

NOVICE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES
ON PRINCIPAL MENTORING IN A K-8 RURAL SCHOOL SETTING

by

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ABSTRACT

Teacher turnover is a common theme in the literature for schools in our nation. Several rural Montana districts have a difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers. Many statistical studies indicate teachers move to other professions after teaching between three and five years. What remained unheard in Montana were the voices of the teachers who might stay in education if support and encouragement were made available directly from the principal or in a minority of cases, if the support available from the principal could be improved. Principals working with novice teachers in rural K-8 schools must understand the needs of their new hires in order to implement and deliver effective mentoring strategies.

The purpose of the study was to probe specifically what principals can do in their mentorship of K-8 teachers in a rural setting by eliciting the thoughts of novice teachers. With this knowledge, the principal could then take steps to ensure that these practitioners remain pleased in their profession and that they experience job satisfaction. An additional benefit of the study was a resource for principal mentoring in Montana rural schools.

This qualitative study captured the voices of novice teachers through semi-structured interviews. These interviews provided a description of the needs and wishes of rural teachers. The investigation focused on the actions that might be provided to novice teachers by their principal to increase educators' job satisfaction and longevity.

The findings indicated Montana rural K-8 teachers would prefer increased principal interactions in the areas (in random order) of 1) introduction and orientation, 2) honesty and expectations, 3) professional growth, learning, and forgiveness, and 4) availability. These four themes of teacher expectations, gleaned directly from the voices of rural teachers, provided the basis for a 76-page resource for Montana rural principals to create and implement their own district procedures for principal mentoring.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher attrition is a well-documented and growing problem in our society, which threatens the consistency and potential of curriculum delivery. Frequently, headlines in magazines and newspapers address the shortage of teachers in the United States. This is a genuine concern for school districts and administrators. Principals' experiences and research findings point to the fact that teacher attrition is a reality. It is clear, however, that this problem is not experienced on the same level for all schools. Those schools offering strong mentoring programs enjoy the benefits of teacher longevity. In fact, research indicates that in those sites where teacher support is offered, there is reduced teacher attrition (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). However, what educators presently know about principal-to-teacher mentoring, especially in rural schools, is far from complete. The gaps in the present knowledge base make it impossible to successfully reduce teacher turn over rates.

The research on teacher attrition indicates that about 17% of teachers hired are first-time teachers. Brock and Grady (2007) examined the profile of a beginning teacher. They found that many first-year teachers are new graduates joining a world of responsibility, which often means a new job, a new residence, and first-time financial independence from parental support. But first-year teachers can also be adults entering education as a second career through military retirement programs or alternative certifications. Students over-traditional age, for example, women who have raised families and are seeking re-entry into the workforce, complete the profile of typical first-year teachers. These types of novice teachers face problems due to inadequate

preparation, inappropriate teaching assignments, lack of support, and an inability to fit in with the established culture of the veteran staff (Brock & Grady, 2007; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

Interviews with beginning teachers reveal that they feel overwhelmed with the realities, complexities, and workload of teaching (Brock & Grady, 2007). Smith and Ingersoll (2004) noted that studies have shown that the better a teacher scored on exams, such as the SAT, the less likely that teacher was to stay in education for a career. This means the “best and the brightest” new teachers are the ones most likely to leave. Research reports 20-30% of beginning teachers leave education, 30% of those leave in their non-tenured years (years 1-3), 50% leave by the end of the fifth year--the average time it takes for a teacher to become established and effective--and just under 10% won't even complete their first year of teaching (Brock & Grady, 2007).

Aaronson (1999) effectively summarized the complexity of teacher attrition when she stated the following.

Most U.S. teachers start their careers in disadvantaged schools where turnover is highest, are assigned the most educationally needy students whom no one else wants to teach, are given the most demanding teaching loads with the greatest number of extra duties, and receive few curriculum materials and no mentoring (p. 335).

Given these conditions, it is no surprise that many leave, and those who don't, merely learn to cope rather than flourish in their environments. These types of situations lead to a sense of failure where new teachers burn out and quickly leave the profession.

The problems associated with teacher attrition are extensive and complex. Lower quality teaching, loss of intellectual capital, cost factors, and inconsistencies in school

reform efforts are all related to teacher attrition. However, research confirms that new teachers improve dramatically in their first few years in the classroom (Olson, 2000). Also, since it takes essentially three years for a teacher to become competent and five years to become truly effective, it can be surmised that districts are losing teachers before they have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The result is that often the students, who need the most help, sit in classrooms where overworked, inexperienced teachers can hinder their optimal chances for school learning.

In addition, teacher attrition is thought to devitalize the profession because the incentives and support are too weak to keep the best candidates. The more academically able teachers leave teaching sooner than their counterparts. The more able quickly attain jobs in other professions. Those leaving are often the teachers who graduated from top colleges and scored the highest on teacher tests (Norton, 1999). This problem is then intensified because the shortage could mean that districts are less likely to non-renew marginal teachers as they come up for tenure.

Another problem particularly troublesome for districts is the cost associated with replacing teachers. Schools already face fiscal hardships, and the money which goes toward recruiting and hiring new teachers is money lost from the budget—an inadequate budget that results in inferior curriculum materials, equipment, and facilities. Another cost-related problem is school reform efforts and the fiscal ramifications of professional development. Hope (1999) posited that “school improvement efforts, which often take years before reaching fruition, in many ways require a stable group of teachers who are aware of and consistently work towards the improvement goals” (p. 55). Again this

problem takes on a cyclical nature because the reasons teachers leave often have to do with the poor work environments, and those environments cannot improve unless a stable group of teachers manage to implement successful reform efforts. Probing the cognitive and emotional processes experienced by teachers in deciding to stay or to leave can give professional educators insight regarding the choices and provide more understanding for this complex problem.

Overview

Statement of the Problem

Many principals working with novice teachers in rural K-8 schools do not understand the needs of their new hires; consequently, school leaders do not implement and deliver effective mentoring strategies.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to probe specifically what principals can do in their mentorship of K-8 teachers in a rural setting by eliciting the thoughts of novice teachers. With this knowledge, the principal could then take steps to ensure that these practitioners remain pleased in their profession and that they experience job satisfaction.

Mentoring is a topic, which has been discussed, studied, and explored in many school districts across the country. While most educators would agree that mentoring is important to support novice teachers, the best practices of how to mentor are still debated.

This is particularly the case in rural schools for a number of reasons. Rural schools tend to have fewer financial and other resources when compared to their suburban and urban counterparts. As a result, first-year teachers will often be employed in a rural school setting with the intention of gaining classroom experience and then leaving to build their resumes. Typically teachers stay at their first rural school job for a couple of years before moving on to another position. When teachers leave, there is a disruption in the staffing of the school. This causes a significant problem for the principal who, year after year, is filling classroom teacher positions. The lack of continuity from year to year at a certain grade level coupled with the novice teacher's lack of teaching experience, makes for less-than-ideal teaching/learning experiences.

Research depicting attrition of novice teachers provides a compelling reason why schools must utilize induction and mentoring programs (Sweeny, 2008). Sweeny (2008) noted that, "the costs of teacher attrition are huge and include finding and recruiting, ...orienting, training, supervising, and evaluating them (p. 5). He believed that mentoring is a cost effective solution because it plugs the leak and saves money, which is otherwise lost. Furthermore, Sweeny (2008) predicted that over two million new teachers would be needed in the next decade. This is an alarming statistic because if we lose first-year teachers, the problem is further exacerbated.

The baby-boomers who became teachers in the 1960's are now reaching retirement age. Some of our most experienced and gifted teachers are leaving without passing on their experience and wisdom. When this experience is not available to new teachers, they must start from scratch to learn the same lessons all over again. Mentoring allows us to capture and share the experience and wisdom that new teachers need and to honor those who serve as mentors for sharing their wisdom (Sweeny, 2008, p. 4).

Besides the fact that researchers advocate mentoring as a way to curb teacher shortages, the government, too, is concerned about the transition new teachers make. The federal No Child Left Behind Act, passed in 2002, emphasized the importance of new teacher induction (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Unfortunately, the majority of the nation's schools were slow to respond to this call for new teacher induction. The following year, in 2003-2004, only fifteen states responded to this federal initiative and funded mandatory mentoring and induction programs (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004). Although support for induction and mentoring programs has increased, mentoring methods vary in their scope, design, and implementation; as a result, novice teachers experience various degrees of satisfaction.

Research Questions

These are the questions that this research sought to answer:

- a. What specific areas of principal mentoring do rural K-8 teachers identify as critical in order for them to remain in the profession?
- b. What are novice rural K-8 teachers' expectations of the principal in order to ensure job satisfaction?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided because the words tend to have a variety of meanings making it necessary to explicate them for the purposes of this study.

1. Educator: Any number of people involved in the implementation and improvement of education for children, primarily the principal and teaching staff.

2. *Mentoring*: Mentoring involves a series of induction or orientation meetings followed by formalized, on-going, on-the-job coaching and guidance that takes place in the employees' first few years on a job. Using this definition, it is understood that learning is a process, not an event, and that learning from books and college classes alone is not enough.

3. *Novice Teachers*: Full-time classroom instructors in their first three years of teaching. For this study, novice teachers will also include instructors in their first three years of placement in a new school or district.

4. *Non-tenure*: An educational term for a teacher in one of his or her first three years of teaching. A teacher receiving a fourth contract while working in the same school district becomes a tenured teacher.

5. *Principal*: The administrator in direct supervision of the teaching staff. In rural Montana districts this position is frequently combined with other positions. The principal may be an administrator who is also a head teacher or an administrator with multiple administrative roles, such as curriculum supervisor, superintendent, staff evaluator, transportation director, food services supervisor, and director of finances, etc.

6. *Rural School*: School in a district with fewer than 250 students and typically surrounded by open territory.

7. *Urban School*: School in a city with a dense population, containing at least one city of 50,000 and its surrounding closely settled area.

8. *Best Practice*: A superior method or innovative practice which contributes to the improved performance of an organization, usually recognized as "best" by other peers.

Significance of the Study

There is a dearth of educational research on how principals might mentor new teachers in rural schools. However, the research on mentoring is abundant in regard to coaching, leadership, business mentoring, peer mentoring, induction processes, and the general effectiveness of mentoring. While much is known about teacher-to-teacher mentoring and many districts have embraced this, what is lacking for rural schools is an added dimension -- what principals can do.

In a small district, where there is only one class at every grade level, having a peer teacher is not sufficient to help the new hire in understanding the school, the curriculum, and the community, etc. Accordingly, these individuals feel overwhelmed by the multi-faceted nature of the rural school job. They turn to the principal for help and seek answers to questions ranging from procedures to curriculum delivery.

This is in direct contrast to what occurs in a larger district where the principal is more removed from the day-to-day needs of the new hire. The principal of a larger district is concerned with administrative duties and is not involved in answering the daily questions, which a new hire might have. Often the assumption is that the new teacher will find a way to resolve his or her questions.

The principal of a rural school cannot afford to assume that new teachers will figure it out on their own. The nature of rural schools is such that when a teacher has incomplete information, it undermines his/her potential effectiveness. Thus, when one member of a staff is inadequately prepared or knowledgeable about any number of topics, the net performance is diminished. In a rural school setting, this is a precursor to disaster.

This study intended to fill that void; it sought to probe specifically what principals could do in their mentorship of K-8 teachers in a rural setting for the dual purpose of helping teachers remain in the profession and ensuring their job satisfaction.

This study identified the perceptions of rural K-8 teachers at one small rural school in southwest Montana, where the student population is 165, in order to determine their needs for success and thereby remain in the teaching profession. In addition, by determining novice teachers' expectations of the principal, a description of best practices for rural school principal mentoring to new teachers was an anticipated outcome for this research.

Background Information

The researcher had been a classroom teacher for six years before assuming the responsibilities of a rural school with a student population of less than 200 students. Her previous experiences as a professional educator involved working only in a larger school district of over 4000 students, including one high school, two middle schools and six elementary schools. As a teacher new to this district, the researcher had many peer teachers -- at her grade level and in her subject area -- who could answer questions. Thus for her, the transition from a college graduate of a teacher education program to a first-year teacher was a fairly smooth experience. When she assumed the position of principal at a small rural school, just sixteen miles from this larger district, the contrast of the two job settings was distinct. In this new setting the researcher, classroom-teacher turned principal, was faced with learning how to meet the needs of teachers in addition to

fulfilling administrative duties. While she was prepared for the latter, the former task was unexpected and baffling. Confounding to the researcher were the demands made on her by teachers who expected daily and direct contact with their administrator. In her experiences with the larger district, this was simply not the case. A teacher would have contact with the building administrator for monthly staff meetings and at formal evaluations -- typically twice a year for new hires.

However, teachers at the rural school would drop by the researcher/principal's office multiple times a day to ask questions relating to sundry topics. For example, they would ask about how to respond to parents, how to implement curriculum, how to locate or order supplies, how to deal with classroom disruptions, how to complete insurance paper work, how to prepare for a substitute, how to work with parent helpers, how to meet the needs of diverse learners, what to do when a student missed the bus, and what to do about scheduling concerns. Additionally, they wondered when they could visit the principal and chat about their day.

This disconnect between the experiences in the larger district versus the rural school were cause for reflection. The researcher/principal desired to know what she could do to meet the diverse needs of her teaching staff and yet survive as a novice principal.

Quite unexpectedly, one of the staff members expressed an interest in attending a workshop, which offered state-of-the-art ideas about a then-new idea—mentoring. In the summer of 2005, this teacher attended a professional development opportunity and learned about the various levels of coaching and mentoring. The teacher enthusiastically

shared what she had learned with the principal. This was the initiating event, which launched the principal's interest in mentoring. The following fall, with the start of the new school year, the teacher and researcher/principal shared information learned from the workshop with the entire staff. The staff responded positively and indicated they would like to learn more about mentoring. This event was a catalyst to what would subsequently take place -- the development of a principal-to-teacher mentoring program at this rural school.

Later, during the spring of 2006, when this rural school's mentoring attempts were fledgling, at best, a grievance was initiated by one of the new hires against the school district. This highlighted the need for a well defined and executed mentoring program to assist newly hired teachers to the district so that such an event might be avoided. As the school leader, the researcher was determined to learn from this experience. Hence, a school-wide attempt, where all participants, including classroom teachers and specialists, was made to address this issue of how to educate more completely new teachers about district policies, procedures, and the day-to-day operation of a classroom.

A few months passed and another opportunity presented itself. Together, the teacher, who had attended the workshop, and the principal/researcher, participated in a three-day summer institute offered by the Montana Office of Public Instruction. During this training, it became clear that less than ten schools of over 250 in Montana had implemented a mentoring program for new teachers. The principal/researcher, astounded

by this statistic, decided to be proactive. She made a commitment to research, develop, and implement an effective rural school-mentoring program for her new hires.

The following summer, in July 2007, the researcher attended yet another state workshop which explored teacher-to-teacher mentoring. The researcher realized this limited focus did not meet the needs of her rural school situation. What her school needed was principal-to-teacher mentoring. She wanted to know how the principal could respond to multiple teacher inquiries, so they would be satisfied and could return to the business of teaching. She decided what was lacking were teachers' voices and perceptions about what the principal could do to ease the newness of the teaching situation.

The next step involved the principal/researcher inquiring of her staff what she could do to maximize their effectiveness as teachers. A series of conversations resulted in the shared understanding that teacher-to-teacher mentoring was simply not effective in this particular rural environment. Instead they desired principal-to-teacher mentoring because they believed it was only the principal who could answer their salient questions. And so, the need for a principal mentoring program was born. Even though teacher-to-teacher mentoring didn't totally disappear, its significance was diminished. In this school setting, teacher-to-teacher mentoring looked more like girlfriend-to-girlfriend camaraderie and informal chats.

As the principal/researcher explored the notion of principal-to-teacher mentoring, she discovered that teachers do value and want mentoring from the principal. Consequently, the principal invited her newly hired staff to participate in the

development of a principal-to-teacher mentoring program for the school. All of the novice teachers readily embraced this opportunity to articulate the needs of newly hired teachers. Teachers felt a resource or handbook, which articulated best practices for a principal to communicate with teachers, was needed to offer complete coverage of essential information for a teacher new to the district. Subsequently, with the teachers' input, such a resource was created, which captured their thoughts about essentials for first- year teachers. This draft document included four sections: Section 1- Description of the Program, Section 2- Monthly Discussion Topics, Section 3- Evaluation, Section 4- Appendices.

Section 1 described the program and its purpose, which was to assist teachers in their first three years--the protégé year, the intern year, and the resident year--to become proficient in instructional and professional work skills. Based on findings from this study, a more developed and detailed role of the principal was harvested.

Section 2 provided an outline of topics for a newly hired teacher. Areas included checklists for the preparation of the first day of school and for mentor discussions, a survey of new teacher needs, curriculum calendars, and suggested readings to meet the changing needs of teachers.

Section 3 outlined formative and summative assessment formats available to the novice teacher. The process of evaluation was designed only for coaching purposes and was used to track the growth and development of newly hired teachers. New teachers conveyed their anxiety about formal evaluations. They believed "practice" evaluations would be helpful in planning and designing an observed lesson for formal evaluation.

Practice evaluations were exactly that -- a “practice” at teaching in the presence and judgment of another adult, followed by a post conference where both parties would talk about the successes of the lesson and areas in need of improvement. After this trial run, a formal evaluation would be scheduled.

Section 4 offered suggestions from the Montana Office of Public Instruction for developing a mentoring program along with a Mentoring Application. Some of these included checklists, Internet resources, forms, etc.

This small rural school had ambitiously decided to undertake a project, which would uncover an understanding of best practices in principal-to-teacher mentoring. Results from two years of inquiry indicated that the principal’s role was of primary importance to novice teachers in rural schools. In fact, they preferred principal-to-teacher mentoring over teacher-to-teacher mentoring. They valued the former because they viewed their teaching colleagues as having only partial information and lacking a sense for the whole picture. Teachers explained quite candidly that teacher-to-teacher mentoring provided helpful advice to novice teachers about how to keep student disruptions to a minimum, how to plan and develop lessons, and how to administer alternative assessments.

Notwithstanding, what was missing was the knowledge of procedures and policies of the district, which only a principal could offer. Teachers felt they needed a better understanding of the role of the principal in order to perform their jobs better. For instance, in discipline procedures the teachers questioned what happened after the initial

discipline referral was made by the teacher. Did it go to the parents? Should it be filed? How would the principal follow up with the teacher? Would the principal talk with the parents? Teachers wanted to know how the principal would support their communications with parents along with other procedures directly related to the principal's role and duties.

Too, teachers felt the principal was the lead person on curriculum and instruction in the building, and they voiced a need for more direct advice on curriculum decisions and pacing of classroom lessons. Although the principal had numerous roles and responsibilities in a rural school, new teachers seemed oblivious to these multiple demands and expected immediate interaction with their building administrator. Multiple interruptions each day interfered with the principal's ability to effectively perform her job. This resulted in having to revise her approach to daily administrative tasks.

Using the suggestions of the three novice teachers in the 2006-2007 school term, the researcher identified suggested readings, which were used with the following group of new hires. They selected three books for future novice teachers to use as a resource. Based on their advice, mentoring was implemented by both the teacher mentor and the principal for the 2007-2008 academic year. Teachers also discussed a concerns survey (Appendix B) and later reviewed another survey to talk about principal behaviors new teachers would like to have as they start their jobs (Appendix C).

These preliminary steps helped guide the outline of the methodology for the current study. Mentor meetings and interviews during the year of this research study defined the best use of principal time. The intent was to invite teachers to identify

specifically what principals could do in their mentorship of K-8 teachers in a rural setting for the dual purpose of helping teachers remain in the profession and ensuring their job satisfaction.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 provided an overview to this study, which investigated the role of the principal in mentoring novice teachers in a K-8 rural school. Statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, definition of terms, significance of the study, and the preliminary study were presented. In Chapter 2, Literature Review, supporting literature, which addresses rural school management, teacher attrition, and teachers' expectations of the principal as mentor will be presented.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher begins with situating the need for mentoring in the teaching profession. This is followed by a summary of the available research concerning rural school management, teacher attrition, and expectations of the principal in mentoring new hires. Next, the chapter identifies the most relevant literature, which conflates with the goals of the study, identifies the contributions and weaknesses of the current literature, and discusses the gaps and saturation points in the research.

Context of the Problem

Teachers fresh out of teacher education programs find themselves sharing common experiences: they are uncertain about their first new jobs, uncertain how to maintain a classroom without a cooperating teacher guiding their every move, uncertain how to teach curriculum, and uncertain how to motivate learning and improve student achievement on their own. While this is common to all novice teachers, rural school teachers have additional concerns. For example, teachers can feel overwhelmed and inadequate when they are the only teacher at their grade level. They do not have colleagues to talk to about any number of topics, including how to create teacher-made tests, how to grade projects, and how to pace lessons.

Limited resources in a rural school can be another very real concern for the novice teacher. While teachers in an urban district might have the latest curriculum materials and opportunities for in-depth professional development, this is simply not the case in rural settings. The reality of working in a rural school, which is likely different from their student teaching experience, i.e., in urban settings, is also problematic. There is only one school leader (and no vice-principal) to cover all administrative duties and to be responsive to every new teacher's feeling of job satisfaction.

Themes in the Literature

Rural School Leadership

Experts would agree that the needs of rural and urban schools are quite distinct (Rice, 2003; Taylor, Martin, & Fix, 1998). Nearly 8.8 million students across the nation attend a rural educational facility (Lerner, 1995). Yaunches (2007) lists Montana among the most rural of states in the nation with 57,959 students attending a rural school. This report highlights the challenges faced by rural schools including high poverty levels, low student achievement, low teacher salaries, teacher turnover, and uneven distribution of Title One funds. These are serious concerns that demand a knowledgeable and competent school leader. While the needs are salient and pressing, the research about rural school leadership has been less than complete (Harmon, Howley, & Sanders, 1996). According to Chamberlain and Goldsberry (1984) the "practices in rural school...the vagueness and generality of the available literature in describing the tasks and

expectations of rural principals” (p.130) are a missing link in the literature.

Additionally, “a review of resumes in the ERIC database...reveals that no one has yet surveyed doctoral research in rural education” (Harmon, Howley, & Sanders, 1996, p. 68). The research done by Arnold, Newman, Gaddy, and Dean (2005), resulted in the conclusion that the isolated nature of rural schools limits research endeavors there. This, combined with the fact that state and federal funding agencies favor awarding funds to larger districts, has consequences for smaller districts. These researchers posited that the outlook for comprehensive findings about rural school leadership is bleak. The vast majority of studies concerning principals have been conducted in large school districts, not small ones.

It is vital to define the diverse roles of principals in rural schools. These school leaders spend less time evaluating and supervising their staff, yet they are highly engaged in the activities of the school and community (Chamberlain & Goldsberry, 1984). For example, they attend church services, town meetings, and sporting events where they encounter the families who attend their school. Even necessary errands such as grocery shopping and doing laundry result in meeting up with families. A family reunion is an occasion where the principal can expect to greet school students and family members. In short, the principal of a rural school has no anonymity.

More is expected of principals in a rural school by the school staff and the community. Principals in a rural school are accountable to the school board, for they are seen as a role model as well as the CEO. A principal’s absence at a school event is noticed, and people wonder where she is and why she didn’t attend.

Other considerations, which directly impact the rural school principal, involve fewer physical and financial resources, smaller libraries, and more limited social opportunities. This impacts the rural principal because she has to do more with less. So when good ideas come along, the rural school principal is oftentimes restricted in her ability to respond to these initiatives.

Teacher Attrition

There is a wealth of research on teacher attrition, and it is recognized that increasing percentages of teachers leave their profession within the first five years (Darling-Hammond, 2001; American Federation of Teachers, 2001). However, several studies indicated well-planned and well-implemented teacher mentoring and induction programs can be successful in increasing job satisfaction, efficacy, and retention of new teachers (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

Empirical studies probed the determinants of teacher turnover. Teachers leave for various reasons: discipline problems or difficult students, paperwork overload, poor working environments, lack of administrative support, assignment to areas outside of their specialty, extra duties, and isolation (Aaronsen, 1999; Brock & Grady, 2007; Hope, 1999; Norton, 1999; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Sweeny, 2008).

Even though most individuals are attracted to teaching because they want to work with children and youth, when they encounter intolerable working conditions, find themselves embedded in a profession with a poor image, do not receive the parental and administrative support to be successful as a teacher, or are assigned to teach outside their areas of strength or interest, many leave education for work in other fields (Norton, 1999, p. 53).

Teachers are too frequently placed in assignments, which leave them with little chance for success. This can be especially true in rural areas where there is frequently one teacher per grade level. Teacher attrition in rural districts requires further investigation. Norton (1999) revealed, “school leaders must devise ways to ascertain these reasons [why faculty leave the organization] and determine the factors that might serve to retain personnel” (p. 55).

Teaching is experience-driven; it requires on-the-job training and learning. The skills for effective teaching are gained through daily practice and experience. Teacher resilience, perseverance, and the ability to remain focused on student learning will ultimately define a successful teacher in the completion of the first year of teaching, the “survival year” (Brock & Grady, 2007). These characteristics are vital to retaining new hires; their absence often signals a teacher’s departure.

Nancy Protheroe (2006) reported the findings of the National Retired Teachers Association and Harris Interactive from 2003. They interviewed novice teachers who were leaving the profession. These interviews revealed that teachers felt they would have benefited from daily guidance from mentors or other teachers. In addition, they believed that non-judgmental, constructive, and compassionate mentoring would have made them more confident and more effective. They wanted more information about expectations of school leaders in regard to student discipline, time management, and curriculum-related issues, such as lesson plan development. Novice teachers leaving their profession wished they had had a support group to affirm them when they had concerns – colleagues who could have provided motivation during their toughest times.

A related issue is teacher expertise. The single most important determinant of success for a student was the knowledge and skills of that child's teacher (Goldberg, 2001). Mentoring of a beginning teacher creates immediate advantages for the learners. Through mentorship, students are able to gain teaching expertise in spite of having a first, second, or third-year novice teacher.

Education has been labeled as an occupation that "cannibalizes its young"-- an occupation where the initiation of new teachers is similar to a sink-or-swim, trial-by-fire, or boot camp experience (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). The new teacher is assigned those challenging students -- those the more senior teachers refuse to put up with in the classroom. Veteran educators have long felt that the new teacher must go through the same hardships and learning experiences, which they had endured. Now that feeling among educators is more of a passing trend, for teachers are noticing the benefits of mentoring and realizing that helping their peers and colleagues improves education; it also improves educators.

Rebecca Anhorn (2008) discussed the importance of supporting young professional educators. Like Ingersoll and Smith (2004), she described this phenomenon as "the profession that eats its young" (p. 15). Anhorn chronicled the stories of six first-year elementary teachers during their inaugural year. The study participants shared positive and negative experiences in focus groups, electronic bulletin board communications, and survey questions. From her studies she concluded that beginning teachers were expected from the first day of their assignment to complete all of the tasks which veteran teachers do. In addition, Anhorn (2008) identified several other factors as

evidence of how new teachers are overloaded and under compensated: low salaries, adverse working conditions -- including class size and working load -- inadequate teacher preparation, and ineffective mentoring support. These emerged as typical reasons, which determine if teachers stay or leave the profession. Anhorn (2008) reported that, “overwhelmed, hectic, isolated, beaten-down, unsupported, scared, humiliated, afraid, stressed, and drowning...” were words the six teachers/participants used to describe their first year of elementary teaching.

Teacher attrition affects every rural school and yet is addressed incompletely in the literature. Furthermore, while a wealth of empirical studies enumerates the reasons teachers’ leave, few if any of the research findings detail and listen to the voices of teachers. Talking to those in the profession can assist others in knowing what school leaders must do to keep teachers teaching. Learning why teachers might feel frustrated and then making adjustments to assist teachers may reduce the turnover in rural school districts and offer a positive step toward the resolution of this ongoing problem.

Principal-to-Teacher Mentoring

In a thorough review of the available literature, the researcher found only a few published sources of how principals could directly guide beginning teachers. There was much about mentoring, in general, but not principal-to-teacher mentoring, in particular. Brock and Grady (2007) in their *From First-Year to First-Rate* text detail essential understandings: knowing the beginning teacher, helping the beginning teacher face problems and barriers, developing a good induction program, helping beginning teachers

with common problems, and integrating induction and career long development. This resource provided helpful background information for the researcher as she acquainted herself with what experts in the field say about principal mentoring.

Nancy Protheroe (2006) referenced a report by the Public Education Network (2003) regarding roles of the principal in assisting new teachers. From teachers themselves, the report offered ways a principal could make the role of a new teacher more successful and less frustrating. Protheroe (2006) identified behaviors teachers consider important for a principal to model: accessibility, ease of asking questions and discussing problems, and providing “assistance, guidance, and solutions” (p. 35).

Protheroe (2006) summarized what novice teachers needed and expected of the principal. Teachers appreciated being observed, receiving direct feedback and guidance, and being helped to make full use of planning time. Additionally, they believed principal support in discipline was important in job satisfaction. They felt principals should provide teachers with formal opportunities to learn and collaborate, but principals should also boost new teacher morale by taking the time to work with them side-by-side. Principals should be a sounding board for teachers; new teachers wanted to be listened to and made to feel successful. Teachers wished to share struggles and strategies with their principals (Protheroe, 2006).

Another researcher, Jan Richards (2003, 2005), described specifically the suburban principal’s role in supporting new teachers. Teachers would like principals to provide high visibility, give suggestions and guidance, and support teachers with parents and discipline. They also would like emotional and professional support. The

teachers/participants in Dr. Richards' study were volunteers from graduate-level classes who were enrolled at two universities in suburban Southern California. The researcher also recruited volunteer principals from the same area. From Richards' interviews, she constructed a list of 22 principal behaviors, which this study's participants referenced in their interviews with the principal/researcher (Appendix C). Dr. Richards found that suburban teachers desired principals who exhibited the following behaviors:

- Cares about what makes teachers happy in their jobs
- Respects and values teachers as professionals
- Has developed a strong mentor program for new teachers that includes frequent opportunities to observe master teachers
- Is supportive of teachers in matters of student discipline
- Respects teachers' preparation time as valuable by working to minimize meetings, duties, and unnecessary paperwork
- Provides adequate resources and supplies to do the job
- Encourages teachers to improve in areas of teaching practice and professional development
- Has an open-door policy – accessible, available, willing to listen
- Sees the principal role as protector, problem solver, nurturer, and encourager
- Is highly visible in classrooms
- Gives suggestions and guidance in teaching practice
- Gives praise and acknowledgement of a job well done
- Is fair, honest, and trustworthy

- Respects differences in teaching styles
- Respects a teacher's wish for autonomy
- Values teacher input and opinion and gives teachers opportunities for responsibility and decision-making
- Is a motivator and team builder who encourages collaboration
- Demonstrates warmth, friendliness to teachers and students
- Is interested in his/her teacher as a person
- Supports teachers with parents
- Is highly visible within the school campus

Then in 2005, Richards used the list of behaviors with 100 more teachers and 100 more principals to create a ranking of each behavior's importance. She hoped to discover if there was indeed a teacher and principal difference in the perception of needed behaviors of principals. After analysis of her data, she found the top ranked behaviors in 2003 were a match to those unveiled in 2005. She next sought out the differences between the behaviors teachers believed were most required of a principal and those principals thought were most important to deliver. The teachers wanted support with parents, and in discipline cases, they wanted to be respected and valued as professionals. They also wished to be treated fairly, honestly and respectfully. Finally, they expected a principal to have an open-door policy.

However, in contrast, were the views of principals and the behaviors they thought were most needed. Principals agreed that they should respect and value teachers as professionals; treat them fairly, honestly and respectfully; and have an open-door policy.

Principals also felt a need to deliver encouragement to teachers about needed improvement in teaching practice and professional development, to hold consistently high standards for all as professional members of the school family, to be a motivator and team builder who encouraged collaboration, and to give praise and acknowledgment for a job well done. The significance of Richards' (2005) work is undeniably important. If teachers and principals are not receiving and providing the behaviors needed for teachers to remain in the profession, then there are no winners. Principals lose good hires, and teachers move to another type of work.

Literature Alignment with the Present Study

It is not an exaggeration to say that outside of these few sources, the literature offered no additional information specifically about how a rural school principal can mentor teachers. This was a bit disconcerting to the researcher who expected to find more information on the principal's role in assisting new hires. There were plenty of research studies concerning coaching, leadership, business mentoring, peer mentoring, induction processes, and the general effectiveness of mentoring. Nonetheless, the fact remained that principal-to-teacher mentoring was a topic that had not been fully explored in the literature.

In summarizing the review of the literature, which was helpful in illuminating key topics for this study, most published mentoring texts and articles viewed the principal's role as "behind the scenes" guidance (Goldberg & Proctor, 2000; Sweeny 2008). Recommended principal mentoring responsibilities were administrative duties such as

matching mentors to novice teachers, providing release time for common preparation periods for the teachers, providing release time for novice teachers to observe master teacher classrooms, explaining standardized tests, sharing evaluation policies and procedures, and encouraging professional development (Brock & Grady, 2007; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Sweeny, 2008; Udelhofen & Larsen, 2003). The principal/researcher of the present study however felt that besides being the authority on administrative tasks and assignment of duties, the principal could provide much more to a new hire's success.

Sweeny (2008) stated schools must contribute to the process of assisting their own new hires. However, there remains a significant gap in the research knowledge; the profession lacks an in-depth understanding of what principals can provide to teachers in order for them to feel less frustrated in their first years in the profession, so they might ultimately stay in education. With this significant gap, there is also a need to define the principal behaviors needed in the rural setting.

Research does contribute many understandings about novice teachers' circumstances and what principals should do. Norton's (1999) research indicates that novice teacher stress and dissatisfaction in principal behaviors can result in teachers leaving education. Development of principal-to-teacher mentoring might foster satisfied teachers who would continue a career in education, improve school system satisfaction and morale, and increase student achievement due to higher teacher performance. The principal would need to understand how to provide a caring, supportive, encouraging environment as perceived by teachers, not the principal (Gehrke & McCoy, 2007).

School leaders can find numerous possibilities to participate in the mentoring or in developing a principal support plan for new teachers. Principals should first provide adequate and thorough training of the teachers wishing to become involved as mentors. Then, alongside the trained mentors, principals can lead induction days before the start of the school year for a thorough orientation to the school and its policies and procedures. Principals can also provide mentees with support such as a welcoming staff environment, encouragement and praise, adequate classroom resources, training for classroom management, a beginning year free of extra duties, and frequent clear communication on expectations.

The first important role of a principal is to provide adequate training for veteran teachers to become mentors. Teacher-to-teacher mentoring is so much more than just good intentions. Principals should provide adequate training and compensation to teachers who want to be leaders of teachers by fully embracing the mentoring philosophies of the school district. Meeting with these mentors frequently and discussing the progress of the program will contribute to this goal.

Principals, along with their trained mentors, can provide a thorough induction to the educational life for staff and students at their school. The process can help beginning teachers understand not only the “hows” but the “whys” of “what we do around here.” Each school district is independent and thus individual. Mission and vision statements, employee handbooks, student handbooks, mentoring manuals, crisis plans, and school tours are vital aspects of induction training. Principals can offer policy and procedure information, and introduce key staff members, such as secretarial staff, technology

support, and custodial staff. Likewise, these school leaders must take an active role in setting the tone of the school for beginning teachers.

Principal-to-teacher mentoring ensures that teachers know that the principal supports their presence in the school environment. Literature frequently affirms the principal sets the expectations and tone for school climate (Richards, 2003; Sweeny, 2008). The principal can make introductions of support staff and assist in relationship building. The school's secretarial staff is key to a positive welcoming atmosphere. Active principal involvement in the mentoring of beginning staff models the interactions and support expected from other staff members toward beginning teachers and, conversely, beginning teachers' dispositions toward the support staff. Sweeney (2008) places this model role directly on the shoulders of a principal; however, he does not involve the principal in the day-to-day mentoring. Rather, he suggests that a principal oversee the needs of the new hire indirectly -- administratively.

Nancy Protheroe's (2006) article depicts the need for principals to praise beginning teachers, show them encouragement, and reinforce the positive accomplishments in their day. Principals should be sure new teachers understand that "no question is a dumb question." Teachers need to continue to seek opportunities for clarification and understanding from the principal. Often, the principal-to-teacher opportunities for communication and interaction are lost in the meetings and schedules of a typical school day. By setting aside a mentoring meeting time weekly, the novice teacher is able to observe the behaviors, actions, and attitudes from the principal needed for teacher job satisfaction. Without principal-to-teacher mentoring, teachers often

perceive that the principal is not respecting and valuing them; is not accessible, available, or willing to listen; is not fair, honest, or trustworthy; does not support teachers with parents; and does not support teachers in student discipline (Richards, 2003, 2005).

Also, principals can monitor adequate provisions for the physical classroom environment, which can support and enhance learning. The classroom designed for student success incorporates a rich, responsive classroom versus one that is overcrowded and or visually over-stimulating. Too often teachers plaster every available wall space with posters, clutter countertops with teaching materials, and in short, overwhelm the student with a “busy” environment. A responsive principal can help teachers understand what the classroom “looks” like from a child’s perspective.

Equally important is a classroom with sufficient teaching resources. The principal supervises the inventory and curricular resources available to the new teachers. Frequently when a teaching position opens, the materials in the room have been redistributed throughout the school, for senior teachers find items that would be beneficial to their instruction. Soon the beginning teacher has a classroom void of teaching materials. Principal involvement in teacher mentoring would provide awareness of this situation and improve inventory supervision.

Principal-to-teacher mentoring can support teachers in the development of skills needed for the classroom. For example, principals can lead training for improved classroom management, differentiated instruction, developing interdisciplinary units, and meeting cultural or poverty needs of students. A principal providing on-the-job training

or finding the needed support assists teachers in meeting the needs of the wide range of students.

Principals can assign the newest teachers less extracurricular duties during their “survival year” to promote the novice teachers’ feelings of enthusiasm, energy, and idealism which encouraged them to choose teaching as a profession (Brock & Grady, 2007). Teachers need to feel they can concentrate on the classroom needs during their first year. Loading a new teacher with extra responsibilities can lead to faster attrition, so year two or three is better for assigning additional duties.

Principal-to-teacher mentoring would increase communication. Principals should take the time to inform new teachers of pertinent information in multiple ways. They should not only give the novice teacher a school handbook, they should verbally stress the most important areas of this resource for the new hire and continually reinforce key procedures with reminders. For example, the principal could offer a quick handout or reference sheet about payroll procedures necessary at the beginning of the school year or provide a note about an upcoming grading requirement. Principals should avoid acronyms or confusing educational words until new hires are clear about the descriptions for school programs and resources. Providing full information keeps beginning teachers from feeling left out, confused, or inferior.

In addition to these few examples of principal-to-teacher assistance ideas, this researcher feels it is important for a principal to monitor any type of teacher-to-teacher mentoring program, reflect on the principal behaviors teachers expect, review best-practices in the field by reading journals and relevant literature (which can provide the

principal guidance in meeting the needs of teachers) and attend mentoring professional development workshops and seminars.

Nancy Protheroe (2006) summarized a report by the Public Education Network (2003) regarding roles of the principal for assisting new teachers to achieve more success and less frustration. Research indicated that the principal behaviors teachers want include accessibility, ease of asking questions and discussing problems, and providing “assistance, guidance, and solutions” (Protheroe, 2006, p. 35). Teachers appreciate being observed, having direct feedback and guidance, and being helped to make full use of planning time. Teachers feel principal support in discipline is important in job satisfaction. Principals should provide teachers with formal opportunities to learn and collaborate, but principals should also boost new teacher morale by taking the time to work side-by-side with them. Principals should be a sounding board for teachers; new teachers want to be listened to and made to feel successful. Teachers want to be able to share struggles and strategies with their principals (Protheroe, 2006).

Novice teacher stress and dissatisfaction in principal behaviors has resulted in teachers leaving education (Darling-Hammond, 2001). Development of principal-to-teacher mentoring could foster satisfied teachers who would continue a career in education, improve school system satisfaction and morale, and increase student learning due to higher teacher performance. The principal must provide a caring, supportive, encouraging environment as perceived by teachers, not the principal. This researcher believed the only way to understand what was needed and expected from the principal by

beginning teachers in a small rural school was to ask them. This was the driving force of her study.

Table 1 presents a summary of the available research on the recommended principal behaviors. While this was a helpful starting point for the researcher, these studies specifically addressed the process of mentoring in situations other than a rural setting. These summary findings highlighted the need for exploring, specifically, principal-to-teacher mentoring in a rural setting.

Table 1. Review of the literature

Author	Recommended Behaviors for Principals
Brock and Grady (1998, 2006, 2007)	Know the beginning teacher, socializing the beginning teacher, helping the beginning teacher face problems and barriers, developing a good induction program, helping beginning teachers with common problems and integrating induction and career long development, helping teachers with common problems, measure induction success, showing and telling how things are done
Goldberg & Proctor (2000)	None
Protheroe (2006)	Provide accessibility, observations, discipline, assign a mentor teacher, professional development, receiving direct feedback and guidance, helped to make full use of planning time, discipline, formal opportunities to learn and collaborate, boost new teacher morale by taking the time to work with them side-by-side, sounding board for teachers, listening to and making to feel successful, allow teachers to share struggles and strategies with their principal
Richards (2003, 2005)	Provide high visibility, give suggestions and guidance, support teachers with parents and with student discipline, emotional and professional support
Rowley (1999, 2000, 2005, 2006)	None
Sweeney (2008)	Assign a mentor teacher, provide technology, assign rooms near mentors, use positive language, provide welcoming environment
Udelhofen and Larsen (2003)	Administrative duties: scheduling new teachers, provide policies, share procedures, openly support mentoring program, explain standardized testing, etc.
Yendol-Hoppey and Dana (2007)	None

Contributions and Weaknesses of the Current Literature

One of the valuable contributions is the ongoing conversation among researchers and educators about the importance of mentoring. An additional strength of the literature is the discussion and search for the reasons for teacher attrition among novice teachers.

However, a weakness of the literature is the ambiguity of the particular school setting. While many studies identified the role of the principal, these studies failed to address if the individual worked in an urban or rural school. In close reading, the researcher inferred that the principal reference was usually a leader of an urban school, not a rural school.

Another weakness is the lack of specific delineation of mentoring responsibilities by the principal. “Often building administrators are left out of the loop regarding mentoring and induction” (Sweeny, 2008 p. 112). However, Sweeny (2008) described a very new movement toward principal involvement in mentoring.

One common reason administrators often have no role in induction and mentoring is their required role as evaluators. Induction leaders want mentoring to be separate from evaluation. The vital distinction needn’t be a big concern. Site administrators have a vested interest in the success of new teachers: most extend more support and guidance than their legal role requires; as the instructional leader, the principal is concerned about the students and the extent to which novices are becoming effective teachers; building administrators don’t want to lose a new hire at the end of the year and negate all they have invested in that person’s success; and they don’t want to interrupt momentum in school improvement, curricular initiatives, or staff development (p. 112-113).

Gaps and Saturation Points

The current literature on mentoring supports the need for mentoring inclusion in schools (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Sweeny, 2008). As a result, numerous authors have developed mentoring suggestions, programs, and workshops. Using these ideas, strategies, and skills, principals can develop a program for principal mentoring for the needs of their staff. Nonetheless, teacher attrition is a reality. Year in and year out, principals are faced with the task of searching to fill classroom positions.

Even though there was ample information about teacher attrition, none of the studies directly addressed the particular concerns of rural K-8 teachers. A review of rural school journals and other such publications resulted in topics about needs of rural schools and their personnel, but none on principal-to-teacher mentoring or mentoring in general. Rural teachers face particular challenges such as positions with only one teacher per grade level, principals with multiple job requirements, and locality isolation. None of these were discussed in the literature.

The literature firmly established that mentoring has the potential to retain teachers; mentoring can be beneficial in myriad ways. Teachers have others to share their stories with so that they can feel heard and appreciated. Mentoring includes teacher observation and offering direct feedback and guidance, as well as, helping instructors make full use of planning time. Effective discipline practices results from mentoring and it boosts new teacher morale by taking the time to work with them side-by-side and providing them a sounding board. Teachers have a need to feel listened to and made to

feel successful. They need to share struggles and strategies with their principals, and have formal opportunities to learn and collaborate (Brock & Grady 1998, 2006, 2007; Protheroe, 2007; Richards, 2003, 2005).

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to discover the specific areas that principals could attend to as they mentor K-8 teachers in a rural setting for the dual purpose of helping teachers remain in the profession and ensure their job satisfaction. Chapter 2, Literature Review, offered a summary of the available literature, which informed this study. Mentoring is a complex issue; while teachers are individuals, they have common needs, which can be addressed by a wise, intuitive instructional leader. In particular, rural school teachers have additional concerns because of the particular nature of such teaching environment.

Chapter 3, Research Methodology, will present the research methodology, which was used in this study. In particular, it will discuss the participants, researcher's positionality, instrument function and development, the research design, and the time frame for the study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this third chapter, the approaches to studying the research questions are discussed. The chapter begins with a discussion of the participants involved, the instruments used, and the research design. This is followed by the time frame for the project.

The purpose of this study was to probe specifically what rural teachers identify as critical for them to remain in the profession, and subsequently what principals can do to meet these expectations. With this knowledge, the principal could then take steps to ensure that these practitioners remain in their profession and that they experience job satisfaction.

Phenomenology, which can be a philosophical perspective and approach to qualitative research, best describes this study. Phenomenology places a focus on people's subjective experiences and interpretations of the world (Creswell, 1998, 2003). In this study, the researcher/principal was probing answers from novice teachers at a rural school about their perceptions about expected principal behaviors. As a phenomenologist, the researcher desired to understand the world of a first-year teacher; she sought to explore their reality as a newly minted teacher.

Participants

Method of Selection

The population for this study was determined by the definition of novice teacher. In the rural school being studied, there were nine new hires within the last two years. These individuals fit the study's definition of novice teachers; however, only seven were full-time teachers, and the researcher decided to work with these individuals who taught in self-contained classrooms. The other two novice teachers not selected were a part-time art teacher and a counselor.

The seven teachers were similar in that they were full-time elementary novice classroom teachers. The participants were invited personally in a face-to-face meeting to join the research study after they had received a tour of the school and had signed a contract with the district.

Respondents

The respondents' participation was voluntary and all agreed to sign the subject consent form. Of the seven respondents, four graduated from an accredited teacher education program at a university fifteen miles away. Two others graduated from another teacher preparation program in the state of Montana, and one graduated from an out-of-state university.

Table 2. Demographics of Research Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Years of teaching Experience	Grade level teaching
Grace	24	F	0	3
Edith	23	F	0	4
Edward	36	M	2	5
Joan	26	F	1	6
Karen	26	F	1	7
Bella	33	F	1	K
Alice	32	F	6	Special Ed.

Researcher's Positionality

For qualitative research to be effective, the researcher should consider herself an instrument. The researcher “engages the situation and makes sense of it” (Eisner, 1998, p. 34). An astute observer recognizes what is significant in the research setting; as well, she can discern what to ignore. Guba and Lincoln (1983) discussed the advantages of using one’s self as an instrument for “greater insightfulness...flexibility...responsiveness...holistic emphasis...and ability to utilize tacit knowledge...to process and ascribe meaning to data” (p. 324).

The researcher in this study was a female with six years of teaching experience in two separate middle schools, each with a 6, 7, 8 grade-level configuration and with a student body over approximately 400 and 700, respectively. Additionally, she had completed nine years as a principal in a K-8 rural school in southwestern Montana, the site for this study. Both of her undergraduate degrees were earned in 1993 -- one in elementary education with a K-12 reading endorsement, and the other in Health and Human Development. Her master’s degree, completed in 2000, was in Educational

Leadership. Doctoral coursework included studying the management of schools and employees. This graduate preparation contributed to her foundational knowledge base, which in turn, equipped her to work with various school employees from the teaching staff to the custodian. Though not an expert, she had been hiring and acclimating new faculty into their roles as classroom teachers for the past nine years. Not surprisingly, the researcher's special interest in hiring quality teachers and retaining them over the tenure of her principalship was a major impetus for this study.

A primary concern of the researcher was the nature of participants' voices. Would teachers be less than honest in responding to her queries? Perhaps they would see her as an authority figure and have guarded responses. The principal went to great lengths to prevent such contamination. To begin with, new teachers were welcomed warmly by the existing teaching staff. A potluck picnic, coffee and rolls, and after-school snacks provided occasions for teachers and the principal to get to know each other and to establish a baseline of trust. Weekly staff meetings, informal exchanges in the hallways, and impromptu conversations were other ways that the principal built an esprit de corps. By the time the data for the study was to be collected, teachers felt comfortable with each other and freely admitted to speaking openly, whether or not the principal was present. When the principal/researcher pointedly asked the question of whether or not her presence was a distracter, they candidly acknowledged that her role was more of a reporter taking notes. To them what was most important was that she captured their honest responses, for their number one concern was that future hires would benefit from their forthrightness.

Related to this issue of how authentic the teachers' voices would be is researcher bias. The researcher in this study was also the principal of the school who had definite views about how the school should be run most efficiently. As a school administrator, she made daily decisions in the best interest of student learning. Accordingly, she had expectations for teacher performance. The principal/researcher believed that once hired, teachers were responsible for fulfilling their end of the teaching contract. This meant being a self-directed learner who was able to figure out curriculum and content pacing concerns, as well as demonstrating competency with procedural issues and other key aspects of the job.

But this study required a level of trust and open communication among novice teachers and their principal, who was also their supervisor. The principal/researcher had to knowingly set aside her bias and predisposed expectations for teachers and become a facilitator and a member of the school team. Sweeny (2008) addressed this tension of the role of a principal immersed in the research setting. Some might mistakenly believe that school leaders, or principals, want mentoring to be separate from evaluation; however, this distinction need not be a concern, for building administrators have a "vested interest in the success of new teachers" (p. 112). In other words, the judicious principal is willing to go to great lengths to ensure that her staff believe in her genuineness, trust her, look to her for guidance, and most importantly, work with her toward their self-improvement as educators. The principal/researcher of this phenomenological study embraced this principle. Brock and Grady (2007) also address this notion of researcher bias. They claim that principals play a critical role in a new teacher's inaugural year by providing

support and assistance. Since principals want beginning teachers to succeed, most would be willing to “begin the year with an orientation and intend to provide ongoing support” to bring this to fruition (p. 3). This was precisely the mindset of the principal/researcher. Her goal was to begin the year with positive teacher principal interactions and maintain that momentum throughout the school year and the term of this study.

Profile of Rural Hires at the Research Site

Data collected over ten years’ time, which is presented in Table 2, reflects the pattern of district hires in the rural school, which was the site for this study. In 2004 and 2007, the number of hires was significantly higher than in other years. These numbers represented approximately a 50% turnover, due to retirements, spouses relocating, and teachers leaving the rural school for higher paying jobs in a larger district. Nonetheless, when looking across the years, there is, at a minimum, a new staff member who needed to be trained each year. This responsibility fell completely on the principal, who was already more than busy preparing for a new school year, ensuring that building facilities were repaired or replaced, and overseeing the K-8 curriculum needs for the entire rural district.

Table 3. District Hires

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Average
0	1	1	2	2	5	2	3	6	2	~3 per year

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher used weekly in-depth, semi-structured individual and group interviews to collect data in this research project. She approached the interviews with an open mind; although questions were preplanned, the participants' responses guided the discussion and any follow-up questions. Each interview session, scheduled for a minimum of 30 minutes, was audio taped and recorded in the researcher's field notes. On average, interviews lasted an hour. At the end of each interview, the researcher gave participants a list of the interview questions and requested that they provide any additional information. A representative sample of the interview questions follows.

- 1) What expectations do you have concerning district curriculum, subject standards for student learning, district policies, use of technology for classroom instruction and evaluation of teacher performance?
- 2) How do you as a teacher determine student academic ability, use effective teaching strategies, plan and design both lessons and units, use textbooks effectively and differentiate to meet individual students' needs?
- 3) What questions do you have concerning student discipline, assessment and evaluation, classroom organization, management of paper work and reports, access to materials, supplies, and equipment, and resources for instructional resources?
- 4) What would you like to know about parents and community members, the principal and board of education, colleagues, motivating students, and the profile of students at this school?

- 5) What assistance from a principal would enhance your teaching success, educator knowledge, ease with academic state standards, or classroom management?
- 6) What assistance from a principal would ease your frustrations?
- 7) Do you have any additional concerns or questions?

In addition to information gleaned from interviews, the researcher used anecdotal notes to support the data collection; for example, spontaneous hallway conversations between the researcher and the participant were recorded in a notebook. The mixture of sources had the potential to reduce bias through triangulation.

According to Creswell (1998), researchers use multiple and different sources and methods to provide corroborating evidence. As well, Gay and Airasian (2003), assert that when researchers use different data sources, for example “an interview, related documents, and recollections of other participants,” these varied measures can provide a more genuine representation (p. 215). In this study, triangulation occurred with the analysis of multiple sources of evidence. These guided the researcher’s interpretations of the data. Eisner (1998) referred to this as “structural collaboration” and described it as “the confluence of multiple sources of evidence or the recurrence of instances that support a conclusion” (p. 55).

Data was also gathered from reviewing and discussing surveys from resources, which surfaced during the review of the literature. (Appendices B and C). The researcher selected two surveys based on their suitability for the study. The surveys selected were (1) *Principal Behaviors That Encourage Teachers to Stay in the Profession: Perceptions*

of K-8 Teachers in their Second to Fifth Year of Teaching (Richards, 2003) and (2) *Leading the Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program* (Sweeny, 2008).

Additionally, the researcher shared with the participants research studies about mentoring; she asked them if they agreed with the findings presented by researchers Brock and Grady (1998, 2006, 2007), Protheroe (2006), and Richards (2003, 2005). Participants were asked to elaborate why they agreed or disagreed with the findings from these key authors.

Instrument Function and Development

The purpose of incorporating in-depth semi-structured interviews was to collect data about what teachers need or want in a mentoring program. Patton (1987) asserted “the basic purpose of the standardized open-ended interview is to minimize effects by asking the same question of each respondent” (p. 113). Additionally, using this approach makes it easier for other researchers to replicate the study. Jorgensen (1989) observed, “in-depth interviews differ from other strategies in that they seek to explore particular matters in elaborate and comprehensive detail” (p. 90). Hence, in-depth interviews were used because the researcher sought to examine teachers’ needs and concerns about how the principal can assist a novice teacher. A comprehensive set of information from teachers, who had very specific thoughts about mentoring, resulted from the interviews. However, when the researcher believed additional information was needed, she asked all respondents a similar question so as not to alter the interview protocol. Member checking was utilized with the respondents either during or after the interviews to determine if the researcher had recorded and interpreted their answers accurately.

A concerns-based survey was discussed to gain an understanding of topics and trainings needed by the cohort. Sweeny (2008) provided a survey, *New Teacher Topical Needs Assessment* (p. 19), to identify the level of concern novice teachers were feeling (Appendix B). Richards (2003) identified principal behaviors from the rating and ranking survey she used with suburban Californian teachers. Her survey was also discussed with the novice teachers in this study (Appendix C). This activity asked novice teachers to discuss the importance of 22 identified principal qualities and to identify the three behaviors most important to them as a novice teacher.

In addition to in-depth, semi-structured one-on-one interviews between the researcher and the participant, group interviews were conducted. The purpose of these interviews was to allow teacher participants to brainstorm ideas aimed at the mentoring needs they may not have considered in the one-on-one interviews. In addition, the researcher noticed in her tenure as a principal that during animated conversations among the faculty, teachers often overlooked the fact she, the principal/researcher, was present and revealed open, candid thoughts because they were in a comfortable setting with their peers. The interview questions developed by the researcher were open-ended and encouraged the finding of an answer to the overriding questions -- What specific areas of need do teachers identify as critical from principals in order for them to remain in the profession? -- What are novice teachers' expectations of the principal in order to have job satisfaction? The questions were asked of all respondents; however, the researcher remained attentive for answers that would perhaps lead to emerging themes, which would then require a more specific follow-up question.

Interview questions developed over time with many interviews per teacher. The researcher logged a long list of questions in 2006 that could be of potential interest. She kept notes through the development of the *Principal's Mentoring Handbook* (Appendix A) to document teacher concerns, which could lead to interview questions. The questions were then narrowed in number while broadening the scope to be less formal. Using less formal questions allowed respondents to guide the interview process and tell their stories while the researcher listened, recorded, and interpreted the responses.

The questions were developed in conjunction with notes from the last two years of the researcher's interest in the topic. As well, they incorporated the available literature findings and knowledge from Rubin and Rubin (2005).

Main questions get a conversation going on a specific matter and ensure that the overall subject is covered, whereas probes are standardized ways to ask for more depth and detail and encourage the conversational partner to continue. To achieve richness and depth of understanding, those engaged in qualitative interviews listen for and then explore key words, ideas, and themes using follow-up questions to encourage their interviewee to expand on what he or she has said that the researcher feels is important to the research (p. 13).

The questions were written in the fall of 2006, but were continuously improved during the 2006-2007 academic year and the summer of 2007. The pilot questions were reviewed in mid-September 2007 in order to revise the questions a final time based on the literature review. In phenomenology, rich description is an essential part of the research process, which aims to capture an individual's experiences of a phenomenon (Creswell, 1998, 2003). The researcher knew that well-formed questions would likely yield more comprehensive answers, which would be crucial in a phenomenological study.

Finally, the questions were clustered and sorted into general topics so the interviews would flow smoothly. Reminders for probes were placed in the researcher's master copy along with a sheet for recording demographic information about each respondent. A new sheet for notes was used for each interview.

Trustworthiness and Dependability

The trustworthiness about conclusions drawn from the data is enhanced when a study can "increase the likelihood that an authentic picture of the participant's reality is elicited" (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992, p. 647). In addition, credibility is met by a good experimental design, which rules out that other factors caused the effect being studied. Guba and Lincoln (1983) noted that credibility could be determined by "demonstrating that the researcher's interpretations of data are credible to those who provide the data" (p. 651). They also stated that transferability occurs when the effects can be generalized to other populations and contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1983). This phenomenology research study was created to minimize biases, thus maximizing responses.

Pilot interviews were conducted with the other two novice staff members who were not included in the program. The original questions were asked of the two part-time teachers who fit the novice definition in the other domains. Their immediate feedback on a question was elicited to check whether the question would draw the information being requested to determine whether the researcher's interpretations would be accurate. The questions were then revised and refined for the actual interviews. These pilot meetings and interviews helped to put the researcher at ease and allowed for well-designed,

thoughtful initial questions, as well as follow-up questions. The interviews were audio recorded during the pilot interviews to test the recording device. As the data was analyzed, the researcher telephoned, visited, or emailed respondents about incongruities or needed clarification.

Interpretive verification was used to gain feedback from peers so multiple perspectives could be considered in the data analysis. The feedback was recorded in the researcher's journal to allow interpretation on multiple levels. The researcher kept an open mind for various interpretations of the collected data; interpretative verification enabled the researcher to understand the responses through the perspective of others, which would substantiate the results.

Eisenhart and Howe (1992) suggested that trustworthiness could be established using specific techniques that prolong involvement, by carefully considering many sources of data from multiple perspectives, and asking respondents to review the findings. All of these methods were used in this study.

Field notes were logged to help demonstrate fidelity. These notes were used to keep track of information. Notes on access, the questions and prompts used, the context, and verbal and nonverbal messages were recorded and coded so to reduce the threat of trustworthiness. Another method the researcher used was a research journal. In this journal the researcher documented her impressions of the interviews, noting any puzzling issues or problems that arose. This journal allowed an open and honest account of biases in thinking, provided a daily record of the incidents and a recording place for continuing formative efforts at analysis. The journal helped the researcher develop follow-up

questions and keep a detailed record of the dates, events, interviews, and times. Also, the researcher emphasized to all respondents that confidentiality would be maintained in the write-up of information collected. Pseudonyms were used in all drafts of the research.

The researcher established a friendly relationship with each of the respondents. She provided food at the gatherings, listened intently to their stories, and was appreciative and thankful for their time. Jorgensen (1989) stressed the importance of sustaining access once given by the respondents, and the researcher was attentive to this throughout the study. “The character of field relations heavily influences the researcher’s ability to collect accurate, truthful information” (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 21). The researcher built positive relationships with the teachers so that during follow-up interviews they could speak openly and freely about their opinions in the presence of the researcher. This was accomplished by a genuine “let-me-be-helpful attitude” that was pervasive in all formal and informal conversations. The teachers, in turn, were highly motivated to be candid and direct in their responses, which they shared with the researcher. They wanted to guarantee that future hires at this rural school would benefit from their “baptism-by-fire” experience. As novice teachers, they hoped that by their honesty future colleagues would experience a smoother transition into the educational profession. It was easy for them to verbalize their realization and recognition of offering up carefully crafted responses in order to please the principal would not be honest to other teachers. Above all, their burning goal was to share their heartfelt sentiments about needs and expectations of novice teachers. In short, the participants in the study trusted the researcher/principal in order to meet the greater goal of improving novice teachers’ induction to the

profession by the principal. The esprit de corps established in the initial meetings with the study participants made it possible to gain their trust and ultimately contributed to the inclusion of all participants in member checking activities, including the review of the post-interview transcripts.

Research Design

Rationale

This project, classified as phenomenology, attempted to describe the experiences of first-year teachers and their expressed needs for job satisfaction. Using this information, rural principals could then consider the stated concerns of these novice teachers and provide support through mentoring. Phenomenology, a type of qualitative research, in contrast to the other research paradigm -- quantitative research -- was chosen because it was most appropriate for answering the study's research questions. Phenomenology is a descriptive form of research, which seeks to uncover how individuals experience a phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). A phenomenological approach results in description of one or more individual's experiences with a given phenomenon - - in this case, principal mentoring in rural schools (Creswell, 2003). For such a study, the primary data collection method is in-depth interviews. Accordingly, qualitative interviews chronicled the lives of novice teachers during the course of this research.

According to Rubin and Rubin (2005), the method of qualitative research selected should construct a portrait of on-going change and personal growth. Many

researchers feel the beginning teacher's first year is a "survival year" and the following years, up to year three and possibly year five, are a period of continual growth (Darling-Hammond, 2001; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). To gather this complex information of varying views and needs of beginning teachers, qualitative research offered the most holistic option of finding human patterns to provide insight into this phenomenon.

A major concern in qualitative research is the sample size or the number of participants in the study; however, in most qualitative research, the sample size is generally small and the sample is not necessarily intended to be representative of the whole population. Consequently, the results of the study cannot be generalized to the entire target population (Creswell, 1998). This is acceptable because the goal of qualitative research is to gather rich information, rather than to develop a precise estimate of what portion of the population feels a certain way. The concept of "more is better" does not fit with the beliefs of the qualitative researcher when referencing the number of participants for an effective study. In a phenomenological study, the number of participants does not make the study richer, more meaningful, more thorough, or more generalizable. More participants do not offer more integrity to the data being collected by a qualitative researcher due to the specific time and specific situation. Qualitative research aims to study the intentions, beliefs, and views of its participants intensely. So, "more (depth) is better." It is not a wide and broad collection of research; rather, it is a very in-depth view of the world of the participants.

In this study, interviews were a primary means used to seek answers to research questions. Jorgensen (1989) stated, "In-depth interviews differ from other strategies in

that they seek to explore particular matters in elaborate and comprehensive detail” (p. 90). To collect information that will be useful in providing for the needs of novice teachers, the researcher was able to study, in detail, the novice teachers and draw from their ideas on how principals can better meet teachers’ needs in their first years in the education field.

Research is key to increasing the scientific knowledge of our society. In education, researchers make an impact on the future of teachers and students when they investigate phenomenon existing in our schools. Research methodology, the question or hypothesis, the research design, the development of the data collection, and the thoroughness of data analysis all contribute to the success of the study.

Invalidity and Minimization

The characteristics associated with qualitative research may have both positive and negative influences on the readers’ perceptions of the materials being presented. The critical detail required of qualitative research means the small sample chosen might not be representative. It does not come value free. The researcher, who, in this study is also the school’s administrator, needed to filter the information through her life experiences, and this could be accompanied by bias or could produce bias.

The largest threat to validity for this study was the researcher’s own background with novice teachers and her association with rural school settings. Her experiences might have given her preconceived ideas about what a new teacher might desire in order to stay in the teaching profession and about what a new teacher might want in a school

administrator. On the other hand, the researcher's experiences were an asset because she was able to use the language of the teachers and fit into the school setting quite naturally. Jorgensen (1989) indicated that "it is not possible to acquire more than a very crude notion of the 'insiders' world....until you comprehend the culture and language that is to communicate its meaning" (p. 14). The researcher tried to minimize any negative effects by recording her own answers prior to interviews and by consciously trying to remain a curious outsider. Jorgensen (1989) referred to this as 'naiveté' and calls it a strategic maneuver. Following this recommended strategy, the researcher did not engage in stories of her own in the conversations; rather, she remained an attentive listener and asked clarifying questions without interjecting anecdotes or digressions.

Procedural Details

A systemic procedure was used for collecting and recording data (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The first step for the researcher was to write regularly in a journal to record questions and concerns as they arose. Detailed records were kept to chronicle any procedures used, interviews held, or concerns that would need to be addressed. The next step was to set meeting times for group interviews as well as individual interviews. This scheduling was critical so as not to overwhelm or over-burden the new teachers already in their "survival year" of their profession. The interviewer met weekly with the group of novice teachers and, in addition, interviewed each teacher four times: October 2007, December 2007, February 2008, and May 2008. Each individual interview, scheduled for 30 minutes but typically lasting an hour, was audio taped and transcribed to ensure that

the information was accurately recorded and reported. Furthermore, each weekly group meeting (beginning in October) was audio taped.

Analysis Strategy

Analysis of the data was conducted using the 'constant comparative method' as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967). This method, commonly used in other research, seemed to fit the analysis of the data being collected in this study as well. Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggested four steps to uncover strategies including comparing incidents applicable to each category, integrating categories and their properties, delimiting the theory, and writing theory.

When the researcher is convinced that his analytic framework forms a systematic substantive theory, that is it is reasonably accurate statement of the matters studied, and that it is couched in a form that others going into the same field could use -- then he can publish his results with confidence (p. 113).

Interview questions were not analyzed separately because respondents sometimes answered more than one question at a time and often answered a question before it was asked as part of their responses to another question. The plan was to break down the data as specifically as possible from the interviews onto note cards and then sort and analyze these for commonalities or themes.

Assumptions and Limitations

The basis of this study assumed that teachers who were beginning teachers would be the best individuals to generate ideas on how school districts can keep excellent teachers in classrooms in rural schools, and how principals can assist teachers in finding job satisfaction while teaching in rural school districts. By studying the novice teachers and requesting their thoughts, the researcher could make future improvements in the working environments of new hires.

A limitation of the research was that a specific need for one K-8 rural school setting was being examined. The needs of this school and school administrator may or may not match other Montana K-8 rural schools. Even though there are several similarly sized K-8 schools in Montana, the location of a particular K-8 district within the state may impact teacher attrition differently from other rural schools. Districts may experience teacher attrition due to other reasons such as community isolation, pay scale, student behavior, or declining enrollments.

Time Frame

In a sense, this study began in the fall of 2006 when the staff met for faculty meetings and an idea for a mentoring resource emerged out of a need to assist newly hired teachers. During the course of this academic year, mentoring was haphazard, at best. The researcher met with novice teachers weekly for eight months and again for three full days of release time, so this cadre of individuals could work on a resource

which would then become useful for principal mentoring. The framework for the 76-page draft document called a *Principal's Mentoring Handbook* resulted in December 2006. Throughout these several months, the focus of what would become this research project emerged. Later in August 2008, based on the needs of participants and the outcomes of this study, revisions were added to improve the clarity and detail of the final revised resource for rural school principal mentoring.

During the 2007-2008 school year, the study began in earnest. In July of 2007, four of the seven participants were hired. Once these individuals signed their contracts and decided to become part of the faculty, an induction day was held for all novice teachers and newly hired classified staff. Induction, or orientation day, was held August 8, 2007. It provided an introduction to the school and its personnel. It also guided the group of novice teachers through a series of activities to identify personal strengths. New teachers then discussed the *New Teacher Topical Needs Assessment* (Sweeny, 2008 p. 19) to identify the level of concern novice teachers were feeling (Appendix B). For example, teachers were asked if they were very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not concerned at all about classroom management.

Before contact time with the students, the seven novice teachers agreed to participate in this study. Communication means were defined as email, phone calls, classroom visits, and general interactions throughout a normal day, group interviews, and individual interviews. Each participant signed and had witnessed a subject consent form.

Once the school year was underway, the researcher met with the cohort of novice teachers from 3:30-4:30 in the school's technology room each Tuesday. These Tuesday group meetings are intended to continue throughout the novice teachers' first three years with additional new teachers joining as they were hired. She also met individually with novice teachers during preparation periods and for classroom visits, which typically lasted 30 – 45 minutes. The purpose of these informal classroom observations was to acknowledge teachers' importance as part of the school team and to indicate through actions that the principal cared about their success. These visits were probably the hardest for the researcher to find time for, yet she believed that they would be the most valuable for the novice teachers.

The projected time line was to collect interview data throughout the ten months of the 2007-2008 school year between August 2007 and May 2008. The data were analyzed and interpreted in late spring and early summer. Using the research findings, the novice teacher cohort and the administrator planned to collectively revise the principal mentoring recommendations in August 2008 (Appendix A) by improving the process and the principal mentoring procedures for use during the following school term.

Chapter Summary

This chapter began with describing the methodology used for this study, followed by a discussion of the participants involved, the instruments used, and the research design. Finally, the time frame for the project was presented. The next chapter provides a discussion of the outcomes of the research.

RESULTS

Introduction

This phenomenological study focused on specifically eliciting the thoughts of novice K-8 rural teachers in order that effective principal mentorship might be realized. With this knowledge, the principal could then take steps to ensure that these practitioners remain satisfied and that they experience job satisfaction.

The analysis of the in-depth interviews, held with seven teacher/respondents, is detailed in this chapter. All of these novice teachers agreed to allow their interviews to be audio recorded, and the interviews were subdivided into smaller chunks of data. For analysis, the data was sorted to allow themes to emerge from the research. The researcher used member checking to confirm the findings and ask follow-up questions. Following the interviews, the participants were asked to verify information with the researcher through email, in person, or by telephone.

All seven participants in the study were novice teachers, working as educators in the researcher's school district for less than three years. Their experiences, stories, and reflections answer the questions of the researcher:

- a. What specific areas of principal mentoring do rural K-8 teachers identify as critical in order for them to remain in the profession?
- b. What are novice rural K-8 teachers' expectations of the principal in order to ensure job satisfaction?

In answering these research questions, the principal/researcher learned how she could contribute to the teachers' first years of teaching in order to encourage their stay in the school district. Understanding in detail these needs might allow principals to meet the expectations of teachers, rather than hearing in an exit interview that a teacher is frustrated and is moving on to a new profession. After investing school resources into novice teacher training, (i.e., workshops, videos, guest speakers), principals often think they have contributed to a teacher's job satisfaction. In reality, the principal's perception of satisfaction does not align with the actual needs of teachers (Richards, 2003).

Themes

A primary focus of this study was to explore what specific areas of principal mentoring a K-8 principal can engage in in order to encourage her novice teachers to stay in the profession. A second and equally important concern was to explore what novice K-8 teacher expectations are for their principal so that they experience job satisfaction and choose to remain teaching in that rural district. As a result of the multiple data points collected over an academic year, four major areas surfaced among all seven of the research participants; there were no additional themes, which emerged from the data. These topics were of equal importance to the participants and are listed randomly. These themes are 1) induction and orientation, 2) honesty and expectations, 3) professional growth, learning, and forgiveness, and 4) availability.

Introduction/Orientation

Teachers expressed the need for a well-organized and detailed induction or orientation at the beginning of the year. Coming to a new school culture, even for an experienced teacher, can be an overwhelming prospect. A detailed orientation process can help new staff to feel comfortable and enable them to attend to the important job ahead once the students arrive. All details, no matter how trivial, should be addressed. New faculty must have a complete building tour and be personally introduced to all building staff.

“The greatest relief for me was the orientation day,” commented Bella. “It put me at ease to get to work with peers in my same situation. We all learned to help each other and it gave me a chance to see and hear the principal’s expectations of me.”

“Knowing the expectations of your job from the start is important. It is more than expectations though; it is sharing a common vision or direction of your school. I did not like working where the direction or goals were not clearly articulated to the staff,” shared Edward. “Having my first orientation has helped me see where I am headed.”

Bella added, “Orientation helped me to see where I have always been headed for students, but I had never realized the importance of being introduced to a culture and community. It brought ease and confidence to my role of teaching.”

As well, the participants interviewed reiterated the importance of having detailed information available in writing for review as needed. The documentation of policy and procedures within the district, although similar to other districts, is never exactly the same. Teachers’ focus after being hired is directed to the classroom and the list of things

to get done. Equally important would be the knowledge of how the district works. To support this process, teachers stress the importance of teacher orientation and then during the first years, teachers rely on an employee and mentor handbook for their introduction to the beliefs of the district. Teachers frequently mentioned their thoughts on the importance of written procedures and clearly articulated processes of the district.

Joan expressed this clearly, “Having a mentor handbook and an employee handbook has helped me a lot. I can’t remember every detail of information that I need, so with these books I can remind myself. I like to work independently, not always asking people for help.”

Edward agreed. “It also helps me to feel more confident that I am fulfilling the expectations of my job when I can go double check that I have met the expectations of my role as an employee and my role as a teacher.”

Grace noted that time was a factor for her in getting things done in her day and although the mentor handbook was helpful, she preferred just asking the secretary or the principal in the office. “I find that the more familiar I become with the handbook, the more I use it, but I prefer personal help. I just need someone to acknowledge that I have done it right the first time.”

All participants agreed and shared through their comments the importance of a school resource. Teachers shared stories of previous jobs and how important the handbooks and district resources would be in selecting a new position in another school district. New teachers in their first jobs also commented on the ease of finding information and how having resources available reduced their stress.

Orientation, both in a face-to-face workshop atmosphere, and a written document, serve to increase the comfort level of the staff and reduce tendencies for isolation to occur (Sweeny, 2008). Staff then is encouraged to ask any level of question and seek assistance instead of feeling that they should be able to solve any problem on their own. Opening the communication channels from the beginning helps when vital support is required with students and parents.

Several studies agreed with this sentiment and indicated that well-planned and well-implemented induction programs can be successful in increasing job satisfaction, efficacy, and retention of new teachers (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Udelhofen & Larson, 2003). In addition, Sweeny (2008) noted that numerous studies have reported the correlation between the retention of new teachers and the extra principal support offered to them in induction programs.

Honesty/Expectations

Teachers interviewed also expressed the importance of feeling accepted and valued as a part of an intimate family-structured staff. An important step to having that sense of acceptance is to provide an open and honest atmosphere from the very beginning of a teacher's relationship with the school community, even as early as the initial interview. Protheroe (2006) reviewed the Public Education Network's (2003) preferred principal behaviors and found teachers want to be listened to and made to feel successful. Teachers want to share stories and receive feedback and guidance. Richards (2003)

found teachers would not respect and value the principal or find the principal accessible, fair, honest and trustworthy without honesty and open expectations.

“The principal should be honest about the setting, community, parent expectations, everything,” described Alice. “The interview can go both ways, each learning about each other’s needs and strengths. Expectations should be laid on the table right away. Does the job include coaching? Other duties?”

Bella added, “What does the teacher need to know about the school staff, kids, and parents? I would like to know that I am being given an overview of what I can expect if I accept a job.”

Edith commented about previous jobs and how she is more careful to interview the district and not be so willing to jump right in and then find she is working in an environment that is not supportive of the teaching attempts.

Interviewed teacher Joan felt strongly about the initial matching of a teacher with the school community. “No tricks. When a principal sells the school as if it’s a wonderland and it is not truly that remarkable, then the teacher feels unprepared for the reality.”

A sense of equality and fairness was also expressed as an important aspect to teachers’ definitions of honesty in the administration. Teachers invest a large portion of both their physical and emotional lives to the working environment. Fairness is important for maintaining a positive balance in the working relationship of the staff. Presenting a unified front of working together was important to the teachers in achieving a high degree of job satisfaction.

“Everyone should be told the same thing,” said Edward. “We have to know that we are getting the straight story. No hidden agendas or secrets is a must, especially for new teachers. I worked in an environment where teachers felt like independent contractors -- no team work -- and I left.”

“I found I need a family at work. Folks I can trust and count on when I need support. We all need to put aside individual differences and work together for our students. In my work, I like knowing I can count on individuals, regardless of job title,” stated Karen.

Of lesser value to the entire group of interviewed teachers were the minor details, such as how to make copies and retrieve classroom supplies as compared to the deeper interpersonal aspects of relationships -- open communication, plain language and honest expression.

Professional Growth, Learning and Forgiveness

It is well documented that an individual entering teaching is called to the profession for mostly altruistic reasons. Teachers want to teach in order to make a difference in the lives of their students (Norton, 1999). They want to help individuals and communities. The power of acknowledgment and praise can help teachers feel successful initially in their profession. Over the span of a career, teachers depend on deeper growth and fulfillment. Teachers participating in this survey expressed the need for continuous and real growth. They reflected that it is an important part of the principal/staff relationship to provide the opportunities for individual development,

growth, learning, and reflection on their practices. Protheroe (2006) also found teachers required principal support to air concerns and provide motivation. Her study felt a critical role in the performance of a principal was to provide daily guidance and the use of non-judgmental, constructive, and compassionate mentoring would then make novice teachers more confident and effective.

“I want the principal to assist me in my professional development and find the funds to pay for opportunities for us to learn,” said Karen. “It feels great to know the principal will work on this so that teachers can implement and try their ideas.”

Joan emphatically added that, “Ideas and offers are followed by gestures and real programs that assist teachers in teaching better every year.”

“I want to have every resource possible to make learning optimal. I do not want to use past practice when something new and better is being presented,” commented Alice.

An atmosphere allowing teachers to try ideas and to learn from them required a level of acceptance and trust. Teachers participating in this study mentioned the aspects of both comfort and forgiveness as important parts of a landscape that both promotes and supports personal professional growth. This supports the findings of Protheroe (2006), which stated that teachers appreciated formal opportunities to learn and to collaborate about their learning.

“Comfort level is so important,” said Karen. “I have to feel comfortable to try new approaches and not worry if it is going to be an issue. Doesn’t bring the results I had hoped for? I want to know my boss will forgive or forget as long as I learn and move on.”

“I appreciate an active working program aimed toward improvement. Anything a principal can do -- endowments, programs, or workshops. Pay in Montana is not that good. I know that. It’s not the biggest issue to make good money; it is a big issue that the principal is working for you and will help you,” observed Edward.

Teachers expressed that receiving respect at some level from not only students, but from the community and the administration was an important factor in longer-term job satisfaction.

Edith expressed satisfaction on this theme saying, “It helps to know that my principal respects and trusts my judgment. I want to try new ideas, but I also want to move on if the ideas are not working for my students.”

The remaining interviewed teachers openly expressed how beginning teachers might try eight to ten classroom management techniques before finding one that worked for the teacher and the students. Frequently, they shared, in both one-on-one interviews and group interviews, curriculum and classroom management stories of frustration and success. The novice teachers in this study were open and realistic about the complexities of teaching. For example, Edith explained that she had a plan for teaching on the first day, but by day three she realized her agenda for the rest of the week changed quickly -- her lessons and the pacing of her lessons needed constant adjustment.

Availability

Participants interviewed for this study overwhelmingly agreed that the availability of the administrator was the most important element in the support they perceived

necessary to fulfill their daily job responsibilities. It is the overall presence of availability in the principal's relationship to his/her staff that allows the identified qualities of honesty, familiarity, learning, orientation, and team communication to be realized.

"A smaller rural school has unique family qualities. As a reflection of this, its organizational structure must resemble a model that is more family-like," reported Edward.

Edith shared, "In a family, members are given a certain degree of assurance that the other members are there for him. The assurance of knowing our principal is there for us is equally important. The principal heads this family."

Karen too believed, "A family feel is being able to reach the principal at any time. I do not like making decisions, and I want to go to someone who can help me."

"That's it," agreed Grace. "Knowing that the principal is a pal when needed, as well as the boss. It makes a huge difference for me."

The first step in fulfilling the teacher's stated availability needs extend beyond an open door policy to the principal's office during school hours and by cell phone during off hours. It involves how teachers' perceive the principal's view of them as uniquely competent professionals.

"It's so important that the principal take the time to see everyone's teaching as individual. Once the principal understands and knows the teacher's individual abilities, then principal assistance in the use of those strengths is the key to a rural school," said Grace.

Likewise, Edith reported, “The principal’s support allows me to teach and not stress. It means that I know the principal will handle issues that could take me away from doing what is best for the students. He/she will handle parents and the board.”

Alice strongly expressed her needs in saying. “I want to know that discipline is enforced and the principal will support decisions I made in a situation and effectively take it to the parents.”

Agreeing, Edward offered, “I frequently read about principals who do not support teachers’ issues of student discipline. That is not an issue for me. I understand my school’s procedures. That is why I changed schools.”

All the interviewed teachers indicated that availability includes the concepts of support and acceptance. These were important to their understanding of successful mentoring. When participants in this study felt support and acceptance by the principal through day-to-day interactions or through mentoring sessions, then the teachers felt a boost in morale. Protheroe (2006) stressed the importance for boosting novice teacher morale by sitting with them and serving as a sounding board for teachers. She stated that teachers have a desire to share stories and a need to feel listened to in order to feel successful. Richards (2003) described that principals would not feel respected and valued by their teachers if they did not offer support in the areas of working with parents and student discipline.

Discussion of Meaning

Significance

The comments reported here are critical and significant for rural school principals. Unlike other data reported, these teachers were able to express, vent, and share their experiences during their first years in a new school district. The researcher is convinced that principals can use these emotionally complex experiences in order to understand more deeply the needs of novice instructors. This is significant for a variety of reasons. One reason is the information it provides those who train principals at the university level. Principal mentoring and the rewards for both the principal and the teacher should be addressed in principal training. The principal should be able to view the leadership role from the eyes of his or her followers. Based on extensive individual interviews and small group conversations, along with the data from audiotapes and journal notes, the researcher found significance in the teachers' narratives about the uniqueness of the rural school and the needs of its school teachers. Participants described the special bond and connectiveness of rural school environments. While acknowledging that pay is lower, nonetheless, the support of the school family is enough to compensate for lower economics.

Another reason these findings are pertinent is the recognition of small rural schools' improvements. Principals are dedicated to improvement of the education process and structure. More rural principals should find ways to empower their rural

school structure and allow it to flourish, thus bringing about more job satisfaction for teachers.

Negative and Positive Findings

The positive aspects of the teachers' stories far outweighed the negative. The stories or comments, which were negative or shared in frustration, were not directed personally at any principal in any school where a teacher had worked; rather, they were the hopes and expectations teachers would like to see as universal and available at any school district where they might hope to gain employment. For example, the participants' stories reflected teachers' frustrations in their working relationships with principals, but the discussions also reflected the positive changes anticipated for improved principal-teacher relationships. The teachers were honored and felt respected to be asked to give their honest personal opinions in a discussion for school improvement.

Using these findings the researcher determined that there are some definite directions she would like to lead her staff, including the new hires. A written resource, which is provided to each novice teacher and accompanied by weekly meetings, which detail specifics within the handbook, is essential. Teachers who are busy learning the curriculum don't have the time or perhaps the motivation to read a narrative of items to do when they are facing a classroom of students the next day. Therefore, in this resource, it is critical that the principal facilitate their understanding of these vital points by meeting with them frequently.

As well, the participants vocalized how crucial it is for the new staff member to get to know the culture of the school and community. Lack of knowledge about the families of the students they work with on a day-to-day basis can compromise teachers' daily effectiveness. Finally, the novice teachers were emphatic in expressing the need for classroom management techniques, assistance in meeting deadlines, and learning the technical aspects of the grading system. The principal/researcher is determined to incorporate these teacher concerns as part of her staff's professional development. It is her intent that these instructor issues are satisfactorily addressed in order to build a cohesive school staff.

Weakness in the Data

The researcher in this study was employed in the district along side the novice teachers, and this working arrangement could be seen as a weakness in the study. Nevertheless, this was a conscious choice by the researcher, for it enabled her to interview formally and informally the participants in this study. Had she extended this study to be more inclusive so as to hear the concerns of other rural teachers in southwestern Montana, (there are over 10 rural schools in the county where the study took place), the level and intensity of teacher interviews would have diminished. Her daily involvement with them had a positive impact on their job satisfaction and performance. Had the principal/researcher conducted this study with her school *and* other rural schools, the nature of the data would have been more generic. It would have been impossible to build rapport with teachers at multiple schools because such an

endeavor requires time. The principal/researcher would have had to sacrifice her administrative responsibilities in order to travel, coordinate, and meet with teachers at multiple schools.

A rural school culture and community is individual and unique. To better understand the needs of small rural schools, the researcher felt it best to first understand the needs of teachers in her building. Making the most of a one-site setting for this study, the principal could make direct improvements for the teachers she worked with every day. Consequently, the researcher found the participants to be open and willing to share stories and feelings about the role of the principal and the needs of novice teachers. The entire process was done in an effort to possibly expand discussions with teachers in neighboring rural schools at a later date. If the study generated discussions and resulted in an honest exchange of ideas, perhaps the topic of principal-to-teacher mentoring could be shared with other rural schools.

Chapter Summary

The summaries of comments depict the teachers' perceptions of needed rural school principal behaviors. Without these behaviors in place, their sense of satisfaction with teaching and therefore their willingness to remain in the profession would be lessened. The findings identify the specific areas rural K-8 teachers believed to be critical in order for them to remain in the profession. The data suggest a need for the profession to define and unpack the expectations that teachers hold for principals in their novice years. In the

following chapter these ideas are discussed in relation to the literature, and recommendations for principal-to-teacher mentoring are specified.

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This research project, classified as phenomenology, attempted to describe what K-8 rural teachers believe is critical in order to remain in the profession and maintain job satisfaction. With this information, principals could then more effectively mentor them. Phenomenology, a type of qualitative research, was chosen because it was most appropriate for answering the study's research questions. Phenomenology is a descriptive form of research, which seeks to uncover how individuals experience a phenomenon (Creswell, 1998, 2002). A phenomenological approach results in description of one or more individual's experiences with a given phenomenon -- in this case, a principal/researcher studies the experiences of new teachers in a rural school to explore how the school leader (i.e., the principal) can help them experience job satisfaction and encourage them to remain in the profession. Accordingly, qualitative interviews chronicled the workday experiences and perceptions of novice teachers in this rural school setting in southwestern Montana.

Other research has not served to articulate what rural teachers perceive as critical to their success as first-year teachers. As building leaders, principals assign or delegate teachers to help other teachers to understand what the principal needs or thinks. But how can a novice teacher, through the eyes of another teacher, understand the needs or expectations of a principal? What brings teachers job satisfaction? How do teachers

perceive the scope of their job and the expectations of their job? How can principals assist in bringing job satisfaction to teachers? What is critical for a principal to provide to novice teachers so they will find self-efficacy in their work?

This study explored the job satisfaction needs and interpretations of seven teachers who were employed at a rural K-8 school in Montana. The experiences and narratives of these teachers have been captured, and these have been used to extrapolate themes for future school improvement. An ancillary outcome of this study was taking the concrete ideas that teachers vocalized as critical and converting these into a resource (Appendix A). For the teachers, this resource was of paramount importance to them, for it met their expressed need of identifying critical pieces of information requisite to new teacher success. In short, the teacher/participants were satisfied that their forthright responses had contributed to the creation of a document, which would assist future teachers. This document was named the *Principal's Mentoring Handbook*.

Interpretation of the Results

The researcher combined data gathered from survey discussions, in-depth semi-structured individual interviews, and group discussions. With an open mind, the researcher sorted and interpreted the interviews. Although the researcher preplanned the interview questions, the participants' responses guided the discussion and any follow-up questions were based on the topics being discussed. Each interview session was audio taped and recorded in the researcher's field notes. Interviews were scheduled for a

minimum of 30 minutes, but frequently lasted an hour. At the end of the interviews, the researcher gave participants a list of the intended interview questions and requested the participants supply any additional information that might they might wish to add.

In addition, the researcher used anecdotal notes to support the data collection; for example, spontaneous hallway conversations between the researcher and the participant were recorded in a notebook. The mixture of sources had the potential to reduce bias through triangulation. Triangulation occurred throughout the analysis of the data since multiple sources of evidence were used in order to make interpretations. Eisner (1998) referred to this as “structural collaboration” and described it as “the confluence of multiple sources of evidence or the recurrence of instances that support a conclusion” (p. 55).

The results of this rural school setting study can be summarized from the repeated in-depth discussions related to the following four points.

1) *Rural novice K-8 teachers agree on a need for implementation of an introduction and/or orientation for the new hires to any rural Montana K-8 school district.* The principal/researcher was not surprised that this concern surfaced. In her extensive review of the literature, she found induction/orientation to be a requirement of any mentoring program. However, from this study she learned that a rural induction setting needed to be more affective as opposed to procedural. For example, in this school setting, it proved important to check-in with new teachers in order to reassure and assess both their successes and their frustrations. Feedback to the researcher showed that this kind of emotional support superseded the new teacher’s need for assurance in areas addressing

curriculum and assessment concerns. This was unexpected finding and did not surface in any of the literature review.

2) *Rural novice K-8 teachers agree on the importance of feeling accepted and valued as a part of an intimate family-structured staff.* The most important step to having a sense of acceptance is to provide an open and honest atmosphere from the beginning of a teacher's relationship with the school community. As a professional educator who has been working with teachers for over 16 years, this finding was not entirely surprising. When teachers feel included and bonded with the family-school structure, their inclination to remain in the setting increases and job satisfaction improves. However, what was surprising was the intensity of their need to belong to the group. Teachers who are entering an environment, where long-time staff members function and interact intimately and personally in their school relationships, need avenues to be included -- not just professionally, but socially as well. One essential ingredient for a novice teacher's acceptance into the school landscape was a high level of trust. New teachers wanted to know that it was safe to approach coworkers with questions and concerns.

3) *Rural novice K-8 teachers agree on the need for continuous and real professional growth.* They reflected on the importance of the principal/staff relationship to provide opportunities for individual development, growth, learning, and reflection on their practices. Their professional stance as life-long learners was a positive feature because without this mindset, suggestions for individual or school improvements would be made in a vacuum. This finding did not surprise the researcher for in her experiences as a classroom teacher and a principal, she worked with colleagues, who had the mind-set of

life-long learner.

4) *Rural novice K-8 teachers agree that the availability of the administrator was the most important element in the support they perceived necessary to fulfill their daily job responsibilities.* It is the overall presence of availability in the principal's relationship to his/her staff that allows the identified qualities of honesty, familiarity, learning, orientation, and team communication to be realized. The principal/researcher did not expect this theme to surface unanimously from all her participants. While the principal/researcher understood that she sets the tone for the building, a point emphasized in the research, she was nonetheless taken aback with the implications. One interpretation of this finding is to come to the conclusion that if the principal meets everyone's needs and everyone is happy, they will have job satisfaction and choose to stay in the rural school. Conversely, if the principal does not meet the needs of her faculty, their lack of job satisfaction will likely result in their leaving the school setting.

While the literature review finds congruence with the four topics discussed -- the topics which were salient discussion points among all participants -- what was not apparent in this study were the following factors: need of direct support for specific needs such as ease of asking questions, providing solutions, sitting side-by-side during planning, assisting in lesson plans, and discipline support (Protheroe, 2006; Richards, 2003).

Nancy Protheroe (2006) summarized a report by the Public Education Network (2003) regarding roles of the principal for assisting new teachers. From teachers' opinions, the investigators identified ways a principal could make the role of a new

teacher more successful and less frustrating. Their research indicated that the principal behaviors teachers deemed important were accessibility, ease of asking questions and discussing problems, and providing “assistance, guidance, and solutions” (p. 35). Each of these themes matches the findings of the present study. Additionally, rural teachers at this southwestern Montana school appear to require more of a family-type sense of inclusion in their relationship with the principal. For them, a bond where ideas can be shared and reviewed was more valuable than simply having solutions provided to problems. This finding provides both advantages and obstacles for the administration in that it increases the levels of cooperation and trust among the staff and increases the emotional commitment the staff is willing to invest in their work. Obstacles are experienced when work is time dependent and the added time intimacy requires impeded work outcomes.

Jan Richards’ (2003) list of 22 principal behaviors expected from teachers (Appendix C) provided many hours of discussion and storytelling by the participants in small group meetings. Richards’ identified an “ideal” wish list of behaviors commonly expected of a principal. This list was discussed, compared, and analyzed thoroughly in many conversations. While Richards’ list did overlap the researcher’s findings, there were two areas in Richards’ list that were distinct. Findings of little import to this projects participants were 1) support of teachers in matters of student discipline and 2) respecting teachers’ preparation time as valuable by working to minimize meetings, duties, and unnecessary paperwork. However, the remaining 20 items were discussed and in some way valued by the rural teachers as important to a principal mentoring program

and were ultimately included in the findings of the study.

Frequently the break down in perceptions is due to lack of principal-to-teacher communication (principal-to-teacher mentoring) as revealed by Protheroe (2006). Protheroe (2006) described novice teachers who were leaving the profession and concluded that teachers felt they would have benefited from daily guidance from mentors. In addition, the teachers believed that non-judgmental, constructive, and compassionate mentoring would have made them more confident and more effective. They wanted more information about expectations of the school leaders in regard to student discipline, time management, and curriculum-related issues, such as lesson plan development. Novice teachers leaving their profession wished they had had a support group to air their concerns and someone who could have provided motivation during their toughest times. In addition, the principal/researcher's findings reflected that this depth of support is extremely time dependent and must be pursued in balance with expected teacher productivity.

The novice teachers of this qualitative study had a support group and regular individual attention from the principal due to the design of the study. This provided outcomes different from those of Protheroe (2006). Due to the non-judgmental, constructive and compassionate implementation of the study, teachers felt they attained teaching confidence and were highly effective teachers for their first years in the district. However, they felt being given an orientation to the district made this a reality. The induction addressed the administrator's expectations in regard to parents, students, curriculum, and lesson planning – the items listed as needed in the review of the literature.

Limitations of Findings

There are two areas that the researcher found as limitations to this study. One was that the participants were all from the researcher's school district. However, with the depth of research and discussion already in place, this limitation turned out to be a strength of the study. The teachers were invested in the discussions, were open and honest about their needs, and found that the individual and group discussions improved their inaugural years. Knowing the capacity to which teachers can stretch themselves and their day, and working before, after and during preparation periods strengthened the principal-teacher bond.

Based on the first limitation, it would be understandable to readily recognize the second limitation of the study – the researcher's positionality. After listening to the teachers, it was necessary to dissect their stories, analyze their motives and intentions, sort the similarities and differences of their responses, and separate the study from the daily job and duties of a principal. The researcher, as principal, could be on the defensive and be unable to accept the expressed concerns of the participants. While respondents and the researcher had open and honest discussions, all participants, including the principal, worked through tense moments with a greater goal in mind of honest communication.

Areas for Further Inquiry

The literature revealed gaps or areas for further inquiry. Even though teacher attrition is an area of intense research, there is still the need for further inquiry due to the impending teacher shortages, which will affect rural areas quite drastically. Teacher attrition has many avenues that require exploration, most notably in the rural school context. In addition, there is a lack of guides or models describing proactive steps rural school districts and administrators can take to increase teacher job satisfaction. The resource, *Principal's Mentoring Handbook*, refined from this research at this K-8 rural school makes clear what small changes principals could implement toward teacher job satisfaction.

Another area to be further researched and defined is the specific delineation of mentoring responsibilities by the principal. "Often building administrators are left out of the loop regarding mentoring and induction" (Sweeny, 2008, p. 112). However, helpful suggestions from Sweeny (2008) describe a very new movement toward principal involvement in mentoring.

One common reason administrators often have no role in induction and mentoring is their required role as evaluators. Induction leaders want mentoring to be separate from evaluation. The vital distinction needn't be a big concern. Site administrators have a vested interest in the success of new teachers: most extend more support and guidance than their legal role requires; as the instructional leader, the principal is concerned about the students and the extent to which novices are becoming effective teachers; building administrators don't want to lose a new hire at the end of the year and negate all they have invested in that person's success; and they don't want to interrupt momentum in school improvement, curricular initiatives, or staff development (p. 112-113).

In addition, as a result of this study many questions arise that could add to the existing body of knowledge on teacher attrition. One area that warrants extensive research is the rural schools and the principalships within those schools. The leadership directly influences the teaching staff, which in turn directly influences classroom performance. Just how are principals trained and how effective is their training for rural area schools? This is a very important question, which could be explored as a follow up to this research.

Recommendations

Novice teachers want to work in an environment in which they feel they belong -- a supportive community, where there is “structure, support, consistency and the freedom to take risks” (Sargent, 2003, p. 45). More must be done to understand teacher attrition in schools and to determine ways to remedy the current cycle. Currently, new teachers are hired and leave so quickly that they cannot advance their own skills.

Yet, the reasons teachers leave are frequently the very reasons that change is so desperately needed in rural schools. This paradox makes turnover an enigmatic problem to solve, but continued efforts must be made so students in rural areas have the equal opportunities of their urban counterparts.

In addition, personal experience is an area that needs to be explored and expanded as a valid way to know about the world. “Voice is related to the means whereby teachers and students attempt to make themselves present in history and define themselves as

active authors of their own worlds; voice questions the way experiences are ignored or included, affirmed or marginalized” (Weiler, 1988, p. xii). However, rural teachers’ voices have not been heard in the research on attrition. Lee and Burkham (2002) stated that “teachers are not automatons and a perspective that strips them of the biographies, dispositions, and affective orientations misses much of what breathes life into classroom interaction patterns” (p. 67). Listening to the teachers may be inconvenient, time consuming, and complicated to sort through; however, it is the only way to finally understand why attrition occurs. Listening to teachers may pave the way for school improvement, principal effectiveness, and ultimately better learning conditions. For these reasons, more qualitative research is needed.

This project addressed the research questions, but it also prompted additional queries: Can listening to the voices of teachers improve schools? How can others, in addition to the principal, provide ways for increased job satisfaction? Who should take responsibility for educating teachers so that they are truly prepared to teach? How can rural schools turn around budget problems that lead to teacher turnover? The researcher posed these questions upon the conclusion of this research project. Further research can answer these questions and add to the present knowledge base. The educational needs of rural schools are imminent and the challenges that they face are apparent. Subsequently, efforts must be made to conduct research, which attends to these issues.

Chapter Summary

This qualitative research project sought to find specific areas of principal mentoring that rural K-8 teachers would identify as critical in order for them to remain in the profession and what expectations these teachers would hold for the principal in order to ensure their job satisfaction.

The answers to these questions were very genuine and thorough, with four general themes being discovered from the seven novice rural school teachers in the study. These included (in random order) the need for 1) an introduction or orientation for novice teachers, 2) an expectation of honesty from the principal, 3) a willingness to allow teachers to grow and develop while providing professional development and forgiveness, and 4) principal availability.

As research increases our knowledge about the role of schools and those working in schools, it behooves all educators to understand novice teachers' needs and expectations during their beginning years in the profession. Without an understanding of what teachers view as important, educators are unable to improve the system. Through conversation, discussion and analysis, teachers and principals are able to implement change and bring improvement to schools, while enjoying the work along the way. Goldberg (2001) reminds all those in control of the operation of a school that the single most important determinant of success for a student is that child's teacher. The researcher hopes that this dissertation offers additional insight and new perspectives so as to encourage the efforts of rural Montana principals in their quest to maximize teacher satisfaction and longevity.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PRINCIPAL'S MENTORING RESOURCE

PRINCIPAL'S MENTORING RESOURCE



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SECTION 1

MENTOR PROGRAM

“DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM”

“When veterans and novices work together in a nurturing relationship, each gets something of real value from the other. Veterans gain energy; novices gain inspiration. Isolation fades, connection flourishes, pain turns into wisdom – a joyful wisdom that makes the difficulties in our work endurable and keeps both veteran and novice coming back for more.”

- “A tale of two children,” by David Shoemaker, Phi Delta Kappan

MENTORING PROGRAM

A. Program Purpose/Goals

What is the purpose of Gallatin Gateway School Mentoring Program?

Gallatin Gateway School Mentoring is an intentional process to guide a protégé, intern, or resident participant to proficient professional instruction in conjunction with professional employee work skills to better serve Gallatin Gateway School District #35.

What are the goals of the Gallatin Gateway School Mentoring Program?

- To improve teaching performance in order to raise student achievement.
- To promote the personal and professional well being of protégé teachers.
- To improve teaching performance in order to enhance positive school environment
- To transmit the culture of the school system to protégé teachers.
- To increase retention of promising protégé teachers.

What are the characteristics of the Gallatin Gateway School Mentoring Program?

- Confidential and non-evaluative professional support
- Focused on classroom instruction and student learning
- Facilitated by an administrator and qualified teachers as trained mentors
- Intentional and purposeful structure
- Implemented district wide

Administrator and Program Coordinator

Who directs the Gallatin Gateway School Mentoring Program?

When a new teacher is hired to our school, the Administrator will contact the Gallatin Gateway Mentoring Coordinator. The Coordinator and Administrator together will

1. Implement policy,
2. Delineate roles and responsibilities,
3. Monitor and document the effectiveness of the program.

B. Mentors

What is a Mentor?

Mentors will be tenured members of the Gallatin Gateway School District with at least two years of teaching experience who have successfully completed the mentor program as a mentee. They will be recognized as outstanding classroom teachers, as well as demonstrate deep knowledge of the discipline(s) they teach. They will possess a

repertoire of effective classroom management strategies and instructional techniques. Mentors will have strong verbal skills, both oral and written, and have the ability to work cooperatively and effectively with others. The mentor will be from the same building as the intern/resident. Mentors in the same subject/grade level will be a prime consideration. Mentors will be expected to complete all necessary evaluations materials for protégés/interns/residents.

Characteristics of a Mentor:

- Has a minimum of two years teaching experience
- Demonstrates expertise in instruction and classroom management
- Is able to articulate best practice teaching strategies
- Possess excellent communication skills
- Is interested in assisting a protégé
- Has successfully completed a minimum of one year of the program as a mentee
- May be a building principal

Who will choose Mentors?

Interested teachers will apply on a yearly basis and be screened by the principal.

What is the stipend for Mentors?

\$300 per year (July to July) per mentee will be the stipend for taking an active Mentor role. Principal mentors will not receive a stipend.

Mentees

What are the levels of the Mentor Program at GGS?

All newly hired teachers at GGS will be classified as “protégé”. A teacher can be designated a “protégé” regardless of the number of years of teaching experience.

Protégé:

- A licensed teacher who is new to teaching
- A licensed teacher who is new to the school district
- A licensed teacher who has taught in the school, but is changing levels between elementary, intermediate, or middle school.

Second year teachers may continue to participate in the program on a voluntary basis as an Intern.

Intern:

- A licensed teacher who is in the second year of teaching at GGS
- A licensed teacher who has successfully completed the protégé stage of the program

Third year teachers may continue to participate voluntarily in the mentor program for support of individual professional development goals.

Resident:

- Advanced degrees
- National Board Certification
- Additional endorsements
- Subject area or level change- if changing from elementary, intermediate or middle school

What are your responsibilities as a protégé?

A new teacher's first and greatest responsibility is to the students and their academic achievement. Your best possible effort as their teacher and guide, will guide students to meet their greatest potential as learners and citizens.

As a protégé you report to and are supervised and evaluated by your administrator. It is not the intent of the mentor program to compromise or supplant the role and responsibilities of your supervisor. Rather, the intent of the program is to supplement and complement the role of your supervisor through the provision of peer and principal assistance.

How often will Mentees see a Mentor?

Mentees will meet with mentor at least once a week during a prep period and any additional informal meetings as needed. All mentees will attend weekly staff meetings.

What support and assistance can I expect from my mentor?

Mentor-protégé interaction is controlled by the relationship that develops between the individuals involved. In general, the mentor is to provide advice, help secure materials, and ease the protégé's transition into the district and the profession. The mentor will share professional development opportunities/requirements and guide the mentees induction into the teaching ranks. The mentor's role is one of a facilitator and should enrich the experience of a protégé/intern/or resident teacher.

How does my Mentor know my needs?

In addition to an individual relationship and verbal communication, the mentee may use the *Protégé Needs*, page 18.

How will I be evaluated?

Year One: Evaluation will be on-going both written and verbally between Mentor(s) and protégé. At the end of the first and third quarter the non-evaluative status report (page 60) form and the protégé needs assessment form (page 61). These evaluations are confidential and non-evaluative. Protégé's will be asked to evaluate the Gallatin Gateway mentor program and participate in updating the program.

Year Two: Evaluation will be on-going both written and verbally between mentor and protégé. At the end of the first and third quarter the non-evaluative status report form and the protégé needs assessment form. These evaluations are confidential and non-

evaluative. Protégé's will be asked to evaluate the Gallatin Gateway mentor program and participate in updating the program.

Year Three: A third year mentee can receive professional development assistance for the pursuit of advanced degrees, National Board Certification, additional teaching endorsements, subject area or level change - (if changing between elementary K-3, intermediate 4-5 or middle school 6, 7, 8 levels).

How do I use my professional days?

All certified staff are provided three professional development days per year. These may be used in a variety of ways:

- Teacher/classroom visitation for the purpose of observation
- Professional training/ graduate level teacher training
- Professional workshops/ conferences

What if something about the mentoring program or the mentor troubles me?

The protégé is encouraged to speak to the administrator and/or coordinator to be assigned a new mentor. The mentor program is created and sustained for the encouragement and support of teaching staff and student achievement, therefore flexibility and adaptability is required and encouraged. The mentor/mentee program is designed to be a positive, productive experience. Let the administrator/coordinator know how your needs can be best met.

SECTION 2

MENTOR PROGRAM

“MONTHLY DISCUSSION TOPICS”

“The most powerful form of learning, the most sophisticated form of staff development, comes not from listening to the good works of others but from sharing what we know with others....

By reflecting on what we do, by giving it coherence, and by sharing and articulating our craft knowledge, we make meaning, we learn.”
- Roland Barth

AUGUST

BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE BASE

- ☐ Introduce protégé to building staff members
- ☐ Orient protégé to building, including copy machine, mailboxes, restrooms, staff lounge, library, computer labs, lunch room, etc.
- ☐ Assist in filling out new employee paperwork.
- ☐ Orient protégé to his/her class roster and schedule
- ☐ Help review “first day of school plans” including discipline plans, room arrangement, and orientation materials in order to instill confidence in the beginning teacher.
- ☐ Orient protégé to his/her room and help locate texts and needed supplies
- ☐ Explain school procedures, traditions, and “unwritten” rules of the school district
- ☐ Discuss available community resources
- ☐ Go over crisis plan, lockdown, bomb threat, and fire drill procedures
- ☐ Discuss confidentiality guidelines
- ☐ Introduce protégé to Title IX and MEA representatives
- ☐ Personal & classroom web page instruction
- ☐ Refer protégé to administrative resource library for videos/materials on teaching/management.
- ☐ Review master calendar
- ☐ Discuss Insurance and Flex Benefits
- ☐ Discuss and review pacing charts, objectives and curriculum materials (binder)
- ☐ Participate in one day paid induction meeting with principal

Checklist

Preparing for the First Day

Efficiency in the classroom is the hallmark of an effective learning environment. Established procedures, consistently applied and taught to your students at the onset of the school year, will significantly improve your classroom management time.

Directions:

- Check () each item for which you already have a prepared process.
- Place an (X) by any item for which you do not have a prepared policy but believe you need one.
- Highlight those items, which you will teach the students the first day of class.

I. Beginning Class

- ☐ A. Roll Call, Absent, Tardy
- ☐ B. Academic Warm-Ups
- ☐ C. Distributing Materials
- ☐ D. Class Opening/Anticipatory Set

II. Room/School Areas

- ☐ A. Shared Materials
- ☐ B. Teacher's Desk
- ☐ C. Drinks, Bathroom, Pencil Sharpener
- ☐ D. Student Storage/Lockers
- ☐ E. Student Desks
- ☐ F. Learning Centers, Stations
- ☐ G. Playground, School grounds
- ☐ H. Lunchroom
- ☐ I. Halls

III. Setting up Independent Work

- ☐ A. Defining "Working Alone"
- ☐ B. Identifying Problems
- ☐ C. Identifying Resources
- ☐ D. Identifying Solutions
- ☐ E. Scheduling
- ☐ F. Interim Checkpoints

IV. Student Work

- ☐ A. In-class Participation
- ☐ B. In-class Assignments
- ☐ C. Homework
- ☐ D. Stages of Long-term Assignments

V. Instructional Activities

- ☐ A. Teacher, Student Contacts
- ☐ B. Student Movement in the Room
- ☐ C. Signals for Student's Attention
- ☐ D. Signals for Teacher's Attention
- ☐ E. Student Talk During Seatwork
- ☐ F. Activities to Do When Work Is Done
- ☐ G. Student Participation
- ☐ H. Laboratory Procedures
- ☐ I. Movement In/Out of Small Groups
- ☐ J. Bringing Materials to School
- ☐ K. Expected Behavior in Group
- ☐ L. Behavior of Students Not in Group

VI. Ending Class

- ☐ A. Putting Away Supplies, Equipment
- ☐ B. Cleaning Up
- ☐ C. Organizing Class Materials
- ☐ D. Dismissing Class

VII. Interruptions

- ☐ A. Rules
- ☐ B. Talk Among Students
- ☐ C. Conduct
- ☐ D. Passing Out Books, Supplies
- ☐ E. Turning in Work

VIII. Other Procedures

- ☐ A. Disaster/Lock Down Drills
- ☐ B. Lunch Procedures/Seating Charts
- ☐ C. Student Helpers
- ☐ D. Safety Procedures

IX. Work Requirements

- ☐ A. Heading Papers
- ☐ B. Use of Pen or Pencil
- ☐ C. Writing on Back of Paper
- ☐ D. Neatness, Legibility
- ☐ E. Incomplete Work
- ☐ F. Late Work

- ☐ H. Out-of-Seat Policies
- ☐ I. Consequences for Misbehavior

XI. Checking Assignments in Class

- ☐ A. Marking and Grading Assignments
- ☐ B. Turning in Assignments
- ☐ C. Students Correcting Error

XII. Grading Procedures

- ☐ A. Determining Grades
- ☐ B. Recording Grades
- ☐ C. Grading Long-term Assignments
- ☐ D. Extra Credit Work
- ☐ E. Keeping Papers/Grades/Assignments

- ☐ G. Missed Work
- ☐ H. Due Dates
- ☐ I. Make-up Work
- ☐ J. Supplies
- ☐ K. Coloring or Drawing on Paper
- ☐ L. Use of D'Nealian or Cursive

X. Communicating Assignments

- ☐ A. Posting Assignments
- ☐ B. Orally Giving Assignments
- ☐ C. Provision for Absentees
- ☐ D. Long-term Assignments
- ☐ E. Lesson Plans
- ☐ F. Handing Back Assignments
- ☐ G. Getting Back Assignments

- ☐ F. Grading Criteria
- ☐ G. Contracting for Grades
- ☐ H. Report cards, Midterms, and Finals
- ☐ I. Cheating

XIII. Academic Feedback

- ☐ A. Rewards and Incentives
- ☐ B. Posting Student Work
- ☐ C. Communicating with Parents
- ☐ D. Students' Record of Grades
- ☐ E. Written Comments on Assignments
- ☐ F. Term Schedule

Elementary Orientation Checklist

1. Put an X next to the areas you are already familiar with.
2. Meet with your mentor and discuss the areas where you have questions.

I. Locations

- ☐ A. Music
- ☐ B. Computer Lab
- ☐ C. Library
- ☐ D. Special Ed.
- ☐ E. Title 1
- ☐ F. Speech
- ☐ G. Gym
- ☐ H. Lunchroom
- ☐ I. Location of Teaching Supplies
- ☐ J. Location of Art Supplies
- ☐ K. Copiers – Workroom
- ☐ L. Nurse's Office
- ☐ M. Location Microwave/Refrigerator
- ☐ N. Secretary, Business Manager, Clerk

II. Grade Level Specific

- ☐ A. Attendance/ Lunch Count
- ☐ B. Books, Workbooks and Teacher's Edition
- ☐ C. Schedules
- ☐ D. Lesson Plans
- ☐ E. IEPs for Speech and Special Ed
- ☐ F. Classroom Parties
- ☐ G. Telephone System
- ☐ H. Phonic Ear Use
- ☐ I. Recess/Lunch/Bus Duties
- ☐ J. Grading/Report Cards/Confidentiality
- ☐ K. Setting up Grade Book
- ☐ L. Getting a Substitute
- ☐ M. Pacing Charts
- ☐ N. Monthly Objectives
- ☐ O. Master Calendar
- ☐ P. Log Entries
- ☐ Q. Behavior Slips/Discipline
- ☐ R. Website

III. Handbooks

- ☐ A. Staff

- _____ B. Student
- _____ C. Crisis
- _____ D. Volunteer
- _____ E. Athletic
- _____ F. Bus Rider Manual
- _____ G. Gifted Education
- _____ H. Wellness

IV. Forms

- _____ A. Health Insurance/Flex Plan
- _____ B. FICA/TRS
- _____ C. Accident
- _____ D. Discipline
- _____ E. Leave Request
- _____ F. PE Trips/Requests
- _____ G. Requisitions
- _____ H. Special Needs Students – Concern: Referral: 504
- _____ I. Classroom Reimbursement- PIE/School

V. Expectations for Teacher

- _____ A. Teacher's Responsibilities at Lunch
- _____ B. Recess Responsibilities – Playground and Indoor Recess
- _____ C. Dismissal Time Rules
- _____ D. Hallway Bulletin Boards
- _____ E. Parent Teacher Conferences
- _____ F. Early Release
- _____ G. Fire Drills
- _____ H. Lock Down

IV. Miscellaneous

- _____ A. Paychecks (where and when)
- _____ B. Calling in sick
 - prior to the school day beginning
 - during the school day
- _____ C. Leave requests
 - Personal (not before holidays)
 - Professional
 - Sick
- _____ D. Sub folders
- _____ E. Shortened schedules
- _____ F. Evaluations
- _____ G. Field trips
- _____ H. Telephone system
- _____ I. Inventories
- _____ J. PIR/Incentive Days
- _____ K. Fire Drills
- _____ L. Lock Downs
- _____ M. Contraband Searches

Middle School Orientation Checklist

1. Put an X next to the areas you are already familiar with.
2. Meet with your mentor and discuss the areas where you have questions.

I. Locations

- _____ A. Music
- _____ B. Computer Labs
- _____ C. Library
- _____ D. Special Ed.
- _____ E. Basic Skills
- _____ F. Learning Lab
- _____ G. Speech
- _____ H. Lunchroom
- _____ I. Gym
- _____ J. Counseling Center/Nurse
- _____ K. Refrigerator/Microwave

II. Facilities

- _____ A. Using the computer lab
 - Scheduling
 - User contracts
- _____ B. Using the library
 - Scheduling
 - Supervision

III. Computer use

- _____ A. Student use
- _____ B. Grade book
- _____ C. Log in/log off
- _____ D. Privacy
- _____ E. Log Entries
- _____ F. Behavioral Forms

IV. Supplies

- _____ A. Supply room
- _____ B. Local businesses
- _____ C. Copy machine

V. Duties

- _____ A. Attendance
- _____ B. Tardies

- _____ C. Duty Schedule
- _____ D. Breaks
- _____ E. Monitoring hallways
- _____ F. Hall passes
- _____ G. Weekly lesson plans
- _____ H. Homeroom
- _____ I. Monthly Objectives
- _____ J. Pacing Charts
- _____ K. Websites

VI. Grading

- _____ A. Eligibility
- _____ B. Make-up work
- _____ C. Grading procedure
- _____ D. Advanced makeup
- _____ E. Finals
- _____ F. Report cards

VII. Discipline

- _____ A. Chain of command
- _____ B. Discipline write-ups
- _____ C. ISS
 - Homework
 - For testing/quiet work area

VIII. Handbooks

- _____ A. Staff
- _____ B. Student
- _____ C. Crisis
- _____ D. Volunteer
- _____ E. Athletic
- _____ F. Bus Rider Manual
- _____ G. Gifted Education
- _____ H. Wellness

IX. Miscellaneous

- _____ A. Paychecks (where and when)
- _____ B. Calling in sick
 - prior to the school day beginning
 - during the school day
- _____ C. Leave requests
 - Personal (not before holidays)
 - Professional
 - Sick
- _____ D. Sub folders
- _____ E. Shortened schedules
- _____ F. Evaluations
- _____ G. Field trips
- _____ H. Telephone system
- _____ I. Inventories
- _____ J. PIR/Incentive Days
- _____ K. Fire Drills
- _____ L. Lock Downs
- _____ M. Contraband Searches

X. End of the Year

- _____ A. Final Report Card
- _____ B. Cumulative Folders
- _____ C. Permanent Record Files
- _____ D. Inventories

Mentor/Protégé Discussion Checklist

Peer Relationships

- ☐ Requesting assistance from the custodian, counselor, nurse, librarian, paraprofessionals
- ☐ Dealing with uncooperative peers
- ☐ Chain of Command
- ☐ Interschool contact methods
- ☐ Working with Special Services personnel
- ☐ Introduction to fellow employees
- ☐ Staff/team meetings

Parental/Guardian Relationships

- ☐ Home visitations
- ☐ Requesting assistance from the home/school coordinator
- ☐ Conference schedule and procedures
- ☐ Parent/teacher organizations
- ☐ When and how to contact parents/guardians
- ☐ Communication with non-custodial parents/relatives
- ☐ Releasing students to the care of an adult

Student Issues

- ☐ Cultural composite of the district
- ☐ Working with ESL students
- ☐ Accepted student discipline techniques
- ☐ Consequence of extreme behavior problems
- ☐ Accepted behavior for hallway, recess, lunch, restroom, library, assemblies
- ☐ Working with special needs students
- ☐ Working with the resource teacher
- ☐ Pull-out procedures for students receiving resource assistance

- ☐ Grading/learning accommodations for special needs students
- ☐ Reporting suspected abuse

Emotional Support for Teachers

- ☐ Stress reduction techniques
- ☐ Finding a confidant

Calendar

- ☐ First day's/week's schedule
- ☐ School breaks and procedures
- ☐ Observation of holidays
- ☐ Observation of birthdays
- ☐ Scheduling meetings

Managerial Items

- ☐ Acceptable classroom management techniques
- ☐ Arranging desks, tables
- ☐ Traffic patterns
- ☐ Seating of students with special needs
- ☐ Classroom amplification system (if available)
- ☐ Storage and access to materials
- ☐ Student access to texts, equipment, teaching centers
- ☐ Room temperature
- ☐ Bringing personal items from home
- ☐ Purchasing class materials
- ☐ Pets in the classroom
- ☐ Time management
- ☐ Conflict resolution
- ☐ Items needing repair
- ☐ Technology Request
- ☐ Supervisory duties: playground, lunch, study hall, bus line-up, detention
- ☐ Fire/bomb threat/evacuation procedures

- ☐ Weather closures
- ☐ Taking roll
- ☐ Student illness during the day
- ☐ Student accidents/emergencies
- ☐ Lunch count/procedure
- ☐ Student handbook and its content
- ☐ Student use of phones

Instructional Needs

- ☐ Motivating students
- ☐ Teaching styles
- ☐ Learning styles
- ☐ Alternative instructional strategies
- ☐ Questioning techniques
- ☐ Daily grading procedures
- ☐ End-of-term grading procedures
- ☐ Assessment procedures
- ☐ Models of assessment
- ☐ Day-to-day grading procedures
- ☐ Progress reports
- ☐ Homework policies
- ☐ Curricular planning
- ☐ Lesson plan requirements
- ☐ Enrichment materials
- ☐ Adaptation of curriculum/instruction
- ☐ District curriculum/ State standards
- ☐ Location of guides, manuals, assessments, supplementary materials
- ☐ Introduction to texts
- ☐ In-house subject matter experts
- ☐ Department heads
- ☐ Expected progress on curriculum
- ☐ Additions/deletions to curriculum
- ☐ Guest speakers/District consultant list
- ☐ Utilizing technology in the classroom
- ☐ Using the computer lab

- ☐ Computer-based lessons
- ☐ Using the district web page
- ☐ Classroom supplies
- ☐ AV equipment
- ☐ Photocopying/printing
- ☐ Laminating
- ☐ Sharing equipment, rooms, resources
- ☐ Photography, videography
- ☐ Scheduling a bus/fieldtrip
- ☐ Computer access and policies for use
- ☐ Use of the library

Terms and Conditions of Employment

- ☐ Teacher evaluations
- ☐ Contract renewal/termination
- ☐ List of expected responsibilities
- ☐ Teacher contract and what it means
- ☐ Grievance procedures

Orientation to Work/Community

- ☐ Tour of school
- ☐ School Philosophy
- ☐ School Improvement plan
- ☐ Committees/Opportunities for involvement
- ☐ Location of businesses/offices in community
- ☐ Community organizations/opportunities for involvement

Miscellaneous Policies

- ☐ Staff phone use
- ☐ Cellphone use
- ☐ Computers: policies and procedures
- ☐ Mail policies and procedures
- ☐ Photocopier and laminator use

- ☐ Building/room keys/codes and security
- ☐ Use of building and equipment after hours
- ☐ Travel procedures
- ☐ Team/staff meetings
- ☐ Communication with the administration
- ☐ Contracted hours for teachers
- ☐ Accepted dress code
- ☐ Extra-duty assignments Types of leave and restrictions
- ☐ Preparing for and requesting a substitute teacher
- ☐ Planning time
- ☐ Where to find additional training
- ☐ Required district trainings
- ☐ Professional growth/development & teaching certification
- ☐ Budgetary/purchase orders
- ☐ Food/beverage procedure
- ☐ Eating school lunch
- ☐ Teacher liability
- ☐ Staff handbook
- ☐ School board policies
- ☐ Unwritten rules of the school/community
- ☐ Professional teacher organization membership
- ☐ Parking procedures
- ☐ Procedures for arriving/leaving
- ☐ Salary and pay procedure

Protégé Needs

Identify the extent of your needs by rating the following items on a scale of 0 to 3, with 0 being no need, and 3 being highest need.

0 = No Need

1 = Slight Need

2 = Moderate Need

3 = Highest Need

Peer Relationship Needs

- Knowledge of staff names, job title, contact information
- Introduction to school board
- Requesting custodial, technical, library, or health assistance
- Working with the counselor(s)
- Working with paraprofessionals
- Working relationship with administration
- Working with Special Services personnel
- Dealing with difficult peers
- Working as a team

Parental/Guardian Relationship Needs

- How to prepare for parent/teacher conferences
- Communicating with parents via phone/mail/email
- Dealing with upset parents
- Custodial parent issues

Instructional Needs

- Knowledge of grading procedures
- Knowledge of testing procedures
- Knowledge of Powerschool
- Knowledge of district curriculum
- Adaptation of curriculum/instruction
- Models of assessment
- Curricular planning
- Enrichment materials

- Knowledge of academic standards
- Using technology in the classroom
- Using AV materials

Student Relationship Needs

- Motivating students
- Assigning and receiving homework
- Accepted student discipline techniques
- Referral to Special Services
- Knowledge of resources for exceptional students
- ESL student issues
- Working with students from other cultures
- Cultural Diversity
- Teaching styles
- Learning styles
- Alternative instructional strategies
- Questioning techniques
- Student privacy issues
- Professional relationships with students

Emotional Support Needs

- Dealing with stress
- Dealing with difficult students
- Dealing with family pressures

Calendar Items

- Knowledge of school calendar
- Knowledge of class schedule
- Knowledge of teachers' convention

Work and Community Environments

- Familiarity with the building
- Familiarity with district offices/buildings
- Familiarity with the community/area
- Joining community organizations
- Classroom environment

Miscellaneous Policies

- Use of school equipment
- Use of school building
- Use of telephone, photocopier, computer, mail
- Parking procedures
- In-service/meeting procedures
- Keys/security procedures
- How to order classroom supplies
- School vehicle use procedures
- School Improvement Team plans
- Committee membership
- Annual budgetary/purchasing procedures
- School philosophy
- Accreditation process
- Salary schedule
- Salary pay procedure
- District benefits
- Absence/leave procedure
- Staff arrival/dismissal times and procedure
- Allowable use of planning time
- Food/beverage procedures
- Extra duty assignments

- Curriculum expectations
- Building dress code
- Teacher liability
- Computer use policy

Miscellaneous Policies (cont)

- Rules/school law
- Professional development/required classes
- Field trips process/procedures
- Homework policies
- Eligibility policies

Managerial Needs

- Classroom organizational techniques
- Reporting suspected abuse
- Record-keeping procedures for roll, lunch-count
- Emergency and weather procedures
- Fire drill, bomb threat, evacuation procedures
- Knowledge of student handbook
- Requesting and preparing for a substitute teacher
- Acceptable classroom management techniques
- Planning: long and short term
- Student illness
- Time management
- Conflict resolution
- Breaking up fights
- Suspected substance abuse procedures
- Assigning textbooks
- Library policies/procedures
- Lunch/recess procedures
- Copyright law

Terms and Conditions of Employment

- Contract renewal procedures
- Contract termination procedures

Assessment Calendar

****See GGS Goals for AYP in reading, math, lang. arts, science, and writing**

Dibels

2 nd week of September	Grades 1-6
3 rd week of January	Grades 1-6
3 rd week of May	Grades 1-6

DRA Testing

First two weeks of Oct.	Grades 1-8
First two weeks of Jan.	Grades 1-8
Middle two weeks of May	Grades K-8

CRT

1 st Week of March	Grades 3-8
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ITBS

Last week of March	Grades 1-8
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Writing Sample

3 rd week of April	Grades K-8
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Writing Norm/grading

Last Week of April	Teachers K-8
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Math

Chapter Tests	As given Grades 1-8
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Science

Chapter Tests /Units	As given Grade 1-8
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Social Studies

To be determined

Health Enhancement

To be determined

The Arts

To be determined

*On your computer, record scores as tests in each subject area are administered or available. These spreadsheets can be found in teacher drop box at each grade level folder.

Bibliography

Vincent, S. & Ley, J. (1999). *The Multigrade Classroom: A Resource Handbook for Small, Rural Schools: Book 2: Classroom Organization*. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Suggested Reading

The Teacher's Reflective Calendar and Planning Journal
by Mary Zabolio McGrath and Beverly Holden John
ISBN: 1412926467

Framework for Understanding Poverty
by Ruby K. Payne, PhD
ISBN: 1292229143

The New Teacher Book: Finding Purpose, Balance and Hope During your First Years in the Classroom
A Rethinking Schools Publication
ISBN: 9780942961454

Winning Strategies for Classroom Management
By Carol Bradford Cummings
ISBN: 0871203812

Working with Parents: Building Relationships for Student Success
by Ruby K. Payne, PhD
ISBN: 1929229623

SEPTEMBER

BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE BASE

- ☐ Tactfully offer suggestions to those issues that may arise later- Open House, homework, midterms and assignments
- ☐ Share experiences, especially in areas where protégé is having problems
- ☐ Offer class management tips
- ☐ Discuss additional emergency health, safety, discipline, and weather procedures
- ☐ Discuss grading nuances and show protégé how to use PowerGrade & how to log student behaviors
- ☐ Discuss parent communication procedures
- ☐ Review and discuss short/long term planning
- ☐ Discuss absences and substitute plans
- ☐ Set up first opportunity for protégé to observe your teaching and ask questions
- ☐ Review the monthly calendar
- ☐ Explain open house
- ☐ Explain eligibility for sports- Athletic Handbook
- ☐ Prepare for 504, CST, and IEP meetings
- ☐ Time to observe or conduct protégé observation
- ☐ Go over district grievance procedure and review master contract
- ☐ Explain MBI Procedures
- ☐ Substitute Folder (see Employee Reference & Forms Manual)
- ☐ Explain how to write monthly learning objectives
- ☐ Explain how to write lesson plans & newsletter articles
- ☐ Bulletin Boards- new employees- not until November- Academic based
- ☐ District assessment directions and scores entered into computer- district spreadsheet
- ☐ Review class management and discipline plan
- ☐ Explain classroom brochure requirements
- ☐ Explain student use of day planners
- ☐ Explain email use and signed policy for students and staff
- ☐ Explain student self evaluation forms
- ☐ Explain voicemail set up and homework hotline
- ☐ Explain midterm report process
- ☐ Teacher conference documentation to principal

Monthly Statements of Learning Objectives

- 1) Due before the 1st (first) day of each month by email to the principal
- 2) Posted to the teacher web page before the 5th (fifth) day of each month

Suggestions for Improving Statements of Learning Objectives

1. Consider the school mission
2. Consider the school goals set by the school board
3. Consider the purpose of your instruction
4. Consider your use of instructional minutes
5. Consider the State standards, benchmarks and district curriculum for each lesson
6. **Consider the instructional outcome(s) to be achieved (Why are you teaching this lesson or series of lessons???)**
7. Consider the assessment goals to be achieved (Know your assessment before you instruct – where are you going with your instruction and why are you going there?- be able to communicate your intentions for your instruction)
8. Use active voice - For example: **Students develop familiarity**, NOT students will become familiar
9. Specify and explicate broadly drawn expectations such as understand, develop, appreciate. Think about the expectations in terms of thresholds: how would you know if a student understands or appreciates? Alternatives might include the following: know, recognize, describe, use, demonstrate
 - Example 1: Students will understand the fundamental principles; **better: Students will be able to describe the fundamental principles**
 - Example 2: Students will develop essential thinking and problem solving skills; **better: students will be able to demonstrate thinking and problem solving skills in specific ways**
 - Example 3: Students will be introduced to major figures; **better: students will recognize and will be able to discuss the writings of major figures**
 - Example 4: The concentration provides comprehensive exposure to a range of topics; **better: students study diverse topics and will be able to describe the issues and use the methods of the field**

- Example 5: Courses provide comparative analyses; **better: students read, write, and practice theoretical approaches and will be able to discuss their critical understandings of the respective strengths and weaknesses of those approaches**
 - Example 6: Students are expected to understand fundamental conceptual and theoretical propositions; **better: students will be able to describe fundamental conceptual and theoretical propositions**
 - Example 7: Students comprehend; **better: Students will be able to describe**
 - Example 8: Students are taught the forms; **better: Students will know and will be able to describe forms....**
10. Describe expectations positively (as a necessity) rather than conditionally: students should be able to....; **better: students will be able to . .**
 11. Identify the most central student learning expectations rather than a laundry list of possible expectations – know where your instruction is headed and why
 12. It may be useful to distinguish lower level expectations from higher level expectations, using Blooms taxonomy
 13. Describe learning experiences that allow students to meet the expectations

Hint – Learning Objectives **DO NOT** include:

1. less than professional language and grammar – You are a professional educator
2. due dates for assignments
3. parent notes or reminders
4. listing of individual assignments or chapter
5. field trips
6. what you didn't achieve in your previous month
7. this month....(the month is listed at the top of each Excel sheet)
8. students will continue – if you did not complete your instructional expectation then it is a new expectation in a new month
9. restatement of lesson plans – Learning objectives are your lesson plan **objectives** –not individual assignments –

Standards Based Classroom Rating Scale

Where am I now?	Advanced	Proficient	Near Proficient	Novice
I start with Gallatin Gateway standards and benchmarks (which are aligned to the state standards)as the focus of my <u>monthly learning objectives (unit benchmarks)</u> .	I always do this	I usually do this	I sometimes do this	I haven't started this
I use pacing calendars and curriculum mapping to ensure content coverage of each benchmark in each curricula area.	I always do this	I usually do this	I sometimes do this	I haven't started this
I use Gallatin Gateway daily unit targets (which are aligned to the state standards)as the focus of my <u>daily lessons/units</u> .	I always do this	I usually do this	I sometimes do this	I haven't started this
In my classroom, I post the student learning targets, which are written in student-friendly language.	I always do this	I usually do this	I sometimes do this	I haven't started this
Before instruction, I design aligned assessments which include preassessments to allow for student differentiated instruction opportunities	I always do this	I usually do this	I sometimes do this	I haven't started this
Before instruction, I unpack my grade-level/subject area benchmarks so I clearly understand the content and performance targets required for student proficiency	I always do this	I usually do this	I sometimes do this	I haven't started this
I use dependable, and accurate classroom assessments to inform and guide my instruction for maximum student proficiency on each benchmark	I always do this	I usually do this	I sometimes do this	I haven't started this
I inform my students regularly, in terms they can understand, about their progress on each benchmark	I always do this	I usually do this	I sometimes do this	I haven't started this
My students help to manage their own learning and can effectively communicate their achievement status to others.	I always do this	I usually do this	I sometimes do this	I haven't started this
MY PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT				

Write a Lesson Plan Guide

How to Develop a Lesson Plan

To begin, ask yourself **three basic questions**:

1. Where are your students going?
2. How are they going to get there?
3. How will you know when they've arrived?

Then begin to think about each of the following categories which form the organization of the plan. While planning, use the questions below to guide you during each stage.

Goals

Goals determine purpose, aim, and rationale for what you and your students will engage in during class time. Use this section to express the intermediate lesson goals that draw upon previous plans and activities and set the stage by preparing students for future activities and further knowledge acquisition. The goals are typically written as broad educational or unit goals adhering to State or National curriculum standards.

What are the broader objectives, aims, or goals of the unit plan/curriculum? What are your goals for this unit? What do you expect students to be able to do by the end of this unit?

Objectives

This section focuses on what your students will do to acquire further knowledge and skills. The objectives for the daily lesson plan are drawn from the broader aims of the unit plan but are achieved over a well defined time period.

What will students be able to do during this lesson? Under what conditions will students' performance be accomplished? What is the degree or criterion on the basis of which satisfactory attainment of the objectives will be judged? How will students demonstrate that they have learned and understood the objectives of the lesson?

Prerequisites

Prerequisites can be useful when considering the readiness state of your students. Prerequisites allow you, and other teachers replicating your lesson plan, to factor in necessary prep activities to make sure that students can meet the lesson objectives. What must students already be able to do before this lesson? What concepts have to be mastered in advance to accomplish the lesson objectives?

Materials

This section has two functions: it helps other teachers quickly determine a) how much preparation time, resources, and management will be involved in carrying out this plan and b) what materials, books, equipment, and resources they will need to have ready. A complete list of materials, including full citations of textbooks or storybooks used, worksheets, and any other special considerations are most useful.

What materials will be needed? What textbooks or storybooks are needed? (please include full bibliographic citations) What needs to be prepared in advance? (typical for science classes and cooking or baking activities)

Lesson Description

This section provides an opportunity for the author of the lesson to share some thoughts, experience, and advice with other teachers. It also provides a general overview of the lesson in terms of topic focus, activities, and purpose.

What is unique about this lesson? How did your students like it? What level of learning is covered by this lesson plan? (Think of Bloom's Taxonomy: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, or evaluation.)

Lesson Procedure

This section provides a detailed, step-by-step description of how to replicate the lesson and achieve lesson plan objectives. This is usually intended for the teacher and provides suggestions on how to proceed with implementation of the lesson plan. It also focuses on what the teacher should have students do during the lesson. This section is basically divided into several components: an introduction, a main activity, and closure. There are several elaborations on this. We have linked to some sample lesson plans to guide you through this stage of planning.

Introduction

How will you introduce the ideas and objectives of this lesson? How will you get students' attention and motivate them in order to hold their attention? How can you tie lesson objectives with student interests and past classroom activities? What will be expected of students?

Main Activity

What is the focus of the lesson? How would you describe the flow of the lesson to another teacher who will replicate it? What does the teacher do to facilitate learning and manage the various activities? What are some good and bad examples to illustrate what you are presenting to students? How can this material be presented to ensure each student will benefit from the learning experience?

Rule # 1:

Take into consideration what students are learning (a new skill, a rule or formula, a concept/fact/idea, an attitude, or a value).

Choose one of the following techniques to plan the lesson content based on what your objectives are: 1) Demonstration ==> list in detail and sequence of the steps to be performed, 2) Explanation ==> outline the information to be explained, 3) Discussion ==> list of key questions to guide the discussion

Closure/Conclusion

What will you use to draw the ideas together for students at the end? How will you provide feedback to students to correct their misunderstandings and reinforce their learning?

Follow up Lessons/Activities

What activities might you suggest for enrichment and remediation? What lessons might follow as a result of this lesson?

Assessment/Evaluation

This section focuses on ensuring that your students have arrived at their intended destination. You will need to gather some evidence that they did. This usually is done by gathering students' work and assessing this work using some kind of grading rubric that is based on lesson objectives. You could also replicate some of

the activities practiced as part of the lesson, without providing the same level of guidance as during the lesson. You could always quiz students written or verbally on various concepts and problems as well.

How will you evaluate the objectives that were identified? Have students practiced what you are asking them to do for evaluation?

Rule # 2:

Be sure to provide students with the opportunity to practice what you will be assessing them on. You should never introduce new material during this activity. Also, avoid asking higher level thinking questions if students have not yet engaged in such practice during the lesson. For example, if you expect students to apply knowledge and skills, they should first be provided with the opportunity to practice application.

Resources for Lesson Plan Ideas

PBS TeacherSource A large collection of lesson plans, teacher guides, and online student activities correlated to 90 sets of state and national curriculum standards.

<http://www.pbs.org/teachers/>

Discovery Channel School <http://school.discoveryeducation.com/>

Education World® - Lesson Planning Center

http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/

Education World® - National Standards <http://www.education-world.com/standards/national/index.shtml>

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

In 1956, Benjamin Bloom headed a group of educational psychologists who developed a classification of levels of intellectual behavior important in learning. Bloom found that over 95 % of the test questions students encounter require them to think only at the lowest possible level...the recall of information.

Bloom identified six levels within the cognitive domain, from the simple recall or recognition of facts, as the lowest level, through increasingly more complex and abstract mental levels, to the highest order which is classified as evaluation. Verb examples that represent intellectual activity on each level are listed here.

1. **Knowledge:** arrange, define, duplicate, label, list, memorize, name, order, recognize, relate, recall, repeat, reproduce state.
2. **Comprehension:** classify, describe, discuss, explain, express, identify, indicate, locate, recognize, report, restate, review, select, translate,
3. **Application:** apply, choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, practice, schedule, sketch, solve, use, write.
4. **Analysis:** analyze, appraise, calculate, categorize, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test.
5. **Synthesis:** arrange, assemble, collect, compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, manage, organize, plan, prepare, propose, set up, write.
6. **Evaluation:** appraise, argue, assess, attach, choose compare, defend estimate, judge, predict, rate, core, select, support, value, evaluate.

<http://www.officeport.com/edu/blooms.htm>

For further Web-based information on Bloom's taxonomy:

<http://www.eecs.usma.edu/cs383/bloom/default.htm>

<http://www.valdosta.edu/~whuitt/psy702/cogsys/bloom.html>

<http://www.eecs.usma.edu/usma/academic/eecs/instruct/howard/slidesho/sigcse2/index.htm>

<http://www.uct.ac.za/projects/cbe/mcqman/mcqappc.html>

Critical and Creative Thinking Bloom's Taxonomy

What are critical thinking and creative thinking?

What's Bloom's taxonomy and how is it helpful in project planning?

How are the domains of learning reflected in technology-rich projects?

Benjamin Bloom (1956) developed a classification of levels of intellectual behavior in learning. This taxonomy contained three overlapping domains: the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective. Within the cognitive domain, he identified six levels: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. These domains and levels are still useful today as you develop the critical thinking skills of your students.

Critical thinking involves logical thinking and reasoning including skills such as comparison, classification, sequencing, cause/effect, patterning, webbing, analogies, deductive and inductive reasoning, forecasting, planning, hypothesizing, and critiquing.

Explore the Georgia Critical Thinking Skills Program. It contains links to lessons and resources in many areas of critical thinking.

Creative thinking involves creating something new or original. It involves the skills of flexibility, originality, fluency, elaboration, brainstorming, modification, imagery, associative thinking, attribute listing, metaphorical thinking, forced relationships. The aim of creative thinking is to stimulate curiosity and promote divergence.

Read the article Teaching Thinking Skills and Critical and Creative Thinking for additional background information.

While critical thinking can be thought of as more left-brain and creative thinking more right brain, they both involve "thinking." When we talk about HOTS "higher-order thinking skills" we're concentrating on the top three levels of Bloom's Taxonomy: analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Cognitive Domain

Knowledge

collect	describe	identify	list	show	tell
define	examine	label	name	retell	state
enumerate	match	read	record	reproduce	copy

Examples: dates, events, places, vocabulary, key ideas, parts of diagram, 5Ws

Comprehension

associate	compare	distinguish	extend	interpret	predict
contrast	describe	discuss	estimate	group	summarize
cite	convert	explain	paraphrase	restate	trace

Examples: find meaning, transfer, interpret facts, infer cause & consequence, examples

Application

apply	classify	change	illustrate	solve	demonstrate
calculate	complete	solve	modify	show	experiment
relate	discover	act	administer	articulate	chart
collect	compute	construct	determine	develop	establish
prepare	produce	report	teach	transfer	use

Examples: use information in new situations, solve problems

Analysis

analyze	arrange	connect	divide	infer	separate
classify	compare	contrast	explain	select	order
breakdown	correlate	diagram	discriminate	focus	illustrate
infer	outline	prioritize	subdivide	points out	prioritize

Examples: recognize and explain patterns and meaning, see parts and wholes

Synthesis

Combine	compose	generalize	modify	invent	plan
create	formulate	integrate	rearrange	design	speculate
adapt	anticipate	collaborate	compile	devise	express
reinforce	structure	substitute	intervene	negotiate	reorganize

Examples: discuss "what if" situations, create new ideas, predict and draw conclusions

Evaluation

assess	compare	decide	discriminate	measure	rank
convince	conclude	explain	grade	judge	summarize
appraise	criticize	defend	persuade	justify	reframe

Examples: make recommendations, assess value and make choices, critique ideas

Affective Domain

Domain Attributes: interpersonal relations, emotions, attitudes, appreciations, and values

accepts	attempts	challenges	defends	disputes	joins
contributes	praises	questions	shares	supports	volunteers

Psychomotor Domain

Domain Attributes: fine and gross motor skills

bend	grasp	handle	kick	operate	reach
stretch	type	write	express	perform	conduct

Resources on Bloom's Taxonomy

Bloom's Taxonomy by J. Prado

This site contains the levels, example words, products, and example questions.

Other Sites with an Overview and Key Words:

Bloom's Taxonomy: An Overview from *Family Education Network's TeacherVision*

Taxonomy of Educational Objectives developed by A. Harrow, adapted by T. Allen

This page provides sample questions.

Learning Skills Program: Bloom's Taxonomy from *University of Victoria*

This page lists the six levels of the cognitive domain with examples.

Other Sites Listing the Taxonomy:

Designing and Managing MCQs from *University of Cape Town*, South Africa

Major Categories in the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives by G. Krumme, *University of Washington*, Seattle

Question Types Based on Bloom's Taxonomy from *University of Colorado*

Bloom's Taxonomy from *University of Mississippi*

Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum by B. Fowler, *Longview Community College*

Explore the questions associated with each Bloom category.

Critical Thinking Resources

Critical Thinking from *The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga*

This webpage provides an overview of critical thinking.

Critical Thinking on the Web by T. van Gelder at *The University of Melbourne*

This links page provide connects to lots of teaching and learning resources related to critical thinking.

Free Brainstorming Training from *Infinite Innovations Ltd*

Learn basic and advanced techniques for brainstorming.

Mission: Critical from *San Jose State University*

This website provides an advanced look at critical thinking and specifically analysis of arguments and 08/28/2006 10:25 PM Critical and Creative Thinking - Bloom's Taxonomy persuasion.

Examples and Applications of Critical Thinking

Evaluating Primary Sources from *Library of Congress's American Memory*

This website does a great job providing an example of using Bloom's Taxonomy for evaluating primary resource materials.

Integrating Critical Thinking Skills Into the Classroom by A. Buchanan

This article defines critical thinking and provides steps for integrating the ideas into the classroom.

Layered Curriculum by K.F. Nunley

The Layered Curriculum approach focuses on increasing levels of complexity. Explore some of the many examples.

What Is a Thinking Curriculum? by T.F. Fennimore & M.B. Tinzmann, *North Central Regional Educational Laboratory* (NCREL) Join the authors in exploring the characteristics of a "thinking curriculum."

Creative Thinking Resources

Creativity Links by C. Osborne

This page links to great resources on creative thinking.

Creative Problem Solving from *Burris Laboratory School*, Muncie, IN

This page highlights six steps in creative problem solving.

Creativity Web from C. Cave

This page contains ideas on linking creative thinking to critical thinking and multiple intelligences.

Within this Website:

Six Hats of Thinking by S. Labelle

Techniques for Creative Thinking

Edward de Bono's Methods & Concepts of Lateral Thinking

This page provides an overview of deBono's ideas about creativity. Here you can also learn about the Six Thinking Hats.

Introduction to Creative Thinking by R. Harris from *VirtualSalt*

This page compares critical and creative thinking and discusses the myths of creative thinking.

Inventive Thinking Curriculum Model from *The United States Patent and Trademark Office* This page provides ideas for invention and creative thinking.

Classic Lateral Thinking Puzzles by P. Sloane and adapted by A. Ottens

A collection of thinking puzzles is found on this page.

Tutorial on Creativity, Brainstorming and Innovation from Infinite Innovations Ltd.

This tutorial provides basic information about creativity, brainstorming, and innovation. It also provides ideas and activities.

Bibliography

Vincent, S. & Ley, J. (1999). *The Multigrade Classroom: A Resource Handbook for Small, Rural Schools: Book 3: Classroom Management and Discipline*. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Suggested Reading

What Great Teachers Do Differently: Fourteen Things That Matter Most
by Todd Whitaker
ISBN: 1930556691

Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement
by Robert J. Marzano, Debra J. Pickering, & Jane E. Pollock
ISBN: 0131195034

OCTOBER

BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE BASE

- ☐ Discuss holiday celebrations, including teacher convention days
- ☐ Discuss Intervention day requirements and forms
- ☐ Begin discussing and role-playing in preparation for parent-teacher conferences
- ☐ Discuss PowerGrade comments for report cards
- ☐ Discuss and assess progress toward curriculum goals
- ☐ Review state standards and assessments
- ☐ Set an opportunity to observe protégé teaching/ video
- ☐ Discuss coping strategies for stress
- ☐ Discuss any specific problems protégé is experiencing
- ☐ Assist protégé in finding opportunities for professional development
- ☐ Discuss exceptional and special needs students and procedures for working with them- Review IEP
- ☐ Prepare for quarter grading
- ☐ Discuss how to get along with co-workers
- ☐ Review student files
- ☐ Review classroom differentiation
- ☐ Discuss classroom details- showing student work, chores in preparation for parent/teacher conferences
- ☐ Discuss classroom management
- ☐ Discuss teacher convention documentation needed for Principal
- ☐ Discuss classroom reimbursements
- ☐ Review master calendar

Mentor/Protégé Observation Form

This form is **not** intended for the evaluation of teachers. Rather, it is intended as a guide for observation of mentors and protégés. It should serve to focus the observation and guide the discussion following the observation.

Person observing: _____

Person being observed: _____

Date, time, location, & length: _____

PRE-OBSERVATION QUESTIONS:

1. What is important for me to know about your class before observing it?
2. What is your planned lesson for today? What standards and benchmarks will you be addressing?
3. What specific student behaviors would you like me to watch for, if any?
4. What specific teacher behaviors would you like me to watch for, if any?
5. Upon which of the following would you most like me to concentrate: planning, environment, instruction, professionalism, or other?
6. Additional comments/requests/suggestions:

Observation Inventory

In the left hand column, please record what specific behaviors, elements (planning, environment, instruction, professionalism), and lesson essentials (standards, benchmarks, etc) are to be observed. In the middle column, list what was observed in the above areas: for example, "I noticed that you moved among the groups well." In the right hand column, record any suggestions, comments, etc. that are discussed during the post-observation conference. Use the space at the bottom for any additional comments or suggestions you may have for the person being observed.

Behaviors:		POST-OBSERVATION COMMENTS:
Classroom elements (planning, environment, instruction, professionalism):		
Lesson essentials (following plans, addressing standards & benchmarks):		
Additional comments and suggestions:		

**Mentoring Program
Observation/Conference Notes**

Mentee's Name: _____ Date: _____

Class/School: _____

Notes: _____

Questions/ Comments/ Suggestions: _____

Mentee's Signature _____ Date: _____

Mentor's Signature _____ Date: _____

Time to Think... and Think Twice

Sometimes in the grip of first-year zeal, beginning teachers do or say things, which, on later reflection, prove not to have been in their best interest. Think...and think again...BEFORE doing any of the following:

- ✓ Giving advice to experienced teachers...
- ✓ Suggesting changes in curriculum or policy during the first year, **unless** you have been asked to make changes...
- ✓ Assuming that because your peers are doing it, it's acceptable behavior (i.e. casual dress, beverages in meetings/classroom, etc.)...
- ✓ Sharing your personal life with students...
- ✓ Engaging in activities that could be misinterpreted...**Do** become familiar with the community's unwritten rules and expectations for teacher behavior and follow them.
- ✓ Getting too friendly with students...your job is to teach, **not** to be a pal.
- ✓ Dressing like students during school hours or during activities of which you are a sponsor...
- ✓ Becoming a student confidant...Counselors are equipped for this position.
- ✓ Using school equipment for personal use (i.e. vehicles, technology equipment, etc.)...
- ✓ Talking negatively about your predecessor to anyone...he or she had friends on staff.
- ✓ Talking negatively about your fellow staff members or administration...If you talk about people behind their backs, those that listen will assume you will soon be talking about them!
- ✓ Talking about students to other teachers **unless** you are praising them or seeking assistance in working with them...
- ✓ Disclosing private student information, whether positive or negative, to anyone other than the student's parents/guardians...
- ✓ Criticizing the school, teachers, or students to the public, anywhere, at anytime...
- ✓ Failing to live up to a verbal or written agreement with peers, students, parents, administrators...
- ✓ Insisting that you are right or that you must have the last word...There are two ways to end a tug-of-war: one is to drop the rope.

Bibliography

Vincent, S. & Ley, J. (1999). *The Multigrade Classroom: A Resource Handbook for Small, Rural Schools: Book 4: Instructional Organization, Curriculum, and Evaluation*. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Suggested Reading

How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed Ability Classrooms
by Carol Ann Tomlinson
ISBN: 0871205122

Differentiation in Practice: A Resource Guide for Differentiating Curriculum, Grades K-5
by Carol Ann Tomlinson
ISBN: 0871207605

Differentiation in Practice: A Resource Guide for Differentiating Curriculum, Grades 5-9
by Carol Ann Tomlinson
ISBN: 0871206552

NOVEMBER

BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE BASE

- ☐ Discuss holiday celebrations, gift-giving, school programs
- ☐ Discuss cultural differences of students and their different needs
- ☐ Discuss teacher evaluation procedures and concerns
- ☐ Discuss snow-day procedures
- ☐ Review the master calendar
- ☐ Discuss professionalism in the workplace, teacher/principal relations, teacher/school board relations, etc.
- ☐ Help your protégé define goals for self-improvement based on last month's observation
- ☐ Discuss identification of gifted students, IEPs and other resources for meeting their needs within the classroom
- ☐ Discuss importance of keeping students engaged during upcoming holiday season
- ☐ Remind protégé that Christmas time is sometimes quite stressful on students, and not all our students think of it as a fun time
- ☐ Assess student needs
- ☐ Review evaluation checklist (Employee Forms and Reference Manual)
- ☐ Discuss class transitions- first 5 minutes and last 5 minutes
- ☐ Discuss academics vs. "free-time" rewards

DECEMBER

BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE BASE

- ☐ Discuss end-of-semester procedures: testing, grading, etc.
- ☐ Revisit pedagogical issues such as multiple intelligences, technology in the classroom, varied learning styles, etc.
- ☐ Discuss any changes in class schedules at the semester
- ☐ Discuss protégé self-evaluation through the use of a student survey
- ☐ Help protégé come up with ideas for keeping kids on track during holiday season
- ☐ Watch classroom management videos (e.g. Harry Wong) and discuss strategies for maintaining a positive environment in classroom
- ☐ Keep on track- student record keeping sheets, day planners, etc.
- ☐ Locker clean out for break



Student Survey

For Elementary Teacher Self-Evaluation

1. I am able to do the work in class.	☐ ☐ ☐
2. My classroom feels safe.	☐ ☐ ☐
3. I learn new things in this class.	☐ ☐ ☐
4. My teacher shows us how to be kind and helpful to each other.	☐ ☐ ☐
5. My teacher shows us how to do new things.	☐ ☐ ☐
6. The rules in class help us to learn.	☐ ☐ ☐
7. I know what I am supposed to do in this class.	☐ ☐ ☐
8. I am not afraid to ask my teacher if I need help.	☐ ☐ ☐
9. My teacher shows us how to behave.	☐ ☐ ☐
10. My teacher makes me feel good about school.	☐ ☐ ☐



Student Survey

For Teacher Self-Evaluation

Use the scale below to evaluate the extent of your agreement on the following statements

1 = never 2 = sometimes 3=no opinion 4= often 5 = always

1. My teacher is supportive of others.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My teacher dresses appropriately.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My teacher has something planned each day.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My teacher knows a lot about his/her subject.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My teacher is fair.	1	2	3	4	5
6. My teacher is supportive of the principal.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My teacher has a good sense of humor.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My teacher is trustworthy.	1	2	3	4	5
9. My teacher doesn't talk negatively about other people.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My teacher assigns appropriate amounts of homework.	1	2	3	4	5
11. My teacher fills the class with appropriate things to do.	1	2	3	4	5
12. My teacher enforces rules consistently.	1	2	3	4	5
13. My teacher keeps things discussed in confidence.	1	2	3	4	5
14. My teacher is prepared for class.	1	2	3	4	5
15. My teacher willingly answers questions.	1	2	3	4	5
16. My teacher is in control of the class.	1	2	3	4	5
17. My teacher returns papers in a reasonable time.	1	2	3	4	5
18. My teacher has a classroom management plan.	1	2	3	4	5
19. My teacher treats students with respect.	1	2	3	4	5
20. My teacher enforces rules fairly.	1	2	3	4	5
21. My teacher regularly lets me know how I'm doing in class.	1	2	3	4	5
22. My teacher wants the best for me.	1	2	3	4	5
23. My teacher offers extra help when needed.	1	2	3	4	5
24. My teacher encourages me.	1	2	3	4	5
25. My teacher is a good teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
26. My teacher helps me.	1	2	3	4	5
27. My teacher has interest in me as a person.	1	2	3	4	5
28. My teacher always uses time wisely.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I am comfortable asking my teacher for help.	1	2	3	4	5
30. My teacher treats boys and girls alike.	1	2	3	4	5
31. My teacher inspires me.	1	2	3	4	5
32. My teacher expects me to do well.	1	2	3	4	5
33. My teacher is confident.	1	2	3	4	5
34. My teacher treats all students alike.	1	2	3	4	5
35. My teacher is worthy of respect.	1	2	3	4	5
36. My teacher tells the truth.	1	2	3	4	5
37. My teacher is understanding.	1	2	3	4	5
38. My teacher is in control of his/her emotions.	1	2	3	4	5

JANUARY

BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE BASE

- ☐ Evaluate progress toward curriculum goals during first semester and discuss necessary modifications
- ☐ Discuss assessment procedures for both formal and informal assessments (ITBS, MontCas)
- ☐ Go over end of the semester procedures
- ☐ Review MT certification and renewal process- discuss needed MT certification documentation
- ☐ Summer course work- start thinking about recertification requirements
- ☐ Review instructional delivery methods
- ☐ Review DRA/Dibels and student achievement

Bibliography

Vincent, S. & Ley, J. (1999). *The Multigrade Classroom: A Resource Handbook for Small, Rural Schools: Book 5: Instructional Delivery and Grouping*. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Suggested Reading

Reluctant Disciplinarian: Advice on Classroom Management From a Softy Who Became (Eventually) a Successful Teacher

by Gary Rubinstein

ISBN: 1877673366

FEBRUARY

BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE BASE

- ☐ Continue analysis of individual student success in order to help him/her assist students who may be struggling
- ☐ Discuss Valentine's Day celebrations if appropriate
- ☐ Begin time management and preparation for ITBS and CRT testing
- ☐ New teacher list of needs- supplies, and other "needs"
- ☐ Answer policy questions- insurance, pay, summer pay
- ☐ Discuss Art/Tech integration into curriculum

Bibliography

Vincent, S. & Ley, J. (1999). *The Multigrade Classroom: A Resource Handbook for Small, Rural Schools: Book 6: Self-Directed Learning*. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

MARCH

BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE BASE

- ☐ Discuss plans for spring parent/teacher conferences- at-risk phone calls, parent meetings
- ☐ Discuss field trip policies and plans
- ☐ Discuss school-wide achievement testing policies and plans (ITBS, MontCas Phase II, Writing Assessment)
- ☐ Discuss resources needed for curriculum
- ☐ Look at at-risk students
- ☐ Review pacing charts
- ☐ Discuss and review salary schedule
- ☐ Planning and using peer tutoring
- ☐ Review attendance policies
- ☐ Discuss how to design lesson plans for student absences
- ☐ Positive phone calls to parents on student behavior

Bibliography

Vincent, S. & Ley, J. (1999). *The Multigrade Classroom: A Resource Handbook for Small, Rural Schools: Book 7: Planning and Using Peer Tutoring*. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Suggested Reading

Scoring Rubrics in the Classroom: Using Performance Criteria for Assessing and Improving Student Performance
by Judith A. Arter
ISBN: 0751975756

APRIL

BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE BASE

- ☐ Discuss seasonal concerns and student motivation: attire, playground, to & from school
- ☐ Discuss stress relief
- ☐ Work with your protégé to compile a list of most worthwhile activities to use next year
- ☐ Help your protégé begin ordering for next year- Organize by “must haves” and “would like to have”
- ☐ Discuss end of the year cumulative records (elementary)
- ☐ Schedule field trips and end of year activities: academic day and field day
- ☐ Begin end of the year inventory process- read end-of-year check-out in Employee Forms and Reference Manual

MAY

BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE BASE

- ☐ Discuss end of the year activities: graduation (K and 8th), locker clean-out, book check-in, etc.
- ☐ Encourage your protégé to self-evaluate through use of a student survey
- ☐ Discuss your perceptions of protégé's growth throughout the year, discussing areas of greater and lesser strengths
- ☐ Discuss end of the year procedures for teachers: turning in books/keys/computers/gradebooks/lesson plans, preparing classroom
- ☐ Assist protégé with end of the year procedures
- ☐ If your protégé does not receive a contract for next year, offer support, a letter of recommendation, and help in preparing a resume
- ☐ Big Sky Fit Kids- 30- Minute PE Activity all School

JUNE

BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE BASE

- ☐ Discuss End-of-Year Checkout
- ☐ Discuss Final Grade/Completion of Cumulative File
- ☐ Discuss Purchase Order Submittals for Coming Year

PRINCIPAL/TEACHER

Interpersonal Calendar

August BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP

- ☐ Make plans to sit next to protégé at meetings
- ☐ Exchange phone numbers, planning times, and schedules
- ☐ Have the beginning teacher complete a needs assessment and then discuss your mutual goals for the mentor/protégé experience
- ☐ Make it a point to be helpful without being controlling
- ☐ Share professional and personal experiences in order to develop trust and confidences
- ☐ Give the beginning teacher an overview of the parameters of the mentoring relationship
- ☐ Review and discuss the observation form with protégé to he/she knows what to expect during observations.

September BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP

- ☐ Find opportunities to offer positive reinforcement
- ☐ Recognize that your way isn't necessarily the only way
- ☐ Offer advice when asked, being careful not to be overly controlling
- ☐ Treat the protégé as a colleague, not a student
- ☐ Schedule meeting times for the month, reaffirming your accessibility
- ☐ Create a new-teacher survival basket, including pain reliever, sticky notes, chocolate, etc.

October BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP

- ☐ Do a self-evaluation of your mentoring, and set goals for the second quarter
- ☐ Help the protégé begin to become part of the teaching community by including him/her in faculty social activities
- ☐ Have the protégé re-evaluate his/her needs based on the first two months of teaching, and make plans to cover any new concerns
- ☐ Remember to be supportive of your protégé at all times, praising him/her openly to others and keeping areas of concern to yourself
- ☐ Schedule meeting times for the month, reaffirming your accessibility

November BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP

- ☐ Invite your protégé to observe you in both planned and unplanned situations in order to further develop trust
- ☐ Plan a time to discuss questions resulting from your protégé's observation of your teaching
- ☐ Recognize that the protégé, as a recent student, has knowledge from which you could benefit

- ☐ Show an interest in your protégé's personal life as well as his/her professional life by becoming aware of family members, birthday, personal interests, and hobbies
- ☐ Invite your protégé to attend an extra-curricular school event with you, such as a game, concert, play, etc.
- ☐ Schedule meeting times for the month, reaffirming your accessibility

December BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP

- ☐ Schedule meeting times for month, reaffirming your availability

January BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP

- ☐ Discuss what mentoring procedures have been most/least helpful and discuss possible changes
- ☐ Consider extending the protégé's circle of support by including other beginning and experienced teachers for sharing, and for professional and social relationships
- ☐ Schedule meeting times for the month, reaffirming your accessibility

February BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP

- ☐ Foster the growing independence of your protégé by meeting informally on an as-needed basis rather than scheduling meetings in advance
- ☐ Point out resources for individual exploration, including workshops, school visits, on-line training, etc.
- ☐ Build the protégé's confidence through use of well-earned praise

March ENCOURAGING INDEPENDENCE

- ☐ Encourage your protégé to observe other teachers' teaching styles
- ☐ Encourage your protégé to keep a log of his/her successes and goals for improvement
- ☐ Encourage the protégé to re-read teaching journal to evaluate progress so far this year

April ENCOURAGING INDEPENDENCE

- ☐ Discuss what your protégé would or would not repeat in the following year, and help him/her get a jumpstart on planning
- ☐ Review your protégé's budget for next year

May ENCOURAGING INDEPENDENCE

- ☐ Recognize the end of the first year of teaching with a celebration
- ☐ Give your protégé a card or letter with a list of successes in their school year
- ☐ Help your protégé "scrounge" for castoffs from teachers who are cleaning their rooms or retiring

SECTION 3
MENTOR PROGRAM

“EVALUATION”

Quality mentoring is more than casually matching a new teacher and a veteran teacher, assuming they will meet together throughout the school year and that the protégé will flourish.

-Montana Office of Public Instruction

Evaluation

On-going program survey/evaluation forms will be completed and used by all program participants to evaluate, reevaluate, and reformat the mentor program.

Program Goals:

Gallatin Gateway School Mentoring is an intentional process to guide a protégé, intern, or resident participant to proficient professional instruction in conjunction with professional employee work skills to better serve Gallatin Gateway School District #35.

- To improve teaching performance in order to raise student achievement.
- To promote the personal and professional well-being of protégé teachers.
- To improve teaching performance in order to enhance positive school environment
- To transmit the culture of the school system to protégé teachers.
- To increase retention of promising protégé teachers.

Formative Evaluation:

- Survey / student and parent
- Needs survey/form
- Teacher qualities
- Attendance

Summative Evaluation:

- On-going status reports
- At the end of Q1 and Q3 non-evaluative progress reports
- Final non-evaluative reports by mentor and mentee
- Protégé/intern/and resident need/concern form
- Reevaluation meetings Q1 (November) and Q3 (April)
 - Discuss on-going evaluation of program
 - Revise program handbook as needed

Review communication styles and needs of participants

Mentoring Program

Ongoing Protégé/Intern/Resident Status Report

End of 1st quarter _____ End of 3rd quarter _____ Other _____
(date)

Intern's/Resident's Name: _____ School: _____

Certification: _____ Grade/ Subject/ Level: _____

Mentor's Name: _____

Observation Dates: _____

Conference Dates: _____

Circle the appropriate level below for each statement:

1. **Proficient**
2. **Progressing toward Proficiency**
3. **Needs Assistance**

A.) Teaching and Learning:

1. 2. 3. Creates a positive and relevant learning environment

B.) Classroom Management:

1. 2. 3. Facilitates classroom control
1. 2. 3. Interacts well with pupils
1. 2. 3. Establishes an effective classroom routine
1. 2. 3. Organizes classroom to support learning
1. 2. 3. Uses strategies/staff to support students with special needs

C.) Professionalism:

1. 2. 3. Seeks ongoing professional growth
1. 2. 3. Willingness to participate in school and district activities
1. 2. 3. Understands chain of command
1. 2. 3. Collaborates with other professionals
1. 2. 3. Aware of responsibilities of the profession

D.) Parent Contact:

1. 2. 3. Accessible to the students and parents
1. 2. 3. Establishes effective communications with parents
1. 2. 3. Facilitates parental involvement

Mentor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Intern's/Resident's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Intern/resident may attach a response or comments.

Mentoring Program
Needs Assessment Form
Quarter 1

Intern's/Resident's Name: _____ School: _____

Mentor's Name: _____ Date: _____

TO THE INTERN/RESIDENT: As part of the needs assessment process, you are being asked to identify areas of concern on this form. You and your mentor will use this information to develop a personal plan of action.

Circle the appropriate level below for each statement:

- 1. Proficient**
- 2. Progressing toward Proficiency**
- 3. Needs Assistance**

I. TEACHING AND LEARNING:

- | | | | |
|----|----|----|---|
| 1. | 2. | 3. | Planning |
| 1. | 2. | 3. | Incorporates multi-cultural perspective |
| 1. | 2. | 3. | Assessment and evaluation of students |
| 1. | 2. | 3. | Making assignments |
| 1. | 2. | 3. | Developing work-study habits |
| 1. | 2. | 3. | Recognize and provide for individual differences |
| 1. | 2. | 3. | Accessing student records |
| 1. | 2. | 3. | Participations in IEP and CST meetings (special Ed. And appropriate teachers) |

PLAN:

II. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT:

- | | | | |
|----|----|----|---|
| 1. | 2. | 3. | Classroom facilitation and control |
| 1. | 2. | 3. | Interaction with pupils |
| 1. | 2. | 3. | Classroom routine |
| 1. | 2. | 3. | Classroom organization |
| 1. | 2. | 3. | Use of strategies and personnel to assist students with special needs |

PLAN:

III. PRESENTATION OF SUBJECT MATTER:

1. 2. 3. Curriculum

PLAN: _____

IV. COMMUNICATION SKILLS:

Oral and written communication skills

1. 2. 3. Communication with parents

PLAN: _____

V. PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS:

1. 2. 3. Understands District Mission Statement

1. 2. 3. Workshops, inservices or graduate courses

1. 2. 3. Using district-wide resources: (inter-school mail, voice mail, e-mail, contacting Central Administration)

1. 2. 3. Parental Contact

PLAN: _____

VI. MISCELLANEOUS:

1. 2. 3. Needs a building orientation

1. 2. 3. Understanding building procedures

1. 2. 3. Understanding your contractual rights

1. 2. 3. Understanding the role of Student Support Services (school nurse, Educational Talent Search, Speech, Home School Coordinator, Student Assistance Coordinator, etc.)

1. 2. 3. Interpreting district policies (Student, Staff, Sponsor handbooks)

1. 2. 3. Understanding district evaluation process

1. 2. 3. Understanding annual testing requirements

1. 2. 3. Understanding your mentor's role

1. 2. 3. Understanding your responsibilities as an intern/resident

PLAN: _____

Additional Notes and Comments:

Mentoring Program

Final Status Report on Mentors

(To be completed by Mentee (novice teacher))

Mentor's Name: _____

Date_____

Intern's Name: _____ Date: _____

Please comment on the ways in which your mentor worked with you.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Mentee's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mentor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Administrator: _____ Date: _____

Mentor may attach a response or comments.

Mentoring Program
Mentee Final Report
(To be completed by Mentor or Principal Mentor)

Mentee's Name: _____ Certification: _____

Mentor's Name: _____ School: _____

Describe the progress this mentee made during the school year. Include references to growth and/or problems in meeting the professional expectations for mentee.

[illegible]

Mentor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mentee's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mentee Evaluation of the Mentoring Experience

_____ - _____ school year

Using the following scale, evaluate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1 = strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= agree 4= strongly agree

Because of the mentoring experience:

1. _____ My _____ (first, second...) year of teaching was more successful.
Comments:
2. _____ I'm a more effective teacher.
Comments:
3. _____ I was better able to cope with the stress of the _____ (first, second...) year teaching experience.
Comments:
4. _____ I feel adequately prepared for teaching without the support of a mentor for next year.
Comments:

I feel that:

5. _____ The resource materials given to me by my mentor were useful and of high quality.
Comments:
6. _____ My mentor was easily accessible/ in close proximity.
Comments:
7. _____ My mentor match was appropriate, given the availability of mentors.
Comments:
8. _____ I had enough time with my mentor.
Comments:
9. _____ I received adequate support during the year.
Comments:

10. _____ My mentor was beneficial to me.

Comments:

11. _____ The mentoring experience was well-planned and administered.

Comments:

12. _____ In my experience, the mentoring program was effective this year.

Comments:

13. What areas of further training might have been beneficial for your first year?

14. Please list the areas you feel you could use continued support from the mentoring program during your second year as a teacher for School District #35.

15. Describe the ways you feel the school principal mentor was useful to your successes this school year.

16. Describe future needs you would like your school principal as a mentor to assist you with in the coming school year.

SECTION 4
MENTOR PROGRAM
“APPENDICES”

Appendix A

Selecting Mentors and Pairing with Protégés

Selecting mentors can be a challenge for schools. Best practice indicates that teachers should be willing to fill the mentor role and not be pressured into mentoring a beginning teacher. A school or district that is developing a mentor program must determine how mentors will be recruited and selected. In general, a mentor should have at least three to five years teaching experience, and have a proven track record of positive effect on student achievement. Many times, teachers who would make good mentors are held in high esteem by colleagues and the school administration, and may be serving on more than one school or district committee.

- Sample application forms for mentors are available in the forms section of the Teacher Mentor Program Development Template.
- Listed below are sample characteristics and qualities of effective mentors.

Attitude and Character

Willing to be a role model for other teachers
Exhibits strong commitment to the teaching profession
Believes mentoring improves instructional practice
Willing to advocate on behalf of colleagues
Willing to receive training to improve mentoring skills
Demonstrates a commitment to lifelong learning
Is reflective and able to learn from mistakes
Is eager to share information and ideas with colleagues
Is resilient, flexible, persistent, and open minded
Exhibits good humor and resourcefulness
Enjoys new challenges and solving problems

Professional Competence and Experience

Is regarded by colleagues as an outstanding teacher
Has excellent knowledge of pedagogy and subject matter
Has confidence in his/her own instructional skills
Demonstrates excellent classroom-management skills
Feels comfortable being observed by other teachers
Maintains a network of professional contacts
Understands the policies and procedures of the school, district, and teachers' association
Is a meticulous observer of classroom practice
Collaborates well with other teachers and administrators

Is willing to learn new teaching strategies from protégés

Communication Skills

Is able to articulate effective instructional strategies
Listens attentively
Asks questions that prompt reflection and understanding
Offers critiques in positive and productive ways
Uses email effectively
Is efficient with the use of time
Conveys enthusiasm, passion for teaching
Is discreet and maintains confidentiality

Interpersonal Skills

Is able to maintain a trusting professional relationship
Knows how to express care for a protégé's emotional and professional needs
Is attentive to sensitive political issues
Works well with individuals from different cultures
Is approachable; easily establishes rapport with others
Is patient

Source: *Creating a Teacher Mentoring Program*. The NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education: Washington, DC, 1999.
Prepared by the Office of Public Instruction – Statewide Mentor Taskforce
Linda McCulloch, Superintendent www.opi.mt.gov
December 200

Appendix A Continued

Pairing Mentors and Protégés

There is no magic formula to making a “perfect” match for mentors and protégés. Areas to consider are the available mentors, mentor and protégés’ strengths and weaknesses, learning styles, and the goals of the school or district mentor program.

Although ideal matches appear to be one mentor to one protégé, other models exist. Ementoring, using e-mail and telephone to communicate between the mentor and protégé: might be useful for a small rural school district where the best mentor option may be over a hundred miles away.

Another model allows the mentor to be a referral person, not the person with all of the answers. For example, a protégé might have some difficulty with classroom management; if the mentor does not have strength in this area he/she would refer the protégé to a teacher with that strength.

In this model, districts could have different mentors designated for each instructional area, grade level, or other teaching issues.

It is important for the school or district to determine the goals of the mentor program prior to pairing mentors and protégés.

Problem Solving with Mentor Protégé Pairings

Most mentor research describes that 90 percent of the mentor-protégé relationships work out well. There are 10 percent of the pairings that can have a range of challenges. The mentor/protégé can be a close relationship that has typical ups and downs. When developing a mentor program, the school or district should address how a mentor and protégé pairing that is not successful will be handled. Oftentimes the best option is to reassign the mentor and protégé; however, this should be outlined in the program information.

If a school or district is finding that each year they are having difficulty with at least one mentor/protégé relationship, they may want to provide additional professional development for the mentors in the areas of communication and using coaching language.

Appendix B

Mentor Professional Development

Becoming a skilled mentor requires time and intentional professional development. When a school or district is developing a mentor program, the development team must consider what the goals are for the program. After the goals are developed, determine what professional development will need to be provided to the mentors to attain the program goals and to further the mentor's skills.

Many publications are available that provide professional development curriculum or ideas. The CD Bibliography has a few cited.

Listed below are some key concepts and topic areas that a school or district may want to cover when providing professional development to the mentor. This is not an exhaustive list.

Overview of the Goals of Mentoring:

- o Creating a vision of a quality teacher;
- o Defining the mentor role;
- o Identifying the protégé's needs;
- o Understanding the phases of a new teacher;
- o Building an effective mentor relationship;
- o Differentiating support; and
- o Assessing the protégé's level of practice. Source: Davis, 2001, p. vi-vii.

Roles of the Teacher Mentor or the Principal Mentor:

- o Facilitator, Coach, and Collaborator
- o Trusted listener
- o Resource person
- o Problem solver
- o Advocate

Mentoring skills

- o Effective listening
- o Facilitating reflective dialogue
- o Classroom observation and feedback
- o Confidentiality

Mentor Program Requirements

This is just a sample; actual requirements would depend on a school or district program.

- o Program evaluation forms
- o Observation requirements
- o Topics of discussion
- o Confidentiality of the mentor/protégé relationship

APPENDIX B - CONTINUED

Other Information

- o Building a collaborative relationship with the protégé
- o Stages of teacher development
- o Understanding the continuum of beginning teacher support

Beginning teacher concerns

- o Classroom management and discipline
- o Time management
- o An overwhelming workload
- o Classroom instruction
- o Technology in the classroom
- o High-stakes accountability
- o Socio-cultural awareness and sensitivity
- o Student motivation
- o A solitary work environment
- o Relationships with parents and colleagues

Appendix C

Mentor Articles

There have been hundreds of articles written about mentoring teachers and developing mentor programs. Listed below are three articles that are a good start for reading when developing a teacher mentor program.

Creating a Teacher Mentoring Program was published in 1999 by the NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education. It has excellent sections that list key questions to consider when developing a program. These sections can work as a checklist for a group designing a mentor program for teachers.

<http://www.nfie.org/publications/mentoring.htm>

Phases of First-Year Teaching was originally written for publication in the newsletter for the California New Teacher Project, published by the California Department of Education (CDE) in 1990. This article, or parts of it, appears in many books and journals about teacher mentoring. It is an excellent article for teachers and administrators to reflect on the status of their first year of teaching. The article demonstrates how a mentor program should be designed to work with the stages.

<http://www.newteachercenter.org/article2.php>

The Single Best Thing: Mentoring Beginning Teachers, A Manual for Program Designers and Participants was developed as a self-help manual for districts and schools wishing to investigate or implement a beginning teacher mentoring support program. The manual describes one model of mentoring that was researched in 35 Montana schools from the periods 1992-1995 under the title *Beginning Teacher Support Program*. Although this manual does not contain the most up-to-date best practices in mentoring, it does provide good information to review.

http://www.bpe.mt.gov/cspac_reports.shtml

Appendix D

Mentoring Application

Name _____

Date _____

If you are interested in mentoring during the _____ school year, please fill out the following questions and return this application to the mentoring committee member in your building. Although we are not sure what positions will need mentors this year, we would like to build a file for future reference.

1. Why are you applying or re-applying for a mentoring position?

2. What strengths or best qualities do you bring to a mentoring program?

3. What is your philosophy of teaching? How would you advise a protégé whose philosophy differed from yours?

4. How would you deal with a protégé who isn't open to being mentored?

5. How would you handle (or have handled) comments made about you or your protégé?

6. How many years have you been teaching? _____ How many years have you been teaching in District #35? _____
7. What subject(s) have you taught?
8. Are you available to attend mentoring training during the summer during the first or second week of August? If so, which of those two weeks would work best for you?
9. Although the mentoring program is set up to take place during regular school hours, most mentors have found that additional time outside of the regular school day is probably necessary to meet the needs of the protégé. Are you available and willing to spend time outside of school for the mentoring program?
10. Have you ever been a mentor before? If so, what were your greatest success and your greatest challenge in your mentoring experience?
11. Would you be willing to and feel comfortable mentoring outside your content area? _____ Would you be willing to and feel comfortable mentoring a different grade level within your building? _____

APPENDIX B

NEW TEACHER TOPICAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

New Teacher Topical Needs Assessment

The Induction Program is designed to support your professional growth. To help us do so, please tell us the level of concern you currently feel for the following topics. Thanks.

Name _____ School _____ # of years teaching _____

	None	Some	Very	
			Concerned	
Expectations				
District curriculum	1	2	3	4 5
Grade/subject standards for student learning	1	2	3	4 5
School/district policies and expectations	1	2	3	4 5
Using technology as a tool for learning	1	2	3	4 5
Evaluation of teacher performance	1	2	3	4 5
Teaching				
Determining student academic ability	1	2	3	4 5
Effective use of teaching strategies	1	2	3	4 5
Unit and lesson plan design	1	2	3	4 5
Effective use of textbooks and curriculum	1	2	3	4 5
Differentiating for individual students	1	2	3	4 5
Classroom Management				
Student discipline	1	2	3	4 5
Preparation time	1	2	3	4 5
Assessing/grading student work	1	2	3	4 5
Organization of classroom	1	2	3	4 5
Management of paperwork and reports	1	2	3	4 5
Accessing materials, supplies, equipment	1	2	3	4 5
The budget for instructional materials	1	2	3	4 5
Relationships				
Parents and community members	1	2	3	4 5
Principals, administrators, Board of Education	1	2	3	4 5
Colleagues	1	2	3	4 5
Motivating and rapport with students	1	2	3	4 5
Cultural diversity of students	1	2	3	4 5
Other Concerns?				
_____	1	2	3	4 5

APPENDIX C

RANKING AND RATING PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOR

Discussion Date**Name****Rating and Ranking Activity of Principal Behaviors that Encourage Teachers**

(Adapted from a study of principal behaviors by Jan Richards, 2003)

1. Holds consistent, high standards for all members of the school family (faculty, staff, students)
2. Cares about what makes teachers happy in their jobs
3. Respects & values teachers as professionals
4. Has developed a strong mentor program for new teachers that includes frequent opportunities to observe master teachers
5. Is supportive of teachers in matters of student discipline
6. Respects teachers' preparation time as valuable by working to minimize meetings, duties, and unnecessary paperwork
7. Provides adequate resources and supplies to do the job
8. Encourages teachers to improve in areas of teaching practice and professional development
9. Has an open-door policy – accessible, available, willing to listen
10. Sees the principal role as protector, problem solver, nurturer and encourager
11. Is highly visible in classrooms
12. Gives suggestions and guidance in teaching practice
13. Gives praise and acknowledgement of a job well done
14. Is fair, honest, trustworthy
15. Respects differences in teaching styles
16. Respects teachers' wish for autonomy
17. Values teacher input and opinion and gives teachers opportunities for responsibility and decision-making
18. Is a motivator and team builder who encourages collaboration
19. Demonstrates warmth, friendliness to teachers and students
20. Is interested in his/her teacher as a person
21. Supports teachers with parents
22. Is highly visible in school campus

Please rank the numbers of what **you** consider the three top behaviors in the order of what you think is most important. If you think a behavior should be considered as one of the top three, but is not listed, write it on the line below.

Rank 1) # _____ 2) # _____ 3) # _____

other _____