If these relationships are successful, the border crossing for the novice teacher into the profession is smooth; if not, the crossing may become too challenging for the novice, resulting in a missed developmental opportunity.

Participants were two interns enrolled in a yearlong education certification program designed for people who were transitioning from a science-related field to teaching science, and two mentor teachers. The mentors were each state certified mentors, selected to be mentors based on their previous successes working with novice teachers, and had participated in a required training program. Their job was to provide the interns with pedagogical guidance and support in their classrooms, as well as to work with the university supervisor to evaluate the interns’ progress. The program director paired the mentors and interns, since s/he previously worked with the mentors and also knew the interns. Each pair was matched by personality and content area.

Three borders emerged in the relationships - conceptions of mentoring, communication and relationship development, and beliefs about teaching. The two mentors conceptualized mentoring to begin as an apprenticeship where they would provide direct assistance, then gradually provide less support as the novice teachers build autonomy. The mentors envisioned a collaborative relationship, supporting while working together. The interns also conceptualized mentoring as an apprenticeship, considering their mentor an expert source that could offer advice and feedback. One intern’s conceptualization matched her experience, so the relationship developed. The other intern saw mentoring as an apprenticeship, but she did not feel she received advice...
as she prepared lessons. She expected more guidance from her mentor. She eventually became frustrated, then angry, when her conceptualization did not match her experiences.

Developing a personal relationship and effectively communicating was a second border to cross. Neither mentor was able to build a relationship that realized their desired conceptions. One mentee went from frustrated to angry when she realized her conceptions and experience did not align. The inability to realize individual conceptions of mentoring affected the relationship. Neither pair was able to develop a personal relationship. One pair struggled to establish a friendship, but their personal relationship did improve over the course of the year, and it did not interfere with the overall mentoring partnership. The mentor felt comfortable giving advice and having honest conversations. The mentee only spoke of a personal relationship once, stating that she liked her mentor and thought her mentor liked her. The other pair spoke frequently about a lack of a personal connection. One factor for the disconnection between conceptualizations and realities was that neither pair ever discussed their expectations of the relationship. Each had an idea but did not verbalize it, and this lack of communication seemed to have caused tensions in the relationships.

The third border was differing beliefs about teaching. The mentors believed in a student-centered, activity-based learning approach. Perhaps because they spent many years in other careers and were far removed from their college science courses, the mentees’ beliefs about teaching were shaped by their past experiences in college science classrooms and tended to view teaching as lecture-based teacher presentations. The mentors saw the interns as either unwilling or unable to teach in a way that met their student-centered beliefs, creating tension in the relationships.
The authors concluded that because expectations were important in the development of mentoring relationships, providing ways to ensure participants communicate and share ideas with each other is crucial. Communication and dialogue is necessary in any relationship, but extremely important in a mentoring relationship. Creating space for dialogue and communication and establishing clear understandings about each person’s conceptions of mentoring and beliefs about teaching can reduce misunderstandings and frustrations in the relationship.

Coombs and Goodwin (2013) proposed an increase in purposeful dialogue in mentoring relationships to benefit both mentor and mentee. They asserted that professional dialogue helps acculturate and support novice teachers and provide opportunities for mentors to engage with the classroom challenges facing the mentee, learning from them in the process. Reflecting on their own mentoring relationship as university supervisor and student teacher, the authors presented various ways to use dialogue to enhance the mentoring relationship. The first was journaling, but rather than reflecting daily or needing to meet criteria of entries or minutes, Goodwin journaled only to reflect on significant moments in her classroom, allowing entries to be deep analyses of experiences. Journaling reflections allowed the mentor to see snippets of successes and challenges in the classroom without being present to observe them. The mentor could then respond, continuing the conversation and opening the dialogue to ideas about teaching, sharing experiences, and solving problems.

Observations were important in Goodwin’s development, and were noted as an important component in a dialogical mentoring relationship. Observations provide opportunities for mentees to receive constructive and supportive feedback without
critique based on a checklist of behaviors. The words of mentors carry a lot of weight, making feedback an essential part of the dialogue. This type of observation only works if the relationship is cooperative where ideas are shared, rather than hierarchal. In this case, the observation dialogues extended from the journals and continued into monthly meetings where theories and practices that could be incorporated into teaching were discussed. The flexible structure and safe environment of these meetings allowed spontaneity in questioning, challenging the mentee’s thinking and guiding development.

While the authors’ relationship was beneficial to both participants, it was not without challenges. A strong foundation for a dialogical relationship must be established which, due to personalities and other factors, can be difficult. Viewing required journals as true reflections rather than assignments to be completed can pose another challenge. However, recounting daily activities does not allow the same depth of insights as looking for specific events or learning milestones. It is important that novice teachers be taught to see journaling as a reflective experience early in their career, preferably in the teacher preparation program. Time is also a challenge. With already busy teaching schedules and numerous responsibilities it is difficult to find time to journal and meet. Choosing a specific time each week to journal allowed Goodwin time to really think before writing, and each entry became an analysis rather than a record of events.

Encouraging communication and establishing clear expectations from the beginning can promote a collaborative relationship. Hoover & Frieman (2002) created a formal Mentoring Agreement to improve the mentoring process. This agreement resulted from the examination and analyses of numerous case studies the authors had conducted while mentoring student teachers and music education students. The agreement addresses
key points in the mentoring relationship, specifically respect and trust, power, boundaries, and professionalism.

In the first section of the Mentoring Agreement, the responsibilities of the mentor and mentee are pointed out, focusing on a respecting and trusting atmosphere to facilitate the mentoring relationship. Power is the focus of the second section. The mentor can have power over the mentee, but must use it to help the mentee make their own decisions and develop their own teaching style. The mentee also has power and must use it to take responsibility for their own growth and accept the consequences of all decisions.

Boundaries are discussed in the third section of the agreement. The mentor must recognize the autonomy of the mentee, and focus on putting the mentee first and meeting their needs. Professionalism is the focus of the fourth and final part of the agreement. The mentor must be committed to mentoring and model high professional standards. The mentee must respond to feedback and work to integrate the mentor’s suggestions into their teaching. The authors concluded that using a Mentoring Agreement helps both the mentor and mentee begin the relationship with realistic and clearly expressed expectations.

**Summary**

Although various types of mentoring relationships exist, similarities are shared, particularly the importance of dialogue. Communication and open dialogue are crucial in mentoring relationships. Purposeful dialogue helps mentors engage with and assist in developing mentees, and helps mentees better understand how to enhance their own professional growth. A lack of communication can cause dissonances in relationships. Dissonances can also occur when there are differing conceptions of mentoring, when
conceptualizations and experiences do not align, and when mentors and mentees hold differing beliefs about teaching.

**Meaning Making in Relationships**

Meaning making is an interpretive process. Meanings are created and formed, managed and changed through interactions and the exchange of ideas. Meaning arises in the process of interaction between people (Blumer, 1969). Coke, Benson, and Hayes (2015) explored meaning making through their own experiences as early career, tenure-track professors, and found it to be a recursive process. Reflecting and seeing with new eyes developed new knowledge and deepened understanding.

Zeigler, Paulus, and Woodside (2006) explored how individuals made meaning of their life history experiences while engaging in dialogue with others. The process of meaning making required individuals to step back from the experience and reflect on it. Engaging in dialogue with others continued the meaning-making process. Participants constructed knowledge of their experiences individually and at a group level. Meaning making occurred as each recounted events in their lives, reinterpreted them as they heard the experience of others, and emerged with a new story. These findings demonstrate that dialogue can change individual meaning, perspective and create a shared group perspective.

The meanings people have about relationships are value laden; research on meaning making in relationships provides opportunities for significant insights into processes and practices (Manning & Kunkel, 2014). The meaning of something for one individual emerges from the ways in which other people act with regard for that thing (Blumer, 1969). So, the meaning of the mentoring relationship for one individual
emerges from the ways in which the other acts with regard to mentoring. If the mentor conveys it is a burden to help the mentee improve as an educator, the meaning the mentee places on the relationship is affected.

Jewell (2007) examined what mentoring meant to seven experienced middle and high school teachers who represented 10-32 years of teaching experience. One participant was a middle and high school music teacher with 10 years teaching experience. Other subjects represented included English, Foreign Language, Social Studies, and Special Education. While participants were not novice teachers, their vignettes did reveal similar types of issues experienced by novice teachers. The author stated the theory was “that an understanding of the nature of mentoring relationships could help educators develop effective mentoring relationships and solve difficult education issues” (p. 297).

Interviews were conducted to gather data about the nature of mentoring. One theme that emerged was the democratic nature of mentors and the mentoring process. The reciprocal nature of the relationship greatly contributed to the success of the relationship. Six of the seven participants spoke of the willingness of both parties in the relationship: the mentors were willing to mentor and the mentees were willing to be mentored. The relationships also presented the element of choice. Mentees were able to choose the need to be addressed, promoting an open, comforting, nurturing, and trusting relationship.

The mentees noted that the experiences helped them grow professionally and were therefore beneficial. Teachers benefitted from their mentoring experiences by gaining a sense of self as professional educators. Morale, self-esteem, and confidence were enhanced. Continued reflection allowed teachers to better understand challenging situations and create ways to solve problems.
Abell, Dillon, Hopkins, McInerney, & O’Brien (1995) examined mentoring relationships within the Indiana Beginning Teacher Internship Program (BTIP), a state-mandated novice teacher program. This program began in 1987 and provided a one-year internship to all Indiana teachers with an initial standard license. In this program mentors were selected by superintendents based on the mentors meeting specific requirements as well as upon the recommendation of school principals. Mentors received one half day of training and a stipend for participating. The mentor/mentee relationships were constructed by the individuals locally rather than by strict state guidelines in order to best assist novice teachers in their individual schools. The authors were part of a study evaluating this program and reporting results to the state legislature. Their report was to focus on whether or not novice teachers benefitted from the experience, if they were more effective teachers than those who did not participate, and whether or not the state should continue to fund the program.

While preparing for this task, the authors became interested in the meanings that novice teachers and mentors gained from this mentoring process, and decided to further the study to shed light on participants’ perspectives of the program. A phenomenological theoretical perspective was used to describe the “lived experiences” of participants, allowing the researchers to see how relationships were constructed. Eleven school districts were purposefully selected to represent a variety of socioeconomic statuses and communities. Within those districts 46 participants were interviewed, representing mentor teachers (15), novice teacher interns (14), and teachers not directly involved in BTIP (17). The analyses focused on the mentor/mentee pairs, all matched by district-level
administrators for various reasons, including proximity, similar content area or grade level, prior teaching success, and desire to assist a colleague.

Findings revealed that mentor/mentee interactions facilitated the development of a mutually respectful and trusting relationship. The success of the relationship was also based on the assumption that the pair liked each other and was able to work together. One participant had a personal relationship with his mentor, but often spoke of a lack of professional respect for him, which diminished their mentoring relationship. Without professional respect, a truly open relationship where ideas were freely shared could not develop.

A number of other categories emerged through the data. The first was role definitions. Mentors took on a variety of roles in the relationship. Some of these were roles they believed they should take on, and others were based on cues from their mentees. Roles included being a parent figure, trouble-shooter, colleague, scaffold, and serving as a support system. The mentor as scaffold was based on prior experiences as teachers, and how they shared their knowledge and skills about the many aspects of teaching with their mentees. Therefore, the mentee had a conceptual scaffold on which mentees could build teaching experiences.

The roles participants assumed in their relationships defined their interactions and what was learned from each other. As mentors and mentees interacted they developed a bond of trust and respect for the knowledge gained from one another. Respect and trust were built through proximity. The most meaningful relationships were those where the mentor/mentee pair worked in close proximity, which allowed for frequent interactions.
and the mentee to see the mentor as accessible. The interactions were personal as well, helping the pair build a collegial relationship.

Interactions occurred differently for each pair; some set up formal meeting times, others interacted informally, such as the mentee approaching the mentor when questions arose, or the mentor checking in on the mentee. Mentors spoke of the need for flexible meetings, believing it was important to be present but not constantly hovering. Interactions allowed participants to share ideas and take risks without fear. Both mentors and mentees believed they had meaningful ideas to share that would benefit the other; the topics discussed in their meetings resulted in mutual learning.

The BTIP no longer exists in Indiana. Currently, Indiana state policy does not require all novice teachers to receive induction support. Novice teachers who received an Initial Practitioner license may participate in the two-year Mentoring and Assessment Program (IMAP) in order to receive a five-year Proficient Practitioner license. Teachers who do participate in IMAP are assigned a mentor, but this is not necessary to complete the program requirements (Goldrick, 2016).

Summary

The literature on meaning making in mentoring relationships shows that meaning making is a reflective process. Meanings in relationships are value-laden. Interactions and dialogue are necessary in developing trusting relationships. Roles often emerge in relationships; some are assumed based on beliefs, and others are taken on as social cues. The more meaningful relationships were ones where mentor and mentee were in close proximity and had frequent interactions, both formal and informal.
Impact of Mentoring on Professional Development

The mentoring relationship plays a critical role in teaching quality and facilitating the novice’s professional development (Hawkey, 1997). While studies have shown that mentoring has positive effects on the transition to teaching, less research has been conducted on how mentoring impacts novice teachers’ professional development. Richter Kunter, Ludtke, Klusmann, Anders, & Baumert (2013) examined whether quality and frequency of mentoring predicted novice teachers’ development of professional competence in their first two years. Two models of mentoring were used, a transmission model and a constructivist oriented model. In the transmission model mentors perceived their role as experts who transmitted knowledge within a hierarchical relationship. In the constructivist model novices constructed their own knowledge by connecting new and prior knowledge. Novice teachers who received constructivist mentoring showed higher levels of efficacy, teaching enthusiasm, and job satisfaction. They also exhibited lower levels of emotional exhaustion after one year of teaching than did teachers without constructivist mentoring. This study reinforced mentoring as a crucial support for novice teachers, and also that mentoring based on collaboration and reflection is beneficial to novice teachers’ professional development and motivation.

Mentoring impacts the professional growth and development of mentors and mentees. McCormack (2007) found that mentors indicated that guiding novice teachers improved their own professional practice, noting that they were able to reassess their own teaching by sharing new ideas and team teaching with mentees. Encouraging mentees to critically reflect on their teaching resulted in the mentors to do the same, often identifying new solutions to problems and generating additional curricular ideas. When asked about
the impact of mentoring, Hawkey (1998) found mentors’ experience and expectations of building a range of teaching strategies and skills to be beneficial to mentees. Having a large repertoire of strategies to choose from strengthened the mentees’ self-confidence as they began teaching. Hawkey proposed a greater emphasis be placed on the agency of the relationship, as it may be central to more effective mentoring.

Lopez-Real and Kwan (2005) examined ways mentors considered the mentoring process to be professionally beneficial. The most commonly held perceptions identified were that mentors learned through self-reflection, from mentees, and through mutual collaboration. Self-reflection came about in two ways. Mentors were driven to examine their own teaching approaches, techniques, and attitudes in-depth because of wanting to be good role models and advisors. To achieve that, mentors had to ensure their own teaching was of the highest quality and they were able to account for and explain reasons for their methods. Self-reflection also resulted from observing the mentees teach and providing feedback. Analyzing the differences between the mentees’ teaching and their own was another form of self-reflection. The habit of self-reflection continued even after the formal mentoring relationships had ended.

The mentors perceived they directly and indirectly learned from their mentees. Mentors valued the new teaching strategies, innovative ideas, and use of technology the mentees brought to the relationship, which was direct teaching. Indirectly, mentors and mentees had a mutual collaboration and sharing of ideas that mentors indicated was a source of professional development. Mentors and mentees shared views about student learning styles, learning issues, and how to improve student learning. This perception of an equal partnership showed mentors as willing to learn from someone else rather than
being the expert to impart knowledge to the mentee. Mentors also continued this after the formal relationship ended. One participant stated that the mentoring experience led to increased readiness and willingness to share experiences and skills with other colleagues.

Maor and McConney (2015) examined the perceived benefits for mentors participating in a mentoring experience. Prior to the beginning of the relationship mentors were asked to describe ways they expected to benefit from the relationship. Most responses centered on improving mentoring skills and gaining satisfaction from providing meaningful help to novice teachers. Mentors wanted to be able to better understand the needs of novice teachers, provide relevant assistance and feedback, improve their own listening and communication skills, and have opportunities to increase their own skills in dealing with challenging situations.

At the end of the program mentors were asked to describe how they benefited from the experience. A sense of satisfaction in helping bring out the best in the mentee and passing on a love for their subject were noted. Mentoring energized and recharged mentors while enhancing their self-worth. It also helped mentors become more reflective about their own teaching. Participating in a mentoring program allowed mentors to recognize opportunities to improve problem-solving skills and create new strategies for assisting novice teachers in the future. Mentors also saw opportunities to practice being empathetic and non-judgmental and actively used these in their own classrooms.

**Summary**

Mentoring impacts the professional growth of both mentors and mentees. Novice teachers who receive constructivist mentoring show higher levels of efficacy and enthusiasm for teaching. Mentoring relationships based on collaboration is beneficial to
novice teachers’ motivation and professional development. Mentors improve their ability to reflect on their own teaching. They also feel an energized renewal in their teaching, and a sense of satisfaction by helping guide a mentee through the first years of teaching.

**Chapter Summary**

This literature review revealed themes relevant to the present study. Numerous points can be applied to examining music teacher mentoring relationships, specifically regarding how relationships are described, what is meaningful in relationships, and the impact of the relationships on professional growth and development. Mentoring relationships are essential to the effectiveness of overall mentoring. However, many factors impact the success of relationships, including time, mentor/mentee pairing, proximity, compatibility, interactions, and personalities. Time is necessary to develop trusting and collaborative relationships that mutually benefit both participants. Mentors and mentees who are paired by subject and grade level, work in close proximity with opportunities for frequent interactions, and are compatible described their relationships as more valuable and meaningful.

Although different types of mentoring relationships have been identified, establishing a personal and professional relationship, maintaining dialogue, and communicating expectations and beliefs seem to impact what is meaningful in relationships. Dissonances can interfere in the relationships when there are communication issues. Mentoring relationships impact the professional growth and development of both mentors and mentees. Mentors become more self-reflective and energized when assisting mentees, and mentees become more self-confident, benefitting from the skills and experience of the mentees.
The literature highlights the importance of the mentor/mentee relationship to the overall mentoring process. This study aimed to better understand the mentor/mentee relationship within the context of one state-wide novice teacher induction program. It also sought to better understand what mentors and mentees find meaningful in their relationships, and how the relationship impacts the professional growth and development of the mentor and mentee.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between music teacher mentors and mentees within the context of Connecticut’s state-wide novice teacher induction program, Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM). The voices of both mentors and mentees were crucial in gaining an understanding of mentoring relationships and the meanings each individual gained from the relationship. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. How do the mentors and mentees describe their relationships?
   a. What do they identify as successes in their relationships?
   b. What do they identify as challenges in their relationships?
2. What do the mentors and mentees find meaningful in their relationships?
3. How have the relationships impacted the professional growth and development of the mentors and mentees?

Design

This study used a qualitative approach. Qualitative research centers on social structures, individual experiences, and/or relationships between them; it is concerned with the uniqueness and variety of perceptions of the individual case (Bresler & Stake, 2006; Glesne, 2011). Understanding the meanings people attach to their experiences are inquiry areas for qualitative study (Patton, 2002). Due to my interest in the relationships and experiences of both the mentors and mentees and the meanings they gain from these relationships, a qualitative approach best addressed the research questions. A qualitative design provided a deeper understanding of meanings that individuals gain from their
experiences in a mentoring relationship within the context of a structured novice teacher induction program.

A multiple case study was selected as the most fitting design for this study. Case studies investigate a phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014). In this study, case study techniques were used to examine mentor and mentee perceptions of their relationships during the first half of their second year mentoring relationship in a two-year program. Data sources consisted of journal entries and interviews, discussed later in this chapter.

Important to case study research is defining the bounded context of what is being studied (Stake, 1995). For this study the bounded context was TEAM, Connecticut’s state-wide induction program for novice teachers, which is described in the “Participants” section below. Mentoring relationships were examined by studying two cases. Each case was a music teacher mentor and mentee pair within TEAM, and the unit of analysis was the individual mentor and mentee participants, as shown in the figure below.
**Framework**

This study sought to better understand mentor/mentee relationships, what was meaningful in the mentoring relationships, and how the relationship impacted each individual’s professional growth and development. The theoretical framework borrows from both constructivism and interpretivist research. The framework, rooted in constructivism, was guided by the belief that individual perceptions and beliefs are shaped by assumptions, experiences, and interactions (Maxwell, 2013). Interpretivist qualitative research focuses on meaning-making as a continuous process; how people
make meaning of behaviors or events taking place, and how such meaning-making may influence behavior (Manning & Kunkel, 2014). This study was focused on what mentors and mentees found meaningful in their mentoring relationship within the context of TEAM, and how the relationship influenced their professional growth and development. Therefore, constructivism and interpretivism worked together to shape the framework of this study. Participants constructed beliefs about their mentoring relationship through their experiences and interactions with one another, and then interpreted what was meaningful in these relationships and how they impacted their professional growth.

**Participants**

Each participant was either a mentor or mentee in TEAM, a two-year induction program for beginning teachers that includes mentoring and professional development. This program was selected as the context for the study because of its structure and content, and the recognized history of Connecticut’s (CT) previous novice teacher induction program, Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST). Although TEAM is a different program than BEST, the strengths and recognition of BEST as a model mentoring program (Arends & Rigazio-DiGilio, 2000; Howe, 2006; Wong, 2004) made its successor, TEAM, an appropriate context for this study.

The mission of TEAM is to “promote excellence, equity and high achievement for Connecticut students by engaging teachers in purposeful exploration of professional practice through guided support and personal reflection” (CTTEAM – Connecticut’s Teacher Induction Program. Retrieved from http://www.ctteam.org/?page_id=327 May 25, 2016). The goals of TEAM are to refine novices’ teaching using research-based best practices; develop reflective practitioners who can assess their teaching using
professional standards; cultivate an understanding of professionalism; ease the transition to the profession to eliminate teacher isolation and retain quality educators; and, provide teachers and resources to support teacher induction (CTTEAM – Connecticut’s Teacher Induction Program. Retrieved May 24 from http://www.ctteam.org/?page_id=327). Because mentors and mentees have a continuous working relationship where they identify professional goals, work to achieve them, and then reflect on them, TEAM was a good contextual fit for this study.

All novice teachers participating in TEAM are assigned a trained mentor. The program is framed around five modules (Classroom Environment, Planning, Instruction, Assessment, and Professional Responsibilities) that align to the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching. For each module the mentor and mentee work together to identify an opportunity for professional growth based on the Common Core of Teaching performance profile, establish a goal, develop and implement a plan of action, then reflect on it. Each module takes approximately 8-10 weeks to complete (CTTEAM – Connecticut’s Teacher Induction Program. Retrieved May 24 from http://www.ctteam.org/?page_id=2).

**Research sample.** I used a multiple case study design to examine music teacher mentor/mentee relationships within TEAM. This study resembled Ellis’ (2012) study that used a multiple case study design to examine TEAM’s role in novice teachers’ learning and factors that influenced their learning by interviewing six mentor/mentee pairs in three different school districts. Ellis selected participants based on school districts within a mid-range District Reference Group, a Connecticut-created construct by which districts across the state are grouped demographically, mainly by economic similarities. He also
selected mentor/mentee pairs based on convenience rather than selectivity. However, Ellis focused on how the TEAM program influenced learning to teach, not on music teachers, how the mentor/mentee relationship within TEAM was described, nor the derived meanings from the relationship.

Identifying participants for this study was challenging for several reasons. There are far fewer music teachers in CT than classroom teachers, thus many music teacher mentees are not paired with music teacher mentors. In addition, participants needed to be willing to participate. Because I was most interested in the relationships (the case), the aspect of variety in the sample was minimized. The focus was on what was meaningful in the relationships, not the grade level or music subject area (e.g. instrumental, general, choral) in which they were teaching.

This study had two cases for a total of four participants. I focused on cases in their second year of the mentor/mentee relationship in order to examine the established relationships, rather than the experience of creating relationships. The mentors’ experience and the time they have had with their current mentee to establish a relationship added to the richness of the data. Reflections of participants’ first year in the program captured as much of the experience as possible. In addition, mentors were experienced, having had at least one TEAM mentee prior to this study.

Potential participants were identified first through the TEAM website. I emailed a program consultant, introduced myself, explained the nature of the study, and asked for assistance with recruiting participants. She forwarded my information to two other persons, both teacher-leaders-in-residence, who were also music educators and TEAM mentors, who played a dual role at the state level and as public school music teachers.
They each forwarded my information to potential participants. I was contacted by two current TEAM mentees. One had to be eliminated from participating because he changed districts after his first year of teaching and would be assigned a different TEAM mentor in his second year. Another potential participant declined to participate after realizing that the data collection may be too difficult to realistically complete given all her other responsibilities.

The program consultant also forwarded my information to the arts consultant at the state level asking for help with identifying potential participants. This person did not have access to a list of TEAM music teachers, but did forward my information to the president of the Connecticut Music Educators Association (CMEA) asking for help identifying participants. Before this communication, I had contacted CMEA through their webpage, describing the nature of the study and asking for assistance identifying potential participants. Follow up emails were sent to CMEA with no response.

Additionally, I contacted each Music Education faculty member at the University of Connecticut, Central Connecticut State University, and the University of Hartford. I received responses from professors at two institutions, each willing to send an email blast to all graduates and current cooperating teachers to help identify potential participants.

I also contacted 240 District Facilitators located on the TEAM website for assistance in identifying potential participants. I received 52 responses from District Facilitators; 51 stating that no one in that district met the criteria for this study. Only one responder indicated that teachers who met the criteria were in their district. Fortunately, there were two music teacher mentor/mentees pairs in the second year of TEAM in that district.
I emailed these four potential participants, and then arranged online meetings with each one to explain the study and their possible participation. They were introduced to the required data collection materials, informed of the estimated time necessary to complete them, and provided the necessary consent forms. They were told they could decline to participate in the study, and if they chose to participate they could withdraw at any time. All four were willing to participate. Each participant was emailed a consent form for their records, detailing the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, and assurances of confidentiality. Each participant chose their own pseudonym and I assigned pseudonyms to represent school district and individual school names for confidentiality.

**Data Collection**

The data collection was designed to capture unique individual descriptions of the relationship, what was meaningful, and the impact of the relationship on professional growth and development. Although each case was a mentor/mentee pair, the data collection and analysis were designed to not only gather rich data about each case (the mentor/mentee pair) but also about the individual participants (the unit of analysis). Each participant had experiences and interactions prior to this study that shaped their beliefs about mentor/mentee relationships. Therefore, it was important to gather data on each participant.

**Cycles of Data Collection**

Data collection was designed to continually increase in depth over the course of the investigation. Each participant completed five journal entries, three individual interviews, and one joint interview with the mentor/mentee pair. These were organized into three cycles and a culminating experience. Each cycle focused on one research
question; the culminating experience was summative of all three research questions. The organization of the data collection process is illustrated in Figure 3.2.

The first three data sources, comprising Cycle 1 consisted of the first two journals and the first interview, shown in the left-hand column. This cycle focused mainly on participants’ descriptions of their mentoring relationship, allowing participants opportunities to reflect on their relationships before analyzing and drawing meanings from their experiences. Participants’ journal responses informed the first interview. This first cycle centered on research question 1, describing the relationship.

The next data cycle also consisted of two journals and an interview. The third and fourth journal entries focused on the nature of interactions and the meanings derived from these relationships. Again, participants’ responses to these prompts informed the second interview, which delved more deeply into what was meaningful in the relationship. The second cycle focused on research question 2, deriving meanings from the relationships.

The third, and final, cycle comprised two data sources, journal five and the third interview, shown in the right-hand column of Figure 3.2. This cycle focused mainly on the impact of the mentoring relationship on individual professional growth and development. The prompt for journal five was constructed based on the first four journal entries and the first two interviews. The third interview centered on the impact of the relationship on professional growth and development. After all journals and all three individual interviews were completed a joint interview was conducted. This interview focused on collecting data to answer all three research questions, which is why it is shown going across all three columns. Figure 3.2 shows how the data interact with each other and the approximate timeline for completing data collection.
Data Sources

Data sources for this study comprised journal entries, individual interviews (unit of analysis), and joint interviews (case). Hagen (2011) used a multiple case study to examine the impact of a teacher research project on the development of cooperating teacher/student teacher relationships. While not central to the original focus of the study, findings revealed that participating in a teacher research project provided opportunities for cooperating teachers and student teachers to improve their practice, therefore impacting their professional growth and development. Because Hagen focused on mentoring relationships, using cooperating teachers and student teachers as the mentor/mentee pair, I used her interview questions as a guide when creating my journal prompts and interview questions.

**Journals.** Each participant completed five journal entries with a prompt provided by me. Journal prompts can be found in Appendix A. I constructed the order of the journal prompts to align with each research question, and allowed each participant to first reflect on the relationship from the beginning, and then to reflect on ways the relationship
has been meaningful and impacted professional growth. Their mentoring relationship began a year before this data collection. This process gave them the opportunity to reflect on the relationship before asking them to derive meanings, which added richness and depth to their responses.

Ellis (2012) found that although TEAM did play a role in novice teachers’ learning, and participants were positive about their experiences, they struggled to articulate exactly what they had learned and how they had turned that into practice, even after he prompted them to go deeper during interviews. I designed the journal prompts to allow participants opportunities to really reflect on their experiences from the beginning of the relationship. Interviews required on the spot responses. Journals, which could be completed alone and at their own pace within the given week, allowed deeper reflection and added richness to responses. Interviews allowed follow up to the journal entries. Also, asking participants about the impact of their relationship on their professional growth and development at the end of the data collection period, after they had ample time to reflect back, made it easier for them to clearly articulate specific details.

Each prompt was designed to be reflective. While I did not request any specific length of response I did include guiding questions or statements within each prompt to guide their thinking and encourage depth in their responses. Individual journal prompts were sent to each participant via email as a Word document. Participants were asked to complete the journal in one week and return it as a Word document.

**Interviews.** Interviewing is one way to understand the experiences of others and the meaning they make from those experiences (Seidman, 2013). Each participant was interviewed three times individually and each mentor/mentee pair was interviewed one
time, with each interview lasting approximately 45-60 minutes. This overall series of interviews focused on the context of the experience with questions designed to allow participants to reconstruct details and reflect on meanings of the experience (Seidman, 2013). Questions that guided each interview can be found in Appendix B.

Interviews were semi-structured, resembling “guided conversations rather than structured queries” (Glesne, 2011, p. 110). Rubin & Rubin (1995) referred to this as a responsive interviewing method, where a participant becomes a “conversational partner” (p. 11) who has unique knowledge and experiences from which meaning is derived. Interview questions were guided by Hagen’s (2011) multiple case study, which examined the impact of a teacher research project on the development of cooperating teacher and student teacher relationships. I began with a short list of initial questions but was open to modifying them or adding others throughout the course of the interview. Keeping the main topics in an interview to a minimum is less overwhelming and makes it easier to maintain a conversational flow as well as allowing for depth on one subject (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) and broad questions allowed the conversational partners to answer from personal experience (Hunter-Revell, 2013).

I took notes during each interview, writing what I determined to be key words and phrases, to help with follow-up questions and provide an additional source of data for analysis. This procedure, as recommended by Seidman (2013), assisted me in keeping track of what the participant was saying and prevented me from interrupting. In each interview the goal was shared understanding of the meaning made through the conversation. Focusing on the context of the conversational partner’s experiences and meaning allowed for depth in the interview.
Scheduling determined if interviews could be conducted in person or online and both approaches were necessary. All interviews were audio recorded. After each interview the audio was downloaded to a password-protected computer to which only I had access. Data were analyzed as it was collected. I transcribed and coded the data within five days of collecting it to look for themes within the interviews and later across interviews. Data analysis procedures are discussed more fully in the data analysis section.

As Seidman (2013, p.7) stated, “telling stories is essentially a meaning-making experience.” It is in the process of reflecting on the details of experiences and making sense of them that makes telling stories a meaning-making experience. Through data collected I hoped to help participants reflect on and articulate meanings of the mentoring relationship by allowing them to tell their stories of participating in these relationships.

**Pilot.** After all journal prompts and interview questions were composed they were individually piloted with a current TEAM mentor and a former TEAM mentee. These two were previously a mentor/mentee pair, however, they were not music teachers. This was appropriate since all data collection materials focused on the relationship and no music specific questions were posed. Each person was emailed the journal prompts and participated in an in-person interview to determine the effectiveness of the prompts and questions. They were asked if they felt I addressed all the issues under study. The pilot participants were able to provide relevant and meaningful feedback that was used to slightly modify prompts and questions. I made necessary revisions based on their feedback and suggestions.
Data Analysis

The data were organized in ways that helped formulate themes and refine concepts, linking them together to create a description of music teacher mentoring relationships within the context of TEAM. Data were analyzed during the data collection phase in order for me to focus and shape the study while it was underway (Glesne, 2011). Data were given a “preliminary exploratory analysis” (Creswell, 2008) to begin gaining a general sense of it as soon as it was collected. This involved reading, rereading, and writing notes and memos—seeing the data as a whole before breaking it down.

I transcribed all interviews from the audio recordings. Researchers who transcribe come to know their interviews better (Seidman, 2013). After I transcribed each interview I sent the transcription to each participant for a member check. Each participant received a copy of her transcript to check for accuracy and was given the chance to clarify or expand on her statements. I read and analyzed interview transcripts and journal entries multiple times, writing memos containing suggestions for preliminary interpretation (Creswell, 2008; Yin, 2014). Regularly writing memos during data analysis allows analytical thinking about data and facilitates thinking activating insights (Maxwell, 2013). I also took theoretical notes during analysis, which Hunter-Revell (2013) described as deliberate attempts to find meaning, providing a link from the data to the research questions.

Organizational categories, established prior to data collection, were useful ways of ordering data focusing on broad areas (Maxwell, 2013). My research questions served as organizational categories, functioning as containers for further sorting data. In addition to organizational categories I used substantive categories to capture ideas that did not fit
into organizational categories. Substantive categories were descriptive and taken from participants’ own words (Maxwell, 2013).

The organizational categories were the initial code list: description of the relationship; successes; challenges; what was meaningful; impact on professional growth and development, with subcodes to be developed within each question (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Codes changed and developed as the research continues. When codes are created and revised is less important than whether they have some conceptual and structural order (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As I read and reread interview transcripts and journals I made notes in the margins and wrote shorthand codes on relevant passages, continuing until all data was indexed and coded.

Organizational and substantive codes served as categories and subcategories. The data analysis process began as soon as data collection commenced to reflect the evolving structure of the analysis (Glesne, 2011; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). All coding was done by hand, with hard copies of the transcripts, journal entries, and other materials, and highlighters were used to identify themes and patterns. Once coding was completed, data were arranged into a logical order and thematic analysis was used to search for themes and patterns (Glesne, 2011; Patton, 2002). After data were analyzed and emerging themes identified, codes were refined and supported with transcript excerpts.

To summarize, data were analyzed first using intra-case analysis. I read the journal entries and transcriptions of interviews from each participant, referencing the audio, and coding the transcript data to look for themes and patterns (Glesne, 2011). The same process was repeated for each case. Next, cross-case analysis was applied to examine the relationship of emerging themes between the two cases and explore
similarities and differences among the cases (Yin, 2014). Broader themes across the two cases were coded, analyzed for emergent themes, and supported by transcript and journal material. Cross-case analysis deepens understanding and explanation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Member checks were conducted during the data collection phases to check for accuracy, and to insure the trustworthiness of my interpretation of the data.

**Validity**

Qualitative data is subjective and open to the researcher’s interpretation (Patton, 2002). Validity in qualitative research is “not the result of indifference but of integrity” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 124). While threats to validity cannot be completely eliminated, steps can be taken to minimize concerns. Subjectivity, or researcher bias, is one threat to validity (Maxwell, 2013). The researcher chooses data that fits her purpose and goals, and selects the data that stands out. I cannot eliminate my beliefs but I can understand how my expectations may influence the conduct, analysis, and results of the study.

Reactivity, or the influence of the researcher on the setting or participants, is another threat to validity (Maxwell, 2013). The participant’s responses are always influenced by the interview, interview situation, and journal prompts. While this could not be completely eliminated, I could prevent the consequences of this situation by understanding how I may have been influencing the situation. For example, asking leading questions influences the interview situation so I avoided asking leading questions to the best of my ability. Establishing guiding questions prior to interviews also helped me avoid leading questions.

Conducting intensive interviews to collect rich data helped provide a more complete picture of the mentoring relationship and increased the study’s credibility
(Maxwell, 2013). Interview questions and journal prompts were designed to be intensive, allowing the collection of rich, detailed, and varied data to provide a larger picture of these mentoring relationships. Member checking was used to make sure I did not misrepresent or misinterpret what a participant said, and to help me identify my biases. Member checking also strengthened my interpretations (Glesne, 2011). While I did bring certain biases into the study as far as choosing what data were important to examine and the lenses used in analyzing and interpreting data, every effort was made to stay embedded in the process and interpret what the data revealed. Validity threats were considered throughout.

**Ethical Considerations**

All participants provided informed consent to participate in this study, according to Institutional Review Board protocol. With their consent, participants expected their confidences to be preserved (Glesne, 2011). No deception was used in this study. Pseudonyms were used for all participants during the study, in the text, and will be similarly used in future presentations. All participants were fully aware that they were being audio recorded during the interviews. All recordings, along with all other data were stored on my password-protected computer with all precautionary measures taken to ensure securing all data, maintaining confidentiality and protecting identities. Participants did not have to answer any question and they had the option to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Participants received all transcripts of their words and write-ups of drafts revealing how they were represented. It was my ethical obligation to minimize misrepresentation and misunderstanding (Stake, 1995, 2005).
Chapter 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between music teacher mentors and mentees within the context of Connecticut’s state-wide novice teacher induction program, Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM). The research questions were:

1. How do the mentors and mentees describe their relationships?
   a. What do they identify as successes in their relationships?
   b. What do they identify as challenges in their relationships?

2. What do the mentors and mentees find meaningful in their relationships?

3. How have the relationships impacted the professional growth and development of the mentors and mentees?

Data collection and analysis were designed to gather rich data about each case (the mentor/mentee pair) and the individual participants (the unit of analysis). Each participant completed five journal entries, three individual interviews, and one joint interview with the mentor/mentee pair. The interviews were semi-structured guided conversations (Glesne, 2011), where researcher and participant were conversational partners (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Journals and interviews were organized into three cycles and a culminating experience. Each cycle focused on one research question; the culminating experience was summative of all three research questions.

Data were organized in ways that helped formulate themes and refine concepts, linking them together to create a description of music teacher mentoring relationships within the context of TEAM. The research questions served as organizational categories,
which functioned as containers for further data sorting. The organizational categories provided the initial code list: description of the relationship; what was meaningful in the relationship; and, the impact of the relationship on professional growth and development. “Descriptions” was the first organizational category used, aligning with the first research question. This included how each participant (unit of analysis) described herself, the other, and how each described the mentoring relationship. “Meaningful” was the second organizational category used, aligning with the second research question. This included instances of what was meaningful to each participant within each case. “Impact on Professional Development (PD)” was the third organizational category used, aligning with the third research question. This included the impact of the relationship on the individual professional development of each unit of analysis.

Substantive categories, or subcodes, were developed within each question; these were formed to capture ideas and themes than emerged from data analysis that did not fit into organizational categories. Subcodes changed slightly throughout the data analysis process as themes were organized and refined. Memos, written during analysis for preliminary interpretation, confirmed findings that emerged from data analysis.

The findings are presented by first detailing the mentoring relationship of each case (mentoring pair), including each unit of analysis’s perspective on the experience—how they described their relationship, what was meaningful in the relationship, and the impact of the relationship on their individual professional growth and development. The chapter concludes with a cross-case analysis of themes and subthemes that developed through the analysis process. All names are pseudonyms, including the school district and individual schools.
Description of Cases

Both pairs taught in Connecticut’s Kessler Public School District (KPSD) and were in the second year of their two-year TEAM mentoring relationship. The first case— I named “Yin-Yang”—was comprised of Dana McCord, mentor, and Kai Jones, mentee. The second case—I named “Schlemiel Schlimazel”—was comprised of Elizabeth Oliver, mentor, and Madeline Murray, mentee.

Yin-Yang: Dana and Kai

Dana, the mentor, had been teaching music for over two decades. At the time of this study she taught K-5 vocal music at Lindstrom Elementary School, a low socioeconomic school with just over 400 students. Lindstrom’s population was quite diverse; over 80 percent of the students were minorities representing a variety of cultures, with over a dozen different languages spoken.

Dana was an experienced mentor, both in the TEAM program and as a cooperating teacher for student teachers. She was also a life-long learner; she had earned multiple levels of Kodaly Certification and completed extensive graduate work, earning advanced degrees in music and education. Additionally, she served on various educational committees in her district. Her mentee, Kai, described her as friendly, knowledgeable, and hard-working, noting that she truly cared and wanted Kai to grow as a teacher.

Kai was a second-year teacher at Whittingham Elementary School, a low socioeconomic Title I school with approximately 400 students. Similar to Dana’s school, Whittingham’s population was also quite diverse; students represented a variety of cultures, with almost two dozen languages spoken. Kai taught PK-5 vocal music and an
extra-curricular fourth and fifth-grade choir with approximately 100 students. Kai was also continuing her education by completing graduate work. Dana described her as quiet, humble, and hard-working, with an excellent ability to reflect on her teaching.

Unlike many mentor/mentee pairs, Dana and Kai had met long before being paired together in TEAM. Kai was a student in the KPSD, and had once participated in a town-wide children’s choir taught by Dana. Although they remember each other positively from these choir experiences, they both used the word “nervous” to describe their feelings upon learning they had been paired as TEAM mentor and mentee, though both for different reasons.

Kai’s nervousness came from the unknown, stating that the two just did not know each other as adults and had no professional relationship. She was hesitant to approach Dana, noting, “I hadn’t seen her since I was a kid, so that was just weird” (Kai, Interview 1). Also, Kai had maintained a very positive relationship with her cooperating teacher, whom she considered a mentor, and continued to reach out to after her student teaching was complete.

Dana was nervous about their different personalities. She described herself as “very goofy” and her classroom as “a new show every half hour” (Dana, Interview 1). She remembered Kai as a very serious student and was nervous about their initial meeting, stating that she imagined some awkward encounters. She wondered if Kai would think she was a good teacher, and was afraid of letting her down.

However, that all changed when they first met. Kai described their first conversation as “relaxed; almost like a clean slate…starting over in a new relationship” (Kai, Interview 1). She was excited that a new relationship was going to be formed (Kai,
Joint Interview). Dana said they were instantly able to laugh, and in their first meeting they “began goofing around about something” (Dana, Interview 1). Dana instantly relaxed. “For me, if I can get someone to laugh that is my connection with them, you know, that’s the start of my relationship with them” (Dana, Interview 1). Dana quickly saw the beauty in their different personalities.

“Our personalities are completely different. However, we are able to recognize that these different approaches to life are great for being able to share a multitude of teaching tools in the music classroom. We are different and so is the way we teach. How awesome! Right?” (Dana, Journal 2)

Dana could tell Kai was nervous to take on the TEAM journey and her first year of teaching. Kai recalled their first meeting as nice. She was thankful Dana took the time to focus on her and listen to what she wanted to accomplish. Dana said they saw eye to eye on many of Kai’s novice teacher needs and was very glad to learn that they had much more in common than Dana originally thought.

Descriptions of the Relationship

“Our relationship is so unique.”

-Kai, Joint Interview

Dana described Kai as forthcoming. “Even though I had been her teacher, a long time ago, I thought that that would maybe get in the way of her being really honest with me about what was going on in her classroom . . . but that, that wasn’t true” (Dana, Interview 1). Dana also described Kai as a warm teacher. She was “super smart” (Dana, Interview 2), charming, mature, and a fast learner. Kai’s knowledge was “so vast…there’s so much knowledge in her and she has so much natural ability” (Dana,
Interview 2). She was honest with herself as far as where she was as a new teacher but also very hard on herself. Dana was impressed with how open and receptive to ideas Kai was, and Kai appreciated Dana’s knowledge, experiences, and availability.

Although once nervous to be Dana’s mentee, Kai said, “we just connected from the start” (Kai, Interview 1). As a student in Dana’s children’s choir, Kai remembered her as “friendly” and “hard-working” (Kai, Journal 1). When asked if she would still use those two words to describe her today, Kai said “absolutely” (Kai, Interview 1). She felt that Dana was focused on her during their time together, took time to listen, and wanted her to do well.

Overall, Dana described their relationship as a partnership in a collaborative sense, noting that it was probably the most collaborative mentoring relationship she has had. Dana recognized she had more tricks and tools since she had been teaching for over 20 years, and that much of her learning came through experiences Kai had not yet had. However, she never wanted to approach their relationship with an attitude of superiority, conveying she knew more than Kai or that her role was to teach her everything. Dana loved working with novice teachers because they had so many fresh, new ideas that she would love to implement in her own teaching. She hoped Kai viewed it the same way. Kai did view their relationship as collaborative. She was excited to get new ideas from Dana, but also spoke of the importance of sharing ideas and teaching strategies, noting that she may have ideas or ways of approaching teaching that Dana had never thought of.

**What was Meaningful in the Relationship?**

“When we are one-on-one, especially face-to-face . . . we are learning how to connect to each other better . . . it’s meaningful in that way.”
Dana and Kai offered unique perspectives of what had been meaningful in their relationship, speaking of both specific instances and broader topics. Dana immediately spoke of an instance she referred to as a “relationship builder” (Dana, Journal 4). Having Kai observe her teach and discussing the lesson after the observation helped Dana understand more about Kai as a person, how she may react to things, and how Dana could be proactive in helping her grow and develop. Dana showed Kai that all teachers have room to grow, as her lesson was not perfect, and Kai showed Dana her ability to be reflective.

Dana spoke of another instance that was meaningful, when they were not meeting as mentor and mentee, but as Collaborative Inquiry Team members at a district-wide professional development session. Their task was to search for best practices on different elements in their curriculum. Dana and Kai were in a group working on improvisation and melody. This gave Dana the “opportunity to not have to be the one with all the answers. We were able to develop ideas together . . . I can always provide resources, but it’s great when she finds something new and we can talk about it” (Dana, Journal 4). Dana said it was also nice to see Kai interact with other colleagues. It gave her ideas for how to approach Kai’s remaining TEAM modules.

Dana found the time she and Kai spent face-to-face meaningful. It provided opportunities for them to better connect and learn more about each other, especially on a personal level. Dana loved connecting with Kai and watching her already vast knowledge bloom and expand. She hoped Kai found their time together meaningful both personally and professionally.
Kai recalled the effort Dana put into the relationship as meaningful. She stated that Dana always sought her out at department meetings to say hello and check in with how things were going in her teaching and her life, and to ask if she needed help with anything. Just knowing Dana was there at each department meeting eased Kai’s nerves, but Dana making the effort to check in with Kai meant a great deal. Dana also helped Kai with teaching materials, especially repertoire. She was willing to let Kai borrow materials to use in class, and was quick to reply to requests for materials or help.

Kai told the story of how Dana advocated for her and other first-year teachers during a district-wide meeting in the first year of their relationship. Having Dana stand up not only for her but for other first-year teachers as well was extremely meaningful.

_Last year we were in a meeting and we were talking about how some teachers in elementary vocal have insane schedules where we teach for long blocks of time and don’t have a break. Last year I had six straight classes with no break, and I remember—no I really remember—in that meeting you standing up and being like ‘this is ridiculous; there is no reason for this,’ and I felt like ‘oh, like, she’s actually on our side.’ So, as the younger teachers, we don’t say things. We complain to each other, but we don’t say things. And, so, for you to say that I think that was actually really helpful. And I think it was helpful for me because I kind of know that you’re there for us, but I don’t think a lot of the other new teachers know that about you, and so I think that was really helpful._ (Kai, Joint Interview)

Kai felt cared for and valued as a person and a professional.
The biggest thing that's meaningful is just how well we get along, and how we already know each other, and, you know, TEAM is not—I don’t like saying this—but TEAM is not the most important thing; um, so it becomes more important that we just know each other, and we are friends, and we get along, and want each other to be successful in what we are doing. (Kai, Interview 2)

**Impact on Professional Growth and Development**

“*If you go through the process that they are asking you to go through, you will learn something. You will change. Your teaching will change.*”

-Dana, Interview 3

Through her graduate coursework, Dana gained quite a lot of knowledge about adult learners, leadership, and mentoring. Her time spent as a mentor allowed her opportunities to put her knowledge and skills to use, giving her the chance to “develop those muscles” (Dana, Journal 5). She said, “you can have a ton of book knowledge, but until you are out there putting it to use, it really doesn’t matter” (Dana, Journal 5). “Book learning is one thing. When you sit down face to face it’s totally different. Unless you’re working with a person, you just don’t know” (Dana, Interview 3). Her graduate work allowed her to work on skills of helping someone identify an area to improve, be a good listener, and figure out what questions to ask to guide their thinking to get them headed in the right direction (Dana, Interview 3). Mentoring Kai provided a chance for Dana to further develop these skills. Because Kai was so easy to work with, Dana could try different strategies without being afraid she would do it “right” (Dana, Journal 5). Even so, Dana knew Kai would be forgiving if Dana did or said something wrong, and she could just go back and retrace her steps. “Just like in student teaching you learn who you
are as a teacher, I have been able to learn what I want to be like as a leader” (Dana, Journal 5).

Dana has much more confidence in her knowledge about things now. She described it all as

*becoming a better resource. You know, someone who doesn’t have all of the answers but . . . can say from experience, like, ‘this might work’ or ‘how about we check into this?’, or ‘I’ve seen such and such teacher do this really well, how about we spend five minutes with them?’ . . . and I feel that that’s a really important thing that mentors need to be is that kind of resource, and . . . I got to develop as a much more rich resource than I was before.* (Dana, Interview 3)

Kai’s professional development was impacted as well. Through their regular interactions, Dana modeled various traits that influenced Kai. One was Dana’s ability to listen and respond. Kai said having that model impacted the way she listened and responded to her students. She also learned how to take a piece of repertoire and implement it in a way that was helpful to her students. Observing Dana gave Kai a broader and deeper understanding of how to reflect on her lessons and the ability to think about them in different ways. It also helped her better understand other perspectives and points of view.

Through her work with Dana, Kai learned how to manage a diverse classroom. The way Dana thought about her students, planned her lessons, and selected materials that reflected the diversity of her students was helpful to Kai, who also taught very diverse students. She acquired a much better understanding of how to teach younger grades “in a way that seems like fun and games but is rich in musical concepts” (Kai,
Journal 5). Kai’s pacing had improved from her first year, her repertoire collection expanded, and she learned to transition between activities much more efficiently. Kai’s lessons had a smoother flow that kept students focused, engaged, and on task. More “on task behaviors” led to improved classroom management. Her understanding of how to pace lessons and transition between activities came in her first-year of teaching. Since learning how to more effectively transition she has been working on implementing those skills as they continue to develop so they become more ingrained in her teaching.

While Kai did gain knowledge and skills in pacing, repertoire, and transitions, she also learned that it was okay to be different. She tried to implement techniques and strategies she observed other teachers doing, specifically Dana and her former cooperating teacher, but those did not always work with her students. Kai figured out how to modify activities to better suit her students, or discard techniques and strategies that simply would not work. She learned that she did not have to teach like someone else did. That realization was comforting, and dramatically shifted her perspective of teaching (Kai, Joint Interview).

This mentoring relationship had also given Kai the confidence to reach out to other colleagues with questions or ideas. Early in the relationship Dana suggested that Kai observe other district music teachers. Kai soon realized that she could learn something from each person. Still, Kai found comfort in having Dana as a mentor. Seeing her at department meetings and just knowing someone was there, ready to say hello and help when needed provided Kai a sense of security. Just knowing that Dana was “an email/conversation away helps me be more confident in reaching out to my other coworkers” (Kai, Journal 5).
Reflecting on their relationship, Dana reiterated the fact that although she initially feared their different personalities may negatively impact the relationship, she was grateful for the opportunity to work with Kai, stating,

*there’s a seriousness about her that sometimes I need, and a silliness about me that I think she needs at times . . . I’m really glad I got paired with her...just because we are so different than each other, but we’re teaching the same stuff and it’s just always interesting to me how things are carried out by different personality types.* (Dana, Interview 3)

She felt her relationship with Kai was a much more collaborative relationship than she has had with other mentees. She credits this to Kai’s dedication and work ethic, which she found was much different from other novice teachers. “Her commitment to getting kids where they need to go is different. Kai puts students above all else. It’s a shared passion” (Dana, Interview 3).

In Chinese philosophy Yin-Yang describes a complementary balance between two opposites. Dana and Kai had opposite personalities—silly vs. serious as Dana described—but they ended up complementing each other quite well. Their differences were viewed as a positive in being able to share a variety of teaching strategies and tools. Therefore, I named Dana and Kai’s case Yin-Yang.

*Schlemiel Schlimazel: Elizabeth and Madeline*

Elizabeth, the mentor, had been teaching music for over a decade. At the time of this study she taught K-5 vocal music at Barton Elementary School, a suburban, middle socioeconomic status school with just over 350 students, the majority of them Caucasian. Like Dana, Elizabeth was an experienced mentor, having worked with other TEAM
mentees as well as student teachers. Her mentee, Madeline, described her as a supportive, open, and an encouraging mentor as well as a creative and thoughtful teacher who planned exciting and enjoyable activities.

Madeline was in her second year teaching K-5 vocal music at Hollingsworth Elementary School, in a suburban area with a middle socioeconomic status population. She also taught a fourth and fifth-grade extra-curricular choir at Hollingsworth and traveled to another elementary school during the week to teach two Kindergarten music classes. Madeline had completed some Kodaly Certification levels and was enrolled in graduate school to continue her education. Elizabeth described her as conscientious and hard-working.

Elizabeth and Madeline also had a unique connection. Madeline was teaching in the position Elizabeth previously held. Elizabeth was part of the hiring committee to fill the position when she left, and teaching a sample lesson was part of the interview requirements, so Elizabeth had observed Madeline teaching one class prior to being hired. Prior to offering Madeline the job, Elizabeth had asked to mentor whoever filled the position. Madeline was offered the job and they were paired together. The sample lesson Madeline taught as part of the interview process and their interactions following it ended up having an impact on their relationship.

Descriptions of the Relationship

“We have a very strong relationship, an open relationship.”

-Elizabeth, Joint Interview

When Elizabeth learned that Madeline got the job and they would be paired as mentor and mentee, she felt like she already had a sense of the type of person Madeline
was. Elizabeth thought they would work well together. She did question whether they would “click,” (Elizabeth, Interview 1) or if their personalities would allow Madeline to feel comfortable enough to approach her with questions. Based on her observation of Madeline’s demonstration lesson, Elizabeth described her as warm, engaging, and inclusive. The inclusive part was particularly important for Elizabeth, because Hollingsworth Elementary had a high proportion of students with special needs and she wanted to be sure all students received the best possible music education. Regarding the students with special needs, Elizabeth said “it was critical for me to have somebody in that position who would see to their needs and include them with all the rest of the other students” (Elizabeth, Journal 1). Elizabeth felt a responsibility to the students at Hollingsworth, and said that Madeline was the candidate who stood out above the others as the person best suited to take over that role.

Madeline recalled their first interactions as supportive and respectful. Prior to her demonstration lesson Madeline contacted Elizabeth to ask about the class she would be teaching to best prepare an appropriate lesson. Elizabeth was very responsive, providing details about what the class was studying and offering any classroom materials for use. After Madeline got the job she met Elizabeth again, still before being paired in TEAM, and was encouraged when Elizabeth remarked on how much she loved Madeline’s lesson and what great teaching ideas she had. “She kind of listed all these things that she was supportive of, and so that was really, really kind. I didn’t expect that but it was very encouraging” (Madeline, Interview 1).

Because Elizabeth previously taught in Madeline’s position she could provide information regarding school policies and procedures along with insights on students’
behaviors and personalities. Madeline found this quite helpful. Being able to assist in that way, and having positive interactions before they were paired in TEAM gave Madeline a calm and confident feeling entering the school year (Madeline, Interview 1).

Once they officially met as mentor and mentee Elizabeth felt their personalities were quite compatible. Madeline agreed, adding that they had similar approaches to teaching and shared a sense of humor. Madeline recalled great conversations about personal triumphs and challenges as teachers, and felt they “related similarly [to] a lot of teaching approaches and personal aspects” (Madeline, Journal 1). They were also able to have honest conversations about Madeline’s teaching and TEAM goals. These conversations were not difficult; Elizabeth said they both approached them as ways to improve and Madeline felt her ideas were respected and valued.

Elizabeth believed a novice teacher needed to feel supported and know the mentor was there to answer questions or act as a sounding board when difficulties arose. This was especially true in music positions where there is often only one teacher per building; new music teachers must feel like there is someone who understands their unique subject. She also believed the first responsibility of the mentor was to build a relationship. Elizabeth opened the lines of communication; “without open communication there is no room for growth” (Elizabeth, Journal 2). She spoke of the need to get rid of egos, listen, be honest, and work to collaborate to best build a relationship. “I think it’s really important that it’s not always your way or that’s it . . . there are new ways of looking at things” (Elizabeth, Joint Interview). She also spoke of the need for trying to understand things from the mentee’s perspective, noting the value in mentors looking back on their own time as novice teachers. Remembering what it was like to have limited repertoire, or
not know the curriculum, and deal with the stresses and pressures of being a first-year teacher helps better understand the mentee. Madeline also spoke of understanding the perspectives and experiences of the other person and finding commonalities to build a positive relationship (Madeline, Journal 2).

Once their relationship was established, guidance and engagement became necessary components. Elizabeth believed the mentor was responsible for listening to the mentee and engaging her in conversation that led her to their next step. In her experiences as a mentor she found it more beneficial to provide the mentee with the tools to find the answers rather than just telling her how to teach. Each person is unique and Elizabeth said she would never expect Madeline to teach the same way she did, or even want to teach the same way. The mentee should apply information and feedback provided by the mentor to make changes in their teaching. “The mentor provides the tools and the mentee builds the house” (Elizabeth, Journal 2). Madeline did this. Elizabeth described her as talented yet humble, conscientious, and hard-working. She was knowledgeable yet inquisitive, very receptive to suggestions, and always taking steps to implement ideas. She located articles and other resources on her own to help her develop, always striving to be the best she can be. She valued the feedback Elizabeth provided and grew as a teacher due to her work.

While they did not establish a regular meeting schedule, they did meet in person approximately once a month, in what Elizabeth called “email meetings” (Elizabeth, Journal 3), in between to stay in communication with questions and updates. Emails were often sent before each in-person meeting so they could create an agenda based on Madeline’s needs and Elizabeth could prepare resources as appropriate. Their discussions
reflected Madeline’s teaching; what was going on in her classroom and what she was working on for her TEAM modules, which were related. Madeline described their meetings as productive, where they were “constantly bouncing ideas off of each other” (Madeline, Interview 1). Their meetings often went longer than planned because they were having such great conversation.

Madeline described their shared characteristics as friendly, a little extroverted, and well-balanced. She said a friendship developed because Elizabeth was so open and they had so much in common professionally and personally. In addition to similar approaches to teaching and lesson planning,

> we can just be completely ourselves around each other, which is great . . . it's a lot easier to relate to somebody when they’re like you, um, and they have similar demeanors and similar personalities . . . I feel like there’s a basis of understanding from the get-go. (Madeline, Interview 1)

Each felt their meeting time was adequate, productive, and relevant whether it was a quick conversation or something longer. Everything they talked about related to TEAM, teaching, and what was going on in the classroom. Their meetings sometimes turned improvisatory, if an issue arose in the classroom they had not planned on discussing but wanted to share and exchange ideas on how to improve, they talked about it. Because of busy schedules and being in different buildings, time was limited. They needed to stay focused when meeting, knowing it could be weeks before they were able to meet in person again.

Their relationship was a success because Madeline was “awesome” (Elizabeth, Joint Interview). She was a hard worker, came prepared, took input and advice with no
ego, and was willing to implement new ideas based on Elizabeth’s suggestions. Madeline said the relationship was successful because of Elizabeth’s openness, encouragement and lack of judgment. She made it clear from the start she was willing to answer any question and provide support in any way, which made Madeline not afraid of asking questions or fearing she would “look stupid” (Madeline, Joint Interview).

Madeline described her relationship with Elizabeth as healthy, honest and respectful. They openly communicated and trusted one another. Elizabeth stated she and Madeline were “two people just on a walk, you know, walking side by side…and that’s how I see the two of us. No one is leading, no one’s behind, but we’re just kind of walking side by side” (Elizabeth, Interview 1).

**What was Meaningful in the Relationship?**

“It’s meaningful because we have . . . a very mutually respectful relationship so we can relate to each other on a lot of topics.”

-Madeline, Interview 2

Madeline’s “open and honest spirit” (Elizabeth, Journal 4) was meaningful to Elizabeth. She had previous mentees who wanted to prove how much they knew and did not listen to suggestions. That had not happened with Madeline; she was not afraid to say she did not know how to do something, ask questions, or seek advice. She had no ego when it came to their relationship.

A shared commitment to Madeline’s progress was another meaningful aspect for Elizabeth. Knowing that Madeline was relying on her, and that Elizabeth could support her and learn from her was meaningful. Elizabeth felt Madeline valued the time they had to work together and Elizabeth valued the professional development she gained from
helping her. Elizabeth hoped Madeline would gain confidence in herself and her abilities. “Most young teachers have it in them, they just have to refine their craft, and I’m hoping that I’m able to help them in this process to be able to find the ability to do that, and find their own voice as a teacher” (Elizabeth, Interview 2).

The most meaningful thing for Elizabeth was the time they spent together and the fact that they looked forward to getting together and talking. “I have always found that the more you put in to a relationship, the more you get out of it. I find that to be very true of working with Madeline” (Elizabeth, Journal 4). She said, “maybe we are both music education nerds” (Elizabeth, Interview 2).

The process of TEAM seemed daunting to Madeline, but Elizabeth’s ability to guide her through each step and support her as she completed each module made Madeline feel confident and less overwhelmed. Observing Elizabeth show such kindness and support was meaningful. It helped Madeline realize how crucial it was to be kind and supportive of others. Elizabeth spoke similarly, saying Madeline was thoughtful, which reminded her to be thoughtful to others as well.

Their relationship, and time they spent together was meaningful to Madeline, because she and Elizabeth had such a mutual respect and could relate to one another on various topics.

Even though she is my mentor, sometimes we relate in a way that feels like we are equals. I mean, we are colleagues within the district, and so we are very respectful of each other and I feel like I can confide in her as a mentor and as a colleague, and as a friend in the same kind of area that I’m teaching. So, that’s very helpful. (Madeline, Interview 2)
One specific instance stood out as being meaningful to Madeline. It occurred before they were even paired as mentor and mentee, when Madeline was visiting Elizabeth’s classroom after she first learned she got the job. She remembered Elizabeth telling her how much she enjoyed her teaching and how she wanted to hire her immediately. Madeline was surprised and humbled. It meant a lot that Elizabeth thought so highly of her right away and took the time to let her know. Madeline instantly felt like she was going to be working in a district that was welcoming and encouraging. Elizabeth being so complementary and encouraging made Madeline feel validated and confident in approaching her with questions. Madeline said it was one of the most meaningful compliments she had ever received; “people don’t have to say those things…so if you’re volunteering that information that’s very meaningful and very impactful on the person hearing it…it’s probably more meaningful to me now than it ever was” (Madeline, Interview 2).

Overall, for Elizabeth, knowing there was someone out there relying on her that she could support and learn from even though she was the mentor was meaningful. Madeline again stated that the most meaningful thing was seeing how important it was to be encouraging and kind to one another, because it fostered so much of the success in their relationship.

*I have come away from this relationship knowing that whatever relationships I have in the future, how important it is to be kind and warm to people, because when you are like that you get the best out of people, and that’s what you want. I feel like I have a renewed sense of how important that is from our mentoring relationship.* (Madeline, Joint Interview)
Impact on Professional Growth and Development

“Because our relationship has been so compatible I feel like I’ve grown throughout this process with her and my professional development has increased because of being her TEAM mentor.”

-Elizabeth, Interview 3

Anytime Elizabeth mentored a novice teacher she went through some aspect of professional growth. To best provide the most up-to-date resources and information she spent time researching and reading articles that kept her current. She always tried to have “tighter lesson plans, create better transitions, and more effective lessons” (Elizabeth, Interview 3). Elizabeth learned a variety of new strategies, ideas, and activities with each new mentee, sharing those that best fit the needs of the mentee and students. Elizabeth often used the strategies in her own classroom to see how they worked. This added richness and depth to discussions when presenting what she had learned to Madeline. Elizabeth reflected more on her own teaching to prepare for working with Madeline. It was important to Elizabeth that she kept learning so she could attend each meeting with something new. “Working with Madeline has made me aware of how important it is for me to keep on top of these new ideas, so that I can act as a filter and provide her with information that she can use and not be overwhelmed by” (Elizabeth, Journal 5). She believed her compatible relationship with Madeline advanced her professional growth and development (Elizabeth, Interview 3).

Madeline commented on how helpful Elizabeth’s knowledge was, especially because Elizabeth knew what the students would enjoy, having previously taught them.
It saved me a lot of trial and error with unfamiliar games I would find in music books. While I still incorporate new music games that I learn from various resources, having several that are known to work with students is very helpful. (Madeline, Journal 5)

They also spent meeting time looking through resources together, which benefitted them both. Elizabeth said that while she would have liked to think she would have looked through so many various resources on her own, it was working with Madeline that gave her a purpose to seek so many new resources and ideas. Elizabeth was grateful, because they were useful in her classroom too.

Elizabeth had learned a lot about working with novice teachers through her years as a mentor, and working with Madeline reinforced much of what she had learned. Giving answers is not the best way to teach. Guiding and asking leading questions provided the most opportunities for growth. Elizabeth guided Madeline the same she would her students, by providing multiple ways to seek answers, allowing Madeline to choose what best fit her learning style. Elizabeth said, “I am not at all like my mentee and I would never expect her to teach the same way I do. Nor should she want to” (Elizabeth, Journal 2). Madeline’s willingness to work hard and keep going taught Elizabeth perseverance. Elizabeth also learned to model patience and the importance of practicing lessons and teaching activities in advance. “If I can exhibit those character traits and instill them in her, she will be ready for any teaching experience that comes her way” (Elizabeth, Journal 4).

When asked how she had changed professionally since working with Madeline, Elizabeth stated that her sense of collaboration and excitement had become stronger. She
felt differently about Madeline than she had with past mentees because Madeline was so willing to confidently come forward with ideas and share thoughts about what was going on in her classroom, where other mentees have been afraid to share for fear of being wrong or being judged in some way. Elizabeth hoped Madeline would think she guided her without being overbearing, and think their time together was well spent.

Knowing how Madeline respected Elizabeth as a person and a teacher impacted Elizabeth’s professional development. It changed her attitude for how she approached working with Madeline

*because I really feel like she values our time together and . . . knowing that she really values my thoughts and my perspective on music education, I want to go in there really feeling prepared and really feeling like I can give her the best that I can.* (Elizabeth, Interview 3)

The relationship impacted Madeline’s confidence as a teacher. It positively impacted her lesson planning skills and knowledge of curriculum. She said she went “deeper” in her planning now (Madeline, Joint Interview). She was able to plan lessons more quickly and they were more formulaic, which made everything else “line up as we go . . . I’m really seeing the payoff” (Madeline, Joint Interview). “Not only did Elizabeth respect and believe in me, but she also gave me great tools to help with my classroom management skills, assessments, and lesson plans” (Madeline, Journal 5).

Madeline also felt much more comfortable around colleagues due to her mentoring relationship, like she was respected and belonged.

*At the beginning of my position last year . . . I really didn’t speak up at all because it was a new environment and I felt like I was just there to take in a lot of*
information and learn the curriculum and the work environment, and the professional attitudes and relationships within my district and within my building.

So, I was mostly observing these things for the first two or three months, and I wasn't sure exactly how I was going to fit in to that mold, because every working environment has a different, you know, feel and level of comfortableness or whatever. Um, so after two or three months Elizabeth and I started building on our relationship... so, she made me feel a lot more comfortable every time we met with each other that first semester. I felt like I could share a little bit more every time we met, and that my ideas were valid and brought a, brought something new to the district that other people might like as well . . . I would say it was her just one on one with me. She personally validated a lot of ideas that I had, so that made me feel more confident to share that with our big group meetings, with all the teachers in the district. If I had not had that relationship with her I don’t think I would've spoken up as much because I wasn't exactly sure how I would have fit in. (Madeline, Interview 3)

Madeline viewed her colleagues differently than she had prior to her relationship with Elizabeth. They all had pre-existing relationships with each other, but they were inviting to new teachers and welcomed their new ideas. Madeline said she would continue to ask questions to colleagues because Elizabeth has inspired her to be comfortable enough to ask for help when needed.

The biggest impact on Madeline’s professional growth and development, the most beneficial aspect of this relationship has been Elizabeth’s sharing ideas and materials.
I just can't stress enough how much she has helped me with that, because when I have gone through all of my resources and I can't find any more games that I think would work well with fifth-grade for example, I call her—or, or not call—but I asked her in meetings, um, you know, 'give me five to 10 games'. . . she gave me every single game that worked with fifth-grade, which was amazing, and other grades too. So, that plan, that helped me plan for a month. I know I had a whole month's worth of planning because of that; and then she called me and left voice messages of these songs. So, I have them, and, she sent me PDFs. She was emailing me and texting me all these PDFs of the songs she shared with me. So that has been the most crucial aspect to my success as a teacher in the past year or two. (Madeline, Interview 3)

In the joint interview, Madeline spoke again of how beneficial Elizabeth’s sharing repertoire and instructional materials was to her overall professional growth and development.

I can look in any of my resource books and learn a song and be like ‘oh, great that has those elements, I could totally use that,’ but there is [sic] other layers that she brings to that, of like ‘oh I have a game to go with that,’ or ‘this is a partner song with that song,’ you know? Or how she maybe did it with a creative SmartBoard file and how I can use that not just on the staff but maybe in a different guessing game or some sort of way. So, it's kind of, it's gone beyond just learning to read a curriculum book or learning to read a resource, a music resource or songbook and saying “oh, I can teach music now.” I mean it's so much more than that and, um, I think having that in-person relationship has
really brought to life all of the possibilities for teaching . . . also, because she's experienced she knows what works and what doesn't, and she's like 'oh no no, fifth grade won't do that,' 'second grade hates that, you know, but this works with them,' so I don't have to play as much of the guessing game. Which the first couple years of teaching you're just trying to see what works with those kids because every class is different, every dynamic is different. And so, a lot of the ideas she's given me are already tested. (Madeline, Joint Interview)

Elizabeth and Madeline shared a philosophy about problem solving. To be seen as a leader, Elizabeth needed to be able to identify problems and create appropriate solutions, and believed the same for others. Madelene did not believe that Elizabeth should immediately solve problems for her. When an issue arose, she tried different strategies first; if they did not work then she asked for help and followed up when necessary.

Just speaking with Elizabeth made Madeline feel better.

*I feel emotionally lighter, like psychologically. Not just as a teacher, I feel better as a person. You know . . . I wouldn’t always feel like that if I wasn't paired. But yeah, I don’t think I would necessarily feel like that with everyone. But . . . whether it's been a great day or a rough day, I feel better just having this relationship and being able to talk things out. So, I feel, like I said, rejuvenated.*

(Madeline, Joint Interview)

Elizabeth and Madeline each painted such a positive picture of this relationship from the beginning, and although I only spent a short amount of time speaking with them
together it was clear they shared a mutual appreciation, personally and professionally. It was no surprise they were in complete agreement about the success of their relationship.

*I am grateful that I get to work with my mentee, and I don’t know if it’s because we have similar interests or our personalities kind of click, but every time we meet it’s just not a burden. It’s one of those things where I feel like we’re going to have a great conversation and hopefully it’ll bring her teaching further, and I just know that I’ll get something out of it as well.* (Elizabeth, Interview 1)

Overall, Madeline said, “I’ve learned so much just in this past year and a half. If I look back to where I was on the first day of school and now, I mean, I’m a completely different teacher, and at a different level” (Madeline, Joint Interview). When asked in the final interview to again describe their relationship, Elizabeth said “very strong and open; one based on mutual respect.” Madeline replied with “exactly how I feel. That’s it. That’s it right there” (Madeline, Joint Interview). This relationship went beyond fulfilling the requirements of TEAM. “It’s like the whole child. You have to make sure that every aspect of them is fulfilled, and that’s kind of how I feel about mentoring” (Elizabeth, Interview 1). Madeline said, “I’ve rarely seen somebody that open and that willing to help . . . it’s been really nice” (Madeline, Interview 3).

In the first interview, Elizabeth talked about how her school was in a residential area and she would often look out the window and see people walking and talking together. She said that was how she viewed her relationship with Madeline, just two people out on a walk, side by side. When she said that I got a visual of the opening credits of *Laverne and Shirley*, the television show broadcast in the late 1970s, where they were running down the sidewalk arm in arm. Although Elizabeth talked about the
relationship in an older sister/younger sister way on one occasion, and in a maternal way on another occasion, the side by side as equals stood out. Madeline also talked about how Elizabeth’s welcoming and supportive mentoring style made her feel like an equal, so they became the *Laverne and Shirley* pair. To avoid confusion with four first names, I named Elizabeth and Madeline’s case Schlemiel Schlimazel, a phrase from the *Laverne and Shirley* theme song.

**Cross-Case Analysis**

Cross-case analysis was applied to examine the relationship of themes that developed between the two cases (Yin, 2014). Broader themes emerged from the substantive categories, or subcodes, that were developed within each question. These themes were coded and supported by interview transcripts and journal material. While every relationship is unique because every individual is different, similarities among these mentor/mentee relationships were evident.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

*“There are responsibilities . . . unstated responsibilities.”*

-Elizabeth, Joint Interview

Both relationships were described as successful and each participant spoke of their relationship in a very positive light. Each participant had beliefs about their role and the role of the other person in the relationship. In both cases, each person carried out the roles and responsibilities they believed they should. Expectation met reality; each person carrying out their believed roles created consonance in the relationship and contributed to its overall success.
Dana believed the mentor should take the lead in establishing the relationship, because being a new teacher is overwhelming enough. Dana also believed the mentor must be a good listener, have open ears, and ask open-ended questions. The mentor should be well versed in the TEAM process, and able to guide the mentee, giving feedback when necessary and appropriate. “Letting them make mistakes is necessary . . . it’s easier to tell [them how to do something], but it’s not good. You don’t want to see them suffer but you don’t want to give them the answers” (Dana, Interview 3).

It was evident that Dana lived her beliefs in the relationship. She provided multiple ways to implement teaching ideas and activities, guiding Kai rather than telling her. Dana kept up to date on TEAM training and took advantage of other professional development opportunities, including graduate work. She actively pursued the latest resources and materials to share with Kai as appropriate. Dana called her relationship with Kai “easy and efficient” (Dana, Joint Interview), referring to it as a partnership in a collaborative sense.

Like Dana, Elizabeth spoke of the mentor taking responsibility for building the relationship to help the mentee feel supported. She felt it was her responsibility to reach out first, because it can be overwhelming to new teachers who often do not know anyone in the school district, especially a large one. Elizabeth believed the mentor must “know” the mentee in the same way a teacher knows each student and how they learn. Mentors must be dedicated and invested in the mentees’ growth. They must be prepared for meetings and reflect on meetings to continue progressing (Elizabeth, Journal 2).

Dana believed that while the mentor was responsible for establishing the relationship, the mentee must do the “heavy lifting” (Dana, Interview 1). Elizabeth spoke
similarly. “When it comes to the mentee, I feel that the mentor provides the tools and the mentee builds the house” (Elizabeth, Journal 2). Over her years as a mentor, Elizabeth learned that when a mentee has been given the support she needs, and follows through with her own learning, she is successful in her teaching and TEAM experience.

Elizabeth felt she built a strong relationship with Madeline, who was very receptive to ideas and always took the next step to implement ideas or seek resources that may help her. Elizabeth sought resources that she thought would benefit Madeline, and modeled professional growth by implementing new ideas and strategies in her own classroom. She took the time to get to know Madeline, guide her through the TEAM process and provide Madeline appropriate feedback on her module work. Elizabeth felt Madeline valued the feedback she was given and had grown tremendously as a teacher.

Kai believed a mentor should “pass on knowledge” (Kai, Journal 2), and help the mentee gain confidence, improve skills, and broaden their knowledge base. She also believed the mentor should guide the mentee by asking questions and modeling how to find answers rather than giving answers. The mentee should listen, inquire, grow, and synthesize gained knowledge into a toolbox.

Kai also carried out her believed roles and responsibilities in the relationship. She was inquisitive, asked questions, and was confident in Dana’s ability to answer questions. If Dana did not know the answer she searched for it or they searched together. Kai was receptive to new ideas and implemented Dana’s suggestions into her teaching. She believed these qualities contributed to the success of their relationship. Kai stated “we communicate well, we enjoy spending time together, we understand that each other has insane schedules, um, we, yeah…I think we just work well together” (Kai, Interview 1).
Madeline believed it was her job to progress through the TEAM program and grow as a teacher. She also believed that in a successful mentoring relationship each person should have mutual respect for the other so each person feels validated and willing to share ideas. She noted that music education is a constantly evolving profession, so it is important that each person remain open-minded and accepting of new ideas and different viewpoints. Madeline also believed each person should maintain a cheerful, positive attitude, and aim to understand the other person’s perspectives and experiences. Madeline stated her relationship had every characteristic she believed it should, which is why she felt “so safe and inspired” (Madeline, Journal 2) in the relationship, stating Elizabeth had exceeded her expectations of a mentor.

Dana and Elizabeth were knowledgeable about TEAM and prepared to guide Kai and Madeline through the TEAM process while serving as an appropriate professional model and providing relevant feedback. Both mentees noted the importance of being receptive to feedback and implementing suggestions in their teaching. Each participant believed in respecting the knowledge and expertise of the other. Kai and Madeline understood that Dana and Elizabeth were suggesting ideas and providing feedback in a nonjudgmental way to help them grow. Dana and Elizabeth respected that Madeline and Kai entered the profession with knowledge and experiences that would benefit them as well.

As the mentees gained experience and confidence, the roles in the relationship changed. Participants felt a shift in the focus of their meetings as the relationship progressed. “Things change and progress, that’s the nature of being in a relationship” (Elizabeth, Interview 2). Once the mentees had a better understanding of their TEAM
module requirements they were able to move through parts of them more independently and the pairs could focus on other classroom topics and challenges.

**Communication**

“I think the largest component needed for a mentor/mentee relationship to be successful is open, honest communication.”

-Elizabeth, Journal 2

Elizabeth said, “without open communication, there is no room for growth—on the part of the mentee, but also the mentor (Elizabeth, Journal 2). Dana believed mentors must be able to engage the mentee in conversation that guides them and communicate effective teaching strategies and meaningful feedback. She also believed each person needed to be honest in sharing experiences, positive and negative (Dana, Journal 2).

Madeline spoke of communication first when describing her relationship with Elizabeth. She said they had an “openly communicative” relationship (Madeline, Interview 1), and they were able to communicate effectively from the start, due in part to their similar personalities. Kai also spoke of communication first when describing what was successful in their relationship. She and Dana were able to communicate quickly and efficiently when time was limited, knowing follow up communication could occur through email when they were not able to meet face to face. Kai said they had

*good communication. Even when we are in our own worlds and going and crazy and doing things that have nothing to do with life, you know, I think we still have good communication . . . I mean we have communicated through email. We have communicated in two seconds at a meeting, which I think has worked for us.* (Kai, Joint Interview)
Trust

“A relationship without trust will not accomplish very much.”

-Madeline, Journal 2

Each participant spoke of trust without being asked directly about it. Trust came up in interviews and journals, mainly when participants were asked about the components of a successful mentoring relationship. Dana believed the mentor must first establish trust. She spoke of previous mentees who did not trust her teaching expertise or believe that conversations shared would remain confidential, and it negatively affected the overall relationship. Dana took responsibility for creating ways to foster a relaxed environment and build trust with mentees at the beginning of each relationship. Early in their first-year of teaching she arranged a professional day for mentees, Kai included, to observe other music teachers, ending the day observing her teach. They then met and discussed what was observed and how the mentees could implement new ideas and practices into their teaching. During their discussion, Dana made sure to point out parts of her lesson that did not go as planned or moments that were not her best teaching, to show Kai that she still made mistakes. Dana wanted to demonstrate to Kai that although she had been teaching for over 20 years she was still learning and always had room to grow as a teacher. This discussion helped create a relaxed and trusting environment, leading to meaningful conversations about teaching. Over the years, Dana found that when mentees saw experienced teachers make mistakes (herself included), it allowed them to be more open about discussing areas they needed to improve.

Dana expected herself to be responsible for building trust early in the relationship so Kai felt comfortable approaching her with questions and struggles, and would be
receptive to feedback. Dana spoke of trust numerous times. “I think that’s number one for sure…I want you to understand that you can trust me . . . my job is to help support you, and in a relationship trust and confidentiality is [sic] the most important” (Dana, Interview 1). She built trust with Kai so they could have conversations where “we are honest with each other and trust one another when we are sharing our mutual struggles” (Dana, Journal 2). Dana and Kai trusted each other to complete tasks, to be communicative, and to maintain a successful relationship; “we know that each other will do whatever needs done” (Kai, Joint Interview).

Trust was also evident in Elizabeth and Madeline’s relationship. Madeline said “each person has to feel safe to share their experiences in a confidential space” (Madeline, Journal 2). She believed trust took time to build in a relationship and Elizabeth started working to build trust right away. Elizabeth was dedicated and invested in Madeline’s growth (Elizabeth, Journal 2), which provided that space where Madeline felt safe. Madeline and Elizabeth “definitely have trust, because I feel like I can tell her anything and she’s not going to tell anybody” (Madeline, Interview 1).

**Judgment.** Part of building trust in these two relationships was the understanding that mentors were there to provide support and encourage the mentees to be open and honest without fear of being judged. Neither mentee believed their mentor was judging or evaluating them for what they did not know or were not able to do. Kai said Dana was not a judgmental person at all, and “because she was so welcoming and encouraging I was more willing to be open about things that I was having difficulties with because I knew she wasn’t, she wasn’t there to judge me for what I didn’t know. She was there…to help me (Kai, Interview 1).
Dana thought quite a bit about how she could communicate to Kai that they were on the same level and Dana was not there to evaluate her. “We are professionals. You are a colleague . . . I really wanted to make sure . . . that we are totally on the same level. I don’t care how long either one of us has been teaching” (Dana, Joint Interview).

Madeline felt her relationship with Elizabeth was without judgment, although she described it differently. She felt Elizabeth had an “unofficial” role as an evaluator “like trying to figure out the experiences of the other, in a judging way like trying to figure out where your priorities are as a teacher” (Madeline, Interview 2). Madeline never felt like Elizabeth was evaluating her on a scale, “but there is a judgment about how I’m structuring my lessons or how I’m doing in the curriculum” (Madeline, Interview 2) simply to figure out where she was so Elizabeth could guide her to where she needed to go. Madeline expected Elizabeth to be supportive and helpful. However, her expectations were exceeded. She talked about how Elizabeth’s openness and encouragement made her comfortable.

*I wasn’t ever uneasy because if I felt like I was unsure I probably wouldn’t have asked any questions, as I didn't want to look like I was looking stupid. You never want to feel like you're looking stupid in front of your mentor. So, I feel like she kind of—from the very beginning—kind of wiped all that possibility away, and it was just very open, um, and very encouraging. So, I think that was crucial for me coming in.* (Madeline, Joint Interview)

Elizabeth reiterated that a mentor was there to help and support, not judge or evaluate (Elizabeth, Joint Interview). She said about Madeline, “I don’t get the sense that she feels like I’m judging her” (Elizabeth, Interview 3).
Reciprocity

“If I’m not learning from them in the process, I’m not doing my job.”

-Elizabeth, Interview 1

Both mentors were very quick to say that they had been mentored by their mentee in many ways. They firmly believed that, and were very quick to say so. However, the mentees were somewhat hesitant to say that they had mentored the mentor in some way. Because Dana had a much deeper understanding of teaching, Kai was not sure she had anything to teach Dana. Kai said that Dana likely learned from her in a different capacity, a different type of learning, but “it’s really hard for me to figure out . . . what she has gained” (Kai, Interview 3). She compared it to learning from her students. Kai does not necessarily learn new musical concepts or teaching strategies from her students, but they teach her in other ways, such as about their culture and learning styles.

Madeline shared resources with Elizabeth “especially if it worked in her classroom and she knew not everyone in the district used it” (Madeline, Interview 2). She hoped Elizabeth enjoyed the exchange of ideas and had learned a little bit from her. However, she said

_I don’t think about it in a way like ‘oh, I’m mentoring her,’ but it’s more an aspect that I feel confident that I can suggest an idea and she thinks it’s good enough to take on herself in her own planning. So, I feel validated that my opinions are just as valid as hers, and my ideas are just as valid as hers. So, that builds my confidence, but not in that I would say ‘oh, I’m mentoring her.’ But I just think it helps the relationship be on a more equal playing field, than one person being above the other._ (Madeline, Interview 2)
Kai and Madeline tended to focus on what they could teach the mentors in terms of classroom strategies or instructional materials, perhaps because they received so much guidance in those areas from their mentors. Dana and Elizabeth viewed learning from the mentees in very different ways. Dana learned how to approach tasks with confidence from watching Kai do the same in district-wide professional development sessions. Kai was more willing to share ideas within the district-wide collaborative inquiry groups although Dana thought she would be intimidated in that setting. Through their conversations, Dana learned more about leadership and more about how different people learn and what different people need.

Elizabeth said she was “always amazed at how much I learn about my own teaching when I am working with a new teacher” (Elizabeth, Journal 2). This was evident with Madeline from their first meeting. Elizabeth said, “I felt that she would teach me as much as I would teach her” (Elizabeth, Journal 1). She recognized that Madeline shared new resources with her, or old resources in new ways. She spoke of a song she typically sang with kindergarten and first grade that Madeline brought back again in fourth and fifth grade with a different purpose. Elizabeth had not thought of using the song in that way, loved the idea, and began using it with her upper grades as well. She spoke of “looking at things from another perspective of someone who hasn’t been at it for long…for a mentor, I think it’s really important that it’s not always your way and that’s it. You know, that there are new ways of looking at things” (Elizabeth, Joint Interview).

When speaking of what else she had learned from Madeline, Elizabeth said:

*Just the lightness, and the joyfulness, and the energy that you bring, being a new teacher, comes right back to me, and I think that’s really so important to me*
because it just kind of reinvigorates me to go back and do things in my classroom. Because, you know, if I wasn't a mentor and I'm just doing this, doing to the daily grind and just, you know, seeing people at department meetings but not really having true conversations where we’re going to have these collaborations, it just becomes stagnant. And being able to talk with you like this, once a month or a couple times a month, just kind of brings all that excitement that you have for teaching back to my classroom. So, while I may not have like, lots of ideas I'm getting from you, that’s not your job, that’s not your role. But I get that excitement for teaching from you. (Elizabeth, Joint Interview)

**Personal Aspects**

“I have a hard time not being friendly with someone I am going to spend time with.”

-Dana, Interview 1

While these relationships were professional in nature, as each participant spoke personal aspects emerged from the conversations. When asked if they considered this a personal as well as professional relationship, each person offered some interesting insights. Dana said

*I don’t think I would ever want to separate those two things . . . we have a story and little pieces get filled in all the time, that’s kind of how we get to know each other. You have to connect on some sort of thing.* (Dana, Interview 2)

She reiterated this in the interview with Kai. “As an individual I have a very hard time separating my personal from my professional. I think being an authentic teacher requires you to share a lot of yourself” (Dana, Joint Interview). While she could not separate personal and professional, the personal aspect was not forced in their relationship. It
naturally came through. Kai did not believe a personal relationship was necessary to have a professional one, but “you can’t have a professional relationship unless you care about the person . . . it’s just what we gravitate towards as humans” (Kai, Interview 2).

Elizabeth and Madeline described their relationship as mostly professional with some personal aspects. Their personalities mixed well, they had some similarities in their family life, and the “foundation of personal connection helped build on the professional” (Madeline, Joint Interview). Elizabeth stated, “you can be a great mentor and not have a personal relationship, and still get stuff done, but personal elevates professional” (Elizabeth, Interview 2).

Dana and Elizabeth both spoke of their mentees in a protective manner. Dana wanted Kai to feel supported on a personal and professional level.

*You kind of need, like, an advocate sometimes, or, I don’t know, if she feels like as a non-tenured teacher that she can’t really speak her mind, you know, I want her to know that we have connected on both levels so that I can, I can do that for her. You know, if there is some kind of problem that she needs to navigate that she hasn't been able to do, then I am somebody she can come to because I have been through it, or I have been there longer, you know.* (Dana, Interview 2)

Elizabeth felt Madeline was “a younger sister. She's my little sister. I feel like I'm looking out for her and I have her best interests at heart, just like an older sister would” (Elizabeth, Interview 2).

**Isolation**

“*Mentor mentee relationships really do work and you need one, especially in our case where we are so isolated.*”
Elizabeth was the first to discuss isolation, specifically physical isolation (Elizabeth, Interview 1). She felt that

*for music teachers, there can be a huge sense of isolation because you don’t necessarily have another music teacher right there with you in your building. I’m so grateful that I have an instrumental music teacher in my building that I respect tremendously. I think there is a little bit of a sense of isolation in the fact that I am the only music teacher in the building and my instrumental colleague isn’t always here, because she teaches in another building as well. So, there are some days when it’s just me here by myself and I think that can be isolating.* (Elizabeth, Interview 3)

She brought up isolation again in the interview with Madeline.

*I feel like the classroom teachers have each other and they are right there, and they get to bounce ideas off each other, and they can walk right next door, and we don’t get to have that as much . . . and so that’s what I value in the time that we do get to spend together. There is that sense of ‘oh, we’re together. There is somebody else there and we are not all alone.’* (Elizabeth, Joint Interview)

However, Elizabeth did not feel a sense of isolation among the music teachers in the district. “I can just as easily send an email and get a response the same as I could walking two doors down in my building” (Elizabeth, Interview 3). Madeline also said she felt somewhat physically isolated in her building. “I'm off in a wing in a corner of the school… I am more secluded.” She shared it may have been better for her productivity that way.
I am so busy planning all of the time but I don’t mind because I am constantly working, so it’s actually good for my planning I think that I’m not like constantly around people, [be]cause I would like to talk to people so I probably wouldn’t get as much done. So, it's kind of good that I'm kind of in my corner [be]cause then I can plan more and be on top of things. (Madeline, Interview 3)

Elizabeth hoped that because of their mentoring connection Madeline would not feel isolated. Madeline discussed how the relationship helped her feel less isolated. After a meeting with Elizabeth

I feel rejuvenated because I have all these new ideas, and I also feel like, okay, so if we are both going through a challenging or a really difficult time where there is [sic] concerts and extracurricular choir and all of these things, I always feel lighter after our meetings. It's like ‘okay, we’re not alone. I have some new ideas. It’s going to be okay. We’re all in this together.’ So, I definitely feel lighter when we have, and we can just kind of decompress and hash out things. (Madeline, Joint Interview)

To help build relationships with colleagues and seek additional resources, Elizabeth suggested Madeline reach out to other staff in her building early in their relationship, something Elizabeth called

one of the understated values of TEAM—it provides a path for teachers to find these experts within the building. Especially for music teachers, who tend to be secluded in the building, it is so important for them to realize that there are other people in the building that they can use as resources. (Elizabeth, Journal 1)
The relationship also helped Madeline build relationships and feel more connected to her district colleagues. Elizabeth was integral to the large district, and helped Madeline develop relationships with other music teachers. Madeline learned through conversations with them and benefitted from their expertise.

Although Kai’s classroom was not “in the heart of all the classrooms” (Kai, Journal 1) but instead was right by the office, she saw a lot of things happening outside her classroom. But that did not completely alleviate her sense of physical isolation, which she felt being the only music teacher in her building. Having a mentor made a huge difference in reducing feelings of isolation. Kai said just knowing that Dana was an email away, whether Kai emailed her or not, was comforting (Kai, Journal 1).

Kai wished she could meet with Dana more often. She felt less isolated when she spent time with Dana, either one-on-one or in a district setting. She also found comfort knowing “I’m not the only one doing what I’m doing every day. Other people have the exact same struggle. The mentoring relationship helped that” (Kai, Interview 3).

Dana understood Kai’s feelings of isolation. Dana was in a brand new building that had a different shape than her previous building, which left her feeling more isolated than she had in the past. She was getting used to working in this new space, and Dana felt uncomfortable with the unfamiliarity of her new classroom within a new building. Dana described a sense of discomfort among other teachers as they all adapted to their new building and learned to work within their new classrooms. She believed that district-wide professional development including collaborative inquiry groups helped alleviate some teacher isolation.
Challenges

“If there’s anything unsuccessful I think it would be . . . we don’t spend consistent time with each other.”

-Kai, Interview 1

Although these relationships were successful and described positively by each participant, both relationships experienced similar challenges. These challenges were out of each participant’s control. However, they still had to be met and overcome with realistic solutions, which both pairs were able to do.

Time. All four participants said time was a challenge. Finding time to meet consistently and observe each other teach was difficult. Dana described her meetings with Kai as personable but regulated, and task-oriented, because they had no time to be unproductive. Kai agreed. “We don’t have a lot of time together. We really don’t, and I think that’s the hardest thing” (Kai, Joint Interview). It was the one thing Kai said was unsuccessful in their relationship, that they could not spend consistent time with each other (Kai, Interview 1). Dana wished it were not like that, saying she felt “very guilty” (Dana, Joint Interview) that they did not have more time together. It did work for them, though, because Kai was focused, on-task, and a fast learner, which was great when time was limited.

Understanding and respecting time and individual schedules contributed to the success of Dana and Kai’s relationship. Teaching at separate schools and having busy schedules that included graduate work for both limited their time and availability. “Spending time together is rare . . . because we are both such busy people we have a mutual understanding that things will eventually be done” (Kai, Journal 3). Having
limited time and being at separate schools was not ideal, but it was reality. Each understood that meetings must be productive, and they had to communicate effectively and efficiently, which they did. Kai said,

*a lot of our conversations occur five minutes before our [district-wide professional development] meeting or five minutes after, but if we need to reach out to each other we just email . . . a lot of our conversations in person are less than three minutes, and I’m okay with that because then we always follow up with emails.* (Kai, Interview 1)

Madeline also said her meetings with Elizabeth were productive and meaningful, because with limited time, they had to be. Although scheduling meeting times was difficult, they always did eventually find time to meet, even if it had to be weeks later than they wanted. While time was a challenge, they worked around it the best they could, knowing that they could communicate through email when they could not meet in person. The biggest challenge for Elizabeth was finding time in her schedule to observe Madeline teach. She was only able to observe Madeline once in her first year, but set a goal to watch her teach more in her second year (Elizabeth, Journal 3).

**Proximity.** Neither pair taught in the same school, making proximity an additional challenge in each relationship. Dana said that while the time they did spend together was adequate, being in the same building would make it so much different. “I think the fact that we’re in different buildings is very challenging…because we can’t connect as much as we could if we were just down the hall from each other” (Dana, Interview 1).
I feel like if we were in the same building, however...oh, it would be so different. It would be so different because we will be able to talk about all the little stuff too, you know, just the day-to-day scheduling...I think we’d be able to help each other out and be more of a team than we are right now because she’s in another building. (Dana, Interview 2)

Kai agreed that being at different schools was difficult, and believed their relationship would be different if they taught in the same school. We’d see each other every day. It would be, you, know, more of a one-minute conversation daily rather than a three minute conversation bi-weekly which is a lot more communication. Um, yeah, I’d love to be in the same school, but unfortunately it doesn’t work that way. (Kai, Interview 1)

Summary

Through journals and interviews each participant had the opportunity to reflect on their TEAM mentoring relationship and share their experiences. Dana, Kai, Elizabeth, and Madeline discussed how they described their relationships, what was meaningful in their relationships, and the impact of the relationship on their professional growth and development. Dana and Kai described their relationship as a collaborative partnership. Their relationship was successful because Kai was a fast learner, receptive to feedback, and worked to implement Dana’s suggestions in her teaching. Kai was forthcoming with struggles and challenges because Dana was friendly, approachable, experienced and knowledgeable as a teacher and a TEAM mentor. Elizabeth and Madeline described their relationship as strong, open, and mutually respectful. Their relationship was successful because of their compatible personalities and a shared sense of humor. Elizabeth was
encouraging and non-judgmental and established open communication and trust early in the relationship. Madeline was a hard worker; she was open to receiving feedback and worked to improve her teaching based on Elizabeth’s recommendations.

When asked what was meaningful in the relationship, each participant spoke first of specific instances that stood out. Dana spoke of Kai observing her teach and reflecting on the lesson together and working together on a district-wide Collaborative Inquiry Team as meaningful instances in their relationship. Kai recalled the effort Dana put in to the relationship as meaningful. She made a point to reach out to Kai at district-wide meetings and other times, to check in, ask how everything was going, and ask how she could help. This made Kai feel valued as a person and a professional. Elizabeth and Madeline discussed how the time they spent together was meaningful. Each time was an opportunity to relate to one another. Their time together reminded Elizabeth that someone was counting on her for support and it reminded Madeline of the importance of showing kindness to others.

These relationships impacted the professional growth and development of participants in various ways. Dana viewed working with Kai as an opportunity to practice what she was learning in her graduate program on adult learners and leadership. She learned what kind of leader she wanted to be, and discussed how her new knowledge and skills were helping her become a better resource for Kai. Elizabeth also viewed the relationship as a way to be a model and resource for Madeline. She stayed current on resources in education and music education, worked to implement new ideas and strategies in her teaching so she could share them with Madeline. The way Dana listened to and responded to Kai impacted the way Kai listened and responded to her students.
Working with Dana helped Kai become a more reflective educator, manage a diverse classroom, and improved Kai’s pacing and transitions.

Dana and Elizabeth’s encouragement and support gave Kai and Madeline confidence as music teachers and confidence in reaching out to other school and district colleagues. Kai and Madeline gained new teaching ideas, repertoire, and other instructional materials from their mentor. This was perhaps most valuable to Kai and Madeline’s professional growth and development.

The mentors and mentees believed they had certain roles and responsibilities in the relationship, both professional and personal. Mentors believed in establishing and building trust in the relationship. Trust and open, honest lines of communication were necessary to the success of these two relationships. Withholding judgment built trust and helped the mentees feel comfortable approaching the mentors with classroom challenges.

Each relationship had reciprocity. Mentors believed they gained valuable professional development from the mentees as they worked together. Although the mentees hesitated to say they mentored the mentors in some way, they did articulate that their mentor had likely learned from them throughout the course of their relationship. Collaborating as mentor and mentee helped reduce feelings of isolation felt by all four participants.

Despite the positive descriptions and successful nature of each relationship, challenges existed. Time and proximity made meeting difficult. Busy schedules loaded with professional and personal responsibilities and being in separate schools posed challenges in each relationship. Each pair was able to find creative solutions that worked for them to overcome these challenges.
Chapter 5
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND FINAL THOUGHTS

Summary

Mentoring relationships are critical to the overall mentoring experience (Abell et al., 1995; Jewell, 2007; Mastapha, 2011; Mathur, Gehrhe, & Kim, 2012; Portner, 2001). Mentoring relationships in music education are especially important and valued by the mentors and mentees (Conway, 2003; Schmidt, 2005; 2008). The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between music teacher mentors and mentees within the context of Connecticut’s state-wide novice teacher induction program, Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM).

This study used a multiple case study design. Each case was a mentor/mentee pair in the second year of their two-year TEAM relationship, with each participant as the unit of analysis. Using a constructivist and interpretivist framework, each participant reflected on their relationship, constructed beliefs about their mentoring experience through their experiences and interactions, then interpreted what was meaningful and how the relationship impacted their professional growth and development. One case (Yin-Yang) was comprised of Dana (mentor) and Kai (mentee). The other case (Schlemiel Schlimazel) was comprised of Elizabeth (mentor) and Madeline (mentee). All names were pseudonyms.

The first research question was “How do the mentors and mentees describe their relationship, including what they identified successes and challenges in the relationship?” Yin-Yang, Dana and Kai, described their relationship as collaborative. Dana said it was easy and efficient because Kai was forthcoming about challenges in her classroom and
honest about where she was as a novice teacher. Kai appreciated Dana’s knowledge and experiences as a music teacher and a TEAM mentor, and said she was forthcoming because Dana was friendly and approachable. Schlemiel Schlimazel, Elizabeth and Madeline, described their relationship as strong, open, and mutually respectful. They had trust and excellent communication, along with similar personalities and a shared sense of humor. Elizabeth was encouraging and non-judgmental. Madeline was hard-working and receptive to feedback. Both cases described almost every aspect of their relationship as successful; each pair had trust, communicated well, enjoyed spending time together, and was supportive of one another. Time and proximity were challenging in both relationships. All four participants were at different schools, which made seeing each other regularly difficult. Busy schedules with full teaching loads, graduate school, and personal obligations left both pairs with not enough time to meet as often or as long as they would have liked.

The second research question was “What do the mentors and mentees find meaningful in their relationships?” Both pairs found the face to face time they spent together meaningful. Each participant discussed specific instances in the relationship that were meaningful. Dana enjoyed having Kai observe her teach and reflecting on the lesson together. She and Kai also worked on a district-wide Collaborative Inquiry Team, and the time they spent working as colleagues in that capacity was meaningful to Dana. Kai found the effort Dana put in to the relationship and Dana advocating for her and other novice teachers at district meetings meaningful. Elizabeth found Madeline’s honesty and openness meaningful, along with their shared commitment to Madeline’s progress. Knowing Madeline was counting on her and helping Madeline gain confidence as a
teacher were also meaningful to Elizabeth. Madeline noted that Elizabeth’s ability to guide her through the TEAM program, gain confidence as a novice teacher and district colleague, and the kindness and support Elizabeth showed were meaningful.

The third research question was “How have the relationships impacted the professional growth and development of the mentors and mentees?” Working with Kai gave Dana the opportunity to put what she was learning in her graduate program about adult learners and mentoring to practice. Dana provided a model for Kai on how to listen and respond to students, and how to manage a diverse classroom. Kai became a more effective teacher, improving her pacing and transitions between activities. She also became more reflective and confident in reaching out to other colleagues. Working with Madeline helped Elizabeth stay up-to-date on resources and gain new ideas and strategies. Her relationship with Madeline reinforced the importance of guiding rather than telling, and gave her a stronger sense of collaboration and excitement. Madeline gained confidence as a teacher and an increased level of comfort around other colleagues through this relationship. She also developed a greater understanding of curriculum, lesson planning, assessment, and classroom management.

Discussion

The results of this study provide additional validation to results from other studies. However, some unique aspects emerged as well. In this section I discuss the findings contextually with other research.

Roles, Responsibilities, and Communication

As found by Orland-Barak & Hasin (2010), the mentors and mentees in this study also entered the relationship with expectations of roles and responsibilities for each
person, whether spoken or not. Abell et al. (1995) found expectations of roles defined interaction patterns between the mentor/mentee pair. According to Dana and Elizabeth, mentors should take responsibility for reaching out and establishing the relationship, and building trust at the beginning of the relationship to facilitate open, honest communication with the mentee. The mentors in this study each took on these roles as mentors. As mentees, Kai and Madeline believed they should be prepared to ask questions, be receptive to feedback, reflect on their teaching, seek resources, and progress as a teacher. They each took on these roles as mentees.

When asked, participants articulated what they believed these roles and responsibilities were within their relationship, but they had not discussed them with each other prior to, or during their relationship. Elizabeth said there were “unstated” (Elizabeth, Joint Interview) roles and responsibilities, and that she and Madeline did not “create a list of responsibilities” (Elizabeth, Joint Interview). While Dana and Elizabeth both felt communication was crucial, and opened the lines of communication early in the relationships, neither mentee purposefully discussed roles and responsibilities.

However, previous research indicates the importance of roles and responsibilities being clearly communicated at the beginning of the mentoring relationship (Abell et al.; Orland-Barak & Hasin, 2010; Zachary, 2012). Each person’s expectations should be communicated—what each person believes their role is, their needs, and their desired outcomes from the relationship. Mentees should communicate their goals and envisioned growth as a teacher, and mentors should communicate how they are willing and able to help the mentee grow and achieve their goals. Bradbury & Koballa, Jr. (2008) found tensions can develop when expectations are not stated. Although roles and
responsible were not explicitly communicated during the relationships in the present study, both relationships were still described as successful. This could be due to each participant carrying out their believed roles and responsibilities, and their expectations of the relationship met their reality.

Zachary (2012) called communicating expectations or roles and responsibilities the negotiating phase of a mentoring relationship, where mentor and mentee discuss how their work together will move forward in a “free flowing but focused” (p. 127) conversation. In this negotiating phase, each person describes how she would like the mentoring process to unfold. Challenges, such as time constraints, should also be discussed along with how they can be met and worked out. This negotiation process results in a consensual agreement with defined goals, success criteria and measurement, delineation of responsibilities, accountability assurances, and a plan for achieving goals. I believe this happened implicitly with the two cases in the present study. Although neither case had a conversation about how they would like the mentoring process to unfold or how challenges would be met and worked out, they did go through the process Zachary described. It seems roles and responsibilities do not necessarily need to be explicitly stated; these can be negotiated in other ways.

**Personal Aspects**

Effective mentoring goes beyond sharing subject or pedagogical content expertise (Maor & McConney, 2015), and the effectiveness of the mentoring experience can be shaped by the perceived compatibility of mentor and mentee (Hellsten, Prytula, & Ebanks, 2003). Dana and Elizabeth both wondered if their personalities were compatible with their mentees, although they quickly overcame these concerns.
Mentoring involves highly personal interactions (Wildman et al., 1992), and interpersonal characteristics are important factors (Carter & Francis, 2001). Maor and McConney (2015) indicated important mentoring characteristics include positive encouragement, listening, being friendly and approachable, using humor, being well-organized, and being open and available. These traits were evident in these two relationships. Humor, in particular, seemed to help connect these pairs early in their relationships. Elizabeth and Madeline connected through a shared a sense of humor, and Dana and Kai quickly learned they could be goofy together.

Mentoring relationships exist on a continuum from personal to professional. No matter where the relationship falls on the continuum, both sides have meaning and function in various ways (Zimpher & Rieger, 1988). Based on my conversations with all four participants, their relationships were more professional, although personal aspects were evident and meaningful in both relationships. While both pairs believed it was possible to maintain a professional relationship without necessarily needing a personal one, they each appreciated the personal connection their relationship had. I believe personal connections contributed to the success of these two relationships and that all mentoring relationships need personal aspects. Working to develop a personal mentor/mentee connection may elevate perceptions of the overall mentoring experience.

People Make the Program

While the focus of this study was on mentoring relationships, these relationships existed within the context of the TEAM program. Therefore, the relationships were not completely separate from the program. Connecticut’s TEAM is a very structured, detailed program, and it seems TEAM may have contributed to the success of these relationships.
in some ways. Dana and Elizabeth were knowledgeable about all TEAM processes and procedures. All four participants were organized and up-to-date on TEAM responsibilities. Elizabeth encouraged Madeline to reach out to other colleagues who had successfully built relationships with support staff in her school to learn more about her students. Elizabeth stated “that’s one of the understated values of TEAM—it provides a path for teachers to find these experts within the building” (Elizabeth, Journal 1). Kai had a strong mentoring relationship with her cooperating teacher from student teaching and was hesitant to reach out to Dana at first, but TEAM “kind of forced” (Kai, Interview 3) the relationship with Dana, and “it was great” (Kai, Interview 3).

Clarke (2004) perceived three types of mentoring models: the formal/traditional model where communication is mainly one-way, from mentor to mentee; informal mentoring, where information is shared more casually; and, co-mentoring, where dialogue is mutual and reciprocal between mentor and mentee. The relationships in this study best fit the co-mentoring model situated within TEAM, described as a collaborative endeavor (http://www.ctteam.org/? page_id=530). When first asked, Kai and Madeline had a difficult time saying they mentored Dana and Elizabeth. The more they talked about their relationship the more they identified ways they did help Dana and Elizabeth grow as professionals. Although Kai and Madeline remained hesitant to call it mentoring, they recognized reciprocity in the relationship.

However, while TEAM had a role in these mentoring relationships, most of the success in these relationships was due to the work and dedication each participant contributed. It is the personal and professional characteristics of the people in the relationship—their attitudes, work ethics, and beliefs—that constituted the success or
failure of the relationship. Those in charge of designing and implementing mentoring programs should consider ways to foster dedication and a positive attitude of success toward the relationship. While these attitudes should be considered in the mentor selection process, in programs that serve all novice teachers, as TEAM does, mentees cannot be selected based on set criteria. These types of programs must then consider ways to foster these attitudes in the mentees. One possible means of fostering mentees’ attitudes is for mentors to model dedication and enthusiasm for the relationship early on, as Dana and Kai did, to instill a positive attitude toward the relationship in the mentee.

**Mentor Selection and Preparation**

Dana and Elizabeth were both experienced and dedicated mentors, willing to helping their respective mentee grow. Mentoring’s effectiveness can be enhanced by selecting mentors who are interested in their own professional growth as well as the growth of a novice teacher (Maor & McConney, 2015). Mentor selection should be based on a set of criteria that matches the goals and purposes of the mentoring program.

Selection criteria may include evidence of outstanding teaching, strong interpersonal skills, respect of peers, current knowledge of curriculum, commitment to their own professional development, and a demonstrated understanding of school and community culture and climate (Moir et. al, 2009; Portner, 2001). Throughout this study, all four participants highlighted the characteristics of the mentors that emphasize these same characteristics.

In TEAM, District Coordinating Committees are required to establish the guidelines and criteria for mentor selection. Mentor teachers must have a provisional or professional educator certificate and a minimum of three years of teaching experience,
including at least one year in the district in which they are currently employed. Selection criteria may include effective teaching practice as defined by the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching; the ability to work cooperatively to assist in the professional growth of a beginning teacher; outstanding professional model with a commitment to own professional growth and ongoing learning; the ability to listen and effectively communicate; effectively relate to adult learners; be reflective and articulate about teaching; and, be committed to helping beginning teachers improve their teaching (CTTEAM – Connecticut’s Teacher Induction Program. Retrieved from http://www.ctteam.org/?page_id=20, March 9, 2017). Dana and Elizabeth never discussed how they were selected as TEAM mentors. However, by being established teachers in the district, outstanding professional models, and able to communicate and work collaboratively with novice teachers, they each embodied the TEAM criteria for mentor selection.

It is also important to adequately prepare mentors to take on their role. Mentors who are prepared to take on their role are perceived by mentees as more valuable than mentors who are not prepared (Conway, 2003). TEAM mentors are required to participate in a three-day Initial Support Teacher Training program, which engages prospective mentors in the TEAM module process and specifies how to guide mentees through the program. Mentors are also required to complete a three-hour Mentor Online Update Training every three years to remain TEAM mentors (CTTEAM – Connecticut’s Teacher Induction Program. Retrieved from http://www.ctteam.org/?page_id=799, March 9, 2017). The initial preparation and update training of mentors was never raised by participants. TEAM training may have not been discussed because Dana and Elizabeth
were both invested as mentors and proactive in their own professional growth and
development. However, preparation and updated training of mentors are valuable aspects
of a mentoring program.

**Mentor Development and Satisfaction**

Mentoring can be good for the mentor. It can feel like a valuable professional
development activity, where mentors learn in the process (Conway, 2015; Conway &
Holcomb, 2008). Mentoring Kai and Madeline was professional development for Dana
and Elizabeth. Dana had the opportunity to put her graduate school skills to use working
with Kai, becoming a better listener and understanding more about tailoring the
mentoring experience to best benefit Kai as an adult learner. Elizabeth searched for and
located numerous resources to help Madeline but ended up using them in her own
classroom as well. She said she would not have been as actively seeking resources if it
were not for Madeline.

Elizabeth also experienced enhanced reflection on her own teaching as she
worked with Madeline. This finding is supported in McCormack’s work (2007), that
found that mentors improved their own practice when guiding mentees; they were able to
reassess their own teaching by sharing ideas with mentees. Mentors who encouraged
mentees to reflect on their teaching to identify solutions to problems and create new
teaching ideas, as Elizabeth and Dana did, became more reflective and better at problem
solving. Lopez and Kwan (2005) similarly found that mentors learned through reflection
as they examined their own teaching approaches when working with mentees. Dana and
Elizabeth indicated they experienced these benefits.
Dana and Elizabeth helped Kai and Madeline establish themselves as teachers in their individual school and in the district. This is consistent with previous research that indicates good mentors assist novice teachers in establishing relationships in their schools and district (Lock et al., 2006; McCormack, 2007). Kai and Madeline experienced increased confidence in their classrooms and districts from these additional relationships. Mentoring practices Kai and Madeline felt were effective included: 1) their mentors welcoming them to the district, and helping them build relationships with other school and district colleagues, 2) encouraging observing other teachers, 3) encouraging them to seek the expertise of other teachers and professionals in her school, particularly regarding how to best accommodate students with special needs. Not only did this guidance help Kai and Madeline build relationships with other building and district colleagues, it provided them additional professional development opportunities outside their relationship with Dana and Elizabeth, who viewed mentoring as a collaborative experience, honoring the expertise of other teachers. Dana and Elizabeth did not see themselves as the sole provider of mentorship and support.

Dana and Elizabeth felt a sense of satisfaction knowing they provided meaningful help to their mentees. They viewed the experience as an opportunity to help a novice teacher gain confidence in their first years but also to give back to education. Elizabeth said “someone did this for me along the way…they took the time to help guide me in the beginning of my career, so I feel like I'm doing that for somebody else and I think that's important” (Elizabeth, Interview 2). Dana said the opportunity to work with someone who is just beginning her career was meaningful, as was helping another person love teaching music as much as she did, and connecting with someone as she grew. She felt it
was a way to give back not only to music education, but all of education (Dana, Interview 3). Consistent with Moar and McConney’s results (2015), the present mentors gained a sense of satisfaction in helping a mentee become a better teacher and passing on a love for their subject to someone just beginning their teaching career.

**Teacher Isolation and Subject Area**

Isolation can negatively influence music teacher satisfaction and desire to continue teaching (Krueger, 2000; Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005). Because music teaching is so specialized and one music teacher often serves all students in a school, music teachers are especially vulnerable to isolation (Krueger, 1999). Each participant spoke of isolation at least once during our conversations. Elizabeth was the first to mention it. After almost two decades of teaching and numerous professional relationships formed she still felt isolated, particularly physically. Dana also spoke of a physical isolation, although it was a slightly different situation. She was in a new building and classroom and still working to feel at ease in her space. The stress of adjusting to a new school took a toll on Dana and other teachers. Dana said, “nobody really knows how to work in their space” (Dana, Interview 2) and “people haven’t been that nice about things” (Dana, Interview 2). She also felt awkward in her classroom, constantly questioning the room setup, where materials were placed, and how students could best use the space. Acclimating to her new surroundings while other teachers struggled to do the same contributed to Dana’s feelings of isolation because she did not feel she could ask for support from any other teacher.

Mentoring relationships reduce feelings of isolation among music teachers (Krueger, 1999). Although Kai felt isolated being the only music teacher in her school,
she was comforted knowing Dana was there, even if not physically. Similarly, Madeline knew Elizabeth was there to support and encourage her, even when they could not meet regularly. Kai and Madeline felt less isolated just knowing that they were not alone; that Dana and Elizabeth were there to help.

Further, relationships with other colleagues, mentioned earlier as beneficial to Madeline and Kai’s success, also reduced feelings of isolation. Kai and Madeline found comfort knowing that district colleagues worked just as hard and had similar challenges. Dana and Elizabeth spoke similarly about how their relationships with Kai and Madeline and the connections they had to other music teachers in their district helped combat isolation.

It is clear that music teachers need opportunities to interact, share experiences and expertise, and build relationships with other music teachers to reduce isolation. One participant in Sindberg and Lipscomb’s (2005) study on music teacher isolation stated, “the music teachers in my district have tremendous and varied gifts. Sharing these gifts would only have a positive effect. The frustration of not being allowed this weighs heavily on my mind” (p. 52). Rickels and Brewer (2017) examined perceptions of how participation in a Facebook Band Director’s Group (BDG) satisfied the professional development needs of the group’s members. Members of BDG post questions on a variety of topics such as repertoire and equipment, and received responses from members in a variety of geographic and work situations. Respondents commented on how participating in BDG reduced their sense of professional isolation, noting the speed of responses, quantity of responses, and hearing from people around the country and world as valuable. Mentor/mentee relationships are one type of professional relationship that
provides for these exchanges of professional ideas and can lead to decreased isolation so common among music teachers.

Music teachers are not the only teachers who experience isolation. Art and physical education teachers are also often referred to as “special” teachers, particularly in an elementary school. They also often have only one teacher in that subject per building. Gates (2010) used the metaphor of an archipelago—a group of islands within an area of water—to describe isolation and professional development for art educators, stating it “promotes a definition of our field that allows for diversity and intersectionality within a collective identity” (p. 7). Each island in an archipelago is unique and represents the physical isolation of art (and music and physical education) educators, but downplays the physical isolation when each island is considered part of a group. Art teachers often seek professional development opportunities outside of their isolated school contexts for opportunities to collaborate with others who understand their subject. Building bridges between islands creates possibilities for collaboration and rich professional learning within the archipelago and can reduce feelings of isolation. Weimer and Thornton (2014) also discussed the idea of islands, with novice music teachers on an island isolated from other music teachers and how creating collaborative networks could bridge distance gaps between music teachers and broaden professional development opportunities.

Professional learning communities (PLCs) have been effective in combating isolation. Beddoes, Prusak, and Hall (2014) cited isolation as one “nearly insurmountable barrier” (p. 21) to teaching physical education. They claimed an effective Professional Learning Community (PLC), which “represents a shift from a culture of isolation to one of collaboration” (p. 26), provides opportunities for mentoring, collaboration, and
socialization. Similar to how the BDG Facebook community was helpful for professional development, Maher, Burroughs, Dietz, and Karnbach (2010) found an electronic PLC fostered professional learning within one school district, helping music teachers who were once isolated connect to colleagues across the district.

This study, and others, demonstrates the importance of building relationships and community to reduce feelings of isolation. Mentoring provides the opportunity to foster a sense of community that may reduce the isolation felt by so many music teachers. Conway (2015) examined reflections of experienced music teachers on their past perceptions of mentoring and found that while music teachers do need support from other music teachers, they also need several types of mentors. One participant in Conway’s study suggested multiple mentors, such as a building mentor and a music teacher mentor. Because isolation is not specific to music, perhaps music, art, and physical education teachers within a school can be the building level mentors, building relationships with each other to combat feelings of physical isolation.

Previous research suggests matching mentors and mentees by subject and grade level is highly desirable (Huffman & Leak, 1986) and benefits the mentee (Carter & Francis, 2001; Mathur, Gehrhe, & Kim, 2012; Wildman et al., 1992). This is often not possible, particularly for music teachers, because there are often fewer music teachers per school and district than teachers of other subjects. In the present study, each pair taught elementary vocal music, which was beneficial to the mentors and mentees. Dana and Elizabeth both discussed subject area, reiterating the fact that matching by subject area and grade level is important. Dana said “what we do [as music teachers] is really awesome and special, and nobody else does it quite like we do” (Dana, Interview 3).
Elizabeth believed it was important for new teachers to feel like there is someone who understands their unique subject area (Elizabeth, Journal 2). She recalled being a novice teacher paired with a mentor who was not a music teacher.

*At the time, I was teaching high school and I was mentored by someone who was a special education teacher, and he didn’t have any music experience. While he could help me with teaching in general, he had no understanding of what it was that I did in class, as far as teaching music. It was a little bit of a challenge because he didn’t know how to speak the same language. That is really what it came down to.* (Elizabeth, Interview 1)

Dana was grateful Kai was also an elementary music teacher. She spoke of the challenges of having a relationship with someone who was not an elementary music teacher.

*I’ve had music people [mentees] who are high school teachers. Oh my gosh, I don’t know what their life is like. They don’t know what my life is like. You know, even though teaching, good teaching should look the same, I agree with that . . . but it's just like, oh my gosh, it's just so hard. So, I think it’s really important for people to know that.* (Dana, Joint Interview)

Kai and Madeline both indicated the repertoire and teaching materials shared by Dana and Elizabeth greatly impacted their professional growth. Kai said, “we’re always looking for new repertoire . . . new songs or new rhymes, or new activities that we can use with our students” (Kai, Interview 2). One of the most beneficial aspects of Madeline’s relationship with Elizabeth was Elizabeth’s contribution of song and game materials to help Madeline plan lessons. “I just can’t stress enough how much she has
helped me with that” (Madeline, Interview 3). This was possible because of the mentors’ accumulation of materials in their years of experience as elementary vocal music teachers. In these two cases, matching the mentor/mentee by subject area and grade level was an asset to the relationship.

Having multiple mentors could benefit novice music teachers in numerous ways. A building mentor could provide support regarding policy, procedures, and the culture of the school. This teacher could also help with teaching in general since she would more likely know individual students and be able to provide valuable assistance with specific behavior issues and learning styles. A music mentor could provide support regarding curriculum, repertoire and materials, and other items specifically related to teaching music. Kai and Madeline benefitted greatly from having mentors who were also elementary vocal teachers. If one district or proximal districts could collaborate to provide music teacher mentors in all content areas—strings, band, general music, and vocal music—novice teachers within these districts could benefit from having the experience and expertise of someone teaching the exact same content area.

**Emphasis on Relationship**

The mentoring relationship is the “avenue through which all mentoring processes, complete with the interplay of cognitive, affective, and interpersonal factors are mediated” (Hawkey, 1997, p. 332). During the joint interview at the end of the data collection period each participant shared the value of this research. Elizabeth and Madeline believed it made them think about their relationship a little bit more deeply and they were thankful for that.
Well, I want to thank you, because I think that, while I think that our relationship is wonderful, it really, this whole process has allowed me to really kind of appreciate you [Madeline] and how I think our relationship is a little bit unique in regard to how we well we work together and the situation of it . . . having been in your school, I think that that makes it a little bit different. I think going through this whole process and reflecting back, it's been really eye-opening for me too, so thank you. (Elizabeth, Joint Interview)

Madeline agreed.

Honestly, I would like to echo that, because I don't think I would have analyzed our relationship as deeply, just on a regular daily, um, a regular day or something like that. And so, now I feel like I have a deeper appreciation for our relationship because I've had to analyze it, you know. So, I feel like it's actually made us have a better relationship because we have had to analyze it. So, it's been good. (Madeline, Joint Interview)

Dana was also thankful for being given the opportunity to think about her relationship with Kai, and having “good conversations” (Dana, Joint Interview) about it. Kai believed it was important that the conversation continue: “I think, too, it's important that we don't just have this conversation now and stop. And not just you and I, I think we need to talk about it with other people, too” (Kai, Joint Interview). Dana agreed, suggesting that those in charge of TEAM may benefit from this research on mentoring relationships, saying “it’s been eye-opening and it’s made me think a lot more about relationships, as I think people should be looking at relationships like this” (Dana, Joint Interview). She continued,
I was thinking about our coordinator for TEAM and I think it's—I'm still in contact with that person—and I think it would be just so helpful. So, I'm thinking like, after you're done, I mean one of the people that needs to read this kind of thing are people who are District Facilitators so that they can understand maybe what to support in the relationship. Or, I don't know what the other people have said, but it would just be interesting for them to kind of read the research. (Dana, Joint Interview)

Reflecting on and discussing their relationship allowed each participant to consider their relationship in ways they had not yet done. Journaling and being interviewed brought forth a new appreciation for their relationship and the realization of the importance of a successful relationship that is mutually beneficial to both parties. Positive relationships are crucial to the overall mentoring experience and a greater emphasis should be placed on the mentor/mentee relationship within the mentoring process. Mentoring programs should be designed and implemented with a focus on the overall relationship to enhance the mentoring experience for all participants. In this study, providing mentors and mentees opportunities to reflect on the relationship allowed both parties a chance for a richer and more meaningful mentoring experience. TEAM, and other mentoring programs should consider implementing a relationship-reflection component. This could include designing a relationship expectation profile at the beginning of the relationship to discuss expectations and desired outcomes of the relationship. Mentors and mentees could be encouraged to journal throughout the relationship to reflect and provide valuable insight on how to best move forward to maximize the relationship’s overall effectiveness.
Challenges

As positive and beneficial as these relationships were, each relationship experienced challenges. The challenges were not uncommon to other mentoring relationships. Time and proximity were the two largest challenges discussed. Being in closer proximity would have allowed each pair more time to interact. Although the participants were not able to change their situation to eliminate the challenges they faced, each pair was able to realistically tackle each one and make the best of their individual situation.

**Proximity.** The physical location of mentors to mentees and their availability impacts the mentoring relationship (Carter & Francis, 2001). Proximity is necessary to view the mentor as accessible (Abell et al., 1995) and provide opportunities for mentor and mentee interactions during the school day (Zimpher & Rieger, 1988). Mentors and mentees teaching in the same building is important “because of the spontaneity with which many of the most crucial mentoring interactions occur” (Wildman et al., 1992, p. 210). Proximity was a challenge for Yin-Yang and Schlemiel Schlimazel, as all four participants were in different buildings. Kai said she would have preferred to be in the same building to have short, regular conversations rather than longer ones farther apart. Dana said it was difficult having Kai outside her building. Dana said “I mean, realizing how isolated we are, um, you know, in our own buildings; if we were in the same building and we had our mentor relationship, how different that would be. Oh my gosh, so different. So different” (Dana, Interview 3).

**Time.** The lack of time to spend together because of busy schedules and teaching at different schools was another challenge in these relationships. Mentors need release time
to meet with mentees and attend ongoing professional development. However, as suggested by Zimpher & Rieger (1988), release time should be a reduced teaching load rather than requiring the mentors to leave classes or shirk other responsibilities. Providing adequate time for informal and formal meetings to plan and talk is important (Huffman & Leak, 1986). Yin-Yang and Schlemiel Schlimazel were responsible for setting their own meeting schedules. Dana felt “guilty” (Dana, Joint Interview) that she and Kai did not have more time to spend together.

Although being at separate schools and having limited time was not ideal, the participants in this study had a positive perspective. They remained flexible, a trait important to mentor/mentee relationships (Abell et al., 1995). Each participant cited the time they spent together as something meaningful in the relationship. Face to face meetings could not be as often or as long as they may have liked, so their time had to be productive and focused. They were respectful of the time they did have, and supplemented in-person meetings with emails when necessary. Seeing each other at regularly scheduled district-wide professional development sessions allowed them to share a few moments to check in with each other.

Because of limited time and teaching in separate schools, observing each other teach was challenging for the mentors and mentees. Kai observed Dana teach once, which was quite beneficial, but schedules did not allow frequent observations. Elizabeth and Madeline also had trouble finding time to observe each other. Elizabeth was hoping she would be able to get to Madeline’s school more often in the second year of their relationship, but scheduling time was difficult.
Learning by observing can be helpful in developing skills (Darling, 2006). Observing each other teach was important to Dana, who mentioned it was an important relationship builder for her and Kai (Dana, Journal 4). “It was an important step in me learning more about her” (Dana, Interview 2). Kai found observing Dana and talking through her lesson really helpful. It gave Kai a broader understanding of how to reflect on her own lessons. “It’s not like I had never done that before, but I think the way she did it, I was able to think about it in different ways” (Kai, Interview 3).

At one point in their relationship Dana and Kai discussed with each other the possibility of recording classes and sharing the videos for feedback when observing in person was not possible. Dana hoped she and Kai would be able to send each other video clips of their teaching. She hoped it would lead to feedback and a way to stay connected; something to focus on and hold each other accountable, “which would be good” (Dana, Interview 2). Feedback is crucial in supporting individual learning and enabling mentee growth (Zachary, 2012).

Elizabeth stated that if she could spend more time with Madeline she would spend it watching her teach. Having the opportunity to observe Madeline is different from talking about teaching. “We can talk about what’s been going on in the classroom but seeing it in action is a different situation” (Elizabeth, Interview 2). She said even just having Madeline record a video of her teaching and the two of them reflecting on it would be meaningful.

When time and proximity are a challenge, mentors and mentees should video record lessons and spend time observing one another from a distance when in-person observation is not possible. The observer can then provide feedback, discuss, and reflect
on the lesson. Recorded lessons can be viewed separately at a convenient time or can be watched together or individually with written or verbal feedback accompanying the video. Video recording could increase the possibility of having multiple mentors, providing more opportunities for feedback. It is clear for the participants in this study that observing and commenting on each other’s teaching helped mentors further develop their own teaching skills and provided the opportunity to reflect on the mentee’s teaching, as in Wyatt & Arnold (2012) and Nilsson & van Driel (2010), so it is necessary to seek creative solutions to increase valuable mentor/mentee interactions.

**Recommendations**

This study highlighted two mentoring relationships within the context of one state-wide novice teacher induction program, providing insights on the elements of a mentoring relationship. The findings are not generalizable and do not represent all music teacher mentoring relationships. While the findings do add to the existing research on mentoring relationships, there still is much more to be learned. Future research should continue examining mentoring relationships in formal and informal programs, focusing on pairs in various proximities—same school, same district but different schools, or across districts. Future research should also continue examining music teacher mentor/mentee relationships where mentor and mentee are matched in various ways—music teacher mentor with non-music teacher mentee, non-music teacher mentor with music teacher mentee, and music teacher mentor with music teacher mentee.

The two cases in this study were paired within a structured program. However, when participants spoke of their relationship, the conversation always extended beyond TEAM. All four participants were certain their relationship would continue beyond their
required two years together in TEAM. Dana said she and Kai had that connection. Kai stated it was “guaranteed” (Kai, Interview 2) that their relationship would continue. She and Dana would still be conversing and collaborating as district colleagues, although Kai would likely still view Dana as a mentor. Elizabeth offered to continue guiding Madeline, who gladly accepted. Elizabeth never felt her relationship with Madeline was a traditional mentor/mentee relationship anyway, because of its collaborative nature. She said she and Madeline would continue to support each other as colleagues. Madeline stated this relationship made her more likely to be a mentor in the future. The impact of the mentoring relationship on professional growth after the official mentor/mentee relationship ends should be examined. A follow-up study on these two cases would be interesting to investigate to see if the two pairs still have a relationship, and if the mentees had become mentors.

The rationale for this study was based on findings that mentoring has a positive impact on the professional growth and retention of teachers (Andrews & Quinn, 2005; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004); and, that mentoring relationships are valuable (Conway, 2003; Schmidt, 2005; Schmidt, 2006) and crucial to mentoring’s overall effectiveness (Abell et al., 1995; Benson, 2008; Hawkey, 1998; Portner, 2001; Zuckerman, 1999). This study sought to gain a deeper understanding of the mentoring relationship, specifically the music teacher mentor/mentee relationship. While both relationships in this study were unique, there were commonalities among how each participant described their relationship, what was meaningful in it, and the impact of the relationship on professional growth and development. The findings of this study imply
that several factors contribute to mentoring relationships—personalities, time, perceived roles and responsibilities, communication, and trust.

Mentoring is “grounded in social constructivism—individuals make meaning of knowledge within a social context and as a result of interactions with others” (St. George & Robinson, 2011, p. 28). Participants described specific instances such as observation and discussion with reflection on a lesson as meaningful. They also discussed broader topics such as feeling valued as a person and professional and being reminded of the importance of being kind and supportive as meaningful in these relationships.

Mentoring relationships make important contributions to the induction experiences of novice teachers (Carter & Francis, 2001). The mentoring relationships in this study made important contributions to the induction experiences and professional development of Kai and Madeline and made important contributions to the professional development of Dana and Elizabeth. This examination of music teacher mentoring relationships within an existing novice teacher induction program raises several questions.

• How can mentoring relationships be formed, fostered, and sustained to enable meaningful professional growth and development for the mentors and mentees?

• How can those charged with designing and implementing new programs or modifying existing programs place a larger focus on the mentoring relationship, or the people within the program?

Dana and Elizabeth were both experienced mentors and used their prior experiences and knowledge of teaching to inform their mentoring practice. They were also prepared to be mentors by participating in TEAM training, entering the relationship
prepared to take on their roles and responsibilities as mentors. While Kai and Madeline had been student teachers under the guidance of a cooperating teacher, they no had prior experiences as novice teachers without the safety net of their cooperating teacher, and no formal preparation to take on their role as mentees.

- How can mentoring programs prepare mentees to take on their roles and responsibilities in the relationship?

Perhaps part of the novice teacher induction experience can be a session or meeting prior to the school year where the mentoring relationship is discussed. This would allow all novice teachers to gather and socialize with each other to form relationships among themselves. The mentors could also take part to meet and socialize with novice teachers.

Dana and Elizabeth were dedicated mentors, committed to their own professional growth and development and the growth and development of their mentee.

- How can more teachers like Dana and Elizabeth be selected as mentors?
- Can dedication and commitment to professional growth be developed in potential mentors?
- How can the mentoring program encourage and nurture dedication?

Likewise, Kai and Madeline were dedicated to their own growth. They were hard-working, inquisitive, forthcoming, positive, and receptive to feedback. They viewed TEAM as a way to improve their teaching rather than just something to cross off a to-do list.

- How can those qualities be encouraged and nurtured in mentees?
Mentors need mentors (Conway & Holcomb, 2008); a chance to discuss challenges, strategies, and ideas as they continue developing. Dana and Elizabeth were required to update their mentor training every three years, but they were not provided ongoing development opportunities as they worked with Kai and Madeline throughout the school year.

- How can ongoing mentor development be implemented in mentoring programs?

  Kai and Madeline both spoke of how their mentoring relationship built their confidence as novice teachers, especially with regards to reaching out to school and district colleagues.

- If novice teachers do not have the opportunity to participate in a mentoring program, how can they be provided the skills necessary to seek mentoring relationships on their own?

- How can mentoring relationships be fostered earlier, perhaps in the teacher preparation program?

- What is the role of the school or district in fostering mentoring relationships, whether part of a formal program or not?

- How can mentoring relationships contribute to the overall success of the school as a collaborative community?

- How can districts and schools without mentoring programs create spaces that allow mentors and mentees to find each other or find a collaborative community they feel empowered to join?

Dana did not want to separate personal and professional aspects of her relationship with Kai. Elizabeth stated that personal aspects were not necessary in a
mentoring relationship, but they elevated the professional aspects. Kai said caring for someone is what humans gravitate toward.

- How can mentoring programs focus on personal aspects within the mentoring relationship?
- How can opportunities for mentors and mentees to interact in social settings be part of the overall mentoring experience?

Having mentors and mentees matched by subject and grade level and in the same building is desirable (Abell et al., 1995; Carter & Francis, 2001; Wildman et al., 1992; Zimpher & Rieger, 1988). In this study, all participants taught in different schools, which they each noted as a challenge in the relationship. However, each pair taught the same music content area, elementary vocal music. This was an advantage, especially to the mentees, who benefitted greatly from new repertoire and instructional materials their mentors shared. Because of the number of music teachers per school and district, matching mentor and mentee by proximity and subject matter is highly unlikely. The idea of multiple mentors has been discussed.

- How can mentoring be expanded beyond only a one-to-one relationship to a broader, more collaborative and community-based approach that includes multiple mentors at the building and district level with a variety of expertise in teaching and subject content area?

Final Thoughts

No two relationships are alike. Relationships are comprised of multi-faceted components. Darling (2006) described the mentoring process as a mosaic, with designs as unique as snowflakes. Although there are similarities, no two are ever precisely the same.
A mentoring relationship may be compared to a stool, supported by three legs—action, attraction, and affect (Darling, 2006). Action on behalf of the mentee is at the heart of all mentoring relationships. Attraction is the pull that draws the mentee to the mentor; the qualities the mentor displays that the mentee admires and wishes to emulate. Affect is the positive feeling of the mentor toward the mentee, respecting and valuing them. These three legs take time to develop, and must all be present for the relationship to be balanced and successful. The two relationships studied had balance among these three legs of the stool, each contributing to the success of the other ones and to the relationship as a whole. When there is balance, no one is leading, no one is behind, each pair can just kind of walk side by side.
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Appendix A

Journal Prompts

Journal 1:

Reflect back to the time you and your mentor/mentee were first paired prior to the beginning of last school year. What were your expectations of this relationship prior to meeting? What did you imagine this relationship would be like? Describe your initial meeting and how your relationship has evolved to where it is now. Is it how you imagined? Note some interactions that particularly stand out to you (both positive and challenging) and why they stand out, or share a story that is an example of an important moment in the relationship.

Journal 2:

What do you believe a successful mentoring relationship should be like? Do you believe each participant has certain roles and responsibilities in the relationship? If so, what are they? Are they evident in your relationship? List the necessary components of a successful mentoring relationship and talk about why you believe each to be important.

Journal 3:

Describe the nature of your time together. Do you meet only for the required amount of time? How often is that? Is it in person? Discuss the nature of your meetings, detailing conversations and interactions. Are the topics set ahead of time (TEAM module work) or do the conversations emerge based on what is going on in your classrooms and/or other topics that may come up in between meetings? Do you observe each other teach or watch videos of each other teaching? If so, do you provide feedback to each other?

Journal 4:

Think back from the beginning of this relationship to the present time. What stands out as being meaningful in your relationship? Note specific examples and why they were meaningful. What are some important “take-away’s” from your experiences with your mentor/mentee?

Journal 5:

You have been in this mentoring relationship for over a year. Think back to last year and reflect on your professional growth to this point. Discuss how your mentoring relationship has impacted your own professional growth and development. In what ways have you grown since then? How are you professionally different than you were prior to being paired with your mentor or mentee? How has this relationship affected that growth?
Appendix B

Guiding Interview Questions

Interview 1—questions were added based on responses to journal entries 1 and 2. The focus was describing the relationship (research question 1).

Describe your relationship with your mentor/mentee at this time. Trace it back to the beginning of last school year when you were first paired.

Tell me about other mentoring experiences you have had (other TEAM mentees or as cooperating teacher for the mentor; undergraduate and student teacher for the mentee).

In journal 2 you listed X as necessary components of a mentoring relationship. Do you have those aspects in this relationship?

What has been successful in your current relationship? Why? What do you attribute that success to?

What has been challenging? What makes it challenging? How have you tried to address or work through these challenges?

Interview 2—questions were added based on responses to questions in the first interview and journal entries 3 and 4. The focus was on meanings in the relationship (research question 2).

Do you feel the time you spend together is adequate? Productive? Meaningful?

If you were able to spend more time together what would you choose to focus on?

What has been meaningful in this relationship? Why?

If you could change anything about the relationship what would it be? Why?

Interview 3—questions were added based on responses to questions in the second interview and journal entry 5. The focus was on the impact of the relationship on individual professional growth and development (research question 3).

Describe the impact of this relationship on your own professional growth and development.

Do you see this relationship continuing beyond your required time together in TEAM? Why or why not?

How will the meanings you’ve gained through this relationship carry over into your future teaching practice?
Joint interview

[This was the very last piece of data collected and additional questions were based on other three interviews and all five journal entries.]

If I were present during one of your meetings describe the interactions I would see there.

If I were a new teacher next year hired to teach in Connecticut and paired with a mentor in TEAM what would you tell me about what to expect from this relationship?

If you two were going to write a story together detailing your mentoring relationship what are some of the key things (highlights?) you would be sure to include?

As a result of your interactions with each other and your time together in this mentor/mentee relationship how has your teaching or your thinking about teaching and learning changed?
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Publications

Research Presentations
Music Teacher Mentor Mentee Relationships in Connecticut's Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM)
Suncoast Music Education Research Symposium, 2017
A Tale of Two Novices
Using goal-setting strategies to increase student self-efficacy and improve overall musicianship
West Virginia Music Education Association Conference, 2017