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Diversified Blends: A Case Study of Contemporary Mentoring Experiences.

by

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Abstract

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This study represents a qualitative inquiry into how people are informing, understanding and practising alternative mentoring models as well as what a living contemporary mentoring model for school administrators can look like in a school district organization. This project seeks to provide insight into promising contemporary mentoring practice in order to improve the quality of school administrator mentoring programmes. Multiple forms and levels of data were collected for this project including provincial, school-district level and individualized interviews and observation. Much of the data comes from interviews with twelve school administrators (mentees) as well as the programme developer, current programme coordinator and current mentors.

Through use of case study and social cartography methods this report uses multiple data sources to identify and categorize a ‘hybrid mentoring’ model that blends a strong bond with a personal formal mentor within a network of informal situational and transformation mentoring relationships. Compilation of mentee network diagrams portrays a theoretical mentoring network incorporating dynamic and diverse mentoring relationships. This case study also identifies that contemporary programmes can be designed to address and minimize inappropriate power and organizational aspects of the classic model criticized from feminist and organizational theory perspectives. Furthermore examples in this case study suggest the organizational climate, in particular leadership discontinuity, is a factor to consider in pre-programme development assessment activities.

*Keywords*: mentor, principal, professional development, non-traditional, diverse, dynamic, formal mentor, network.
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Dedication

For my wife Lisa, my critical friend and wise advisor throughout this adventure.
Diversified Blends: A Case Study of Contemporary Mentoring Experiences

Chapter 1

In 2005 the University of Victoria launched a graduate certificate programme for new and aspiring school leaders called the Certificate of School Management and Leadership (CSML). The intent of the programme was to build the leadership capacity in twenty-five aspiring school leaders through a combination of formal on-campus classes and a field inquiry with an assigned veteran administrator as a mentor. I served as the instructor for the field mentoring component and my role was to observe, assess and interact with the group of participants. I was fascinated by the opportunity and I thought at the time (thought being the operative word here) that I had a sound conceptual understanding of mentoring because of my educator training and experience working with fledgling teachers in schools. I quickly discovered significant gaps in my knowledge and started to experience what Festinger (1957) refers to as cognitive dissonance which he describes as an uncomfortable feeling caused by holding conflicting ideas simultaneously. This experience marked the starting point of my pursuit to resolve the conceptual contradictions that I perceived in mentoring theory and practice. This quest was sparked from reading the CSML participants’ reflective journals.

Many wrote about fulfilling mentoring experiences however there were others whose unsatisfactory experiences became apparent through their reflective writing and email interactions with me. Some of the participants complained about their mentors being out of context, out of touch or simply out of time. What disturbed me the most were the cases in which the relationship with the assigned mentor had no positive impact on the mentee. In two of the cases I became an unofficial surrogate mentor filling the gap.
left by the abandonment of the assigned mentoring relationship. I also noticed that some participants, regardless of the quality of their assigned mentoring relationship, were making mentoring connections with other people; participants, colleagues, other participant’s mentors, CSML staff as well as people from outside of the CSML programme. This whole experience caused me to question my mentoring paradigm as I could not understand why mentoring, which I believed to be intended as a benevolent social construct, had the potential to harm people and result in failed relationships and unachieved goals. It is this dissonance about mentoring success, as well as my curiosity about the development of unsanctioned mentoring relationships I observed, that has motivated me, for personal, academic and professional reasons, to learn more about mentoring.

**Background to the Problem**

To get a better understanding about the relationship between mentoring and school principal professional development it is important to look at the contextual links. The root of the problem, in a nutshell, is a significant shortage of school administrators in British Columbia as well as many other Canadian and international regions. This problem was first identified over a decade ago when reports started to suggest that a gap was being created by an aging population of professionals in education who were reaching retirement age. The Canadian Association of Principals (CAP) estimated in 1999 that 30 to 50% of principals would retire in the next 5 to 7 years. In 2003 CAP confirmed that “the shortage, as predicted in 1999, has become a reality” (CAP, 2003, p. 1). Similarly, The United States National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP, n.d.) in the mid-1990’s predicted similar shortages because principals were retiring earlier
(average age: 57) which would likely lead to a continuing turn-over rate exceeding 40 percent in the next decade.

This retirement gap however, is further complicated by a growing trend in which fewer qualified candidates seeking administrative positions and higher rates of attrition of new replacements. Grimmett and Echols (2001) suggest that the lack of interest in the principal’s job from quality, experienced candidates in BC school districts, “could arise to constitute a serious problem for the school system” (p. 10). Villani (2006) notes that there are reports from regions in the United States indicating first year principal attrition in the range of twenty-five percent.

It seems that the principal’s job has become unattractive to skilled educators because of the stressors associated with the position. Grimmett and Echols (2001) suggest that the idea of working over 60 hours per week is a major detractor for teachers considering the principalship. Villani suggests that the growing trend is that the demands of personal and work lives conflict while Barth (2006, cited in Villani, 2006) argues that the growing list of expectations placed on principals is unsustainable. In addition to the stressors associated with added workloads and responsibility the organizational structure of the principalship is professionally and personally isolating.

Teachers are surrounded by teaching colleagues within the building while principals are often the sole administrator on-site. Kirkham (1995) suggests that new principals are more isolated than new teachers because of their position in the school and while new teachers can turn to colleagues in the building for help new principals cannot. This is because, as Villani (2006) and Kirkham (1995) suggest, school organizations (and individuals within them) tend to believe “leaders are supposed to lead; they do not need
help” (Kirkham, 1995, p. 80). Villani (2006) also suggests that the predominate view in hiring new principals is an unrealistic expectation for immediate high level performance. Isolation exacerbates the problem of initial professional performance expectations placed upon new administrators because they must perform but cannot ask for help. While this study is not about the problems of the principal shortage it is important to recognize that the topic is intertwined with issues related to mentoring. The preparation and hiring of large numbers of new principals will likely result in more mentoring activities because inclusion of a mentor for new school leaders is popular practice in the education profession (Bolam et al, 1995; Bush & Coleman, 1995; Daresh, 1995; Duran, 2003; Jussella, 2004; Kirkham, 1995; Villani, 2006). Mentoring is described as being very beneficial for new and aspiring principals and a critical part of their success in a new role (Andrews, 2003; Blackman, 1993; Bolam et al, 1995; Bush & Coleman, 1995; Daresh, 1995; Jussella, 2004; Kirkham, 1995; Villani, 2006).

**Mentoring**

Mentoring is often portrayed as a benevolent social construct that benefits, to varying degrees, the mentor, the mentee and the organization (Andrews, 2003; Bennis, 1989; Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004; Darwin, 2000; Hay, 1995; Levinson, 1978; Lipton & Wellman, 2003; Malderez & Bodóczky, 1999; Pryce, 2006; Stoddard, 2003; Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 2000; Villani, 2006; Zey, 1984). The popular classic mentoring model of mentoring is based on a senior/junior hierarchical dyad whereby the senior/expert mentor passes on wisdom and experience to the junior/novice mentee. This model, which dates back to ancient Greek civilization, has been the enduring and
prevalent social construct. There is however growing contemporary criticism of the classic relationship structure.

**Classic critiques.** There are critics of classic mentoring who argue that traditional mentoring methodology and models are no longer appropriate or effective. Using feminist and critical theory frameworks some scholars (Dahle, 1998; Hansman, 2001; Hay, 1995; Stalker, 1994) argue that mentoring, as a patriarchal structure, disadvantages women and minorities as it simply replicates dominant organizational values. Others argue, based on technology and social structure perspectives (Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004; Darwin, 2000; Hay, 1995), that the classic mentoring model is no longer valid. Their reasoning is that the traditional pool of hierarchical mentors has been lost as modern organizations become flatter and more diversified. Furthermore because of rapid technological change any remaining classic mentors (senior employees) may not have the knowledge or experience to suit the context of newcomers. In other words, the classic wisdom of the senior mentor is no longer relevant as it has been made obsolete due to technological or social changes.

Another concern expressed in the literature is a gap in the current body of mentoring knowledge because current contemporary definitions are often misunderstood or flawed in design (Bolam et al, 1995; Carden, 1990; Clawson, 1980; Malderez & Bodóczky, 1999; Merriam, 1983; Porter, 2001; Samier, 2000; Semeniuk & Worral, 2000; Stensrud, 2002). Many of the activities described in the literature are based on the traditional model of mentoring, with one person passing on their greater wisdom and experience to another. However, some confuse mentoring with other methods, such as coaching or counselling which are not mentoring in the original sense of the word (Hay,
1995). This lack of clarity in the field of mentoring could be characterized as practice-rich but theory-poor (Clawson, 1980; Daresh, 1995; Samier, 2000; Stromei, 1999). Although “serious attention has not been paid to this issue by the scholarly community” (Daresh, 1995, p. 8) to mentoring, it is nevertheless a critical area.

**Contemporary alternatives.** The classic senior to junior conceptualization of mentoring is not the only model that exists and there are counter narratives to consider in the literature that describe models that reduce the patriarchal aspects of mentoring and others that develop more complex theories of relationship networks and revisions of the role responsibilities. Dahle (1998) and Stalker (1994) describe alternate approaches that incorporate strategies which contradict the classic model; diversity in mentor/mentee pairings, non-hierarchical mentors, multiple mentors, mentees seeking out mentors and reciprocal mentoring relationships. These scholars suggest that mentoring from a feminist perspective can offer the opportunity for an alternative methodology that endorses resistance and transformation to patriarchal cultures and critiques existing social power bases.

**Evolving theories**

The classic mentoring model incorporates a polarized pairing of a senior and junior in a mentoring relationship however there are alternative models that conceptualize mentoring as a more complex network of multiple relationships (Baugh & Scandura, 1999; Hay, 1995; Higgins & Kram, 2001) whereby a protégé has a network of mentors, each providing different functions. Furthermore, Stanley and Clinton (1992) and Eby (1997) propose alternative models of mentoring based on the form of relationship (lateral and hierarchical) and the skill developed (job-related and career-related). The mentoring
literature has taken new directions, suggesting more complex networks of relationships as an alternative to the traditional pairing.

Clutterbuck and Lane (2004) suggest that mentoring has changed radically in the non-US world where sponsorship and management in the classic mentor-protégé relationship has been replaced with learning alliances, where “the mentor often acquires as much insight as the mentee… and where the focus is on helping the learner achieve independence and self-reliance” (p. xvi). While the learning alliances concept seems very similar to Hay’s (1995) developmental alliances, Clutterbuck and Lane (2004) go further by asserting that mentoring is situational. The point that they make is that the perception of mentor competences has evolved, from an assumption that all or most of the skills required are generic, to a recognition that they are, in large part, situational based upon the needs of the participants. The example they use is that “skills required of an adult assisting an underachieving schoolchild are not the same as those needed by the mentor working with a senior corporate executive” (2004, p. xvii). Their point, in other words, is that mentoring is mentee-driven and the interactions must be based upon the needs and circumstances of the mentee. This raises the question about what sort of burden a situational mentoring perspective could have on a mentor considering the potential complexity of the role and required skill sets.

**Statement of the Problem**

As noted, schools in British Columbia are facing leadership succession challenges and mentoring is being employed to provide on-the-job support for new and aspiring administrators. Classic mentoring models are seen as ineffective in contemporary organizations and in some circumstances detrimental to the people in the relationship and
their organization. There are alternate conceptualizations of mentoring that take into consideration changing social and organizational climates however, there is limited scholarly attention to these alternate models. Although scholars have examined the benefits of classic mentoring programmes and strengthening traditional mentor-mentee relationships, there is little research that focuses on alternative mentoring programmes in the field (Daresh, 1995; Samier, 2001). Furthermore scholarly study and research findings do not reach field practitioners to inform their practice and so the inconsistent classic mentoring model remains the predominant structure.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study will contribute to the body of knowledge of mentoring research by asking “What contributions does the study of a contemporary (non traditional) mentoring model for new school administrators in BC provide to existing and emerging scholarship in mentor-led leadership learning processes?” This question takes into account that people involved in an innovative mentoring structure (such as mentees, mentors, programme leaders and professional association executives) have a story to tell and can provide important information about contemporary mentoring practice. Examining their experiences and understandings of mentoring might enable better theory-practice connections. Due to the popularity and growth of mentoring programmes this type of investigation is needed to understand how people are informing, understanding and practicing alternative mentoring models as well as what a living contemporary mentoring model can look like in a school district organization.

The intent of the study is to illuminate how alternative forms of mentoring benefit new school leaders and school districts as well as what can be learned from the lived
experiences of those within the programme. In other words, this study is an examination of a case where there is non-traditional mentoring for new principals in order to gain an appreciation of their experiences and a better understanding of a non-traditional mentoring model. From a methodological perspective the research plan is to inquire into how the use of social mapping can reveal new understandings of the mentor/mentee relationship and if the complexity of the mentorship can be better understood and represented through the use of diagrams.

**Significance of the Study**

As previously noted there is growing literature to suggest that while popularized as beneficial, ill-conceived mentoring can be damaging to individuals and organizations. This perceived discrepancy between popular belief and potential risk is an opportunity to look for deeper understanding of mentoring practice. Due to the popularity and growth of mentoring programmes this opportunity to improve the understanding and practice in the field of mentoring has the potential to have positive social benefits, particularly for new recruits to the principalship. As there is limited scholarly review of contemporary mentoring alternatives this further supports the need for this research activity and highlights the potential value of the information to the mentoring community, both scholars and practitioners alike.

**Research Process**

The plan for this project was to conduct a qualitative study examining a school district in BC that is using a non-traditional mentoring model for new school-based administrators (principals & vice-principals). The goal was to provide an overview of the non-traditional mentoring model as well as to gain an understanding of the participants’
mentoring experiences. The identification and recruitment of participants was a three-step process that began by contacting provincial-level school leadership associations then moved to school district administration and finally the individual participants. Data gathering approaches included on-site and at-a-distance interactions with participants. The collection methods included the use of electronic surveys, personal on-site or telephone interviews as well as telephone and email communication. An in-depth review of the recruitment and fieldwork process as well as references to the field documentation and examples of the materials can be found in the attached appendices and in Chapter Three.

**Methodology**

There is no shortage of qualitative options in educational research and discussions about categorizing the methodology in the literature ranges from five to over twenty research traditions or strategies (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Jacob, 1987; Tesch, 1990; Wolcott, 1992). Research traditions have various strengths and weaknesses and as such it is reasonable to suggest that a mixed methodology can build on the strengths of each type of method used and minimize the weaknesses of using a single approach (Creswell, 1998; Frechling & Sharp, 1997). The plan for this research project is to incorporate three traditions; case-study, social cartography and narrative inquiry into a blended-methods qualitative study. The goal is to provide a written and graphical dissertation incorporating narratives to describe data interpretations. More will be said about each of these methods and their suitability for my research question in Chapter 3, Methodology.
Conclusion

This dissertation comes as a result of a lived experience and the personal dissonance that resulted from being part of a scripted and planned traditional mentoring model that unfortunately for some participants had inconsistent results. Though mentoring is popular practice and is being used as part of the remedy for the current challenge of replacing large-scale retirements in the ranks of school administrators there are flaws with the current outcomes. Much of the problem relates to the professional working conditions for contemporary school administrators however the current use of traditional mentoring models may not be an adequate solution. The traditional mentoring model, though wide-spread and enduring the test of time may no longer be appropriate and due to changes in the social organizations and technologies may actually be counter-productive.

There are some non-traditional mentoring alternatives discussed in the body of literature however scholars are also noting that the field generally lacks scholarly focus and there is also a gap between theory and the practice in the field. The intention of this research activity is to gain an understanding of a non-traditional mentoring programme for new principals currently used in a BC school district. The plan is to identify the experiences of the participants in this programme and compare the practices to modern theoretical models of mentoring. In addition to an overview of the programme there will be a focus on the participants’ perspective at their active level of mentoring and to gain insight into the mentoring relationships. The goal in the end is to describe the experiences of participants, mentor and mentee alike, in a non-traditional mentoring model as well as to graphically portray the mentoring relationships and connections.
Study Overview

This written report is divided into six chapters and the information is organized to provide the reader a theoretical background followed by the research methodology, study data, findings, and a conclusion. Chapter 2 touches on the challenges of the principalship and the use of mentoring for professional development. This chapter also introduces the idea that mentoring theory and practice is evolving in response to changing social constructs. Chapter 3 sets the stage for the research activities by describing the context of the research participants as well as the qualitative blend of case study, narrative inquiry and social cartography research methods chosen for this work. The data findings and analysis is divided into two chapters with the historical context of the mentoring programme reported in Chapter 4 and the mentee experiences being the focus of Chapter 5. The final chapter focuses on the analytic process and key programme findings. The focus is on a hybrid mentoring model that blends formal and informal mentoring within a diverse network of relationships as well as the continuing significance of the classic formal mentor within the network structure.
Chapter 2

This chapter will explore the existing literature and scholarship of mentoring and document primary and relevant themes. Merriam (2001) explains that, “a literature review is a narrative essay that integrates, synthesizes, and critiques the important thinking and research on a particular topic” (p. 55). The literature review for this study provides a background for the analysis of the mentoring programme experience data collected in one British Columbia school district by identifying the current understanding and theoretical underpinnings for mentoring within the context of formal school leaders. The argument will be that mentoring on the whole is a popularized practice that has gaps in the body of knowledge that can be linked to misunderstood and confusing definitions and conceptualizations of what constitutes mentoring.

The problem will be linked to the combination of a limited academic research base and the prevalence of the traditional and outdated, polarized relationship model (also referred to in this study as the “classic approach” to mentoring). The literature will also show that the traditional form of mentoring, while providing a good deal of benefit to protégé and mentor alike, has inherent structural flaws that can intensify the negative impact of social and professional pressures on individuals and organizations. Mentoring is not however without merit and can provide the potential building blocks, with an appropriate paradigm shift, to become the foundation for a mentoring culture that can build bonds of trust and promote the interests of the individual within a focus on the common good and organizational goals. Classic mentoring practices and theory will be critiqued and alternative contemporary mentoring theories, founded on learning, leadership and critical social theory will be explored.
A mentoring connection

A critical step for this discussion is to consider the context and conditions that are driving the demands for mentoring activities to support school administrators. The starting point in this case is the topic of school administrator shortages in school systems and this literature review will highlight articles that address the topic of principal shortages. One will see that the shortage is being linked to the mass retirement of the baby-boomer generation and as such school systems will need to recruit many replacements (CAP, 2003; Dukowski, 2006; Grimmett & Echols, 2001; NAESP, n.d.). The literature review will also highlight that the problem is further complicated by shortages of suitable replacement candidates and high levels of newcomer attrition (CAP, 2003; Dukowski, 2006; Glasspool, 2007; Grimmett & Echols, 2001; Guterman, n.d.; NAESP, n.d.; Villani, 2006). Both of these problems are attributed to the unappealing and stressful working environments for school administrators. These aspects of the principal shortage are important to the context because mentoring plays a prominent role in the current principal shortage debate.

Mentoring is considered to be very beneficial for new and aspiring principals and a critical part of their success (Andrews, 2003; Blackman, 1993; Bolam et al, 1995; Bush & Coleman, 1995; Daresh, 1995; Glasspool, 2007; Jussella, 2004; Kirkham, 1995; Villani, 2006). Bush and Coleman (1995) suggest that effective mentoring reduces professional isolation and provides valuable feedback. Samier (2000) describes mentoring, historically, as the primary mode of administrative preparation and regardless of pre-service training opportunities the “classical mentor still plays a critical complementary role” (p. 98) for new principals. Samier (2000) also notes that classical
mentoring, “while disadvantageous or even damaging in some individual cases” (p. 98) is still generally beneficial to the development of new principals and is critical to their advancement.

Principal shortages

In 1999, the Canadian Association of Principals (CAP) expressed concerns that an aging population of professionals in education would create such a significant principal shortage that they referred to it as a Leadership Crisis. Their estimations were that 30 to 50% of principals would retire in the ensuing 5 to 7 years. CAP later confirmed in 2003 that, “the shortage, as predicted in 1999, has become a reality” (CAP, 2003, p. 1). The report noted that there were schools starting the year without a principal while others were recruiting retired principals back into the office. Schools in the United States share similar experiences and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) predicted in the mid 1990’s that as many as 50 percent of school principals would retire by the year 2000. NAESP found that principals were retiring earlier (average age: 57) and more than half of those employed planned to retire as soon as they became eligible. The NAESP report also notes the likelihood of a continuing turn-over rate of over 40 percent in the next decade would be further complicated by the growing trend that fewer qualified candidates would seek administrative positions. Four recent American reports (2002 to 2006) from the US Bureau of Labor and Statistics, National Association of Elementary and Secondary Principals, Northeast Regional Elementary School Principal’s Council, and the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry all indicate large-scale retirements, in the neighborhood of 50%, will occur within ten years among currently serving principals (Glasspool, 2007).
In British Columbia (BC) the President of the British Columbia Principals and Vice-Principals’ Association (BCPVPA) recently stated that BC faced, “the prospect of needing record numbers of new principals and vice-principals – 1,000 in the next five years” (Dukowski, 2006, p. 1) while the British Columbia School Superintendents’ Association (BCSSA) reports that one-third of current principals are within the typical retirement age of 56-59 years. Grimmett and Echols (2001) indicate that in the ten year period between 1999 and 2009 we can expect to see “a net estimated loss to retirement of 13,300 educators.” (p. 5). Grimmett and Echols (2001) also discovered during a study of BC teachers that there was an impending shortage of school principals in BC which was a finding that they admitted to being unexpected. These sources provide evidence that practitioners, senior administration and academics agree that the shortage of principals in BC is a legitimate concern: the root of the problem, however, seems even more alarming.

**Lack of replacements.** The problem is not that the current cadre of principals is retiring but that there are not enough suitable replacements willing to fill the void. The problem is an issue of quantity and quality: too few people want the principal’s job and of those who do, many are either too inexperienced or are otherwise unsuitable for the position. This point is noted by Grimmett and Echols (2001) who found that in their study that BC school districts were complaining of the thinness of applicants for administrative positions. The thinness they refer to is characterized by inexperienced professionals with an inadequate foundation of educational leadership values. Grimmett and Echols (2001) argue that senior teachers are no longer attracted to the principalship because they do not consider the administrative role as educational leadership and they do not want to divest themselves from their professional values. According to Grimmett and Echols (2001) the
result is that less experienced teachers are applying for administrative positions. These candidates, who lack professional field experience, align themselves with the managerial nature of administration which does not fit the profile of educational leadership.

This finding is also significant in other parts of Canada. CAP (2003) indicates that in northern regions of Canada there are many instances where teachers in their first or second year of teaching are being appointed as principals to meet the legal requirements of every school having a principal. To put this problem into blunt perspective, quality, experienced candidates no longer want the principal’s job and the lack of acceptable replacements is a serious concern.

**Aspects of the principalship**

Much of the research tends to focus on a similar trend, the principal’s job, which, at the risk of understatement, has become unattractive to skilled educators. CAP (2003) suggests that the problem stems from the principalship being out of balance with the ever increasing importance that individuals are placing on quality of life. Grimmett and Echols (2001) argue that the problem has to do with the changes in the job that come from intensification and managerialism, increased stress, existing structures and adversity in the workplace as well as organizational divestment by senior teachers (p.12). In the USA, the NAESP identified the top three discouraging factors for those considering becoming principals as: insufficient compensation, too much time commitment, and the stressful nature of the job. Other professional organizations and academics report similar detractors (CAP, 2003; Glasspool, 2007; Guterman, n.d.; Umpleby, 2002; Villani, 2006). However Grimmett and Echols (2001) state that the BC situation is exacerbated by
entrenched adversarialism between teachers and management in the BC public school system.

All of the above factors are important and serious problems that senior school administrators are facing. However, this study explores a significant additional problem: the situation is worsened by what happens to those replacement candidates who are deemed suitable and become employed as principals. Too many of the new replacements are being lost to attrition (Villani, 2006). This is the gap that mentorship programmes are understood to address.

**Increasing adversarialism.** This issue of adversarialism identified above should not be overlooked or underestimated in the British Columbia context as it has important implications for effective mentorship programmes and their capacity to address retention issues. As such, understanding BC policy making around school administrators provides an important historical context for tracing the roots of such adversarialism. In 1988 the School Act separated administrators from the ranks of teachers and created a governance structure that is peculiar to British Columbia. This decision was government initiated and generated considerable acrimony between school principals and teachers and union leaders. Grimmett and Echols (2001) also suggest that the nature of school administration has changed dramatically since that time and the resulting intensification of the principal’s workload: together with the deeply embedded adversarialism between teachers and administrators, they posit this as being largely responsible for districts having difficulty recruiting highly capable personnel into administrative positions. Grimmett and Echols (2001) state that they, “consider this difficulty and the shortage of
school administrators that could arise to constitute a serious problem for the school system” (p. 10).

This is an unhealthy organizational structure that pits teachers and principals in an adversarial climate of blame and distrust. Though beyond the scope of this discussion, there are many other challenging factors in the BC school system including rapid curricular change, a decade of legislated contracts, teacher strikes, declining enrolment, school closures, reduced funding and increased pressures of accountability and performance. These actions have only served to increase the level of acrimony between teachers and administrators given that school level administrators have now become the conduits through which such changes are mandated. This form of adversarialism is quite possibly what Brenner (2006a) refers to as an ineffective organizational coping pattern of blaming in the face of adversity. In this pattern the goal is to lay responsibility for problems upon others with the intent of preserving personal infallibility. The downfall of this pattern is that there is no opportunity to learn from mistakes or to prevent them from reoccurring. Grimmett and Echols (2001) refer to this as adversarialism while Brenner (2006b) calls it an organizational feud. While these authors use different terms both agree that it saps organizational energy and is a serious job stressor. There are aspects of mentoring, which will be discussed later, that incorporate reflective practice and collaborative problem solving as well as developing personal support networks which can offer some counter-balance to the adversarialism experienced by school administrators.

**Newcomer attrition.** New principal attrition is becoming a serious complication resulting in losses from an already limited pool of quality candidates willing to fill the leadership void. Villani (2006) suggests that this problem is because, “new principals
often face overwhelming, stressful, even bleak situations” (p. 9) and provides examples from the United States where in one district one-third of all principals hired leave the district within the first five years; in another the state board of education reports a first year principal attrition rate of 23 percent. There are many reasons for attrition that relate to the role and environment of the principalship: these issues will be discussed later in this chapter as part of the review of principal’s working conditions. That being said, the issue of attrition, I suggest, is one of the key issues that requires improvement in order to effectively address principal shortages.

It is important to recognize that there is a counter opinion regarding principal shortages. Roza, Celio, Harvey, and Wishon, (2003), in reference to US schools argue that the principal shortage is more about perception than personnel. They suggest a paradigm shift is the answer to the perceived shortage of qualified school leaders. The essence of their argument is that while there might be a shortage of principal candidates that meet the current criteria set by school district human resources departments, there are adequate numbers of potential school leaders if we change the criteria and focus on looking for leadership ability rather than teaching expertise as the benchmark for applicants. Roza et al (2003) recognize that some districts do have difficulties finding principals but they suggest that it is more a problem of distribution rather than a shortage; they assert that overall, “there are far more candidates certified to be principals than there are principal vacancies to fill” (Roza et al, 2003, p. 1). They also suggest that there is very little concrete evidence to show a principal shortage exists in the United States; they use their own study as evidence that such a shortage does not exist.
There is also some local evidence that not everyone perceives there to be a principal shortage. The NAESP hosts a blog called The Principal’s Office and in June 2007 an article by Guterman (n.d.) called Where Have All the Principals Gone was posted. It makes specific reference to the principal shortage and Glasspool’s (2007) article about expected mass retirements of school administrators in the US. Of the 20 blog responses posted by readers, most talked about the challenges of the principalship. However there were two that noted that they did not perceive a principal shortage as they knew of many highly qualified candidates unable to secure a principalship or who had been passed over for a lesser-qualified candidates. Though anecdotal, these personal perspectives within the context of the larger discussion do raise the question whether the shortage is a product of hiring practices rather than a lack of available candidates.

Roza et al (2003) suggest that the supply problem is rooted in the narrow focus of school district human resources departments that use traditional benchmarks of teaching experience as the indicator for principal candidacy. Their study suggests that this approach limits the scope of potential candidates; by looking beyond the educational pool of applicants, they argue that there is an abundance of non-traditional candidates from the sectors of business, law and non-profits who have excellent leadership capabilities and would make excellent school leaders. They acknowledge that non-traditional candidates may lack the educational background; to overcome this limitation, they suggest the appointment of co-principals. This approach would match the strong leadership candidate from the non-traditional field with an educationally trained curricular expert to make a combined school leadership team.
Roza et al (2003) provide an interesting counterview of the problem suggesting that distribution might be a problem for some districts but overall there are more than enough leadership candidates available for the school positions if districts shift their paradigm and look at non-traditional candidates to fill the leadership gap. While this solution might seem a logical approach, the US has a significantly different legal, political and jurisdictional framework for educational services that does not fit the BC context and as such this proposed solution does not provide a viable alternative for BC schools. Given this limitation the original problematic triad; looming retirements, a lack of candidates, and the high attrition of fledgling replacements remains unsolved. Given demographic trends, there is little that can be done about the retirements therefore the focus must turn to the issues of attracting and retaining new principals. In order to do this it is important to have an understanding of the problems and the working conditions for principals as these are key detractors for attracting replacements.

**Personal stress.** A few years ago I interviewed a group of school principals from northern Alberta to determine the impact that their work had upon their personal lives. I am still haunted by the words of one principal who, when asked how he maintained a balance between his work and personal life, told me flatly that he did not have time for a life because all of his time was taken-up by his work at the school. It was apparent to me that this was not the lifestyle he wanted; he abandoned the principalship the following year after three years in the post. This is an example of what Villani (2006) describes as the growing trend where demands of personal and work lives conflict. As a result principals are leaving the profession because they “want a life outside of the principalship” (p.7).
There are numerous stressors mentioned in the literature to consider at this stage of the discussion. This next section will highlight the suggestions that principals, newcomers and veterans alike, can face the stress of unsustainable performance expectations, unhealthy professional norms as well as the structural problem of isolation. BC researchers Grimmett and Echols (2001) characterize the principals in BC as the most demoralized group in the public school system. They summarize the BC situation like this: “The increased work load, the low hourly pay, the adversarial conditions, and the managerial nature of the administration all combine to make the job unattractive and potentially harmful to personal health and life-style” (p. 14). This negative statement about the nature of the principalship is also echoed in other educational literature that describes the work of the school principal as highly demanding and unsustainable (Barth in Villani, 2006; CAP, 2003; Fullan, 1991; Glasspool, 2007; Guterman, n.d.; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Kirkham, 1995; Umpleby, 2002; Villani, 2006). However, before one can consider possible mentoring solutions it is important to comprehend the magnitude of the challenges.

**Performance norms.** A painful irony of the teaching profession is the predominant attitude that once hired a fledgling teacher is expected to perform at the same high standard as a veteran colleague (Lipton & Wellman, 2003). It seems that this misguided expectation also prevails for principals. For new principals in particular there is the unrealistic expectation that once hired they will perform at a high level of proficiency without delay (Kirkham, 1995; Villani, 2006). Villani (2006) suggests the dominate view for hiring new principals is the expectation of a high degree of performance at the beginning of their employment. This “here’s the job, now go do it…
and do it well” attitude is not only callous but unrealistic because it takes time for a new principal to reach a high-level of proficiency.

Kirkham (1995) suggests that it can take three to seven years of service before a school principal reaches maximum efficiency because it takes time for the newcomer to develop the skills and understanding necessary to plan and effectively execute different activities. Barth (2006, cited in Villani, 2006) describes the beginning phase of a new principalship as a time of vulnerability, confusion and peril so it seems both unfair and unrealistic to expect a new principal to perform the same as a veteran without the benefit of time to develop the knowledge and expertise necessary for high-performance. Adding to the pressure is the burden of an ever-increasing list of duties, tasks and commitments. While many suggest that the principalship plays an important role in the success of the educational system (Connors, 2000; Glickman et al, 2001; Schumaker & Sommers, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1996) they are also bearing a disproportionate share of responsibility and accountability. The role of the principal is becoming, “dramatically more complex, overloaded, and unclear” (Fullan, 1991, p. 144).

Barth (2006, cited in Villani, 2006) describes the growing list of expectations placed on principals as both enormous and unsustainable. Principals are expected to commit many extra hours to their work: Villani (2006) reports that in the USA a principal commonly works 60 to 80 hours per week. British Columbia principals share similar experiences with their American counterparts. Grimmett and Echols’ (2001) study of the BC education system in 2001 noted that the idea of working over 60 hours per week is a major detractor for teachers considering the principalship. When they questioned experienced teachers about their interest in pursuing a principalship one of the main
reasons offered for not wanting the job was: “by the time one has worked 60 hours a week and come in for every crisis at the school on the weekend, evenings or during the summer, the hourly pay is not very good” (p. 13). Not only does this extra time commitment mean less time for a personal life but it also devalues any additional pay that accompanies the principalship because of the overtime that is expected.

**The double-entendre of delegation.** While it may seem unfair for people to expect the principal to be available whenever there is a problem, it is equally unfair to confront them with conflicting expectations. Villani (2006) describes how districts and school communities expect principals to have a life yet keep piling more work onto them, simultaneously sending mixed messages about delegation. Delegation, it seems, has become a double-edged sword because, “when principals try to share responsibilities with other school personnel, they may be perceived as avoiding some of their work” (Villani, 2002, p. 7). On the other hand there are educational scholars proposing models of *distributed leadership* (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Mascall, Leithwood, Strauss, & Sacks, 2008) that are intended to help make the principalship more attractive to those interested in *educationally focused* leadership. The essence of this argument is that leadership is not solely the function of the principal, but that teachers and teacher leaders (such as department heads) also play important roles in leading instructional innovation.

Hargreaves and Fink (2006) warn about the harm that can occur to the educational system because of leadership burn out and argue that it is imperative that leadership is both “durable and sustainable” (p.2). In order to achieve this type of educational leadership Hargreaves and Fink (2006) propose a model comprising of seven principles including *breadth* which refers to *distributed leadership*. Their argument is that in our
complex world “no one leader, institution, or nation can or should control everything” (p. 19) and they equate this idea to the education system suggesting that sustainable school leadership must be spread out across the school and school system. Mascall, Leithwood, Strauss and Sacks (2008) suggest that various sources of leadership within an organization can reach an alignment of values and agree upon which resource will carry-out a particular leadership function. One can find examples from the field (McQuarrie & McRae, 2010; McRae & Parsons, 2007) that highlight the capacity of distributed leadership to be instrumental in both changing school cultures and improving student learning (McRae & Parsons, 2007). Unfortunately it appears that delegation or distribution of leadership is still labelled by some as shirking professional leadership responsibilities. This leads to the next challenge for principals, the apparent and practiced norms of the professional culture.

There appears to be a serious gap between the expectations of the professional culture and what is considered to be either physically and emotionally healthy or sustainable for a human being in a leadership role. Ironically, the profession honours and values those things that are in themselves the source of much stress. There is an unspoken discourse in education that seemingly values a hands-off or trial-by-fire initiation for newcomers. Lipton & Wellman (2003) suggest that veteran teachers do not offer help to new teachers, possibly out of fear that they will be perceived as meddling. Kirkham (1995) notes that for administrators, the system, and in particular school governing authorities, hold a common belief that “leaders are supposed to lead; they do not need help” (p. 80). Barth (2006, cited in Villani, 2006) suggests that, “there seems to be a taboo in our profession against both disclosing our problems to others and giving
assistance to others who have problems” (p. xii). He suggests that the problem is two-fold. First, as a profession, principals are forbidden to share problems and secondly, the growing prevalence of competition in education is pitting principals against each other with the motivation that an underperforming colleague will make the others look better. Not only does it seem that there are strains of professional indifference towards newcomers but as a culture, principals are idolizing those who epitomize all that is unhealthy and unbalanced in the work.

**Isolation.** Another challenge in education is personal and professional isolation caused by a model of sole practitioners that is by its nature isolating individuals within the organization (Buckingham, 1996; Glickman et al, 2001; Kirkham, 1995). School buildings physically compartmentalize teachers into solitary workspaces (the bounds of the classroom walls) and educational constructs socially isolate practitioners with individualized schedules, duties and classroom assignments. There is also evidence to suggest that while isolation happens to both teachers and principals in the school system it is worse for principals (Barth, 2006 cited in Villani, 2006; Glickman et al, 2001; Kirkham, 1995).

Teachers, though isolated by physical and organizational structures are surrounded by teaching colleagues within the building whereas principals, in particular those in smaller or geographically remote schools, usually work in much greater isolation as they are often the sole administrator in the building. For new principals this a concern because unless they are assigned to be a vice-principal in a larger school their first experience is most likely to be the principal in a small school and thus they will be
experiencing their new role in solitude (Buckingham, 1996; Glickman et al, 2001; Kirkham, 1995).

Kirkham (1995) suggests that new principals are more isolated than new teachers because of their position in the school and that the responsibility of their role separates them from the staff. New teachers can turn to the staff for informal mentoring and assistance but new principals cannot because there is the risk, as Villani (2006) suggests, of “being perceived as incompetent” (p. 10). It seems that isolation exacerbates the problem of initial professional performance expectations placed upon new administrators; not only do we expect them to perform immediately but we also expect them to perform alone, without the ability to ask for help or to delegate tasks. As Barth (2006 cited in Villani, 2006) describes it, a new principalship is fraught with risk and peril: “I have never felt as vulnerable, so much at risk, so clueless, and as innocent as I did that first year as a principal… after which I was fired!” (p. xii).

As this section of the literature review makes clear, the profession is losing good people, teachers, administrators and those potential administrators needed to replace the wave of retirees. Fortunately, professional organizations, governing authorities and universities have recognized that these are serious issues and are working towards a solution or at least amelioration of the problem. Mentoring, as will be discussed in the next segment of this review, plays a prominent role in the proposed solutions.

Mentoring new principals

Porter (2001) suggests that mentoring has been around in the education profession for over a generation but has gained prominence in recent times: “Mentoring is no longer considered an option… the educational establishment has made mentoring its premier
modality for inducting, retaining, and developing new teachers” (p. x). The preparation and hiring of large numbers of new principals will likely result in more mentoring activities in BC as the inclusion of a mentor for new school leaders is popular practice in the education profession and mentoring is also gaining prevalence in university pre-service training for school leaders (Bolam et al, 1995; Bush & Coleman, 1995; Daresh, 1995; Duran, 2003; Jussella, 2004; Kirkham, 1995; Villani, 2006). Many government agencies are now requiring school leader preparation programmes. Daresh (1995) reported that in addition to university-based pre-service programmes for school leaders, “more than 20 states currently have, or will soon have, mandated mentoring programmes required for all beginning administrators” (p. 7). More recently, Villani (2006) noted that “legislation is mandating ways to induct new administrators, emphasizing the roles of professional development, observation and networking with successful administrators, and mentoring” (p. 14).

Along the same theme the British Columbia Ministry of Education has also supported new principal mentoring and professional growth through the development of the British Columbia Educational Leadership Council BCELC and the University of Victoria Certificate in School Management and Leadership (CSML) programme, both of which the development of leadership through mentoring. While the concept of mentoring is currently being proposed from many sectors as a possible solution to the problems related to the induction and support of new school leaders, there is also a degree of paradox to mentoring as it offers both promise and peril for professional and personal development of new principals. This section of the literature review will entertain the
idea that while mentoring is widely accepted in many programmes and scholarship, it is also often very misunderstood as to its benefit, application and value.

**Mixed benefits.** Mentoring is described by many writers as very beneficial for new and aspiring principals and a critical factor for their success (Andrews, 2003; Blackman, 1993; Bolam et al, 1995; Bush & Coleman, 1995; Daresh, 1995; Jussella, 2004; Kirkham, 1995; Samier, 2000; Villani, 2006). Villani (2006) emphasizes that mentoring is essential to the support and preparation of new principals in their first year. She argues that mentoring provides “significant support for new principals as they tackle the challenges that await them” (p. 9) and is a critical component in new principal success. Bush and Coleman (1995) concur as their research in England shows that mentoring is significant in the professional development of head teachers (principals). Their findings suggest that “effective mentoring reduces professional isolation, provides support and feedback on performance and gives confidence to new heads during a period of change and uncertainty” (p. 73). Bolam et al (1995) argue that serious consideration should be given to the view that all new school leaders “should be entitled to mentoring support as one component of their management development” (p. 43).

There are other scholars who suggest that mentoring might not be very beneficial to new principals and there are serious matters that seem to contradict perceived benefits of mentoring for new school leaders. One line of the argument is that there is confusion about the role of the mentor in regard to the principalship. Bolam et al (1995) suggest that the favoured use of mentoring is flawed because it concentrates too much on encouraging *reflective practice*. They assert that new school leaders “sometimes want practical advice about specific problems” (p. 41) and as a result they believe that it is
desirable for a mentor to be prepared to give practical guidance and timely advice when it is appropriate. Bush and Coleman (1995) question the rigor of mentoring suggesting that while it is valuable in supporting principals in adapting to the new role, mentoring programmes may lack the rigor for effective professional development.

Most of the literature reviewed in considering mentorship as a practice for professional growth portrays mentoring as both a popular and beneficial method for supporting and developing new school principals. In addition, regardless of profession or social circumstances, a common theme in much of the literature conceptualizes mentoring as a benevolent social construct for newcomers in general. According to Zey (1984), who proposes a mutual benefits theory for mentoring, the mentee benefits by receiving skills, knowledge, support, and protection and promotion. The mentor on the other hand can realize job assistance, prestige, and loyalty, while the organization benefits from development of employees, managerial success, reduced turnover, and increased worker productivity. The benefits of mentoring are often discussed in the literature (Andrews, 2003; Bennis, 1989; Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004; Darwin, 2000; Hay, 1995; Levinson, 1978; Lipton & Wellman, 2003; Malderez & Bodóczky, 1999; Pryce, 2006; Stoddard, 2003; Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 2000; Villani, 2006; Zey, 1984) and in general the agreement is that there are positive aspects to mentoring. Many writers suggest that new school leaders (mentees) benefit from mentoring programmes; however there are others who remind us that mentors can also benefit from the experience. Bush and Coleman (1995) for example, suggest that mentors also gain from the process including “reappraisal of their own practice” (p. 73) prompted by the interaction with the new school leader they are mentoring. The literature also generalizes that the
organization benefits significantly from improved employee performance and retention. Considering the attrition concerns regarding new school leaders highlighted earlier in this chapter, the latter benefit might be an important consideration. There is some dissonance however from those critical of popular mentoring practice as to degree of benefit enjoyed by the mentor, the mentee and the organization and there are differing opinions as to who benefits the most and at what social cost to the others (Dahle, 1998; Hansman, 2001; Hay, 1995; Samier, 2000).

The chapter one anecdotes about the CSML mentoring experience showed that mentoring is not fail-safe approach and actually can have the potential to be harmful to participants. These concepts will be discussed later in the mentoring theory section of this chapter, however it is important to keep in mind at this point that the value of classical mentoring, “while disadvantageous or even damaging in some individual cases” (Samier, 2000, p. 98) is still generally beneficial. Samier (2000) also suggests that mentoring, historically, has been the primary mode of administrative preparation and even though there has been a prolific growth in graduate programmes specifically designed to train and certify administrators the “classical mentor still plays a critical complementary role” (2000, p. 98) to the development of new principals and is critical to their advancement.

A problem of definition

Part of the problem is likely related to the misunderstandings and confusion regarding the conceptualization of mentoring. Stensrud (2002) reports that mentoring of new vice-principals can be compromised because the parties-- mentor and mentees--misunderstand the definition of mentoring. Daresh (1995) suggests that mentoring for new school leaders does not have a sound theoretical foundation because there has been
no systematic research of the existing programmes and there is an overall lack of scholarly attention in the field. This section of the literature review will explore the concept that while popular and prolific, mentoring is neither clearly defined nor well understood.

**Conceptualizing mentoring.** It can be challenging to develop a succinct yet complete description of mentoring: as Grey (2004) recounts, “mentoring is like being a Canadian... it’s easier to define what it isn’t than what it is” (p. 7). Many scholars (Bolam et al, 1995; Carruthers, 1993; Carden, 1990; Clawson, 1980; Malderez and Bodóczky, 1999; Merriam, 1983; Porter, 2001; Samier, 2000; Semeniuk & Worrall, 2000; Stensrud, 2002) note that there are a plethora of definitions for mentoring to be found and “a bewildering range of interpretations of the term” (Malderez & Bodóczky, 1999, p. 4). Some writers suggest that definition, interpretation and misunderstanding all can be influenced by one’s professional perspective or academic background (Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004; Daresh, 1995; Darwin, 2000; Hansman, 2001; Hay, 1995). However, regardless of the range of definition or degree of interpretation, the common element found in most definitions encompasses the concept of an intense interpersonal relationship intended to help a less experienced or struggling person navigate through a new or challenging situation.

There is some variation between writers in the terminology they choose when identifying the relationship roles, with the term *mentor* being most commonly used although also referred to as guide, supporter, associate, critical friend, buddy or mentoring partner. The term *protégé* is also commonplace in the literature but is often substituted with the term *mentee* and, to a lesser extent, participant, newcomer, mentoring
partner or learner. Though there is some variation in the application of the terminology there is not much discussion regarding the basis of the choice. One mentoring consultant commented during a presentation at the 2008 International Mentoring Association Annual Conference that she prefers to use the term protégé because “it sounds nicer.”

Clutterbuck and Lane (2004) provide a rationale for using the terms based on their academic observations. They note that the use of the terms protégé and mentee appears frequently in text and they suggest that protégé tends to be used in a sponsorship type of mentoring relationship. In this type of mentoring the mentor provides both protection and opportunity for growth through networking and opening doors. The term mentee is more commonly used in developmental mentoring where the focus is on the mentored individual’s professional, and or, personal growth. It appears that the terms used for the actors in the mentoring relationships are transposable however, for the purposes of this study I will use mentor and mentee as my primary terminology as I conceptualize mentoring as a developmental social relationship. Note that some terms--such as protégé--will also be used in the discussion as a part of referencing other scholars’ citations and descriptions.

A brief history of mentoring. Semantics aside, there is an archetypal theme for mentoring commonly found in much of the literature. A patriarchal mentoring model is often defined with reference to the mythological character Mentor in Homer’s Odyssey (Carruthers, 1993; Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004; Dahle, 1998; Encarta Dictionary, 2003; Hay, 1995; Lipton & Wellman, 2003; Roberts, 1999; Samier, 2000). While it appears that Homer provided us with the namesake for mentoring, there are those who suggest that the senior-junior pairing exists elsewhere and in eras prior to Homer’s works. Carruthers
(1993) suggests that senior-junior mentoring dyads such as Moses and Joshua or Elijah and Elisha described in the Hebrew Bible predate Homer. The Victoria British Columbia based Peer Systems Consulting Group webpage, a clearing house for articles and information about mentoring managed by Dr. Rey Carr, notes that African scholars have identified mentors as commonplace in Africa long before the ancient Greek civilization existed. Roberts (1999) goes on to suggest that the character Mentor was not actually depicted in a mentoring capacity role until featured in the 18th century work Les Aventures de Télémaque, fils d’Ulysse by the French writer Fenelon. A number of writers including Clutterbuck (2001), Kram (1985), Hay (1995), Darwin (2000), suggest that mentoring has been a long-standing social construct confined to a very narrow set of circumstances and “used as a vehicle for handing down knowledge, maintaining culture, supporting talent, and securing future leadership” (Darwin, 2000, para. 3). Darwin (2000) cites examples of historical mentoring relationships such as Shan Jang which described the passing of the throne by the sovereign to a successor used in pre-revolutionary China. Many references can be found to mentoring in the English feudal system of grooming pages and squires to become knights (Darwin, 2000) and a number of writers (Clutterbuck, 2001; Darwin, 2000; Hay, 1995; Levinson, 1978; Kram, 1985; Samier, 2000 among others) describe mentoring in terms of the apprenticeship models of Medieval Guilds or the practice of patron families supporting talented artists during the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Kram (2004, in Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004) reminds us that “mentors were for the most part a benefit for the privileged few. Princes, statesmen and military officers might be taken under the wing of a more experienced, more powerful patron” (p. xv).
Kram (1985), as well as Darwin (2000) and Clutterbuck (2001), suggests that it has only been in the past 30 years or so that scholarly research, fuelled by a renewed interest in mentoring from learning and leadership theory perspectives, has sparked the beginning of a paradigm shift. Despite this identified shift in focus, it is important to first examine the historical model, which I call classic mentoring because of origin and pervasiveness in the literature. As noted earlier, this model embodies a one-to-one relationship between mentor and mentee and in the majority of cases it is a senior-junior or expert-novice dyad. The essence of this relationship is that a senior person passes on his greater wisdom and experience while guiding and protecting a junior person.

**Contemporary Research on Mentoring**

Regardless of the origins it is clear that mentoring has been a long enduring social construct. Carruthers (1993) cites historical examples of mentor-protégé relationships: two professors, Linacre and Grocyn, mentored Sir Thomas More in the 1490’s; Rembrandt was mentored by Peeter in the early 1600’s; and Charles Darwin was mentored by a professor named Hudson in the 1820’s. Carruthers (1993) also cites more contemporary examples noting that “Gail Sheehy recorded in the 1960’s that her mentor was Margaret Mead; Michael Jackson in press interviews has claimed in the 1970’s Diana Ross was his mentor” (p. 10). These historical examples of renowned people having mentors not only suggest that mentoring has been a long-standing practice but also raises important points about its enduring quality as a contemporary practice.

Up until the mid 1970’s, the classic senior-junior pairing model generally marked the accepted practice in mentoring and there was an underlying exclusivity to the model. The seminal change in mentoring theory was marked in two ways in the 1970’s and early
1980’s. One major milestone was the 1978 work by Levinson, *Seasons in a Man’s Life*, which mentoring scholars (Carruthers, 1993; Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004; Hay, 1995) refer to as a first modern depiction of a mentoring dyad where average people are provided with mentors at critical stages of their lives to help them achieve success in their life path. Levinson (1978) worked from the perspective that an individual's life goes through stages and the structure primarily involves family and work while being shaped by the social and physical environment. He discussed mentoring both from a formal or career perspective of the work setting, as well as from an informal, or family-life setting. He depicted young men being guided in their career pathways by older, successful men and suggested that mentoring was a critical component to career success and played an important part in people’s lives. The other turning point was during the 1980’s. Kram (2004 in Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004) describes this as the decade where “a proliferation of research on mentoring, which resulted in a relatively complex view of the nature of mentoring” (p. xi). This wave of scholarly review and development of mentoring theory began to suggest that mentoring relationships offered a range of career and psychosocial functions as well as benefits to the people and organizations involved.

The customary expert-novice model for the mentor-mentee relationship is often described in a professional context involving one person with more experience guiding a less experienced individual with the intention of promoting their professional development (Daloz, 1999; Harwood, 2004; Hay, 1995; Levinson, 1978; Lipton & Wellman, 2003; Roberts, 1999; Samier, 2000; Villani, 2006; Zey, 1984). Lindstrom and Speck (2004) refer to this as, “expert guidance of one adult to another” (p. 59) although Daloz (1986) describes mentors within organizations or professions as “interpreters of the
environment” (p. 207) who help newcomers to learn to navigate unfamiliar professional or organizational contexts. Harwood (2004) furthers the concept of mentoring as professional acclimatization by suggesting that the foundation of mentoring is the process of sustaining the corporate culture and knowledge. He observed that the “preservation of corporate memory” (p. 11) is a frequent mentoring objective focusing on the transference of the organizational culture to new employees through orientation, career development and learning job skills.

**Relationship models.** Many theorists categorize or describe classic mentoring in distinct streams or themes founded on the typology of the mentoring relationship as either formal or informal (Carruthers, 1993; Daloz, 1986; Hansman, 2001; Levinson, 1978; Malderez & Bodóczky, 1999; Villani, 2006). The main differentiation between the two types of mentoring relationships is that formal mentoring is usually an assigned relationship, something like an arranged marriage with the mentor and protégé assigned by the organizational management. Informal mentoring, on the other hand, is a relationship where the mentor and protégé come together through some attraction or mutual interest, not necessarily within the organization, and their association is entirely dependent on the relationship that is developed between the mentor and protégé.

The predominant mentoring model in organizations is a formally designated professional relationship between an experienced team member paired or matched with someone new to the team or moving into new levels of responsibility. Formal mentoring programmes often incorporate structures based on series of phases in the mentoring relationship and the development of the protégé. Clutterbuck and Lane (2004) argue that mentoring is about transition noting that the notion of personal transition, “whether that
be in personal capability, position or some other achievement” (p. xv) is inherent to many formal mentoring programmes.

There many examples of phased transitional mentoring models in the literature. For example, Clutterbuck and Lane (2004) describe how the Leeds Metropolitan University mentoring study (1995) found “four definable stages these being initial orientation, getting established (‘adolescent’ stage), performing (‘mature’ stage) and ending” (p. 14) which describes mentoring relationships in terms of a life cycle. Kram (1985) also suggests that mentoring relationships can be identified phases and she uses four steps—initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition, to describe the development from a mentor-defined beginning to the eventual separation and redefinition of the relationship by the mentee. Zachary (2000) describes a similar relationship development theme that is divided into a four-stage relationship cycle, prepare, negotiate, enable, and close. The Kram (1985), Leeds (1995) and Zachary (2000) models all depict the mentoring relationship developing in steps or phases that evolve from a point of conception to a conclusion (or redefinition). Gray (1988) on the other hand describes a five-step plan for the mentor/protégé relationship—prescriptive, persuasive, collaborative, confirmative, and successful. This model views the relationship from a leadership continuum perspective. It starts as a mentor-centric relationship with the mentor controlling the interactions through perspective leadership actions. The model evolves as the mentee gains ability and knowledge for self direction and the focus of leadership control shifts from mentor to mentee with the final stage being the mentee’s successful transition to independence.
All of these quasi-stage theory phase models tend to focus on the degree of the mentor’s leadership in the process and the evolution of the relationship as it adapts to the developing strengths and changing needs of the protégé while building a relationship intent on pursuing knowledge and learning. Most models include an early relationship phase in which the foundations of mentor-protégé relational trust are established. From this point, mentors will usually help protégés establish goals then move on to a discovery phase where mentors interact with protégés exploring their interests, beliefs, and rationale for decisions. In the final phase, mentors generally function as role models while challenging protégés to reflect upon their aspiration and to become self-sustaining in their learning and professional development.

Informal mentoring shares the relational aspect of formal mentoring; however it differs in how the relationship between mentor and protégé is initiated. In a formal mentoring programme the members are *assigned* by management. The pitfall in this model is that it is a constructed union that does not necessarily consider the interests and personal characteristics of the individuals and could fail due to the incompatibility of the actors. In an informal mentoring association, however, mentors and protégés come together freely and without managerial direction. The informal type of mentoring relationship occurs as a result of mutual interests and attraction (Daloz, 1986). While assigned mentoring relationships, which are organizational constructs, might only last for the duration of the assigned programme, informal mentoring associations, which are dependent on the relationship developed between the mentor and protégé, may last for many years (Daloz, 1986). In each concept, whether assigned in a hierarchy, peer-to-peer
oriented or of an informal basis, the common thread is that interaction between parties results in a beneficial relationship.

Peer-mentoring is a similar but less formal version in which an assigned relationship is established between professional *equals* where each supports and coaches the other in a collaborative association. Gottesman (2000) refers to this type of relationship as peer-coaching which he describes as a “simple, nonthreatening structure for peers to help each other improve instruction or learning situations” (p. 5). Lindstrom and Speck (2004) illustrate that this is a common and popular practice in schools by providing a structure that pairs teachers in similar situations to give each other professional support and guidance. Both Robertson’s (2008) school leadership coaching model and the work of Villani (2006) on mentoring new school principals highlights a peer-coaching or peer-mentoring partner for professional support and learning. Stanley’s Constellation Model (Stanley & Clinton, 1992) also includes lateral peer mentoring as part of the anchored vertical and horizontal mentoring relationship scheme.

**Mentoring and leadership**

Discussions about mentoring seem to be drawn toward the concepts of teaching, coaching and learning with little discussion as to where mentoring fits within the realms of leadership and management. There is a great deal of leadership literature about the concepts of leadership and management and as such it is too broad to review comprehensively within the bounds of this work. That being said it is important to consider mentoring from a leadership theory perspective as it will provide a framework for conceptualizing the purposes and outcomes of mentoring.
A starting point for this discussion is the Leadership Behaviour Continuum proposed by Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1973). This theory conceptualizes leadership behaviour as a range of decision-making choices from highly autocratic boss-centered to highly democratic subordinate-centered (see figure 1 below). The essence of continuum is that the degree of power over choices and actions can vary between the leader and follower depending on the leadership style that is used.

![Figure 1. Continuum of Leadership Behaviour (Tannenbaum & Schmidt, 1973, p.164)](image)

Some mentoring theorists (Clinton, 2005; Lipton & Wellman, 2003; Malderez & Bodóczky, 1999) use a continuum concept to describe the balance of power or degree of influence between mentor and mentee within various mentoring relationship models and phases of mentoring. Of particular interest is the suggestion that relational power shifts over time from mentor-centered to mentee-centered as the mentee develops the skills and knowledge necessary to become self-sufficient and autonomous. This same conceptualization of shift power in the relationship was the foundation of the phased mentoring development models discussed earlier in this chapter. The role of power within mentoring relationships will be discussed in detail later in this chapter but at this point it
is important to recognize that power is a significant component of mentoring relationships.

Clinton (2003) illustrates the variation in power balances between mentor and mentee based on the mentor’s role in the relationship (see figure 2 below). In Clinton’s (2003) example, which uses roles found in some in religious education models, the mentor role is identified along the top of the diagram while the level of directed control is indicated along the bottom. In this diagram the mentor has the greatest degree of control as a discipler (1.) with the mentee being in a passive following role. The diagram illustrates that the balance of power and influence shifts as the role mentor becomes less deliberate (directive) as Clinton (2003) places different identified mentoring roles along the continuum.

![Figure 2. Mentoring Functions Continuum (Clinton, 2003, p. 9)](image)

One should consider how mentoring can be described as a form of leadership based upon Burns’ (1978) concept of Transformational Leadership. He argues that leadership represents “a symbiotic relationship between leaders and followers” (Burns, 1978, p. 452) in which strength and stability within an organization grows as the leaders and followers develop a multi-layered collective. His argument is that transformational leadership is elevating rather than a set of specific behaviours; he describes it as a process by which "leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation" (Burns, 1978, p. 20). Mentoring is described by many theorists as an
uplifting and empowering process. One example of this perspective is presented by Malderez and Bodóczky (1999) who assert that mentoring is, “based on a growth model of learning… to help each individual mentee become the best [that] they can possibly be” (p. 16).

Another mentoring perspective to recognize is its role of familiarizing new employees with company policies, expectations, goals and operational standards while also increasing the performance and output of the employee. As mentioned earlier, organizations can benefit from improved employee productivity and many mentoring schemes target employee induction, development and introduction to the corporate culture. Hansman (2001) suggest that “the intention of formal mentoring programmes designed by human resource development departments in organizations in most cases is to foster organizational goals” (para. 6). These purposes of induction can be described as managerial constraints imposed on the individual within the organization. In this case, mentorship is used as a management tool that facilitates the work of the organization by ensuring that what is done is in accordance with the organization's rules and regulations.

Lam (2006) notes that Hong Kong, the UK and Taiwan have required internships for new teachers and many other countries including Canada and the US commonly use mentoring as part of teacher training\(^1\) programmes. Lam (2006) warns however that new-teacher mentoring and internship can be misused. In Hong Kong the government has co-opted the mentoring programme for the purpose of controlling “beginning teachers through a set of standardized, quantified and controllable skills and competencies” (p. 6). Essentially Lam (2006) is suggesting that the Hong Kong government is using mentoring

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\(^1\) Note: Lam (2006) uses the term \textit{training} in context to the terminology used in Chinese Government reports he cites which refer to pre-service teacher preparation as \textit{training} rather than \textit{education}. 
and internship to control teacher professional development and script or ‘proletarianize’
the practitioners. Rees and Rodley (1995) suggest that mentoring is a methodology used
in the gender control of agendas. They argue that both networking and mentoring
promotes male domination suggesting that “leaderships replicate themselves” (p. 89) and
males in particular will use mentoring to replicate themselves to maintain the status quo.
Darwin (2000) provides a similar perspective stating that traditional “mentoring is
associated with recycling of power within workplace relationships” (para. 21) where
mentees seek and derive power from the senior mentors in the organization. Dahle
(1998), Hay (1995) and Stalker (1994) all note that classic mentoring marginalizes
women and minorities and replicates the dominant power within an organization.
Literature discussing a feminism critique of classic mentoring is included later in this
review.

At this stage of the discussion keep in mind that this inquiry is not intended to
determine if mentoring is leadership, management, or something in between. Leadership
theory perspectives provide a starting point for mentoring research however, it important
to recognize that mentoring relationships can be very complex. As this literature review
progresses beyond the traditional hierarchical mentoring relationship model it will
become apparent that there is a need for a more elaborate framework incorporating
gender and power relations, network theory and organizational culture in order to better
explore the complexities of mentoring relationships.

**Common mentorship programme attributes**

Scholars suggest that achieving mentoring programme goals is more complex
than assigning a mentor to a protégé and hoping for a successful relationship. Sweeny
(2003a, 2003c) notes that there must be structures and strategies in place to obtain desired results and that effective mentoring is a mutual learning situation with reciprocal mentoring between the mentor and mentee. Harwood (2004) lists a number of conditions linked to programme success including support from senior management, recognizing mentors, training mentors and making mentorship both complimentary to, and part of the organization’s culture.

There is literature that identifies a general pattern in many traditional mentoring programmes that includes a pairing methodology, relationship development strategies, plans for orientation and training of the mentee as well as steps to challenge the mentee to take risks and develop personal responsibility for learning and performance. Cohen (1995) describes formal mentoring as "the one-to-one relationship that evolved through reasonably distinct phases between the mentor and the adult learner" (p. 2). Cohen's (1995) phases start with establishing trust, mutually building goals for the mentee, mentors encouraging mentees to explore reflectively and finally mentors function as role models. Newby & Corner (1997) list six steps for establishing mentoring programmes that starts with assessment of organizational readiness which in their example refers to the needs of the organization for personnel skill and performance development which is used to determine and establish the mentoring programme goals. The steps then move on to establishing selection criteria for mentors and mentees, a training programme for mentors, matching mentors and mentees followed by on-going programme support and evaluation. Clapham (1996) determined through an overview of 70 mentoring programmes that there were four basic mentoring model structures and all incorporated to some degree methods of planning, training, pairing, supporting and evaluating the
mentoring relationships. Monsour (1992) reviewed mentoring programmes for Minnesota school administrators and noted that success was based on programmes that had generally accepted programme methods including; training mentors, needs assessment, carefully pairing the mentor and mentee. There are many others (Darwin, 2000; Lipton & Wellman, 2003; Malderez & Bodóczky, 1999; Sweeny, 2003c) that identify structures and phases that are common to many mentoring schemes.

A number of scholars emphasize that mentoring programs need to be well-planned and well-supported in order to be successful. Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) note that in well-implemented mentoring schemes “successful mentoring relationships (i.e. those in which ‘significant mutual learning takes place’) constitute roughly 85 per cent of all pairs” (p. 313). They also note that over 90 percent of those participants would enter into future mentoring relationships. Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) raise a warning that in poorly implemented mentoring schemes the relationship success rates fall dramatically in the range of 30 percent or less. To this end Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) argue that effective planning and adequate support of a mentoring programme is crucial to its success. Putsche, Storrs, Lewis and Haylett (2008) make similar observations in their work that focused on implementation of a mentoring program based on feminist theory and networking models to improve the educational climate for female undergraduate students. From their findings they concluded that a program’s success depends on “a full-time and dedicated coordinator, appropriate matching of mentors and mentees, and emphasis during training on continuing communication between mentors and mentees to reassess mentee needs” (Putsche et al, 2008, p. 513). It seems that there is consistency in
the field regarding the structures and resources needed to support a successful mentoring program.

There are many other scholars who argue about the importance of providing adequate support to mentoring programmes. According to Porter (2001) an exemplary mentoring program is “designed, implemented, managed, assessed, and nurtured within a formal structure” (p. 2) and “receives ongoing support and resources, including provision for the ongoing professional development of its people” (p. 2). The resources, according to Porter (2001), include “time, money, staff, material, and equipment to support the program’s structure and future development” (p. 9). Sweeny (2003a) reminds us that to be effective, there must be planned structures and strategies in place for a mentoring programme to obtain the desired results. Villani (2006) notes that mentoring programmes need adequate financial resources to provide training, support and compensation (including money or additional vacation time) for mentors and program leaders as well as to provide time within the organization for the mentors and mentees to interact.

A key player in any mentorship programme is the person who is performing the role of mentor who takes on complex and open responsibilities. The role is complex because there are many different activities and situations in which mentoring can occur. Moreover, it is open because of the numerous methods that can be used to mentor someone. As Grey (2004) states, “there is no one best role any more than there is an ‘ideal’ mentor” (p. 18) and as such it is difficult to define mentoring, or the role of the mentor, in a succinct form. Mentors are, among other things, teachers but they are more as they act as coaches, role models, personal developers, protectors, sponsors, and leaders. Shea (2002) describes a mentor as a source of information, someone who
provides insight, develops specific skills, and gives feedback as well as serving as a confidant.

Malderez and Bodóczky (1999), Daloz et al (1996) and Levinson (1978) describe the various roles of the mentor. A primary role is to be a *model* that inspires the mentee while demonstrating expected behaviours. The mentor also serves as an *acculturator* who shows the mentee ‘the ropes’ (or norms) and helps the newcomer become acclimatized to the particular professional culture within their context. As a *sponsor*, mentors can ‘open doors’ for the mentee by introducing new members to the ‘right people’ in the organization. There is a *support role* that mentors provide just by ‘being there’ and available to act as a sounding board, for cathartic reasons, as well as providing a safe opportunity for the mentee to release emotions regarding the challenges of the new setting. The final, and arguably most important role, is that of *educator*. In this role, the mentor provides appropriate learning opportunities to achieve the professional learning objectives for the mentee as well as acting as a sounding board for the mentee’s own discovery and reflection. Malderez and Bodóczky (1999) state that “most mentors will be involved to a greater or lesser degree in all five roles” (p. 4). They also suggest that it is clear from the theory and research that there is no hard and fast rule determining the appropriate balance or proportioning of the roles and activities in any one mentoring relationship. Daloz et al (1996) as well as Hay (1995), Clutterbuck (2001) and Darwin (2000) also note that the roles vary in degree of influence depending on the situation and context of the mentoring.

In summary, the act of mentoring is both complex and open. As such, it can be a very difficult role for anyone to assume and is not without pitfalls and challenges. This
complexity and challenge suggests that not everyone is capable of being a good mentor and that there is a need to prepare people for the mentoring role. The next section of literature will delineate how this preparation might be best accomplished.

**Preparing mentors and mentees**

An assumption in mentoring theory is that mentors need to be *trained* based on the underlying foundation that being good at one’s job does not necessarily make one a good mentor by default (Harwood, 2004; Malderez & Bodóczky, 1999; Sweeny, 2003b). Malderez and Bodóczky (1999) argue that it is crucial that mentors have expert mentoring skills and they emphasize that mentors require additional skills and knowledge beyond their profession practice. As such mentors need to be trained, mentored and supported in their own learning in order to be effective mentors and this assertion is echoed in other mentoring literature (Clapham, 1996; Cohen, 1995; Darwin, 2000; Lipton & Wellman, 2003; Sweeny, 2003a; Villani, 2006). There is some literature suggesting that mentees also need training in order to be effectively mentored (Clapham, 1996; Lipton & Wellman, 2003; Stromei, 1999; Sweeny, 2003a; Villani, 2006).

The problem, as Malderez and Bodóczky (1999) suggest, is that *learned* theory often fails to transfer into the workplace because of an unclear connection between the two and the time it takes for the practitioner to develop the connection. For this reason they emphasize that the mentoring process must focus on developing the mentee’s skills, tools and processes for continuing their own learning so as to become what Schön (1983) refers to as a *reflective practitioner*.

**Reflective practice.** Reflective practice is symbolized as holding up the mirror in which the mentor is expected to act as a mirror and provide a clear image of the mentee’s
experience or belief from a different perspective. Malderez and Bodóczky (1999) suggest that this type of reflection can be very challenging for a mentor because, “the practical mentoring sub-skills of non-evaluative observation, and the recording and giving of data are, we find, among the hardest to acquire” (p. 19). Sweeny’s (2003b) findings support this assertion by stressing that mentors, rather than being evaluative, “must facilitate the protégées own self assessment” (para. 7). The next step in the interpretive method is thinking over to determine the meaning of an event or activity. This is reflection through a series of thoughtful deliberation phases in which the mentee names (discusses) the subject to reveal the existing constructs then applies (acts upon the discussion) in order to reconceive (build upon) and reassemble the constructs in a manner that is meaningful to the person. The goal is to go from implicit to explicit so that the protégé can understand the implications of situations or events and make useful, appropriate decisions based upon their own understanding.

**Mentoring relationships and Benefactors**

At this point is it important to consider the role formal mentoring programmes play in improving organizational structures and advancing individual growth and development. To put it bluntly, the question needs to be asked as to whose interests in relation to power, knowledge, and benefit are primarily served by mentoring programmes. According to Zey (1984) a formal mentoring programme can benefit the mentee, the mentor, and the organization simultaneously. Zey (1984) suggests that the mentee gains knowledge, skills and support, the mentor benefits from assistance with the work, prestige associated with being a mentor, and the loyalty of the protégé. The advantage for the organization includes development of employee capacity, reduced
turnover, and increased productivity. Zey (1984) refers to this as a “mutual benefits model” (p. 11) of mentoring which demonstrates the importance of mentoring for both individuals (the mentor and the protégé) as well as for the organization. Ladd (2002) also suggests that mentoring is perceived to benefit the mentor, mentee and organization, but to differing degrees with some receiving greater benefit than others from the activity.

It is also important to recognize that there can be negative consequences for mentees in a formalized relationship. Porter (2001) notes that newcomers assigned a formal mentor may be isolated by other colleagues in the belief that the mentor is responsible for acculturating the newcomer. There are also warnings in the literature (Kirkham, 1995; Odell, 1992; Porter, 2001; Villani, 2006; Zey, 1984) that raise concerns about the possibility of mentees developing an over-dependency on their mentors which limits personal growth potential. Another possible negative consequence to the mentee in a mentoring relationship is what Zey (1984) calls the “black halo effect” (p. 137): this occurs when a mentor falls out of favour in an organization and the mentee suffers the same loss in organizational social acceptance.

**Benefits to mentors.** The mentoring process can provide a variety of benefits for the mentor such as renewed enthusiasm, satisfaction of helping others, validation of the importance of their work, a lasting relationship (Shea 2002) and Harwood (2004) suggest career advancement is enhanced because of mentor status and a furthered sphere of influence. There are also benefits for the participants including improved self-esteem, orientation, access to information and resources, increased confidence, competence and empowerment (Shea 2002).
**Organizational benefits.** The mentor and mentee benefits seem pale in comparison to the gains that organizations can experience from mentoring programmes. Zey (1984) states the major motivation for a formal mentorship programme is that it benefits the organization. The argument is that mentorship provides the process to integrate newcomers into the organization and foster a sense of inclusion. The result is a reduction in staff turnover, which can be costly in both real dollars and human capital, and a developed sense of loyalty by the mentee to both the mentor and the organization. With the mentor’s direct involvement in shaping and honing the mentee’s skills there is an increase in worker efficiency which benefits the organization as it increases its overall efficiency and likely lowers costs of production or service. This is a particular benefit for capitalistic organizations as increased efficiency usually means greater profits.

**Power interests.** Formal mentoring programmes are social constructs and as such there is the danger that they may reflect power interests inherent within an organization. Malderez and Bodóczky (1999) suggest that the role of a mentor is inherently laden with power and status because in the traditional model the mentor *tells* and the mentee expects to be *told*. Darwin (2000) argues that there are implicit and unchallenged assumptions about knowledge and power in traditional mentoring practices. She argues that the mentor's primary role was to maintain culture and states that “traditionally, the mentoring relationship has been framed in a language of paternalism and dependency and stems from a power-dependent, hierarchical relationship, aimed at maintaining the status quo” (Darwin, 2000, para. 4).

An issue to consider is whether mentoring programmes are intended to manage learning or empower learners and also to determine if it is possible to serve the needs of
the individuals within the organizational imperative of improving performance (or in the case of schools, student achievement). While supporting learning among employees may cause increased performance, Bierema (2000) warns that the interests of organizations are being served at the cost of employee or human interests. When considering whose interests are being served in a mentorship programme it is wise to consider Burns’ (1978) assertion that “ultimately education and leadership shade into each other to become almost inseparable, but only when both are defined as the reciprocal raising of levels of motivation rather than indoctrination or coercion” (p. 448). The question is whether the positive aspects of mentoring have been co-opting by managerialism and power interests and as was mentioned earlier there are a number of scholars (Dahle, 1998; Hay, 1995; Lam, 2006; Rees & Rodley, 1995; Stalker, 1994) who are expressing concerns about power imbalances in mentoring practice.

Planning for shared benefits. The planning of a formal mentoring programme is not limited to a series of prescriptive steps and those responsible for the programme planning can balance both personal development and organizational efficiency. The key to achieving this balance is, according to Cervero and Wilson (1994), to ask "who should benefit" (p. 13) to ensure that programme planning practice involves negotiating the interests of those within the programme including learners, instructors and the organization. Sweeny (2001b), Hansman (2001), Hegstad and Wentling (2005) as well as Malderez and Bodóczky (1999) all note the importance of identifying the targeted benefits and understanding how the parties will be impacted by mentoring activities.

Assessing benefits. Harwood (2004) suggest that a needs analysis that focuses on developing a programme to meets the needs of the mentee is considered to be best
practice in mentoring. While it is beyond the scope of this literature review to debate the conceptualization of best practice there are many references in the mentoring literature (including Clapham, 1996; Ladd, 2002; Lipton & Wellman, 2003; Stromei, 1999; Sweeny, 2001b; Villani, 2006) to suggest that a pre-programme needs assessment is a valuable step in mentoring programme development. Harwood (2004) however notes that in his review of Canadian Federal Government mentoring programmes that relatively few included a needs analysis. The suggestion is that this oversight is a common weakness in many mentorship programmes and is cause for concern as there is a potential gap between mentee need and programme delivery.

So far much of this discussion has set the context by describing the professional landscape for school administrators and explaining the need and impact of mentoring programmes in supporting newcomer professional development. The focus on structural aspects of mentoring programmes and practice has highlighted best practice while also noting concerns with inconsistent results and inequitable social structures. The next phase of this literature review will be to look at the theoretical foundations of the classic mentoring model as well as to acknowledge and explore criticisms of the classic structure then investigate theoretical alternatives.

**Classic mentoring**

Through my readings, professional development activities and mentoring conferences I have found that many writers and mentoring practitioners often predicate their discussion about mentoring by referring to the popularized historical origin of the term found in Homer's The Odyssey. In the story, Odysseus, King of Ithaca, leaves his son Telemachus in the care of his sage and trusted counsellor, Mentor, when he departs
for the Trojan Wars. So deeply entrenched is this definition that mainstream dictionaries commonly refer to this mythological piece in their definition of the word mentor. Though the literature of Homer is popularized as the origin of the term, not everyone agrees that this is necessarily an appropriate origin for the act of mentoring. Some suggest that scholars familiar with Homer’s original work would argue that Mentor largely failed in his assigned duty to keep the King’s Manor intact or provide the young Telemachus with any meaningful guidance or protection (Roberts, 1999). As the story unfolds it is actually the goddess Pallas Athene (Athena), goddess of war and wisdom, who assumes Mentor’s form as well as some other disguises to guide and protect both Odysseus and Telemachus through their journeys.

**Weak definitions.** Part of the challenge is in trying to develop a succinct yet complete alternative definition, which is not a simple task. Malderez and Bodóczky (1999) describe the current body of mentoring definitions as confusing and long-winded offering “a bewildering range of interpretations of the term” (p. 4). Clutterbuck (in Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004) suggests that research in the past thirty years has led to a morass of definitions and applications of mentoring. Clutterbuck (2004) is also quick to remind us that, confusing or not, “some kind of definitional standard is important to bring order to the chaos of academic study” (in Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004, p. xvi) of mentoring because much of the current literature cannot be validated because it is not clear what is being measured in the relationships.

While there is a growing prevalence of the use of mentoring and exponential growth of new programmes (Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004; Daresh, 1995; Darwin, 2000; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Pryce, 2006; Samier, 2000), the great excitement and widespread
belief that there is a need to promote mentoring (Daresh, 1995; Hay, 1995; Samier, 2000) is not supported by theory-based research evidence. Daresh (1995) warns that mentoring is an under-investigated concept with “a virtual absence of theory-based research” (Daresh, 1995, p. 11). Samier (2000) also reports weaknesses in mentoring research and theory suggesting that, “the concept of mentorship in the literature lacks a frequently noted clarity and consistency” (p. 84) and Samier (2000) warns that the existing definitions are too vague or ambiguous.

Just as there is variation and disagreement in the definitions and views regarding the mentoring process, there is also evidence of a paradigm shift in the schools of thought regarding mentoring. Though the constraints of this paper limit the opportunity to discuss all differing positions in detail, there are some divergent perspectives that warrant consideration. One alternative is a feminist critique of mentoring that considers the social power structures of mentoring. Another embodies a sociocultural or critical perspective that considers the changing organizational environments in which mentoring practice exists is also warranted particularly in light of how power operates within such programmes.

**Social theory critique.** Dahle (1998) suggests that the traditional, albeit flawed, model of mentoring is portrayed as a senior (male) member anointing a younger version of himself as his protégé. The underlying assumption is that mentoring is all about the *chemistry* between two people who have a great deal in common. It is also about superior positional power, used by the mentor, who is higher-up in the hierarchy, as a means of steering the lower man’s (sic) career with plum assignments and other favours. Her argument is that this model does not work for women in the workforce because they are
neither welcomed by the “old boys’ club of mentoring” (Dahle, 1998, p. 2) nor can they rely on men to pick them as mentees.

Stalker (1994) provides a feminist critique of the conceptualization of mentoring arguing that when traditionally conceived, mentoring has a male orientation that both ignores women’s experience and socializes protégés, male or female, into accepting a patriarchal system. As a result of the barriers found in the traditional model, Dahle (1998) suggests that women are reinventing mentoring (or wo-mentoring as she calls it) so that it is “more about commitment than about chemistry… and more about learning than power” (p. 2) with alternatives to traditional mentoring beliefs offered as new rules.

Some of these new rules strike at the core of traditional mentoring theory and contradict what has been the foundation of many mentorship models and literature. Rather than depending on a mentor-mentee relationship being built on commonalities, Dahle (1998) argues that the best matches are mismatches that promote opportunities for discovery. Her argument is that diversity provides challenge and opportunity for learning. Another shift in the mentoring paradigm is that a good mentor is “anyone you can learn from” (Dahle, 1998, p. 3) and the traditional model of a senior member mentoring his lesser in a hierarchical organization is no longer the norm. The argument is that an ideal mentor is impossible to visualize in a hierarchical relationship as effective mentoring can come from any level either within or outside the organization. Nor does mentoring have to be a polarized liaison between two individuals as a variety of groupings are possible, and arguably preferable, in healthy mentoring relationships. The rationale is that it is an advantage to diversify a mentoring portfolio as the mentee builds greater capacity from a variety of sources. Dahle (1998) also illustrates that the conventional practice of mentors
picking protégés is outmoded and the new model is for mentees to actively seek-out a mentor. Her assertion is that women, or other marginalized groups, need no longer wait for the traditional method of selection in formal mentoring programmes. Instead of asking for permission, they should seek-out their own mentors or start grassroots mentoring programmes for themselves.

Hansman (2001) expresses her concerns that while formalized mentoring programmes may provide empowering opportunities for marginalized groups such as women they may also “encourage the unquestioning replication of organizational values and hegemonic culture by a new generation of employees” (p. 1). Adding to the problem, she argues, is that it is difficult for women and other marginalized protégés to fit into corporate mentoring and acculturation programmes if the mentor pool only consists of the dominate culture of race, class, gender, or sexual orientation within the organization. The problem is exacerbated when potential mentors from the dominant class are unwilling to work with protégés from a marginalized group. She suggests that these examples illustrate that mentoring is not beneficial for all protégés, and in particular, for those from marginalized groups.

While Dahle (1998) suggests women can seek-out mentors and Zey (1984) finds that having mentorship partners choose each other is most effective, Hansman (2001) argues that free choice in these relationships may exclude mentees from marginalized groups and maintain the hegemonic culture within an organization. It seems that there is no simple answer to this complex set of issues but it does raise an important lens through which the context of mentoring must be examined critically as it cannot be assumed, or guaranteed, that mentoring is either emancipatory or empowering for the mentee.
Darwin (2000) reminds us that contemporary knowledge is based on assumptions developed during the surge of mentoring research in the late 1970s (as was noted by Kram, 2004 in Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004). Darwin (2000) warns researchers to be cautious when depicting exclusive workplace practices based on the mentoring studies of that era because there was a shortage of women in senior positions (the traditional mentor pool). Darwin’s (2000) point is that later work suggesting exclusivity is based on earlier research work, such as Levinson (1978), that was based on mainly male samples. Her argument is that “research suggests that women develop differently from men, thus raising questions about the appropriateness of anchoring mentoring practices on research conducted only with men” (Darwin, 2000, para. 6). Though Darwin (2000) raises questions about the data from earlier research and the aspects of exclusivity in the workplaces of that era it does not lessen the importance of recognizing the aspect of derived benefits from mentoring as an assessment tool when reviewing current mentoring practice.

**Organizational change.** Another important consideration for any classic mentoring programme is the profoundly changing and flattening landscape of many modern organizational environments including school systems. According to Kram (2001, in Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004), during the 1990’s, stable, hierarchical organizations gave way to more flexible, team-based structures in response to changing and complex demands of globalization and increasingly sophisticated technology. Darwin (2000) notes that one aspect of evolving organizations has been the movement toward competency-based training and education that places new responsibilities on organizations and supervisors to provide learning development and career support opportunities to
employees. Educational leadership theorists warn about the impacts of globalization and organizational restructuring in terms of decentralized decision-making and the flattening of educational systems through the elimination of middle management and leadership structures (Ball, 1997; Bates, 2002; Cuban, 1989; Dondero, 1996; Morley & Rasool, 2000; Smyth, 2001; Smyth & Shacklock, 1998; Umpleby, 2002). This is an important consideration for two reasons: employees may be less committed to a mentoring activity in an organization destabilized by downsizing or restructuring, and the ‘flattened’ hierarchy can reduce the pool of people in appropriate positions to fill traditional mentoring roles (Allen et al, 1997; Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004; Hay, 1995; Hegstad & Wentling, 2005).

Hay (1995) suggest that in a traditional mentoring model it is the older, wiser, senior managers who are tasked to *groom* young high-flying mentees; however as organizations get flatter and leaner this traditional model becomes unsustainable for a number of reasons. There are reductions in senior managers (the traditional mentors) and those that remain might not have the experience and skill sets to keep-up with the rapid changes in technology and career paths. Hay’s (1995) argument is that the traditional hierarchical organization role models are being outmoded; *old boy* networks are discriminatory, more people are becoming self-employed yet still want mentoring, cloning existing managerial practices will not create new organizational cultures and people will question the wisdom of moulding themselves to fit into an organization that might make them redundant tomorrow. Hay (1995) also suggests that people are becoming more aware of the advantages of networking compared to traditional
hierarchical mentoring. The importance of networking will be revisited during the discussion of contemporary mentoring alternatives that follows.

**Contemporary alternatives**

In light of changing social expectations, flattening organizations and rapidly evolving technology it seems unlikely that a hierarchical mentoring model based on medieval or ancient society norms can continue to be relevant as a contemporary mentoring structure. So far this literature review has explored and critiqued the *classic* expert-novice model however now it is time to move on to look at contemporary alternatives. This stage of the discussion represents a paradigm shift as lines are drawn to differentiate between classic and contemporary mentoring. In order to facilitate this shift several aspects of the mentoring process will need to be reconceptualized. These shifts include: a shift of control from the mentor to the mentee: and a shift of the focus from a bonding relationship (between mentor and mentee) to networking connections (multiple mentor model theory). The next sections of this chapter outline how these principles can be incorporated in greater detail.

**Mentee-centric orientation.** Clutterbuck and Lane (2004) suggest that mentoring has changed radically in the non-US world where sponsorship and management in the classic mentor-protégé relationship has been replaced with learning alliances, where “the mentor often acquires as much insight as the mentee… and where the focus is on helping the learner achieve independence and self-reliance” (p. xvi). Clutterbuck and Lane (2004) assert that mentoring is *situational* and they argue that the perception of mentor *competences* has evolved, from an assumption that all or most of the skills required are generic, to a recognition that they are, in large part, based upon the situational needs of
the mentee. The example Clutterbuck and Lane (2004) use is that “skills required of an adult assisting an underachieving schoolchild are not the same as those needed by the mentor working with a senior corporate executive” (p. xvii). Their point is that mentoring is mentee-driven and the interactions must be based upon the needs and circumstances of the mentee.

Hay (1995) proposes a transformational version of mentoring in the effort to develop a model that can support individuals within changing organizational environments and evolving social structures. Hay (1995) describes transformational mentoring as a series of developmental alliances established between equals (equal in terms of the relationship but not necessarily in an organizational sense) in which “one or more of those involved is enabled to: increase awareness, identify alternatives and initiate action to develop themselves” (p. 3). Hay (1995) emphasizes that when organizations are volatile or unstable everyone becomes essentially self-employed and to survive -- in a career sense – people assume personal agency and seek-out developmental alliances with other people. This model is more flexible than classic mentoring schemes because peers, unrelated work colleagues or even external practitioners can create alliances to enhance personal development. The foundation of this model is the idea that in modern organizations people are experiencing greater career mobility and less job security so they are forming developmental alliances as a coping mechanism and social safety net. Furthermore, the model is driven by the notion that in changing social norms many people want to escape gender and cultural stereotyping and this mentee-driven flexible structure of mentoring connections is more practical.
While it might be possible to describe the mentoring roles in simple term such as Homer’s image of the wise advisor and trusted friend, Levinson’s (1978) apprenticeship functions of role modeling, guiding, tutoring and coaching or Daloz et al (1996) provision of challenge, support, and inspiration the activities involved in fulfilling these roles are far more complex. Clutterbuck & Lane (2004) suggest the conceptualization of mentoring has become more complex in the past thirty years and so too has the role of the mentor noting that, “one is struck by the number and variety of roles and activities that mentors perform – the list at first seems endless” (p. 1). Others also note the complexity and variety of functions that are part of the mentor’s role. Hay (1995) describes mentoring as guiding, being a role model, utilizing experience and knowledge, listening to mentee’s ideas, talking through career issues, along with coaching and counselling. The Leeds Metropolitan University (1995) developed a diagram that shows the complex range of mentoring roles (see Figure 3).

![Diagram of Mentoring Activities](image-url)

*Figure 3. Mentoring Activities Leeds Metropolitan University, 1995.*

Some of the activities and roles are actually contradictory such as guiding versus challenging or supervising versus counselling. Darwin (2000) proposes a list of over
seventy-five different words that represent individual roles or tasks that can be identified as mentoring. These examples illustrate that the role of mentor is very complex and encompasses a broad-spectrum of knowledge, skills and attributes.

These individual mentoring activities, functions and roles are categorized by many into themes or competencies. An Open University study (1995) suggests that an ideal mentor might be expected to possess and demonstrate strong interpersonal skills, feedback skills, and intervention skills, be able to both coach and teach, as well as have an extensive set of organizational skills, organizational knowledge, exemplary supervisory skills, personal power and charisma, status and prestige. Clutterbuck (2001) organizes mentoring into ten major competences including awareness, savvy, interpersonal skills and conceptual abilities. Darwin (2000) describes eight dimensions of mentoring ranging from being authentic and nurturing to competent, hard-working and even volatile. Regardless of the strategy used to organize or categorize the functions, knowledge, skills and attributes associated with being a mentor, this review makes clear how incredibly complex mentoring might be for any single person.

The idea of a mentor for all seasons or the ideal mentor might be an unrealistic expectation that would be an exhausting burden on anyone; it might also exclude excellent mentor candidates who might not fit the theoretical ideal. Clutterbuck & Lane (2004) warn, “in our search for the ‘perfect mentor’ we may have been too quick to judge people from a set of positive qualities and fallen into the functionalist trap of using mentoring to maintain the status quo” (p. 41). There are suggestions that a more desirable situation would be to have a multiple-mentor model in which a person has a convoy, portfolio or network of mentors over a lifetime, and even at the same time (Baugh &
Mentoring networks. Kram (2004, in Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004) suggests that as mentoring research progressed into the 1990s experts began reconceptualizing mentoring as networks of developmental relationships. Other mentorship scholars have developed the concept of multiple mentors in response to a realization that actors could outgrow a mentoring relationship and would need to move on to other types of developmental relationships (Kram, 1983). Baugh and Scandura (1999) studied the concept of multiple sequential mentoring relationships where the mentee would out-grow a relationship with a mentor and move on subsequent relationship with another mentor. What Baugh and Scandura (1999) discovered was that, “while multiple developmental relationships may result in more positive attitudes in several areas, they may do so at the expense of producing some conflicting expectations” (p. 515). They found that as the number of mentoring relationships increases there is a greater possibility of conflict between the advice of the current and previous mentors and they also discovered that a mentee might outgrow an existing relationship faster than the time it takes to develop a sequential mentoring relationship and as such cause a mentoring gap.

Other writers also suggest multiple mentor schemes but these are more along the lines of a mentoring network rather than a sequential line. Dahle (1998) describes mentoring from the perspective that a person develops a mentoring portfolio and actively selects mentors, formal and informal, as well as peer-mentoring opportunities and mentoring groups. It is important for the mentee to mix and match the characteristics of the mentors to provide a greater degree of diversity in the pool. The advantages of the
multiple-mentor or developmental network model include the aspects of sustainability and diversity addressed earlier in this chapter.

The idea of a network or portfolio of mentoring connections is supported by critics of classic mentoring schemes based on a feminist critique of unequal power-based relationships. The classic model is criticized because it does very little to challenge unequal power relationships and institutional structures and according to some scholars simply reinforces and replicates dominance in an organization. Networking, on the other hand, is described as a way for mentees to establish learning-based connections (Dahle, 1998; Darwin, 2001; Hay, 1995; Stalker, 1994). Feminist theorists support the notion of a networked mentoring model as it shifts the view on power away from the traditional hierarchy. Darwin (2000) notes that some scholars suggest women are “more likely to regard power as a source of ‘power with’ rather than ‘power over’ and consequently to value learning within relationships as a key developmental experience” (para. 14). Dahle (1998) suggests that feminist-based mentoring is “about personal growth and development” (para. 7) rather than the traditional bonds of chemistry between a mentor and his protégé. Dahle (1998) also suggests that a feminist mentoring perspective is more about a mentoring mentality than a mentoring relationship. Her point is that one no longer needs “a single mentor who you keep throughout your career” Dahle, 1998, para. 21) as mentors can leave however a mentoring mind-set allows you to learn from those around you, no matter who they are.

Mentoring relationships are founded on the idea of personal growth but there may come a time when it becomes necessary for the parties to move on to other developmental relationships (Baugh & Scandura, 1999). Clinton (2005) observed, people
can experience “from five to thirty or more mentoring relationships for limited periods of time in their lives” (p. 20). As discussed earlier, mentoring activities, functions and roles can be very complex and, at times, contradictory incorporating a broad range of both technical knowledge and social skill sets. Arguably no one person could be expected to possess all of the knowledge and skills needed to be an ideal mentor; alternative models need to address this concern. There are some strong arguments suggesting that multiple mentors or a network of mentors can provide a deeper mentoring experience. It is important to look beyond the limits of a paired mentoring relationship and look at how multiple mentor relationships can occur.

Kram (1985) argues that individuals rely upon not just one but multiple individuals in relationship constellations for developmental support in their careers and other writers have also supported this constellation idea of mentoring as well (Baugh & Scandura, 1999; Hay, 1995; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Stanley & Clinton, 1992). The essence of these models is that people are positioned within a network of relationships interacting with other people. The interactions may be unidirectional or reciprocal and may involve pairs, triads or group interactions. The main point is that the models are about people connecting with others in a structure that is more complex than the dyad of the classic model. Hay (1995) mentions that “Ad Hoc” mentoring can occur, particularly between peers in cases where there is a mentoring gap; finally many writers refer to informal mentoring that occurs when people find and accept mentors outside of formalized mentoring programmes. As there are fewer imposed restrictions in these informal or ad hoc relations is it arguable that the relationships can be multiple or networked rather than paired and polarized as in the classic model.
Summary

Based on the information from this literature review one can conclude a general understanding of the context and theoretical foundations relevant to this research project. School systems are experiencing a leadership crisis due to administrator shortages sparked by large-scale retirements and exacerbated by little interest from potential replacements and high-levels of newcomer attrition. Much of the problem in filling the leadership gap is being attributed to the unattractive aspects of the work including long hours, unsustainable performance expectations and both professional and personal isolation. Mentoring is becoming popular practice in the training and continued support of new school leaders and there has been a proliferation of mentoring activities in recent years. The literature information also supports the understanding that there is a predominant and enduring expert-novice or senior-junior mentoring model based on the classic patriarchal relationship between Mentor and Telemachus in Homer's The Odyssey.

Mentoring theory has evolved however in the past 30 years as there has been more scholarly review of mentoring. Some contemporary mentoring theorists suggest that the classic model is no longer appropriate in contemporary social organizations. These critics argue that for reasons of social equity (feminist critiques) as well as because of the flattening of organizations and rapid technological advances (organizational transformation theory) the classic model is no longer appropriate. Mentoring in its classic form has reached a point within the contemporary environment that what was once a benevolent social activity now poses a potential threat that can be harmful to its participants. Though the classic model has been critiqued and some theoretical alternatives that embrace mentee-centric diversified networks and reciprocal mentoring
relationships have been suggested. There remains however a gap in the body of knowledge because there has been very little scholarly activity in the mentoring field and as such there is limited information about contemporary, non-traditional mentoring activities.

**Contribution of this work**

To this point the discussion has focused on the challenges of the principalship and the need to prepare and support many new administrators to fill openings left by waves of retirements and attrition of the current school leaders. The literature review looked at the classic mentoring model as well as the evolution of mentoring theory and contemporary mentoring model alternatives from a classic hierarchal pairing to a model that is a mentee-centric, diversified, and dynamic network of relationships. The key problem that has been identified is that mentoring, as it is generally known and practiced in its classic form, has inherent flaws, flaws which can be argued are a result of a lack of scholarly research and gaps between researcher and practitioner. The purpose of this research will focus on the mentoring practices and mentoring relationships of new principals in a BC public school district and to consider how the study of one particular school district programme might better tease out the complexities of the mentoring relationship that have been detailed at some length in this chapter.

The intention of this study is to contribute to this body of knowledge about mentoring programmes in the field of school leadership by taking into account that those involved in an innovative mentoring structure have a story to tell and can provide important information about contemporary mentoring practice. Examining individual’s experiences and understandings of mentoring might also better inform programme design
as a number of theorists have suggested the field is under theorized (Clawson, 1980; Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004; Daresh, 1995; Samier, 2000; Stromei, 1999). Rather than focusing solely on designers’ purposes, this study will consider how participants understand their mentorship experience. There has been an exponential growth of classic and non-traditional mentoring programmes in BC and across North America in response to an increasing need for new school administrators. Though new mentoring models that incorporate non-traditional methods and structures are being implemented few have been formally documented. This study seeks to document an innovative or altered mentoring strategy (that is, one that goes beyond the classical mentoring model) that provides mentoring support to new administrators.
Chapter 3

This study investigated a non-traditional school administrator mentoring programme in a BC public school district and explored mentoring relationships and experiences of the principals and vice-principals in the programme. It was a qualitative inquiry that blended case study, narrative inquiry and social cartography research methods. This chapter begins by outlining the context of the research, followed by the rationale, impact and influence of the chosen research traditions. This inquiry into mentoring programme design, relationship networks and individual mentoring experiences is an opportunity to contribute to the body of knowledge of mentoring research by taking into account that those involved in an innovative mentoring structure have a story to tell and can provide important information about contemporary mentoring practice.

The research setting

The research was conducted in two phases. The first involved contacting provincial associations involved with school leadership in British Columbia for the purposes of identifying potential school districts for the case study field research. In this phase a senior executive or service officer from each of four provincial associations, The British Columbia School Superintendent’s Association (BCSSA), the British Columbia School Trustee’s Association (BCSTA), The British Columbia Principal’s and Vice-Principal’s Association (BCPVP A) and the now defunct British Columbia Educational Leadership Council (BCELC), were contacted as part of the initial information gathering process.
The second phase involved using the data gathered through the identification process to contact and recruit a school district as a potential research site. From the data gathered School District #101 (also identified as SD101) was approached with the request to conduct research in the district. The district Superintendent and Board of Trustees as well as the local school administrator’s association executive all agreed to the research request and the case study field work for this project was conducted in SD101.

**The school district.** School District 101 is a public school district based in a picturesque city of approximately 43,000 residents. The region has a mixed resource, industry and service-based however recent down-turns in the forestry industry have led to local log and paper processing plant closures, lay-offs of hundreds of workers and significant financial revenue shortfalls for the city and region due to large losses in the tax-base. The school district serves 6,000 students in 20 schools and administers a yearly budget of approximately $51 million. SD101 offers a range of programmes from pre-kindergarten (StrongStart) to grade 12 as well as specialized programmes in Aboriginal Education, French Immersion, Distance Learning, Continuing Education programmes for adults as well as an active International Programme for students from other countries to live and study in the region. The district faces operational challenges due to a combination of declining enrolment and provincial funding limitations as well as new legislative mandates.

In 2008 the district developed a strategic plan and part of the process included a review of the factors influencing the district and the challenges they currently face as well as future implications. Of note the district identified a number of factors to be taken into account.

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2 Note that this is a pseudonym being used to protect the identity of the school district, community and individual research participants. While school districts in BC use numbers as identifiers there is no School District 101 in the province.
account for future planning. In that same year, two of area’s major employers announced lay-offs or closures that would impact the economy of the region as well as the population. The district noted that an increasing proportion of the students are of Aboriginal heritage and that the families and band councils have a vested interest in ensuring the success of their students. The Early Development Instrument (EDI)\textsuperscript{3} index for the region indicates that an increasing number of students within the school district are highly vulnerable on one or more of the sub-scales which, in other words, means that more of the children attending SD101 schools are coming without the skills or supports they need to be successful. The report also noted changing demographics as the population within the area is growing but there are fewer school-aged children and more seniors. In addition the population is migrating from the small outlying areas into the city as well as within the city with more residents moving from the north end to the south. The factors have significant implications for the placement of programmes, the growth or down-sizing of school buildings as well as school catchment areas and transportation routes.

A joint letter from the elected board trustees, district parent council and employee groups representing teachers, support staff and school-based administrators, written to the Minister of Education in 2009 describes the current challenges. The concerns in the letter include increasing centralization of decision-making and control by the ministry and new mandates referred to as overwhelming transformation of the education system without consultation. The letter also raises concerns about increasing financial demands brought on by new programme mandates, changes in funding legislation and increased costs due

\textsuperscript{3} The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a population-based tool designed to measure the state of children's development at Kindergarten entry (Human Early Learning Partnership, 2009)
to material, labour resource and service costs with a funding model that has failed to keep pace with the burdens that school districts are facing.

**Participant recruitment.** The procedure to recruit participants was carried-out in three steps. First the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) reviewed and approved my application to conduct research. The next step involved pre-screening and calling potential research districts (see appendix 5), as described in chapter one, followed by sending a letter (see appendix 6) and a follow-up phone call approaching the Superintendent and Board of Trustees for SD101 requesting permission to conduct research within SD101. At this stage the request was reviewed by both the SD101 central office administration as well as the executive of the local school administrators’ association (SD 101 Principal’s and Vice-Principals Association or SD 101 PVPA). Once granted permission by the district and local administrators’ association the next step was recruitment of participants.

Initial research information and invitation letters (see appendices 7-10) were sent via email with follow-up phone calls to all the school-based administrators in SD101 as well as the central office. The retired employees who were programme leaders or mentors were initially advised of the research activity by the professional development co-chairs for the SD 101 PVPA and sent invitation letters (see appendix 12). The original research plan was to interview only new administrators with less than three years, experience however in discussions with district administration and administrators’ association leaders the plan was revised. The new plan provided any administrator, regardless of career stage, currently being mentored or who had been previously mentored in the programme the opportunity to participate in the research project. The intake of
participants started in late September 2009 and continued on until the end of January 2010. During that time open invitations and reminder email messages were sent to the school administrators and mentors using an anonymous distribution list.

The participants. Many individuals participated in this research project sharing their personal perspectives and experiences and the written report includes narrative descriptions of the participants’ living and work environment as well as direct quotations. While this section is intended to provide information about the research participants there are some restrictions to what information can be shared. In order to protect the anonymity of the research participants the names of the school district, community, individuals and schools are not used in this report. Narrative characterizations of individuals are fictionalized and the descriptions are composite or blended based upon trends, themes and situations observed during the field research including the interviews and questionnaire process. Use of terms such as ‘he’ or ‘she’ in the narratives does not necessarily represent the gender of the actual participant. In the case of the information gathered in discussions with representatives from the provincial associations the associations are named however individuals are referred to as an ‘executive member’ or an ‘association representative’ and any gender-specific terminology should not be considered representative of the individual participant.

Twenty two people associated with SD101 agreed to participate in this research activity including mentors, mentees, programme coordinators, executive members of the local school administrator professional association and a central office administrator. One mentee completed the preliminary data (personal demographics questionnaire) however was not able to participate in the interview phase and as such data collected from this
participant is not included in the study. Of the remaining twenty one, some of the individuals were interviewed twice as they were part of two groups (i.e. programme leader and mentee). Eighteen of the participants were current employees and five were retired, all worked for SD101 and all were either currently or previously involved with the mentoring programme in the district.

One participant was a central office administrator, six were current or recent mentors and two were programme leaders who either originally designed and monitored the mentoring programme or sustained the programme in its current configuration. There were sixteen school-based principals or vice-principals from elementary, middle or high-schools interviewed of which twelve were mentees, one was a mentor and three had leadership roles in either the formal mentoring programme, administrator professional development in the district or local administration association leadership. There were eleven males and eleven females in the group.

**Methodology**

The primary methodology employed in this research project is *case study* and the theoretical foundation is based on the work of many scholars (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 1984; Creswell, 1998; Cronbach, 1975; Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisner, 1991; Ertmer, 1997; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Frechling & Sharp, 1997; Lauer & Asher, 1988; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988; Merriam, 2001; O’Connor, 2006; Patton, 1990; Stake, 1978; Trochim, 2006; Yin, 1993). Case study methodology allows for the use of multiple techniques to gather information from multiple sources and though the data is largely qualitative it can also be quantitative (Creswell, 1998; Ertmer, 1997; Frechling & Sharp, 1997; Merriam, 1988; Merriam, 2001; O’Connor, 2006). Common case study data
collection tools include surveys, interviews, documentation review, and observation (Creswell, 1998; Ertmer, 1997; Frechling & Sharp, 1997; Merriam, 1988; Merriam, 2001; O’Connor, 2006). This research project uses all four of these tools to varying degrees in the data collection process.

Another research methodology that influences this project is social cartography, which provides a method for mapping relational spaces by using sociograms to draw diagrams of social links and interpersonal relationship structures within groups. Paulston (1996) refers to this method of graphing relationships as “the variable topography of social space” (p. xix). The use of diagrams as a social mapping tool provides the opportunity for research participants to construct comprehensive and accurate representations of their social connections and context (Paulston, 1996; Paulston & Liebman, 1994). Paulston (1996) defines social cartography as “the writing and reading of maps addressing questions of location in the social milieu” (p.7). Essentially this method embodies drawing diagrams to map (identify) social relationship links between people.

An advantage of this graphic research tool is that it can help participants to recall and decode information through the visual dialogue that occurs while individuals try to draw images of their social networks (Paulston, 1996; Paulston & Liebman, 1994). The process of drawing two-dimensional maps of complex social networks requires a person to construct a mapping metaphor of their social context. The concept of visual dialogue comes from the idea that the process of mapping the social context encourages personal reflection and interpretation in order to represent the relationships while incorporating social space and interaction in the graph. Proponents of social cartography suggest that
through this creative and reflective process people can develop a deeper personal understanding as they attempt to draw contextual maps of their social networks (Paulston, 1996; Paulston & Liebman, 1994). In other words, asking someone to draw a picture of their social network offers them an opportunity for reflection and as they work to develop the images there is a chance to discover a deeper personal understanding of one’s personal context.

The plan for this research project included a sociogram activity as part of the in-person interview and participants were asked to draw diagrams that represented their personal conceptualization of their mentoring relationships. This plan to include graphic representations of mentoring relationships is compatible with case study research practices as one can often find graphics in the mentoring literature as a means of describing mentoring relationships and structures (Clinton, 2005; Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004; Hay, 1995; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Johnson et al, 1999; Stanley & Clinton, 1992).

The third research methodology that informs and influences this project is narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Patton, 2002; Varaki, 2007). The essence of this tradition is the process of gathering information for the purpose of research through storytelling and the study of the ways that humans experience their world as expressed through story (Varaki, 2007). Narrative inquiry embraces a wide range of potential data sources including; field notes, interviews, journals, letters, autobiographies and stories from oral traditions (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Furthermore, narrative inquiry methods incorporate the experience of the researcher into the narrative as well as embracing observation and interview as data collection options (Patton, 2002). This method was chosen to guide the use of the
researcher’s reflective diary as a component of this research project. Incorporating data from my journal as part of the narrative report recognizes the integral role of the researcher’s stance and experience that shape the research direction.

**Questionnaire.** Once the principal or vice-principal (mentee) participants had made an initial response to the research request they were sent an email with a unique identification number and a link to an electronic questionnaire hosted on www.surveymonkey.com. The survey was used to gather basic biographical and demographic information about each participant and his or her school setting. It asked questions about the participant’s age, gender, education and professional experience. It also asked for basic demographic information about the school, student enrolment, programmes and administrative staffing. Many of the questions were inspired by the work of Oliva and Jesse (1993) from the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary who had developed a detailed series of questions used for inquiring into the professional working conditions of school principals in Alberta. The mentee questionnaire (see appendix 15), served three purposes, confirming the participant’s interest in the research activity, providing general information about their circumstances, and as material for opening the discussion during the interview process.

**Interviews.** Personal interviews were conducted with each of the twenty one participants. All but one of the mentee interviews were conducted at the participant’s work place. Three mentor and programme leader interviews were conducted at the SD101 district administration centre while two were held in a local coffee shop and one was at the local airport while the participant awaited a flight overseas. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and was scripted with a list of list of open-ended
questions. The questions used for the programme leaders (see appendix 2) were inspired by Sweeny’s (2003c) work *The Key Questions for Developing Effective Mentoring Programs*, which was designed as a pre-programme planning tool for developing mentoring programmes. The questions from Sweeny’s (2003c) work were revised to provide pre-interview reflective prompts for the programme leaders in SD101 as well as a battery of potential questions for the in-person interview. All of the questions developed for programme leaders, mentors and mentees were reviewed through the University of Victoria Human Research ethics review process.

The use of interviews is popular practice in qualitative research as this method enables one to learn to see the world through the eyes of the participants and to discern how they organize their behaviour (Ely et al, 1991). As the researcher I believed that the interview process went very well with positive responses from SD101 programme leaders, mentors and mentees. During the interviews it appeared that I was able to establish a good rapport with the participants. In each case, the interview started with a school tour as an *ice-breaker*: this also provided an opportunity to learn about the school history and demographics. During the tour and the interview session I made note of my observations regarding interactions between the participant and staff or students in the building as well as interruptions.

**Participant observation.** The purpose of the observation aspect of the research was to recognize and pursue what Merriam (1988) refers to as a “holistic interpretation” of the phenomenon being researched. By planning to observe the participants in their work environments a broader range of data could be collected. Though the interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participant and at their worksite it was often
difficult to schedule a meeting time with a principal or vice-principal participant and in one case it took two months to finally schedule a meeting. The experiences regarding the difficulty in scheduling appointments as well as the observations made during the interviews will be discussed later in this work.

**Sociogram.** Part of the personal interview included an opportunity for the mentees to draw a personal mentoring network map. The participants were provided with a sample diagram of a relationship network (see figure 4 in Chapter 5) using icon shapes to identify people and lines to illustrate connections. I designed this example diagram using shape icons and lines inspired by images generated using InFlow® software (Krebs, 2009) for social and organizational network analysis. In all cases the sociogram activity was offered to the mentee in the later half of the personal interview and all cases the mentees agreed to try drawing a relationship map.

**Interpreting the Meanings**

The challenge once the fieldwork has been completed is to interpret meaning from the data that has been gathered in such a way that one can develop an understanding of the significant and relevant points. For this research activity the process started with an overall review of all the collected data. This is based on Creswell’s (1998) recommendations, who favours reading through all the collected information to obtain a sense of the overall data. This procedure is also advocated by Tesch (1990). The next step in making sense of the data requires organizing it into themes or categories, a process referred to as *open coding* (Creswell, 1998). The concept at this stage is that the, “researcher forms initial categories of information about the phenomenon being studied by segmenting information” (Creswell, 1998, p. 57). The challenge is to develop a
framework for the data considering the diversity of the sources, the four research groupings, association, mentor, mentee and programme leader, and the sheer volume of data that was collected through the hours of interviews, observations, multiple sociograms and pages of personal research reflections.

Coding. Some theorists suggest that an initial choice of data coding categories can depend to some extent on the nature of the research participant groupings (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) and that was the case for my research data. I looked at the data from the different participant groups and developed a coding framework for each group. For the provincial association group the data was coded in two categories; knowledge of the professional landscape and interest in school administrator mentoring by the association representative. The primary coding category for the mentoring programme leaders was programme development and sustainability structured on Sweeny’s (2003c) mentoring programme development question list. The mentor group data coding was divided into reasons for choosing to be a mentor, services provided by the mentor and sustainability of the mentoring relationship. The mentee group, which represents the largest body of data collected, had multiple coding categories. These included questions specific to the formal programme in regard to reasons for choosing to be mentored, expectations of the mentoring relationship, outcomes or experiences of the mentoring experience. Furthermore, I was also considering themes in relation to informal (unassigned) mentoring relationships and anyone that the mentees identify as a mentor and what mentees draw from the relationship as well as how the mentee depicts the relationships graphically. The final coding categories relate to the observations made of the mentees in their work environment including role complexity, intensification of their
work and the interruptions or constant contact expectations placed upon these school administrators.

The initial category choices evolved as I employed a technique discussed by Miles and Huberman (1994) where I made a preliminary count of data and determined how frequently codes appear in the database. After reviewing the interview transcripts and my reflective research journal I revised the themes to focus on those that became apparent from the data. These additional categories included: the lack of information at the provincial level, the role of a formal mentor within a diversified mentoring relationship network, the importance of confidentiality and trust within formal mentoring relationships and the implications of context on this same theme in the network of informal mentoring liaisons. Though not specifically a mentoring topic a final theme was noted regarding the working conditions and sustainability of the school leadership role.

Analysis. Once the data management was complete and the information was coded and organized, the research process moved on to the next step which was analysis of the data. Creswell (1998) states, “data analysis is not off-the-shelf” (p. 142) and by this he means that there is no single, fixed process for analysis in qualitative research however he suggests that there is a general principle to the process. According to Creswell (1998), the data analysis should be in the form of a spiral rather than a linear process. He states, “the researcher engages in the process of moving in analytic circles rather than using a fixed linear approach. One enters with data… and exits with an account or narrative” (Creswell, 1998, p. 142).

The approach to data analysis used in this dissertation incorporated the circular conceptualization of analysis for reviewing the experiences and perspectives of the
mentee participants. Commonalities in the mentee experiences were noted and variations between the participants were explored. In other words, as each participant’s data was reviewed and organized into categories or trends, the data already coded from other participants was reviewed for comparison. This approach allowed for trends and categorizations to evolve as the database was coded and earlier data revisited for comparison.

Going beyond the generality of Creswell’s (1998) spiral, the choice of research tradition also affects analysis. It is important to recognize that blending case study, social cartography, and narrative inquiry research methods can affect data analysis. Case study is, “an analysis [that] consists of making a detailed description of the case and its setting” (Creswell, 1998, p. 153). There are a number of suggested forms of data analysis for the case study and for this research activity two have been chosen: The first form is to develop, “generalizations from analyzing the data” (p. 154). For this research activity the generalizations are the coding and categorization that occurs in the preliminary overview of all the collected data. The second analysis structure incorporating case study methodology is the development of detailed descriptions of the aspects of the case. This research used both narrative descriptions and data details to develop an in-depth analysis and depiction of the case.

Blending in aspects of narrative inquiry and social cartography methods was intended to deepen the analysis of the data in order to develop even more meaningful and accurate representations of the case and the participants. There are a number of narrative analysis approaches that can be used to make sense of research data. One method is *thinking with a story* (Ellis, 2004) where rather than connecting a story to a theoretical
framework one considers how experiencing the story can help one to find truth about one’s life. Other options include thematic analyses where stories are used as data to arrive at themes (Ellis, 2004) and structural analyses in which the story’s organization such as genre, plot line, word choice and so on is examined (Ellis, 2004; Schwandt, 2007). Another method is the functional analyses of the story looking at the purpose the story serves such as a success story or a precautionary tale (Schwandt, 2007).

This research activity embraces another of the narrative analysis methods, narrative representation. In this method researchers collect data and then unify the information in the form of a narrative story that sets out to explain the phenomenon under study. Clandinin (2007) suggests that the creation of the story is considered to be narrative analysis. In this research project I include a first-person narrative based on my research experience and observations through the use of a research diary and field notes. It is also important to recognize that while many research and academic research writing conventions discourage the use of “I” in academic writing, narrative inquiry methods tend to break from this tradition (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, Creswell, 2008).

My reason for choosing to include “I” in the narrative is two-fold. Chase (2005) suggests that the use of “I” and including the researcher’s narrative emphasizes the role that a researcher has in shaping the research results or constructing the story. My goal is to tell a story about professional experiences and this methodology helps me to both realize and articulate my involvement with the data. The other reason incorporating this methodology is because it provides the opportunity for me to incorporate my own lived experience in the work and learn more about myself. As I am conducting research in my own profession with people in similar roles to my own (though in a completely different
school district) there is room for me to critically reflect on my own life based on my research of others.

There are two aspects of narrative inquiry incorporated into this work. First, as Ellis (2004) notes, narrative researchers can build rapport with participants by sharing personal experiences about the research topic. To honour the research ethics guidelines I did not share my professional background or stories with participants in similar roles until after they have given their research consent. Once the consent was confirmed I did share with participants in the interview details of my professional background as a school administrator in a neighbouring school district. My intention was to build rapport and understanding as Ellis (2004) suggests. Another way narrative was incorporated into this thesis was to interweave my own personal experiences along with the stories of the participant’s experiences in the final research report (Creswell, 2007). Ellis (2004) notes that blending together such stories can introduce and hook the readers to the topic or reflect on the research activities and changes experienced by the researcher while conducting the research. The point that Ellis (2004) makes is that a narrative researcher interweaves his/her personal perspective or story into the research report in order to make it clear to the reader that the researcher has an impact on the report. In this project I do both, as is evidenced by the personal story I tell in the chapter 1 and I also include my research journey experience through the use of excerpts from my research journal as part of the project narrative report.

**Judging the quality of the research.**

Many steps were taken to ensure that the quality of this research is the best that it can be. As this is a qualitative study dealing with human experience the report that is
produced as a result is a story that gives voice to the participants but also portrays the researcher’s interpretations of those stories and experiences. Eisner (1991) states, “there are no operationally defined truth tests to apply to qualitative research” (p. 53) and this report is not intended to define truths but rather share perspectives and examples of successful mentoring practice. Merriam (1988) suggests that the data in a qualitative research project be presented from the perspective of the participant and these perspectives rather than truths are presented in the data that has been gathered. My intent was to present the data from the participant’s viewpoint of how they see themselves and their experiences. To do this a number of techniques to ensure the quality of the research are included in the research plan. Creswell (1998) suggests there are a many steps a researcher can take to ensure the quality of a study. He also suggests that there needs to be methods in place to verify the data collected. Merriam (1988) suggests that researchers can explain the theories and assumptions behind the study, provide triangulation of the data collected, and present an audit trail for the data. These techniques are used in this study in order to provide a rich audit trail and add to the overall authenticity of the study.

Triangulation is a process where a researcher uses multiple and different sources, methods and theories to provide corroboration. Creswell (1998) describes the process as “corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective” (p. 202). For this project data triangulation was accomplished through interviewing multiple participants and a variety of groupings (mentor, programme leader, mentee) without screening-out any of the participants. An audit trail was provided through the formal recording of the data throughout the interview and fieldwork process including copies of written questionnaires, audiotapes and transcripts of interviews and copies of
email correspondence with the participants. The audit trail also includes a personal research diary and a field research reflective journal.

This report employs a variety of methods to ensure the quality and accuracy of the data and interpretations including peer review; clarification of researcher bias; member checks; and a report written using a rich and thick description: each will be briefly described. Peer review allows for a peer or colleague to question and critique the methods, process, and findings. For this report there have been three levels of peer review at various stages of the process. As this is a supervised doctoral dissertation the work has been reviewed throughout the process by two academic supervisors. In addition, a preliminary report of the data findings and initial researcher impressions was presented to the SD 101 PVPA executive in June of 2010 with the opportunity for feedback and open discussion of the activity from a professional educator perspective. Furthermore, a preliminary report of the findings, researcher impressions and researcher experiences were presented at a session of the 2010 International Mentoring Conference in which practitioners and scholars in the area of mentoring were able to hear about the research and provide feedback from a mentoring perspective.

Researcher bias is another concern in regard to the quality and accuracy of the data collection and interpretations. In order to provide full disclosure to the research participants, the report reader and presentation audiences in regard to my potential biases as the researcher I took steps to mitigate this throughout the process. In chapter one, I identified my personal biases, in the interview process I disclosed personal professional background and opinions about the principalship and mentoring to the participants (after they initially agreed to participate) and a I provided similar disclosure of profession and
opinion at the beginning of the professional and mentoring association presentations. This self-disclosure, I trust, will help the reader or audience to recognize that bias may be present within this report. Merriam (1988) suggests that it is important that the reader understands from the beginning the researcher’s position or biases and assumptions that might impact the research and the researcher believes that he has addresses this concern in an appropriate manner. I believe that I have fulfilled this obligation.

I also employed a member check as a further step to ensure the quality of the data in this research activity. To conduct a member check, “the researcher solicits informants’ views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations” (Creswell, 1998, p. 202). Creswell stresses the importance of this and states, “this technique is considered by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to be ‘the most critical technique for establishing credibility’”(p. 203). I honoured this tradition by taking the research data and findings back to the participants for their review. Participants were asked to both review the transcripts of the interviews as well as read my first draft of the interpretive written report. By taking the data, analysis and interpretations back to the participants; they had the opportunity to judge the accuracy and credibility of the account and to help the researcher develop a better understanding. They were also asked if they were satisfied that their identities were sufficiently hidden and no one indicated any concerns with the protection of their anonymity.

The final technique used to strengthen the accuracy of this research report is to write it using a rich and thick description. This allows the reader to make decisions about the transferability of the research to their own situation. Rich and thick means that I describe details about the participants so that the reader can experience the research
journey through the eyes of both the researcher and the participants. In this the report
becomes the messenger who carries the story from the participant to the reader through
the written word.

Ethical considerations.

As a researcher it is very important for me to both remember and appreciate the
ethical responsibilities that come with conducting research work. Denzin (2000) states:

From the beginning moments of informed consent decisions, to other ethical
decisions in the field, to the completion of the study, qualitative researchers need
to allow for the possibility of recurring ethical dilemmas and problems in the
field. Ethical issues arise regularly in the field. For example, questions regarding
how much to disclose in the final report and how much to keep out of the final
report are ever present (p. 385).

Ely et al (1991) state, “striving to be faithful to another’s viewpoint is striving to be
ethical. Striving to maintain confidentiality is striving to be ethical. Striving to be
trustworthy is striving to be ethical” (p. 28). As was briefly mentioned earlier in this
chapter, I took many steps to ensure the ethical responsibilities of my researcher role and
activities were met to a high degree.

These steps began with the proposal review and authorization to conduct research
by University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board (HREB). The proposal was
reviewed by the HREB and was approved on September 18th, 2010 (see approval
certificate attached as Appendix 19). Permission to conduct research was also requested
from the school board Superintendent and Board of Trustees prior to contacting any
participants. I recognize that the sample size is small and the data collected could reveal
the participants identity. Creswell (1998) reminds researchers that protection of the participant’s identity is the responsibility of the researcher and to that end this report uses pseudonyms, and fictionalized characters or personal researcher narratives to “represent a composite picture rather than an individual picture” (Creswell, 1998, p. 132).

Participation in the research was voluntary and each participant was given full disclosure of the project in advance of providing informed consent to participate, in accordance with the University of Victoria research ethics rules. Sample copies of the consent letter forms and relevant documents are included (see appendices 1-18). I took steps for the care, protection and disposal of physical data, written documents and magnetic media to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. There was no solicitation of “off the record” information from participants and none was used in the analysis and presentation of the findings.

I also chose to disclosure my personal profession as a school administrator and share my own experiences and perspectives as a school principal with the participants. Creswell (1998) warns that this is an ethical consideration because, “this sharing minimizes the ‘bracketing’ that is essential to construct the meaning of participants… and reduces information shared by informants” (p. 133). This disclosure and sharing was done in advance with the Superintendent and School Board however the mentor and mentee participants were only informed that I was a graduate student conducting research until signed consent was obtained from the participant. After the consent was obtained I disclosed my professional background as a practicing school administrator. The disclosure was not done prior to the mentor and mentee participants granting consent for the research as I did not want to influence the consent in any way based on possible
collegially ties. In two cases a mentee participant knew me in advance, one from being in a graduate class together in the past and another attended a professional development workshop in my school district and recognized me as a fellow participant. I was unknown to all of the other participants prior to the research activity.

I made the conscientious choice to disclose professional and personal perspectives to research participants. Creswell (1998) states, “in feminist research approaches, the goals are to establish collaborative and non-exploitative relationships” (p. 83). My primary reason for choosing to disclose and share personal perspectives and experiences within the discourse was to make it apparent to the participants that I was an interested colleague rather than an impartial researcher. This was important as it needed to be clear to the participants that I had opinions and potential biases based on previous professional practice. Furthermore, I believe that disclosing to the participants some personal professional experiences and observations helped to establish a better relationship between the researcher and the participants involved in the study. In this case, I believe that it was ethically sound to use self-disclosure as part of the research process.

**Difficulties and limitations of the research.**

There are a number of difficulties and limitations for this research. Simple logistics were complex as the participants were from a district many kilometres away and to meet with them required many trips in the middle of the winter with some of the trips being to remote and sparsely populated regions. To minimize some of the travel and carbon foot-print of this research a number of communication technologies were employed. Email messages and telephone calls provided much of the introductory and scheduling message traffic. A commercial on-line survey service provider
(Surveymonkey.com) was used for the questionnaires and much of the contact and district demographic information was obtained through the Internet from the SD101 and provincial association WebPages.

Maintaining anonymity for participants is another challenge because the district has few schools so I had to take precautions to portray data in ways that would not identify a particular school or participant. Because of this issue, I suspect that it added to my difficulty recruiting all of the SD101 administrators and mentors to participate in the study as some may have felt they would be recognized too easily if their situation were described in detail. No one contacted me expressing concerns about anonymity as a reason for declining the opportunity to participate though three did respond to general requests for participation that they were just “too busy” to be part of the project. The point about the busy schedules of the SD101 administrators is something that will be discussed in the data and findings later in this work.

The initial research plan was to look at programmes in British Columbia school districts and through the pre-screening process three potential research districts were identified. While choosing the District SD101 was based on quality of the potential data it also limited the perspective of the data to a school district that is quite small (6000 students) in comparison to many of the larger districts in British Columbia which can be greater than 50,000 students in size. This limit on size and perspective should be kept in mind recognizing that the size of the data pool is small and may represent anomalies that are unique to the region or district. As such drawing conclusions or suggesting trends to be extrapolated to the provincial level may lack accuracy. However, keeping in mind that the case study traditional is not primarily about trends and truths but about lived
experiences and perspectives the small data pool is likely suitable for the research traditions chosen for this work. In the next two chapters I will discuss in detail the data collected and the analysis of the information framed and informed by the theories that were described here in chapter three.
Chapter 4

The presentation and analysis of the research findings is divided into two chapters with Chapter four providing details about the research context and a historical overview of the SD101 model and chapter five focusing on the data and results of the fieldwork with the mentee participants. Chapter four begins with excerpts from the researcher’s personal journal and a reflective narrative dialogue about the initial research screening and investigation process. The discussion then moves on to describe the history and development of the SD101 mentoring model and its place within the district’s school administrator professional development programme based on data and findings that resulted from the fieldwork and interviews with the programme leaders, local professional association executives and formal programme mentors.

Gate-keepers, reluctant organizations and professional courtesy.

As noted, I kept a researcher’s reflective diary as a component of the data collection process. Based on narrative inquiry methodology the plan was to incorporate data from the personal journal as part of the narrative report recognizing that the researcher’s story and experiences not only influence the report but are actually intertwined with the fieldwork data. The following is a series of excerpts from my research journal describing the preliminary fieldwork that led up to the site selection and school district specific research work.

Sept 18/09
- Ethics review approved today!
- Emailed the four associations - follow-up to August intro letter.

Sept 28/09
- Spoke briefly to BCELC representative – interested but not sure he can help.
- Called BCSSA representative - doesn’t have any info on principal mentoring.
Oct 1/09
- Still no word yet from the BCPVPA rep – The BCPVPA has been very difficult to get any response from and I am surprised as I thought this would be a hot topic for them.

Oct 13/09
- Have not heard back from the BCPVPA - frustrating….

Oct 15/09
- Still nothing heard so far from the BCPVPA - emailed the representative again.
- Later in the day today the BCPVPA representative phoned me - reluctant to share district information with me
- I asked her if she would be available for a brief interview she said that she would probably be available sometime next spring (seriously, she meant it)

Oct 16/09
- I sent an email to the BCPVPA member’s listserv this morning explaining that I was looking for a school district using an innovative P/VP mentoring programme.
- Wow – so far today I have had 6 responses to my email with a number of districts and contacts recommended.

Oct 23/09
- Been working through the respondents to my BCPVPA listserv email and pre-screening the districts. One that stands out in particular is SD101 which has a very diverse, active and "grassroots" series of opportunities for mentoring, networking and professional development from school administrators.

Oct 27/09
- I have heard back from all the nominated districts except for one.

Oct 28/09
- I have started the contact process with SD101.

Nov 12/09
- Called SD101 today and I have been approved to do my research in SD101!

As mentioned earlier, my original plan for this project was to begin by contacting four provincial Associations involved with school leadership in British Columbia in order to help me to pre-screen the sixty public school districts in BC and identify potential research sites. Both the British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) and the
British Columbia School Superintendents Association (BCSSA) responded to my request within a few days indicating that they did not have information about principal mentoring. I was not surprised by the responses because I knew in advance that these groups support elected school trustees or senior central office administrators so they might not have collected any data regarding principal mentoring. I was surprised however by the responses from the British Columbia Educational leadership Council (BCELC) and the British Columbia Principals and Vice-Principals Association (BCPVPVA) as I expected that both associations, being directly involved with school-based leadership, would have an interest in this topic as well as data to share. I based this assumption on my understanding that the BCELC had a government mandate to improve school leadership and the BCPVPVA is the professional association that represents school principals and vice-principals in British Columbia.

It took me almost two weeks to get through to the BCELC and once I was able to speak with a representative I was not able to gather much data or support. The BCELC representative recommended a district in the lower mainland and gave me a contact name and number. Though the BCELC representative expressed an interest in the research topic he was unfortunately unable to provide me with further assistance as the BCELC’s funding had been recently cut by the provincial government and the organization was concluding its activities.

As I initially developed my research plan I included the BCPVPVA believing this association would most likely be my best source of information and support for this project about school leader mentoring in BC. After many emails, phone calls and weeks of waiting I was able to make contact with a representative of the BCPVPVA. I was
surprised when the representative said that she, and the association, did not have any significant data and that they would be reluctant to share any district information with me citing privacy concerns. Furthermore, when I asked her if she would be available for about a one-hour interview to get a BCPVPA perspective about principal mentoring she said that she was very busy and would not be available until sometime next spring (this phone conversation occurred in mid-October). On a positive note she did say that she and likely the association would be interested in the \textit{results} of the research.

While disappointing and frustrating it is important to remember that research \textit{resistance} is not an unusual occurrence. Bryman (1989) suggests that organizations are often resistant to being studied as they may be suspicious about the aims of the researcher and that senior managers often act as \textit{gatekeepers} between the researcher and the organization because due to concerns about the amount of time consumed by the investigation. Bates and Piani (2005) argue that reluctance to participate in surveys and research is not uncommon and they identify four popular reasons cited for non-participation in surveys: participants are too busy to participate, participants have privacy concerns about participating, participants are not interested in the research topic and the research will take too much time. Based on the responses from the association representatives it seems reasonable to suggest that this research project was encountering gate keeping as well as research resistance due to time constraints and little interest in the topic on the part of the association representatives.

In order to move ahead I deviated from my original research plan and with approval from my research supervisors I used the BCPVPA listserv to ask if any of my school administrator colleagues across the province were aware of innovative mentoring
programmes for school principals or vice-principals. I sent a message via the listserv and in three days I had five nominations for potential research sites. I found the responses were quick, used supportive language and were encouraging me to continue on this research initiative. Though anecdotal I noticed that the topic of innovative principal mentoring seems to get a more positive response from practicing professionals rather than association representatives.

An explanation for this could be *executive research resistance* which C cycyota and Harrison (2006) note is a common problem for researchers. C cycyota and Harrison (2006) observed that researchers often have difficulty obtaining information from members of an organization’s upper echelon and at best only one-third of executives respond to survey requests and the trend has continued to decline for the past ten years. Though C cycyota and Harrison (2006) suggest there is more likelihood that executives will respond to surveys that “capture their personal or firm-specific interests” (p. 135) it appears that school administrator mentoring, or the way I portrayed the topic to the association executives, did not garner their interest.

**Historical context.**

The personal interviews conducted with school district administration, local professional association executives, programme leaders and the formal mentors included questions about the programme history. The participants were asked to share their knowledge and perspective regarding the history, context and development of the SD101 mentoring programme. Many of the participants chose to share their insight into the social constructs and history of the school district and this data provides some very interesting contextual information about the organizational environment and social
structure of the district prior to and during the development of the mentoring programme. The following narrative is a compilation of the interview responses and discussions regarding the nature of the school district leading up to and during the development of the administrator mentoring programme.

Prior to the 1990’s there was a long period of time where there was little change in the leadership of School District 101. One person served as superintendent for seventeen years and much of the school-based leadership remained constant with few newcomers joining from outside the district and local administrators staying in leadership positions for many years. This long period of consistency came to an end in the early 1990’s when the superintendent retired and a replacement was hired from outside the district. This replacement, Mr. Radcliffe would stay with the organization for five years followed by two other people, Ms. Smith and Mr. Jones who then shared the senior leadership position of Superintendent on an alternating annual basis for nearly ten years.

The mentors describe this five year period with Mr. Radcliffe as a time of change for the district in many ways including a revised professional development programme for school leaders. The mentors suggested that Mr. Radcliffe was a significant catalyst in changing the professional development practices for school administrators. One initiative was the interaction with Harvard University, of which Mr. Radcliffe was a graduate, and he initiated a strategy that involved sending school administrators to Harvard for summer leadership institutes. Many of the current SD101 mentors as well as some current serving SD101 school administrators attended the Harvard institutes in the 1990’s. Some suggested that this experience had an influence on administrator Professional Development (Pro-D) for many years to follow.
After five years Mr. Radcliffe left the district and the assistant-superintendent, Ms. Jones, moved into the superintendent position. It was during her tenure that the mentoring programme started and she was identified as an important influence initiating the development of the mentoring programme by encouraging a renewed use of professional development funding. During this time two percent of each school administrator’s salary was collected by the district with the intended use of funding administrator Pro-D activities. Over a period of a few years the collected funds had grown into a large surplus of targeted but unused money. Ms. Jones applied some pressure on the school-based administrators to use the funds for professional development and a large portion of that money would later go to finance the research and development of the SD 101 Principals and Vice-Principals Association mentoring programme as well as to sustain the on-going operation for a number of years to follow.

During the next few years, due to a series of secondments by the provincial Ministry of Education, the position of Superintendent changed back and forth between Ms. Jones and Mr. Smith repeatedly. Some of the mentors, as well as some of the mentees, noted that this was a time of some organizational instability that culminated in 2006 with a restructuring of the senior administration and addition of a number of new central office director positions. Participants also reported that during this time period of central office administrative changes there was also the beginning of a wave of changes in the school administrator ranks, as long serving administrators reached retirement and newcomers began to come to school leadership roles from outside the district. One mentor noted that the SD101 “administrators are a close-knit group” and in discussing professional-development initiatives with SD 101 PVPA executive members they noted
that the intention was to be pro-active as an association rather than scripted or guided centrally.

There is some very important contextual data to consider when looking at the historical perspective of the SD 101 PVPA mentoring programme. There were a number of environmental and situational conditions that one could argue aided in the development and sustainability of the SD 101 PVPA mentoring programme. One might suggest that the school district as a social organization was predisposed to supporting the development of a successful mentoring because of the leaders in the organization had positive attitudes towards professional development. Mentoring scholars note that organizational environments that support personal development are an important factor in a successful mentoring programme (Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004; Dahle, 1998; Daloz, 1986). In the case of SD101 both district and SD 101 PVPA leaders supported the idea of developing the mentoring programme. Furthermore the availability of a pool of professional development funds was another critical factor to consider; scholars note that successful programmes require dedicated financial and human resources to develop and sustain a mentoring programme (Clapham, 1996; Daresh, 1995; Malderez & Bodóczky, 1999; Porter, 2001; Samier, 2000; Villani, 2006). The district had a surplus of targeted professional development funds and as such there was money available to hire staff and provide financial resources for the operational costs of the mentoring programme such as books, meals and a mentor stipend. Many scholars argue that having an effective programme developer is a critical factor in the success of a mentoring programme (Clapham, 1996; Daresh, 1995; Malderez & Bodóczky, 1999; Porter, 2001; Samier, 2000; Stromei, 1999; Sweeny, 2001a; Villani, 2006). The combination of financial
resources and leadership support in SD101 ensured that resources for a skilled practitioner to investigate, plan and develop the mentoring programme was put into place for the first four years of the programme.

A final environmental consideration is the instability and transformation of the school district organization during the time leading up to and during the development of the mentoring programme. One must consider the impact on the district organization by the transformational leadership imperatives (Burns, 1978; Foster, 1989; Mitchell & Varner, 1990; Samier, 2000) associated with the central office administration pushing for professional change. Furthermore one should also assess the level organizational instability occurring as a result of complex changes in central office leadership (as noted by Dukowski, 2006; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006).

Comments from participants suggest that for a number of years the district was in both leadership and organizational flux and this may have been a reason why there was significant support for the development of the mentoring programme. One mentor, a former long-serving SD101 administrator, noted that the change was so much that “they have lost that sense of connectedness… that sense of leadership that used to be in place.” Scholars note that organizational instability can have a powerful influence in the development and acceptance of mentoring activities. Hay (1995) in particular, as well as Clutterbuck & Lane (2004), suggests that mentoring relationships are developed often as coping mechanisms by people in unstable organizations. Samier (2000) notes that mentoring provides a “technique for coping with change” (p. 83). The essence of these arguments is that individuals build connections with other people as a network of developmental liaisons because the organization is unable to provide support or security
due to the uncertainty of an unstable environment. In other words, people establish mentoring relationships as a form of a professional life preserver in case the organization flounders. Considering that SD101 was an organization in flux for many years, it is worth considering that the mentoring approach may have been embraced because the organizational environment was unstable enough to encourage people to develop their own network or relationships as a way to cope with the organizational transformation.

**SD101 mentoring programme structure**

The following description of the SD101 mentoring programme is based on information from interviews with a central office administrator and three SD 101 PVPA executive members representing the association leadership and professional development committees. In addition this section is informed by information gathered from two mentoring programme coordinators, one who is currently guiding the programme and the other who was the original programme developer and worked as the facilitator for the first five years of the programme. All five of these participants provided historical and chronological details and descriptions of the programme and its development. The two programme coordinators were particularly helpful in describing the historical perspective, initial development process and evolution of the programme. The SD 101 PVPA executive members and the central office administrator were instrumental in developing a contextual perspective to the programme and its position within the overall organizational environment.

Now in its sixth year the programme currently has, according to the mentoring programme facilitator, a pool of fourteen volunteer mentors (all retired SD101 administrators) of which eight are in active mentoring relationships with a total of fifteen
mentees this year. The research and development work for the programme started in the fall of 2002 when a then recently retired SD101 administrator was contracted as a programme developer and tasked to create a mentoring programme for the SD101 school-based administrators. The programme developer started with a literature review of mentoring theory and practice and also conducted a systematic ‘needs assessment’ by individually interviewing each of the 32 school administrators employed by SD101 at that time.

Many mentoring scholars suggest that a needs analysis that focuses on developing a programme the meets the needs of the mentee is considered best practice (Clapham, 1996; Harwood, 2004; Ladd, 2002; Lipton & Wellman, 2003; Stromei, 1999; Sweeny, 2001b; Villani, 2006). The SD101 mentoring programme developer noted during her interview for this research project that the needs assessment process provided her with critical information that played an important role in the programme development planning. She discovered that the school administrators at that time not only supported the idea of newcomer development but in addition were interested in mentoring opportunities for themselves regardless of their current career stage or experience. She remarked that this added a degree of complexity to the programme planning as, “the needs and backgrounds of the administrators would be very diverse” so the programme would have to embrace diversity in experience and needs as well as provide options for mentoring relationships and programme delivery.

Based on information gained through a literature review the developer determined that the size and nature of the SD101 group was too small for a traditionally structured mentoring model of a senior principal or vice-principal mentor being paired with a
newcomer school administrator mentee. Part of her reasoning was that “there is a political nature to a social organization”. What the programme developer is alluding to is the mentoring theory literature perspective that hierarchical mentoring can impose limitations on the growth potential of the relationship (Dahle, 1998; Hansman, 2001; Stalker, 1994; Villani, 2006) as well as concepts of the principalship in which it is difficult for new principals to seek help or answers for questions for fear of being scrutinized or perceived as incompetent (Villani, 2006).

The essence of the problem is that in a traditional senior/junior mentoring model the mentee is reluctant to disclose or discuss personal professional challenges with a mentor who has supervisory or evaluator responsibilities. As such, a traditional expert-novice model could be counterproductive to the mentoring programme goals. Furthermore, the programme developer noted that in many cases the existing senior school administrators do not have time to provide mentoring and she also noted that just because a person has a lot of seniority as an administrator it does not necessarily mean that they will be a good mentor. These observations can also be found in the literature (Malderez & Bodóczky, 1999; Samier, 2000; Villani, 2006) and the same conclusions are drawn that mentors need to have time and specific mentoring skills in addition to professional knowledge in order to be effective.

**Getting Started.** The programme developer indicated that the guiding philosophy was that the structure needed to be confidential, comfortable and flexible for the participants as well as “responsive and evolving based on the interests of the members, new professional development ideas and taking advantage of local knowledge”.

Furthermore, it was important the programme did not significantly add to the participant’s workload and that there would not be any heavy preparation commitments.

In that first year the facilitator provided all of the one to one mentoring and continued to mentor some of her mentees for three years. In the second year the facilitator was joined by three retired school administrators who volunteered to become mentors and received a small honorarium for the hours that they provided mentoring. A mentor/mentee matching process was developed driven by a mentee needs assessment and through consultation. The programme facilitator would describe the profiles of potential mentors from the mentor pool and suggest matches for the mentee to consider based on a needs and capacities. Choosing the mentor was always done by the mentee and participation in this programme has always been voluntary. This mentee-driven matching process continues to be the practice for the mentor assignment aspect of the programme. The mentoring programme has continued to exist though the original developer/facilitator retired from the role after five years. There is now a new programme facilitator, a recently retired SD101 administrator, along with a mentor pool and a group of mentees.

**Programme affiliation.** It is important to clarify the ownership or affiliation of this particular programme as it relates to the origin and organizational circumstances of the programme as well as its positioning within a larger structure of the school district. Though the mentoring programme occurs within School District 101 and is sanctioned by the district administration it is not a district programme per se. The programme is funded and controlled by the local school administrator’s association. The money for the programme comes from a professional development account that is provided through a
two percent annual deduction from each administrator’s salary. The programme facilitator is employed by the local association, and the programme is under the leadership of the SD 101 PVPA professional development committee. The one-to-one mentoring programme is not a stand-alone programme but is actually part of a larger menu of professional development activities offered to the school administrators by their local association.

For the 2009-2010 school-year the SD 101 PVPA professional development programme offered fifteen different opportunities for its members including two retreats for the whole group of administrators plus a variety of focus group and professional interest club choices targeting specific areas such as personal growth plans, professional literature, inter-school visitation, thematic dialogue as well as some work/life balance oriented opportunities. In addition there were two individual mentoring programmes that were part of the bigger Pro-D picture, one for new administrators who were new to a role or new to the district plus a one to one mentoring programme for any administrator regardless of role, seniority or experience.

**Mentoring and innovation.** To this point a reader might be questioning the innovation aspect of the mentoring that has been described in SD 101. One might suggest that the model, a retired administrator working with a novice, is a traditional senior/junior or veteran/newcomer model. The use of retired administrators as mentors might reduce some of the power-over aspects of a traditional hierarchical pairing and the mentee-centric pairing choice methodology in this programme is a non-traditional conceptualization supported by feminist mentoring theory (Auster, 1984; Braun, 1990; Dahle, 1998; Daresh, 1995). These two aspects of the SD 101 PVPA mentoring
programme could be described as being more akin to a nuance of traditional mentoring rather than as a striking example of innovative practice.

There is, however, an important point that seems to set the SD 101 PVPA model apart from the traditional conceptualization of mentoring: in the SD 101 PVPA model mentoring is offered in a formal setting but mentoring is also naturally occurring throughout many of the other professional development activities and groups that form the overall Pro-D programme. I am using the term naturally occurring to highlight how the school administrators established mentoring relationships or liaisons similar to those described by Hay (1995) or Clutterbuck and Lane (2004) within professional development activities that did not have a planned mentoring component, expectation or imperative. One principal, a former mentee in the formal programme, was asked about informal mentoring relationships with colleagues and he described how a life-balance group that was initially intended to provide some recreational relief to the stressors of the principalship became a strong source of collegial mentoring support.

One of the things that we just started doing – and it started as kind of a joke, but it’s actually something that is really important to me and a really enjoyable experience – is a group of us (and it’s men only at this point – it just worked out that way, it wasn’t a plan) meet at least once per week. Have a drink at the pub, get together and just shoot the breeze and so on. Well, we’ve talked about professional development ideas and going together and doing it together, you know? ‘Let’s all go, let’s do a road trip, let’s go to a math conference or let’s go to the mainland for a hockey game. And what we talked about is that those conversations in the car or in the bar, or wherever it was, often those are the real
meat and potatoes of what we do. And so we have a point where instead of data-driven dialogue it’s just drive-dialogue dialogue… it’s like a break from work, but, you know, you end up with those conversations that are really meaningful and it also builds that camaraderie on the side.

Other participants who were current mentees made similar comments noting that they found valuable mentoring support in a variety of the book clubs, targeted topic discussion groups and the inter-school visitation group. Participants did however indicate varying degrees of mentoring support from the various group opportunities. While some noted the life-balance group was valuable others emphasized other activities as being more of a professional mentoring activity.

The inter-visitation, again, is for me a two-way street: I get as much out of it as it gives to me. The book club is more about me: I mean the book club is interesting, but it is more a social network where we talk about the issues. Now there is a lot of stuff that happens in my direction from them, I get a lot of direction from them. I take part in some of that information sharing. I have things to share to them, but most of the stuff is coming at me through the meetings or through the organization.

This conceptualization of mentoring being interwoven in the SD 101 PVPA professional development model and activities may become even more apparent when examining the data collected from the interviews with the programme mentors and mentees, which is a topic emphasized in the next chapter.
Sharing the mentor’s perspective

Five current SD101 mentors, all retired SD101 administrators working with mentees this year, were interviewed as part of this research activity. Two of the mentors were also programme facilitators, one currently working in the role and the other, the original programme developer and facilitator, who had worked in the role for the first five years of the programme. The research goal for the mentor interviews was to gain an understanding of what motivates these retirees to become mentors, their perspective of the mentoring relationship as well as their knowledge of the programme and its history.

The mentoring programme budget provides for a stipend of $50 per hour for the mentors to meet with mentees; however when asked about the motivation for becoming a mentor the financial reward was not a motivating factor for any of the mentors. What the mentors did say was motivating was the opportunity to give back to their profession, community and to maintain a social connection with their former colleagues. All three spoke very highly of the community as well as the school district and expressed their feeling of connection stating that, “community is a big thing.” They also noted that being a mentor provided them an opportunity to give back professionally by providing support to the current practitioners based on their own knowledge and experience. In addition, two of the mentors noted that the situational advantage of the mentor being a retired administrator is that they can provide a historical perspective of the district and analysis of social constructs without being “bogged-down in the details or the politics.” One mentor summed-up the role as providing a sounding board for the mentee, being an experienced advisor and helping the mentee to focus on the big picture concepts of educational leadership.
All three agreed that the mentoring was mentee-centric: in other words, based on the needs of the mentee and driven by the direction the mentee wanted to go professionally. All three mentioned the extreme importance they place on the confidentiality of the relationship, a point that will be seen again when reviewing the mentee perspectives later in this dissertation. One subtle motivating factor started to appear as the research progressed through the discourse of the interviews. Though there were scripted questions, the interviewees were encouraged to take the dialogue in the direction they felt was important. All of the mentors spoke about their careers and their connections to the community and colleagues and it became apparent that these post-retirement mentoring activities were a form of a phased professional and social exit strategy from the school district organization.

One of the mentors noted that the importance of relationships has been “part of the district culture for a long time” and that meeting with a mentee once or twice a month maintained a “social connection” to the organization. Another mentor noted that though he was retired he continued to grow professionally by learning from his mentee. It seems that by mentoring part-time and continuing some professional dialogue with a current practitioner the retirees are able to ease into retirement rather than simply cutting their ties with former colleagues and district organization upon their official retirement from work. It is unclear whether the willingness of the retired mentors to give-back to their district and profession improves the quality of the mentoring process within the programme. The benefit however, is that this example of volunteerism reduces the challenge of finding suitable mentors which is noted as a common problem for many
mentoring programmes by scholars such as Sweeny (2003c), Malderez and Bodóczky (1999), and Clutterbuck and Lane (2004).

Conclusion

This chapter was a presentation and analysis of the initial research screening and investigation processes as well as providing a historical context of the SD 101 PVPA mentoring programme and the mentor’s perspectives. Though difficult at times, the initial efforts to find a site to investigate contemporary mentoring practices highlights that school administrator mentoring programmes may not be a high-profile topic for the provincial organizations, but there is grassroots interest and knowledge-base in the topic area. The section describing the history and development of the SD 101 PVPA model highlights that there were a combination of factors that affected its development: available funding, organizational restructuring, leadership imperatives and existing professional development interests provided fertile ground for the development of the mentoring programme. The next chapter will discuss the data and findings that resulted from the fieldwork and interviews with the programme leaders, the formal mentors and the principals and vice-principals who self-identified as mentees.
Chapter 5

This chapter discusses the data and findings from the fieldwork, questionnaires, personal interviews and sociogram activities completed with the principals and vice-principals who self-identified as mentees in the SD 101 PVPA mentoring programme. The data from the mentee group, which represents the largest body of data collected, is organized into four general themes. Initially the data was screened using a coding framework that included questions specifically to examine why the mentees chose to be formally mentored, as well as exploring their expectations of the mentoring relationship and their reported outcomes of the experience. The data was also coded in regard to informal mentoring relationships and people that the mentees identified as a mentor-figure, as well as what mentees drew on from these informal relationships. The final coding theme relates to the observations made of the mentees in their work environment including role complexity, intensification of the work and the interruptions or constant contact expectations placed upon the school administrator.

After an initial data review was completed the coding themes were revised to focus on case-specific data regarding the mentees’ perceptions of their formal mentor within a diversified mentoring relationship network. This revision process was part of the original research plan and was based on using a preliminary count technique (Miles & Huberman, 1994) with the data to determine frequently appearing codes. The initial data screening identified three themes of which the first focuses the mentee’s formal mentoring programme experience and the role of the formal mentor within a diversified network of mentoring relationships. The second theme that developed was to identify the emphasis placed on confidentiality, trust and mutual respect within the formal mentoring
relationships by the mentees as well as any implications of this context on informal mentoring liaisons and limitations of professional interaction. The third theme focuses on informal mentoring networks identified by the mentees and the nature of the relationships within those networks.

**Participant demographics.**

Twelve SD101 principals or vice-principal mentees were interviewed with the intention of gaining an understanding of their perspectives and experiences from their participation in the SD 101 PVPA professional-development mentoring. Eleven of the mentees were interviewed in their school workplace; the twelfth was interviewed in a neighbouring school after hours while she supervised a sports team from her school participating in an inter-school tournament.

All twelve of the mentees were asked to complete a personal demographics survey as part of the introduction package each participant received. Ten of the mentees completed it on-line prior to the personal interview while the two remaining completed the survey as part of the personal interview visit and later the data was transferred to the electronic database by the researcher. The survey (see appendix 15) asked questions about gender, education, teaching and administrative experience and employment history. There were also questions about the school site including grade range, number of students and amount of on-site administrative support (i.e. secretarial time or vice-principal allocation) for the school principal.

Twelve mentees, seven women and five men, chose to participate in this research project. This group represents 41% of the total number of the 2009-2010 SD101 school-based administrators and 80% of the reported number of mentees in 2009-2010 SD 101
PVPA mentoring programme. This research also looked at the roles and school-settings of the SD101 mentees who participated in this study. The group consisted of principals and vice-principals from eight of fifteen elementary and both of the district’s middle schools. While the schools represented a mix of city and rural schools as well as including both English and French-Immersion schools, none of the participants came from either of the two SD101 high schools. To try to explain why the high school administrators were absent from the research would be speculative; however during the interviews with other administrators in the district it was mentioned that three of the four high school administrators were veteran SD 101 teachers who came up through the ranks, so to speak, to become administrators. The assumption drawn from the interview conversations was that the high school administrators had local experience, knowledge of the organizational tasks and a collegial network with their fellow high school administrators in the district and as such these individuals might not have perceived a need to participate in the formal SD 101 PVPA mentoring programme. As no secondary school administrators participated in this research project there is little information available from a high school leadership perspective. The actual impact this data gap might have on the research findings is not known.

The participants were asked for information about their employment history with the district, which ranged from 1.5 to 29 years. However 40% of the group had been in the district less than five years. All but one of the participants had been in their current school assignment for 3 years or less, five were in their 1st year and one was in the 7th year of an assignment. Of the five new to their position all had at least 10 years of teaching experience (the average was 18.5): four of the five had been employed by the
district for more than 4 years. It seems that while there is a range in the overall years of employment and experience as an administrator, a common factor for most of mentee participants is being in a new position or a different school regardless of the amount of previous experience. Samier (2000) notes that mentoring for a school administrators is driven by the unfamiliarity of new circumstances and as such not only do new school administrators benefit from a mentor but so too do those who are experienced administrators but find themselves in a new organizational setting (such as a new school).

Mentee experiences.

The planned structure for the mentee interviews was to begin with a tour of the school followed by a one-on-one personal interview session. The interview started with a reminder about voluntary participation in the research then moved on to review the demographics questionnaire (see appendix 15) followed by a scripted series of questions (see appendix 17). The script was intended to serve as a framework of potential questions and throughout the interviews the mentees were encouraged to discuss the mentoring programme and the topics of mentoring and professional development as they perceived it. While most of the interviews were within the planned one-hour time limit, some went on for nearly two hours. There were times that the nature of the conversation would go beyond the bounds of the research topic and for reasons of research ethics as well as professional courtesy the tape recorder and note taking stopped until the conversation had worked back to the parameters of the research. There is no off-the-record data being used in this research report and the nature of any of the conversations that might have occurred during those times will not be discussed other than to explain that they were personal in nature.
All of the mentees led a guided tour of their building except for one who was interviewed off-site due to sports team supervision commitments. The initial site tour provided the opportunity to observe the working environment, see the mentee interact with students, staff, and occasionally a parent, as well as get an introductory overview of the school and community. Some of the schools were modern, others quite dated and many in various stages of repair and renovation. Some were at the maximum student capacity while others were nearly empty with rooms closed-off or rented-out to community groups.

At first glance, observing the Principals and Vice-Principals interacting with people in the school might not seem unusual, however over time one trend stood out: the number of interruptions that occurred during the one hour interview time. Either a phone call or someone knocking at the door interrupted every interview at least once. In one interview there were two phone calls and two interruptions at the door within the first thirty minutes. After responding to the interruptions in that particular instance the mentee apologized for the interruptions but reassured me that these were not emergencies so the interview could continue. In another case a teacher opened the closed office door, walked in and started a conversation about a particular student during the middle of an interview. In that instance the door, which had a large window allowing outsiders to see into the office, was closed but not locked and both the mentee and interviewer were seated in plain sight with note papers, tape recorder and laptop computer all on the table. Again the interruption turned out to be a non-emergency; in fact, all the interruptions experienced during the interview process did not require any immediate intervention. The observation of these interviews, laced with interruptions at the door, telephone calls, vibrating cellular
telephones and sound signals from the mentee’s office computer announcing the arrival of yet another email message, does suggest however that it is very difficult for a school-based administrator to have a period of uninterrupted time.

**Bonding with a formal mentor.** The mentee interviews were structured to start with a series of scripted questions (see Appendix 15) that started with details about the formal mentoring programme and the matching process. The responses to the questions about the SD 101 PVPA formal mentoring programme were consistent with mentees identifying it was a voluntary programme and they would meet with their mentor, face-to-face or on the phone, outside of school hours. The mentees spoke positively about the matching strategy and most stated they were pleased with the process of a mentor being recommended by the facilitator but chosen by the mentee. One mentee commented that the process “works well with no pressure.” The mentees responses showed variations in the frequency of mentor/mentee meetings and interactive sessions. One mentee met with his mentor three times a year, another met every second month for “maybe an hour or so” each time. Another mentee mentioned that that the meetings were on an “as needed” basis but did not elaborate as to how many times per year they actually met. Some of the others met with their mentor more often and one mentioned that she would “probably commit a couple of hours per week” to meeting with her mentor while another would meet “two or three hours per month.”

Time was a challenging factor for some of the mentees and one of the participants, who did not have a mentor this year but still wanted to be part of the research to share her previous formal mentoring experiences in the programme, made a poignant observation:
To be honest, this year, the year has taken off so quickly and I am having trouble finding more time. So, at this point, I haven’t necessarily connected with anybody, because I guess I am feeling like I have enough in the areas – and enough sort of supports out there – and through the more informal mentoring activities that I am involved in, I am managing to the get the support that I need that way. So, as opposed to a one-on-one mentor, I haven’t yet been able to commit anymore time.

This particular response not only reinforces the intense time commitments that these school administrators face but also highlights that there are informal mentoring opportunities that can provide needed support. These informal networks and activities will be addressed later in this chapter.

The next stage of the interviews focused on the expectations and outcomes of the formal mentoring relationship and the mentees were asked to talk about what they value or felt was critical in the mentoring relationship. Consistently the mentees used terminology that described *trust, respect* and *confidentiality* as the critical components of their mentoring relationship. One mentee mentioned that he had “huge respect and I also have tremendous trust” in his mentor while another noted that “trust is really, really important” in order to be able to disclose concerns and have frank dialogue in the conversations with the mentor.

Another important factor in the relationship was that it would be non-judgmental and it was important for the mentee “not to feel judged, – because you want to talk about things that you are not sure about.” One mentee also noted that the mentor, as a retired administrator, was not in a position of authority so there was no negative implications for
the mentee to speak frankly about topics of concern and also no advocacy expected from
the mentor either.

She [the mentor] couldn’t go and put a word in for you. It was good that she was
just a neutral person. That neutrality is really important that is what you don’t
have with your principal. Because you can’t, they have to speak for you at some
point. That is their job, is to recommend you or not, at some point.

This comment not only speaks to the perception of neutrality that some mentees have of
their retired mentors but also draws attention to reservations that a mentee might have in
disclosing personal information with a mentor who is in a supervisory role or a position
of power over the mentee within the district organization.

Going further, one mentee noted that there are professional limitations or
boundaries in the organization regarding who you can speak to and what can be said. A
second mentioned that the levels of trust vary depending on who the person is and their
position, however he did note that his perception of the district is collegial and
endeavouring to build trust between employee groups. A third mentee commented that
she perceives a degree of competition between administrators that may temper the
potential for trust and openness in collegial dialogue. One mentee mentioned that he had
to distance himself from a struggling colleague to prevent himself from being drawn into
a problem that could jeopardize his personal relationship with other colleagues. These
observations and comments speak to individual practitioners perceiving that there is a
political aspect to their professional organization and work environment. In other words,
what one says, or to whom one says it to, may have an impact on the speaker.
The concept that politics plays a role in both school organizations and the principalship is discussed in the literature (Bolman & Deal, 2000; Cross & Frankcombe, 1994; Glickman et al, 2001; Lupini, 1990; Villani, 2006) and many of the writers note both that school organizations can be political in nature and the principalship can be a politically-charge position subjected to pressure or scrutinizing by political interests. While some mentee participants did express concerns about politics within their profession and school district organization one should not assume that the interview comments from all the participants are completely forthcoming. Some research theorists (including Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) note that interview participants can be reluctant to share negative comments about their circumstances with a researcher.

Though the mentees in general spoke positively about their colleagues and organization it is important to remember that this is a small school district and the participant can be connected in many ways with others within the organization. Some have family members, spouses or friends who work in the district including managers and district leaders and as such they may not want to speak negatively about the district. It was apparent to me as the researcher that there were bounds to the level of collegiality and peer mentoring occurring in the district and there are politically-charged topics that remain unmentionable between practitioners in the district.

I am going to suggest at this point that the practice of engaging retired administrators as mentors in the SD 101 PVPA mentoring programme should be considered as a non-traditional methodology. A key reason for this suggestion is that because the mentors are retired they have no formal positional or performance assessment power over the mentees nor can they provide any so-called plum assignments or favours
to the mentees that traditional power-mentors can offer. Dahle (1998) describes traditional mentoring relationships as *superior positional power*, used by the mentor, who is higher-up in the hierarchy, to steer the lower positioned mentee’s career with plum assignments and other favours. Her criticism of the traditional model is that it does not work for women because they are not welcomed by the “old boys’ club of mentoring” (Dahle, 1998, p. 2). From the comments of the mentees the SD 101 PVPA mentoring model seems to embrace a non-traditional *learning imperative* mentoring model similar to the one described by Dahle (1998). The mentee comments, which will be discussed in more detail shortly, suggest that their formal mentoring relationship is about reflective professional dialogue rather than political power connections. I recognize however that my suggestion about the power *neutrality* of the retired mentors may not be completely accurate because one could argue that they did have, and may still have, informal power connections with others in the district. One of the mentors is a retired assistant superintendent of the district and others are retired senior school administrators so they could still have power connection however, it does not appear in the data collected that the mentors are choosing to exercise any of the residual power they may still have.

It is important to acknowledge that mentees might be reluctant in sharing sensitive personal information with a person in an evaluative or supervisory role. One mentee suggested that for him the neutrality of his mentor was very important for reflective conversations. He noted that this is something that “you don’t have with your principal” because there is a hierarchy in the school district organization that limits mentoring opportunities between practicing colleagues. Sweeny (2003b) suggests that there is contradictory opinion regarding the issue of supervisors mentoring their
subordinates. From a leadership perspective, it seems reasonable to expect supervisors to have, and use, mentoring skills as part of the professional development of their subordinates. However, supervisors often have evaluative responsibilities that might preclude the level of trust and vulnerability necessary for a successful mentoring relationship. Sweeny (2003b) states that, “many employees will try to hide their real problems from their supervisors” (para 2). A supervisor represents positional authority, seniority and organizational knowledge so there is arguably a power-over relationship issue to consider when supervisors act as mentors. This seems a plausible explanation as to why the SD 101 PVPA mentee mentioned the advantage of having a neutral retired mentor rather than the principal who is a supervisor/evaluator as well as supporting the conceptualization of the SD 101 PVPA mentoring programme as a non-traditional model.

**Benefits derived from a formal mentoring relationship.** At this point the interview focus moved to mentor roles and outcomes of the relationship. The mentees were asked to share their perceptions of what benefits they derived from their formal mentoring. For the purposes of this research the participants we told that the terms formal mentor or formal mentoring refer to the matched mentor and the sanctioned mentoring relationship that is part of the SD 101 PVPA mentoring programme.

Participants described their formal mentors in terms of a wise advisor or counsellor as well as a confidant, and in particular, emphasized the value of the sounding board role of their mentor. One mentee said that his mentor was a “cognitive coach and sounding board” helping the mentee to verbalize and have reflective dialogues about problems and concerns. The sounding-board aspect of the formal mentor was a common theme found in the mentee descriptions of their formal mentoring relationship. As
mentioned earlier, the mentor’s trust and confidentiality was highly valued and this relates to the potential topic sensitivity and personal vulnerability for the mentees through this reflective aspect of the mentor’s role. One mentee noted:

Mentoring is more about those questions like where you can be more vulnerable, for me, personally. I could say, man, I screwed up with this parent; I don’t… even if it’s just a sounding board, somewhere to put it. I screwed up with this parent, I should have done this, I know I should have, what do you think? How could I have done it better?

Another mentee described the reflective interaction in terms of being a collegial problem solving relationship about professional practice and management scenarios. This mentee would approach the mentor asking “how do you deal with this situation, or this is a little bit of tough situation I experienced with a parent.” The mentee then noted that the conversation would then turn into “a cognitive coaching thing and a sounding board.” She also mentioned that she appreciated the opportunity to run ideas by somebody noting that “we kind of just share… it’s nice to have that hour to talk to someone.”

The mentee comments about the sounding board role of the mentor may seem more poignant when linked back to the literature discussions about the stress related to the professional isolation, unrealistic performance expectations and the professional vulnerability of school-based administrators (e.g. Grimmett & Echols, 2001; Kirkham, 1995; Umpleby, 2002; Villani, 2006). Kirkham (1995) and Villani (2006), for example, both note that school administrators are professionally isolated and are highly scrutinized. Villani (2006) adds that school administrators can be reluctant to ask for help or admit to lacking knowledge on a topic or issue because of the risk of “being perceived as
incompetent” (p.10). In a nutshell, school administrators are under many pressures and for reasons of professional isolation and vulnerability, they have limited avenues for dialogue about their concerns, misgivings or uncertainties. The SD 101 PVPA mentoring programme however does provide a form of professional life-line or safety net. One mentee mentioned that the stress of a new principalship was reduced when someone spoke to him about getting a mentor from the programme, “But, somebody – and I can’t remember who it was – said ‘you know, relax, this guy is going to be available, so if you ever want to call him, he will call and have a chat with you.” The mentees in this research had the benefit of non-judgmental and confidential mentors who could be a sounding board and confidant and, from the mentee comments; this appears to be the case and is valued by the mentees.

The mentees clearly valued the sounding-board role of their formal mentor commenting on how the formal mentor provided a confidential environment to have reflective discussions and deconstruct leadership their challenges and discover solutions within themselves for their problems. In addition to helping the mentees to be reflective problem-solvers, the programme mentors were also described by most mentees as a *Wise Advisor* on topics of professional practice. One of the mentees referred to her mentor as a “master of relationships” who could provide insight and perspective on topics involving interactions with staff, parents and students. Another mentee, an experienced administrator in the district, noted that for her the formal mentoring conversations was an opportunity to ask questions that might make her vulnerable to criticism in another venue. She described one example where she had asked her mentor, “I screwed up with this parent, I should have done this, I know I should have, what do you think? How could I
have done it better?” This seems to contradict some earlier discussion about the mentee preference for a non-judgmental mentor; however it is worth keeping in mind that these examples are more along the line of a kind of *collegial discourse* rather than *judgment* or *performance assessment*. In addition, the conversations are confidential and non-evaluative. If anything, these examples speak to the high degree of trust and respect in these mentor/mentee relationships.

Some of the mentees noted a connection between the role of their formal mentor and their individual professional growth plan. Many administrators in SD101 have personal professional growth plans and two mentees make a direct connection between their growth plan and their mentoring relationship. For one mentee who was somewhat unfamiliar with growth plans her mentor, who was very knowledgeable about the process, became a key source of information and guidance on developing the personal plan. Another mentee noted that his growth plan became the framework for his formal mentoring conversations and the mentor consistently linked the conversation to the plan objectives.

Many of the mentees mentioned the cathartic and rejuvenating aspect of the professional dialogue with their mentor. One noted that, “after a session, I am ready to take on the world again.” These conversations are not about venting but as one mentee surmised, “the nice thing about it to -- is it’s not even close to being a gripe session. Never even been like that. It’s professional growth.” Another mentee mentioned that affirmation is also a positive aspect of the discourse and though the primary intent of the relationship is professional growth it is also rewarding to have another professional colleague affirm one’s practice. While some might argue that these conversations seem to
be confirming managerial approaches to problems (i.e. problem-solving) rather than professional learning it is important to keep the professional context in mind. Part of a school administrator’s role is to manage both resources and people and the BCPVPA has developed a set of Leadership Performance Standards for BC school administrators that recognizes that management and leadership are not mutually exclusive stating, “principals and vice-principals must learn to lead and manage simultaneously” (BCPVPA, 2007, p.7). Principals and vice-principals are expected to have organizational capacity, build learning communities, be systems thinkers and planners plus have intrapersonal and interpersonal capacity to “build and support positive and effective working relationships within the school and community (BCPVPA, 2007, p. 10). While the mentee comments might refer specifically to a problem or challenge one can argue that the reflective dialogue about the challenges is a learning experience. Furthermore, there is a direct correlation of these conversations to the expectations of the BCPVPA leadership standards.

One notable divergence in the mentee responses was about consulting with the mentor for practical aspects of school leadership including the organizational culture and history of the district. Five of the mentees interviewed in this research project were hired into school administration positions without any previous employment history in the district. For three of the five this was their first administrator assignment, a fourth mentee had one year of previous administrator experience elsewhere and the fifth was a veteran administrator with over 20 years of previous administrative work experience.

Only mentees from this sub-group mentioned using their mentors as technical advisors both on the practice and culture of the district. One noted that she would consult
her mentor on, in her words, *practical matters*, “he would help me with the culture of the district, who I could go to for this or that or to talk to, or this work or how they did things in the past and so on.” Another referred to his mentor as a *cultural advisor* who, “explains the organizational history” while going on the explain that, “this mentor was for me was more like somebody who would help me with understanding how the district functioned.” Another mentee in this subgroup, referring to being a new person to the district, remarked about the insight her mentor was able to provide her:

He’s been here for a very long time, and I’ll just seek his advice for historical pieces that may help me understand how things run. Sometimes he will explain things contractually: Why things are the way they are and how we can know – well, you know in the contract, it’s for both of us, so it’s just helps me say ‘oh, okay, that makes sense’ and then it’s easier to come in the building and use that information in a positive way.

This referral to mentors for technical advice about organizational practice and culture was a notable difference between the mentees who were newcomers to the district and those who were previously employed in the district prior to becoming an administrator. On the other hand, this is not unusual as mentoring theorists (Daloz, 1986; Daresh, 1995; Harwood, 2004; Levinson, 1978) refer to the *acculturation role* of mentors and the concept that the foundation of mentoring is the process of sustaining the corporate culture and knowledge.

Whether the mentor is a sounding board and reflective colleague or wise advisor who helps the mentee to navigate the unfamiliar cultural and technical aspects of a new school district, something that is important to remember at this stage of the discussion is
that these formal mentoring relationships are part of a larger social structure. The words of one mentee provide insight into the positioning of the mentoring programme within the context of personal professional practice:

… it was all part of the learning process, just one piece of the pie. I guess you could say [that] I am a fairly young administrator, so you know, when I am near the end of my career maybe that might not be the case, but right now, for the next five or 10 years, I will probably have a mentor.

This conceptualization of mentoring being one part of a larger professional development scheme and professional organization not only places these mentoring relationships contextually but also serves as a segue to the next topic of informal mentoring.

Networks and types of informal mentors.

The interview process also included an opportunity for the participants to explore beyond their formal mentoring relationship and the mentees were asked to talk about any informal mentoring relationships they might have. For the purposes of this research the mentees were told that the terms informal mentor or informal mentoring refers to anyone, or any activity, other than the formal SD 101 PVPA mentor and mentoring programme, that the mentee identifies as a mentor-figure or mentoring experience. This opened-ended discussion also included a sociogram activity where mentees were asked to draw a diagram of their mentoring relationships both formal and informal. Ten of the mentees completed a diagram during the interview and portions of those images will be used as part of this discussion about the informal mentoring connections and networks.

During the interview and sociogram activity the mentees were asked in simple but open-ended terms, “Who mentors you?” The intent was to include but also look beyond
the confines of the formal SD 101 PVPA programme mentor relationship. The mentees identified people and groups both within the school district as well as outsiders who provided a variety of different mentoring supports and roles. Based on the interview discussions and sociogram dialogues the mentors can be loosely categorized into a few main roles: technical experts, cultural advisors, peer mentors, critical friends, sounding-boards, outside perspectives and personal supporters. Some people and groups had multiple roles for the mentee while others where limited in their scope. Virtually all of the mentees identified district and school-based staff as well as former colleagues as mentoring connections. In addition, most included some friends and a spouse or family members as part of a personal support network. There were however two cases where the mentee specifically noted that they consciously excluded their spouse from work-based dialogue. In one case it was in order to protect their spouse from the stresses of the principalship, while another commented that it was part of a personal life balance plan to separate work and private life. One other mentee commented that she had not realized that her spouse, also an educator, was in fact a significant mentor in her life until her interview session for this research occurred and she developed her sociogram.

Technical and cultural advisors are terms being used here to represent a knowledge-base of administrative details and organizational understanding. Technical advisors are people that the mentee can turn-to for questions about district policy, administrative practice and contractual information. These resources are commonly contacted when a mentee needs help with a form or report, has a problem in relation to the terms of the employee groups’ contracts or needs technical administrative advice about the day-to-day operations of the school. One of the mentees has a retired colleague
that the mentee solicits to do topical research. He described one example of how he
approached this technical resource person, “I got an issue I really don’t know and I
absolutely am so buried right now - is it just too crazy to ask you? - Can you see what
you can find out about this?” The mentor was very supportive and did research the topic
and provided information about it to the mentee. Though jokingly named the *Google-
mentor* during the mentee interview dialogue, there is no doubt that the mentee highly-
valued this particular mentor’s assistance.

Cultural advisors provide social insight, historical perspective and interpersonal
relations advice. These are the advisors that the mentee will call when there is a problem
with a person or group of people and the mentee needs to gain an understanding or the
social and political implications and historical context. In general the mentees suggested
that the district culture is such that it is “OK to ask central office technical questions”
however there is a bounded degree of trust and some of the mentees reserve more
sensitive questions for informal mentors or their formal mentor because of the trust and
confidentiality of the relationship.

Many of the mentees talked at length about their involvement in the various
groups that the SD 101 PVPA professional development programme offers. There are
professional reading book clubs, topic-based discussion groups, inter-school visitation
groups, a regular meeting for vice-principals, life-balance groups as well as two whole-
group administrators professional development retreats every year. The mentees
identified these professional development interest groups as providing the arena for
professional discourse and reciprocal learning that they considered fulfilling a mentoring
role. One mentee described a group experience this way:
Well, there is a lot of mentoring going on collegially, obviously. I mean, that’s what mentoring is. But, we have, for example, a group of administrators who have just started a boys club. So, what we have done – because of our professional development - in the boys area (I’m talking here about the special needs that boys are having in elementary school, there are the ones that we have to deal with in the office, they are the ones who are falling behind in their learning), so as a group of administrators, we got together and said ‘okay, how can we address it?’ So, it sounds like professional development, but we are actually mentoring each other in how we deal with our problem boys.

Other mentees described their group experiences along similar lines noting the mentoring aspects of the group activities provided an opportunity to review, re-affirm or revise personal professional practice.

While talking about the mentoring that occurs within the group discourse sessions, one mentee made a poignant comment:

You butt your head against a wall sometimes, repeatedly - and you begin to question whether or not you are making any decisions that are correct. Or whether or not it is worth making correct decisions, I guess probably is more accurate.

You know, doing things that are right. And then you go, and you meet with your colleagues in this kind of a situation, and you realize that what you were attempting to do was [mentee’s emphasis] the right thing, and so therefore it gives you a sense of empowerment to keep going.
As one can see, the affirmation aspect of mentoring previously identified in the formal mentoring discussions is also prevalent in their professional development groups and activities.

It is an important point to recognize this apparent *entrenchment* of mentoring within the professional development activities. One can find references in the literature about mentoring as a professional development *methodology* for school administrators (such as Bolam et al, 1995; Bush & Coleman, 1995; Daresh, 1995; Duran, 2003; Jussella, 2004; Kirkham, 1995; Villani, 2006). The findings in this research example however indicate that mentoring is interwoven into many of the SD 101 PVPA professional development activities and one could suggest that in this case mentoring is as much a philosophy as it is a technique. One of the mentees who joined SD72 from out of district commented that this sort of mentoring did not occur in his previous professional experiences elsewhere. These points do raise some interesting, but unanswered questions about how mentoring became socially entrenched in the SD 101 PVPA and SD101 organizations.

The concept of *guarded trust* and professional boundaries that was discussed earlier in section about the formal mentor was also a theme found in the group mentoring data. Mentees commented that while they appreciated and valued the informal mentoring opportunities in the various group settings there were still *unmentionable* topics that the mentees would not disclose with colleagues. One mentee described these professional limitations as “boundaries in who to speak to and what can be said.” This relates to the point about professional isolation mentioned earlier in this dissertation regarding the vulnerability associated with disclosure and the perceptions of professional
incompetence. In a nutshell, there are simply topics that the school-based administrators will not share with colleagues in these group settings for fear of the repercussions that might occur as a result. It appears that while relationships with colleagues provide an informal mentoring venue for collegial learning the opportunity to enable new thinking is limited by underlying political and social aspects of the professional culture.

Most of the mentees identified critical friends and personal support networks in their mentoring relationships diagram. These people ranged from colleagues, past and present, to friends or family members. What sets this group apart from the rest of the network is the degree of trust and confidentiality that the mentee places upon them. It was with these people that the mentees would share personal discourse about career-life topics. The mentees describe these conversations as being primarily about personal career goals and life-path rather than technical conversations professional practice or organizational concepts. As was mentioned earlier, many of the mentees were actively protecting their friends and families from the burdens of their professional life and did not allow themselves to **vent** about their jobs with loved ones. One mentee identified his spouse as a mentor but reflected, “I don’t want to burden her too much because, just some days I go home and think ‘holy smokes, how much do I want to share about the day that I have had?’” Another mentee commented:

For me, I mean I can come home and unload on just about a daily basis with the crap that we deal with; but, if you can – I find – if you can walk through that door and really re-focus on what is going on in the house and how the kids are doing and how her [spouse] day was, that sort of thing.
These comments bring a certain poignant clarity and personal account to the point that some school administrators are working under such conditions that they hide it from their spouse and family members. The next part of this discussion reviews how the mentees described their mentoring networks graphically through a sociogram activity.

**Sociograms.** I provided the mentees with a sample diagram of a classic mentoring relationship (see Figure.4) and explained to them that the icons used in the diagram were only an example to illustrate that graphics could be used to identify interpersonal relationships. The mentees were then asked to draw a diagram of their own design with icons and structure of their choice to illustrate their mentoring relationships. They were also asked to verbalize what they were drawing and at times were asked questions about the diagram during the process. Most of the diagrams drawn by the participants illustrated a matrix of relationships with the mentee either centrally located in the network or at the top of the diagram. Two examples of mentee diagrams that illustrate the networking matrix are included in this discussion. A third example represents one mentee’s drawing that differed from the others as it was drawn concentrically in an effort to describe degrees of urgency in the relation to the topics and nature of the mentoring relationship. The final example is a diagram that one mentee drew in an effort to capture the dynamics of relationship growth and evolution within the mentoring network.
The mentees made diagrams with a variety of drawing styles, some were colourful and colour-coded, others mono-chromatic, some incorporated labels while others used a series of icons. One of the mentees developed two diagrams; the first was a series of concentric circles but then she chose to refine and redraw the diagram a circle and a series of concentric arcs. Figure 5 is a computerized replica of the drawing that was sketched and annotated by the interviewer during the interview. The theme of this diagram is based on the urgency of interactions and the nature of the actors involved. The left side of the diagram is the most urgent and the urgency decreases along a continuum as the diagram moves to the right. Within the circle are first call mentors, people the mentee would call for urgent situations. “M” represents the formal assigned mentor while 1P and 2P are people that the mentee described as “close colleagues” who are fellow principals in other schools that the mentee would call “first or second in case of something very urgent”. “D” represents district staff (senior administrators), “P” is for principal colleagues and “VP” represents vice-principal colleagues. “F” is a friend, who happens to be a teacher elsewhere, “SC” is the school secretary and “SP” is the mentee’s spouse.
This diagram positions the mentors, both formal and informal, in terms of urgency and response. While the “calls on the spot” mentors might be contacted in urgent circumstances, those further out on the arcs may be contacted for less urgent issues however the mentee made note that urgency does not necessarily equate to importance. There are times when some of the informal mentors in the most distant arcs are consulted for some of the most important topics for the mentee. This diagram essentially is describing mentoring in terms of developmental alliances (Hay, 1995) and also as situational mentoring (Clutterbuck and Lane, 2004) in which the mentee develops relationships with multiple mentors and then *chooses* to interact with these various people based on the mentee’s situational needs and the expertise or characteristics of the mentor.

Seven of the diagrams drawn by the mentees during the interviews had similar design characteristics showing a series of mentoring relationships in a web or matrix. This choice of drawing style may have been influenced by the initial sample diagram
used by the interviewer (see Figure 4) however the mentees being interviewed were reminded that they had no obligation to draw their perceptions anything like the sample as it was only a suggestion to what a model *could* look like. That being said, six of the drawings used basic geometric shapes such as circles or squares to identify people and groups with lines and arrows to indicate the flow of information and interaction. Figures 6 and 7 are examples of mentee drawings that use a matrix diagram format.

*Figure 6. Mentee Matrix Diagram Using Basic Geometric Shapes - Sample A.*
The two matrix diagram samples illustrate relationships and lines of communication between the mentee and mentors. These diagrams, plus the other matrix-type diagrams from other mentee participants, include a variety of different people as mentoring influences; colleagues, retired colleagues, friends, formal and informal mentors. In addition to individuals, these diagrams include cohort groups of colleagues that are part of the SD 101 PVPA professional development programme. The matrix diagram models share the same the themes of Hay’s (1995) developmental alliances and Clutterbuck and lane’s (2004) situational mentoring that are in the concentric diagram discussed earlier (figure 5). There is however something new to consider in these examples; the idea that the professional development cohort groups within the SD 101
PVPA programme are being identified by some mentees as *mentoring influences*. The point about mentoring within the cohort groups is an important consideration that will be discussed shortly, however in the meantime there is one more mentee diagram that warrants review as it addresses the challenge of portraying dynamic relationships with static diagram.

One of the mentees noted that the sociogram was a challenge for her because she wanted to depict her mentoring relationship as an organic entity to portray the dynamic nature of her network, yet doing so is difficult given that drawing is static in nature. As you will see in her diagram (figure 8) she uses a combination of solid and dotted lines to show connections with mentors and mentoring groups past and present. The solid lines are current connections while the dotted lines show past relationships. Once again the network includes individuals and groups who provide a plethora of situational mentoring support however this diagram adds the concept of a dynamic model. What the mentee is trying to portray in the drawing is that the relationships evolve and that there are *phases* of mentoring; the first being *survival* support for the mentee, the second supported *professional growth* and the third is sustainability or *maintenance* support for the mentee.
The concept of multiple mentors is discussed by various scholars (see Baugh & Scandura, 1999; Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004; Dahle, 1998; Hay, 1995; Levinson, 1978; Kram, 1983). Some suggest it is a sequential evolution (Baugh & Scandura, 1999; Levinson, 1978) and occurs when a mentees outgrows one mentoring relationship then moves on to another. Clutterbuck & Lane, (2004), Dahle, (1998); Hay, (1995), and Kram (1983) believe in a concurrent network concept arguing that mentees can benefit from a cadre of mentors. Dahle (1998) describes a feminist model in which mentees develop a mentoring portfolio and actively select mentors, formal and informal, as well as engage
in peer-mentoring opportunities and mentoring groups. Dahle (1998) also emphasizes that it is beneficial for the mentee to have a diverse mentoring pool. There seems to be a strong similarity to the concurrent multiple mentor theories (Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004; Dahle, 1998; Hay, 1995) of diverse multiple mentor networks and those actual networks depicted in the sociograms and described by many of the mentee participants in this research project.

**Conclusion**

This chapter was a presentation and analysis of the research findings derived from the interviews and interactions with school principals and vice-principals who were sharing their mentee experiences in the formal SD 101 PVPA mentoring programme as well as other informal mentoring that occurred through collegial activities and other informal mentoring relationships. The analysis of the data suggests that the mentees have a diverse network of mentors but that they also derive mentoring from a variety of professional development activities and in group settings. In addition to formal mentors the mentees also have a cadre of informal mentors including peer-mentors, former colleagues, friends, family and other associates. Though there is an apparent high degree of professional trust, there are also professional bounds that limit what mentees feel they can disclose with colleagues. They indicate that not only do they value the confidentiality and trust provided by formal mentors but also the confidentiality and trust are the key critical factors for them in the mentoring relationship. Mentees are not limited to newcomers and many SD101 school administrators have mentors however women and elementary school positions represent the majority of the respondents. On a depressing note, many of the mentees describe stressful working conditions and some make the
conscious decision to protect their friends and family members from the day-to-day realities of their work life.

One particular observation was the apparent blurring of lines between mentoring as a professional development methodology and professional development philosophy. There is data that could suggest mentoring in this programme is both a method as well as a theoretical foundation. While a formal mentoring programme is offered as part of the larger professional development plan, the participants identify mentoring as an ongoing factor throughout many of the SD 101 PVPA professional development activities and interest groups. It seems that in this organizational setting, mentoring is perceived by the participants as being about professional learning opportunities and collegial connections rather than as a method for the school district to train and indoctrinate newcomers.
Chapter 6

As the researcher, this final chapter is exciting for me yet at the same time sobering as I find writing at this point slightly bittersweet. This is where I highlight the SD 101 PVPA mentoring activities that both mentors and mentees described as a positive professional experience. I also speak about the need for mentoring to moderate the increasing stress and pressure that challenges the sustainability of the principalship for people in that role. This chapter is organized into four sections. First, a brief review of the foundations that inform this study: the challenges of sustaining the principalship and the evolution of mentoring theory. Second is a discussion of the overall analytic process and resulting key findings about the programme context and mentee experiences as well as the implications of using the sociogram activity as part of the research methodology. The next step includes interpretation of the findings and how they fit within the empirical and theoretical knowledge base as well as discussion about the effectiveness of the sociogram as a mentoring research methodology. The fourth step is a review of the limitations of this study and then the chapter concludes with my discussion of the findings’ implications for future research and practice in the area of mentoring with an underlying focus on mentoring school administrators.

Challenges and changes.

Though this research project is intended to study successful contemporary mentoring of a particular group the impetus of the work is linked to a systemic problem in school leadership found in regions of North America: the leadership succession gap caused by large-scale school administrator retirements and the difficulty in recruiting and retaining suitable replacements. Both scholars and professional associations report
principal shortages resulting from large-scale retirements and challenges in finding and retaining suitable replacements. The lack of interest in the principal’s job as well as newcomer attrition is not a new problem, as scholars for years have raised concerns about unsustainable professional expectations placed on principals as well as the isolation of the role. Mentoring, historically, has been the primary mode of administrative preparation for new principals and many scholars note that mentoring is beneficial because it orients and supports new principals plus promotes reflective practice and can ease the impact of professional isolation. One might argue that in this context mentoring is being applied as a counter-weight to provide some balance to the challenging professional circumstances administrators face and help new principals cope with the stress of their work.

Through renewed interest in mentoring research over the past thirty years mentoring theory has evolved and become more complex than the classic mentoring model that more typically embodied an approach using a one-to-one expert-novice relationship between mentor and mentee. Critics of the classic model argue that it is flawed by an incongruent social power bias and a male-orientation. A second criticism is that the classic hierarchical model of a senior wise-advisor mentor has become obsolete in contemporary flattened organizations and rapidly evolving technology as traditional mentors either no longer exist or lack experience relevant to the changing technology. More recent mentoring theories encompass diversified and dynamic methods that are transformational, situational, mentee-centric and include multiple-mentor environments. As a result of this trend in research, mentoring theory has evolved from a long standing hierarchical dyad relationship model to a diverse, dynamic and mentee-driven network of mentoring alliances. In a nutshell, mentoring theory has evolved in the past thirty years
from a long-standing tradition that mentoring was reserved only for the privileged in society, to a belief that everyone needs a mentor, and now to a more recent view that everyone needs to be a pro-active mentee seeking-out mentoring opportunities while establishing reciprocal networks of alliances with other mentees. Though classic types of mentoring still persists, in many models one might wonder if the era of the classic mentor has ended as a result of greater attention to the complexity of the principal’s role; this is one of the assertions that will be discussed in this concluding chapter.

**Analytic process and key programme findings.**

The data collection plan for this research project included five levels of participants: provincial associations representing school leadership in British Columbia, school district administration, mentoring programme leadership, programme mentors and mentees. Though the initial plan was to use data collected from the associations to gain an understanding of promising contemporary mentoring practice in British Columbia school districts the results were far from what was initially expected. The data for this phase came from my personal research journal that I kept during the initial months of the fieldwork. Using a narrative inquiry methodology I reviewed and paraphrased from my journal notes to create a story in order to explain my experiences and observations.

Two associations, one representing elected school trustees and the other school district senior managers did not have any information on school principal mentoring. The two other associations that were approached, one a provincial government sponsored association tasked to improve school leadership and the other being the professional association for BC Principals and Vice-Principals, also did not have information about innovative mentoring that was useful for this research project. It was not until I contacted
practitioners through a professional electronic listserv that I was able to find leads about districts that employ non-traditional mentoring methods for school-based administrators. It seems that at the provincial level, associations have very little awareness of school administrator mentoring: even those associations with ties to the principalship do not have data on innovative mentoring practice.

**Local programme development and design.** Through a nomination and screening process School District 101 was identified and then recruited for the research fieldwork. The initial stage of data collection and analysis was based on a lengthy compilation of questions about structures and phases that are common to many mentoring schemes. The list was developed by reverse-engineering mentoring programme best-practice implementation checklists from Sweeny (2003c) and Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002). The questions were used as an interview framework with a SD101 central office administrator, three members of the SD 101 Principal and Vice-Principal’s Association (SD 101 PVPA) executive, the original programme developer/coordi- nator as well as the current programme coordinator. The checklists were also used as part of the analysis of the data regarding the development and implementation of the local mentoring programme.

Based on the information gathered during the interviews and through analysis of the data it became apparent that many aspects of this particular programme align with mentoring *promising-practices* described in the mentoring literature. Speaking with the person who initially developed and then coordinated the programme for the first four years she described how there was a clear strategy in place from the beginning to develop a successful programme that would support school administrators. There were three
theoretical foundations informing the programme development and planning would be based on; best practices in the mentoring literature, it would be based on the needs of the school administrators and finally that participating in the programme would not be a burden on the mentees by adding to their workload.

**Non-traditional variations.** The programme design was based on a pre-programme individual needs assessment that was completed with all of the school-based leaders employed at that time. There was sufficient funding available to pay for the initial development consultant as well as for a coordinator and annual running costs for nearly five years. A paid programme coordinator was hired and there was both training and some financial recognition provided to the mentors who were recently retired SD101 school administrators. The programme has a mentor-mentee pairing methodology, an annual assessment strategy and is supported by local association and district leaders.

The SD 101 PVPA mentoring programme aligns with many of promising practice indicators in the current mentoring literature. There is a mentor-mentee pairing strategy, the formal mentors are screened, there is a programme reporting structure and a system for accountability. At this point it is important to recognize that the practice indicators, such as Sweeney’s (2003c) *Key Questions for Developing Effective Mentoring Programs* checklist that informed this dissertation, do not delineate between classic and non-traditional mentoring. One might argue that the checklist’s focus on mentor-mentee pairing strategies and meeting organizational needs emphasizes classic mentoring methods of mentor-centric power and organizational induction.

At first the SD 101 PVPA mentoring programme might seem to be a traditional model having a senior person, in this case a veteran SD101 administrator, assigned to
formally mentor a newcomer school administrator within a school district authorized programme. There are three subtle but important variations in prioritizing needs, pairing strategy and relational power balance in the SD 101 PVPA model that differentiates it from classic mentoring. A criticism of traditional mentoring programme design is that there is an imbalance in benefits as the organization’s needs are served at the expense of the mentees. In the SD 101 PVPA programme the mentoring outcomes are based solely on individual needs identified by the mentee rather than on the traditional model of prescribed organizational outcomes. In addition, the programme is administered by the local professional association as part of a professional development plan rather than by the district as an employee development programme which is common to classic mentoring.

The classic pairing strategy has been modified in three ways in the SD 101 PVPA model to reduce the power-over concerns of traditional expert-novice mentoring. In many traditional mentoring programmes mentors and mentees are assigned by the organization or programme management: the SD 101 PVPA model is different. In this model the programme director suggests potential mentors based on their skill sets and experiences as they align to the needs expressed by the mentee. The mentee then has the option to select a mentor from the recommended candidates or, if they so choose recruit a mentor on their own. Mentee-centric matching methodology and the empowerment of the mentee in choosing a mentor are factors mentioned in the scholarly descriptions of non-traditional mentoring. The SD 101 PVPA model uses retirees as mentors who were senior members of the organization and have expertise and experience: as retirees they now have no formal positional power over the mentee in the classic sense of being able to
provide promotion, job enhancement or protection. The removal of positional power-over is another factor mentioned in scholarly critiques of classic mentoring.

At this point I am going to temper my remarks regarding the SD 101 PVPA mentoring model somewhat as I recognize that the aspects of power have not necessarily been completely extinguished in this example. Scholars note that the role of the mentor inherently has power and status associated with the role. In the classic model the mentor is the senior and powerful patron supporting, guiding, highlighting and at times sheltering a protégé. Though the SD 101 model may have removed some of the power-over aspects by enrolling retirees as mentors it is important to recognize that retirement does not necessarily mean they no longer garner status or wield power in the organization. The mentors were all at one point senior members of the organization and continue to have connections with former colleagues, some of whom still might hold positions of power in the organization. In addition the retirees have social connections with others in the district and community and may have significant social connections and presence in the community which might be interpreted by a mentee as positional power.

Though this case study focuses on the SD 101 PVPA mentoring programme an important factor to consider from the non-traditional mentoring perspective is that this formal mentoring programme is one option within a multi-faceted professional development structure. This context of a formal mentoring option within a larger professional development programme could be considered a non-traditional variation on classic mentoring practice. Traditional mentoring is often described as organizational-based indoctrination or orientation programmes intended to provide support and preparation of new principals in their first years (Bush & Coleman, 1995; Villani, 2006).
The SD 101 PVPA model on the other hand offers mentoring as an option within individualized professional development opportunities that is more akin to a collegial learning model than an organizational human resources development tool. The mentee-centric or individualized focus of the mentoring activities is something that both Hay (1995) as well as Clutterbuck and Lane (2004) have described as the shift in contemporary mentoring theory away from formal institutional mentoring (indoctrination) to individualized learning connections and network alliances.

One of the primary goals of this research was to investigate a contemporary mentoring programme and this search for a non-traditional model was informed, in-part, by feminist theory. The feminist critique of classic as a patriarchal method of replicating dominant power structures in organizations was, in particular, one of the key indicators that I tried to use to identify a contemporary non-traditional model. The challenge however was finding appropriate information to develop an adequate theoretical framework. While the work of Dahle (1998), Stalker (1994), Darwin (2000) and Hansman (2001) provided an avenue for criticism of the classic pairing model there was very little information available about successful mentoring from a feminist perspective. Putsche et al (2008) noted that there is lack of literature detailing how to develop and implement a mentoring program based on feminist and networking models. Putsche at al (2008) found in their research that the aspects of providing adequate human and financial resources to support the program were key factors to program success however these same factors can be found in the pre-planning and implementation recommendations from classic model scholars. While the theoretical framework might appear thin due to limited literature resources what remains, the critique of the imbalances in the classic...
model, is still useful in the review of the contemporary program as it reminds me to be
cognizant of power and balance in the relationships.

**Socio-cultural context.** During the interviews participants spoke about the
historical context of the school district. They described the period before the mentoring
programme as a time of stable leadership with one superintendent for fifteen years and
many long-serving school administrators who for the most part had been hired from
within the district. This period of established leadership ended with the retirement of the
superintendent as changes occurred in the district during the next few years. It was also
during this time of change that the mentoring programme for SD101 school leaders was
formally established. The participants explained that the new superintendent, hired from
outside the district, introduced many changes in his five-year tenure introducing new
leadership ideas and challenging established practices. During this time the district began
hiring some school-based leaders from outside the district, something that the participants
suggested was very different from the traditional practice of hiring school administrators
primarily from the ranks of the district teachers. District leadership changed again when
the superintendent left the organization after five years and for the next decade, due to a
series of secondements, two people alternated from year to year as the superintendent.
While the participants spoke positively about the leadership of the alternating
superintendents they also described a degree of inconsistency or uncertainty during that
period of time.

Leadership theorists Hargreaves and Fink (2006) suggest that changes in
organizational leadership can result in *discontinuity* in the organization. They further
suggest that leadership succession discontinuity can be *planned* in order to bringing about
much-needed change to an organization as new leaders set-off in new directions and shake-up organizations. They argue that this sort of action can make significant short-term positive changes however if not sustained over a long period of time short-term efforts do not lead to enduring organizational change. Hargreaves and Fink (2006) also note that a pattern of repeated or rushed leadership successions do not lead to steady organizational improvement. The disruptions and recurring cycle of improvements and set-backs is what they refer to as *unplanned* discontinuity which is a sign of an organization that lacks effective succession planning. It appears that the district was experiencing both planned and unplanned discontinuity as a result of leadership changes with many newcomers and new initiatives happening as a result. Please keep in mind that this is not a criticism of the leadership in any way but rather an observation of a series of leadership changes and an evolving organization.

The checklists that were used as a framework for the programme review questions do not address the socio-cultural concept of organizational stability as a programme development factor. There is a segment of mentoring theory that does address the concept of unstable organizations. The aforementioned discontinuity is interesting when considered from Hay’s (1995) transformational mentoring theory perspective. Hay suggests that people develop networks of learning liaisons with other people as a mechanism for coping with the uncertainty and inconsistency they experience within an organization that is in a state of transformation. In the case of SD101 there were many changes occurring in the leadership and practice of the district organization and one might interpret the actions of the school administrators’ sub-group in developing their own mentoring programme as a pro-active way of coping with the district changes.
A Matter of choice. One might wonder about the degree of freedom the mentees have in choosing to participate in the formal mentoring programme. The SD 101 PVPA programme originated in part from pressure from school district administration and is approved by both the school district and local association executive. The fact that the programme is sanctioned by the formal hierarchy might lead one to ask if the mentees are responding to the expectations of participation in the programme more than they are discerning a personal need for mentoring. Both the programme leaders and the mentees indicated that the mentoring programme is completely voluntary on the part of the mentees and in each interview the mentees noted that they had chosen to be in the programme. The mentees can choose to participate in the formal mentoring programme as one of the many professional development options offered by the SD 101 PVPA.

The identity of the mentees and mentors is known to a limited number of people. One of the SD 101 PVPA executive members noted that, “we have a list of people that are on as mentees and we have a list that are mentors, but we have asked to not necessarily be told who is matched with who.” To put this into context, all the individual members use SD 101 PVPA administered Professional Development funds to pay for any of their professional development activities including the mentoring option. Though the SD 101 PVPA executive knows who is in the programme they do not know the nature of the mentoring activities. The programme coordinator is required to prepare an annual programme report that is presented to both the SD 101 PVPA executive and the SD101 administration; the report only identifies the number of participants and the contact hours, no names or mentoring specifics are disclosed. Arguably the employer has no knowledge
of who might be a mentee and as such it seems unlikely that the school-based administrators are feeling compelled by the hierarchy to be in the mentoring programme.

One final thought on this topic is that the mentees are not all newcomers to the district or new to the administrative role. Some of the mentees are long-term administrators in SD101, others are returning to the mentoring programme for a second or third time. It appears that this is not simply a programme designed for indoctrinating newcomers as the diverse pool of participants are freely choosing to be in the mentoring programme. One might also wonder if the formal mentoring is really needed if the mentees needs could be met through the functions of the informal mentoring network and that is the next topic of this discussion.

**Mentee perspectives**

The data collected from the mentee participants included information about their professional working context and mentoring experiences gather through questionnaires, personal interviews and an individualized sociogram activity. This discussion highlights the mentees’ formal mentoring relationship as well as informal mentoring experiences. There is also commentary about the mentees’ working context and the relationship between their personal and professional lives.

**Classic wise-advisor.** When asked to identify the type of mentoring that was provided by the formal mentor, the mentees used terms such as experienced advisor, sounding board or confidant. Consistently the mentees also referred to the formal mentor as providing critical cultural advice about the nature of the school district, helping the mentee to analyze implications of leadership practice or to work as a critical friend in reflective conversations about problems perplexing the mentee at the time. It should be
noted that during the individual interviews with the formal mentors they consistently indicated that their preference as a mentor was to provide big picture reflection on topics of educational leadership. They also saw their role was to act as personal, professional and confidential counsel, helping the mentee to reflect effectively. In all cases the mentors and mentees stated that the most valued part of the relationship was the bond of trust and confidentiality between the two, ensuring it was a safe environment to say anything no matter how sensitive because it would not be shared with others and there was no vulnerability in disclosing personal apprehension or uncertainty. Neither mentor nor mentee suggested that the formal, retired mentor was a source of technical advice for daily administrative practice; however the mentees did identify other people who provided technical or topic-specific mentoring support.

**Diversified mentoring networks.** Analysis of the mentee interview data revealed that in addition to mentoring within the formal mentoring programme mentees also identified other mentoring alliances. All the mentees described personal mentoring networks in varying degrees of complexity. Some were small consisting of three or four people while others were larger including twenty or more individuals providing some sort of mentoring. All the mentees included some aspect of their other professional development activities offered by the SD 101 PVPA as part of their mentoring network. There are a plethora of professional development options in the SD 101 PVPA programme and within those options are many group oriented activities including; professional reading, inter-school visitations, topic focus groups as well as some life-balance groups that focus on recreational activities outside of the professional role. Many of the mentees identified these group activities as mentoring opportunities where they
were able to discuss work-related topics and gain insight as well as feedback on their professional practice.

Numerous scholars (including; Buckingham, 1996; Cross & Frankcombe, 1994; Glasspool, 2007; Glickman et al, 2001; Grimmett & Echols, 2001; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Schumaker & Sommers, 2001) note that school principals and vice-principals spend much of their school day involved in administration tasks within the school. These activities can range from completing lengthy ministry reports to student discipline interviews, ordering building repairs, balancing budgets, writing newsletters, tackling electronic student records system problems, hiring staff, reviewing student performance, and meeting with parents. The tasks are innumerable, and some say unsustainable (Barth, in Villani 2006; Grimmett & Echols, 2001; Kirkham, 1995; Umpleby, 2002) and though at times routine or mundane many often require a high degree of technical knowledge and administrative skill.

One mentee commented about the interactions within one of the professional development activity groups stating that, “there is a lot of mentoring going on collegially.” She described how members of the group would have reflective discussions about educational topics as well as specific administrative challenges. She noted that, “it sounds like professional development, but we are actually mentoring each other in how we deal with our problem.” This consistency in the mentee identification of mentoring occurring within other organized professional development activities suggests that the SD 101 PVPA model does not delineate mentoring and professional development and there is intertwining of the methods and practice. The data does not define or explain why the intertwining has happened however it seems that mentoring experiences are going
beyond the planned programme as the mentees are identifying mentoring relationships within other types of professional development activities.

The mentee networks often included a mix of other informal mentoring influences such as supervisors, peer-mentors, former colleagues, friends, family and other associates. This group of mentors can be classified into two categories: situational and personal. The situational mentor (as described by Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004) is context-driven based on the concept that the mentee has situation-specific mentoring needs. The mentees described people in their informal mentoring network as “technical advisors” or “mentors on-call” who could provide information or advice on specific professional or administrative topics. In addition to the technical support network there were also people that the mentees described as personal mentors. These people were often identified by the mentees as friends or family members who they would consult regarding personal life circumstances. One mentee described how he often contacted a friend as a life mentor to discuss personal career options and life-balance topics while another mentee described the primary role her spouse played as her personal-life mentor.

Co-existing and complimentary systems. One might wonder why these mentees had both a formal mentoring relationship as well as an informal mentoring network. Part of the reason might be that the two different mentoring experiences provide different mentoring support. As already mentioned, the informal network of mentors is in many cases situational or needs-based depending on the circumstances of the mentee. To conceptualize this it might be useful to think of the various mentoring relationships as mentoring opportunities or mentoring resources. In this way the informal mentors are
conceptualized as on-call or available to provide support, assistance or advice on a particular problem, topic or challenge that the mentee might be facing.

The network of mentoring resources does not however, replace the formal mentor for the mentees in the SD 101 PVPA programme. The key reason that this appears to be the case is because of the bonds of trust and confidentiality within the formal mentoring relationship. Both parties in the formal mentoring relationship, mentors and mentees, consistently articulated that the most valuable aspect of the formal relationship was the knowledge that anything could be said and that whatever was said would remain confidential. In other words, the mentee could speak freely, talk about challenges, apprehension or anxiety knowing that the discussion would not go any further and that they were in a safe environment to reveal and discuss their vulnerabilities with their mentor. The mentees also noted that this trust and personal openness was not characteristic to the same degree with all their informal mentors.

The nature of the informal mentoring opportunities however may preclude the opportunity to share vulnerability through disclosure. In the mentoring literature scholars (including Daresh, 1995; Duran, 2003; Kirkham, 1995; Sweeny, 2003b) note that it can be difficult for mentees to disclose personal apprehension or weakness to mentors who have some sort of positional power over the mentee. In addition, scholarly work on the principalship (such as Bolam et al, 1995; Stensrud, 2002; Villani, 2006) note that the principalship can be highly scrutinized and that there are high expectations for performance and as such people in these roles might be reluctant to chare weakness for fear of being judged as incompetent.
Some of the mentees suggested that regardless of the level of trust there are just some things that one cannot share with a supervisor, a colleague or even a spouse in relation to the work. Mentees suggested that district personnel have supervisory responsibility to evaluate performance so employees may be reluctant to disclose personal inabilities or concerns, something that is supported in the literature as well (Sweeny, 2003b). Colleagues though supportive may also be competition in the future when applying for job promotion and as one mentee noted, “there is a political nature to any school district organization”. Mentees commented that while they appreciated and valued the mentoring opportunities in the various group settings there were still unmentionable topics that the mentees would not disclose with colleagues in a professional discourse. One mentee described these professional limitations as “boundaries in who to speak to and what can be said.” In a nutshell, they are simply topics that the school-based administrators will not share with colleagues in these group settings for fear of the repercussions that might occur as a result.

I consider my spouse as my primary critical friend and often depend on her for mentoring advice. From a personal perspective as the researcher what I found unsettling was the role of the spouse as a mentor for some of the research participants. One mentee commented that she had not realized that her spouse, also an educator, was in fact a significant mentor in her life until her interview session for this research occurred and she developed her sociogram. When asked “Who mentors you?” all but one of the mentees did not initially identify their spouse as a mentor and in most cases the spouse was one of the last to be identified as a mentoring influence. This raises the question about whether mentees readily recognize the informal mentoring influences in their lives beyond the
professional aspects of their lives. Family, friends and an extended informal mentoring network might also be sheltered by selective sharing on the part of the mentee who, as one stated, “does not want to share everything as they don’t get it [because the person lacks the professional context] or it will upset them.” Though the reasons may vary, there is a consistency in the data to suggest that an informal mentoring network does not have the same capacity to provide the personal and confidential professional mentoring that is found in the formalized mentoring relationship.

**Drawings and dialogue.** Part of the personal interviews with the mentees included a sociogram activity intended to be an opportunity to map and explore the mentees’ conceptualization of their mentoring experiences. This aspect of the research, based on social cartography research methodology, was intended to provide the mentees an opportunity to construct graphic representations of their mentoring relationships. The mentees were asked to draw their mentoring connections with others using any basic shapes, lines and labels as well as colour of their choosing. I chose to include social cartography as part of the research methodology for this project because it provides an opportunity for *visual dialogue* which Paulston and Liebman (1994) described as a process that can assist participants to recall and decode information and that “the interpretation and comprehension of both theoretical constructs and social events then can be facilitated and enhanced by mapping images” (p. 215). One should recognize that in this methodology there is the opportunity for bias or misunderstanding on the part of the cartographer including any flaws and misconceptions that the cartographer may have. One should not assume that any diagram is without bias, inconsistency, inaccuracy or limitations. That being said, using diagrams drawn by the participants to represent their
personal conceptualization of their mentoring relationships can offer additional dimensions to the data.

The social cartography exercise was introduced as one of the final activities in the personal interview after most of the questions and dialogue had been completed. This was my conscious decision with the intention of establishing rapport with the participants before asking them to draw any diagrams. After being shown a sample diagram (see Figure 4 in Chapter 5) all the mentees were asked to draw a diagram to answer the question “Who mentors you?” Though many of the mentees initially expressed reluctance in drawing stating “I can’t draw” or “I am not sure what to draw” all did attempt to complete a diagram. In each case the drawing time was not a solitary activity as the mentees engaged in a running dialogue with me explaining the significance of their diagram, verbalizing as they drew while also answering questions that I might ask about the drawing as it developed.

There were some aspects to the activity unique to individual mentees. For example, one drew a concentric diagram to try to express distance in her social landscape between high-priority mentors that she kept “close-by and on-call” and others who were more distant or on the periphery that she would “sometimes call” or call about one type of topic. Another mentee redrew the diagram three times, each time reaching a point of frustration with the diagram until the third attempt, using a mix of dotted and solid lines, indicated her sense of how her mentoring relationships evolve over time. On the other hand there were also commonalities that I observed including an initial reluctance to attempt a drawing but in all cases the mentees were able to complete a diagram.
From a research perspective I found the diagram and dialogue to be very useful as a research tool and I found that I was able to gain much more information from this part of the interview than the scripted questions. After reviewing the diagrams I noticed that the mentees portrayed mentoring networks that were far more complex than a traditional pairing. In an attempt to capture the essence of the mentee diagrams I made a compilation drawing (see Figure 9 below) that shows a dynamic and diverse mentoring network.

Figure 9. Complex Dynamic Mentoring Relationships Network Compilation

Though the diagrams did vary and there were different representations of the degree of complexity and connection to informal mentors all of the diagrams included the formal mentor in a central position in the network. As previously discussed there seems to be a duality in these mentoring networks with both formal and informal mentors being part of the mix however these diagrams seem to portray a prioritization of the formal mentor within the network.

I noticed after reviewing the interview transcripts that there was more reflective discussion from the participants during the drawing phase than during the question and
answer portion of the interview. In one case a mentee had completed a diagram filled with colleagues as mentors but when asked if there was a role for family in the diagram the mentee stated that her spouse was probably her most significant mentor although she had never thought to include him. After the mentee drew her spouse in a central location a discussion ensued for many minutes talking with me about the role that family plays in her mentoring network.

One of my research goals was to inquire into how the use of social mapping can reveal new understandings of the mentor/mentee relationship and if the complexity of the mentorship can be better understood and represented through the use of diagrams. As I reflected upon the socio-gram activity what I realized was most beneficial for me as the researcher was witnessing the participants’ visual dialogue as well as interacting with them as they developed and revised their mentoring network diagrams. While seeing the development of a diagram in itself was useful what gave me a deeper understanding was watching how each participant worked through the diagram, redrawing and revising it while both narrating the experience and engaging in reflective dialogue. Observing some participants realizing previously unrecognized mentoring connections through this activity was very interesting. This helped me to realize that it is valuable for one to reflect upon who the mentoring influences are in our lives. I believe that if I had not included the socio-gram activity I would have missed-out on this deeply fulfilling and enlightening aspect of the research experience.

Through this discussion about the data analysis process some key findings have come to the forefront. As a mentoring programme the SD 101 PVPA model appears to be a well-designed and developed example that embraces many of the promising practices
described in mentoring literature. There was adequate funding for both the pre-planning and implementation of the programme as well as for the yearly operating expenses. A coordinator was hired and the programme was established in response to a detailed needs assessment of the practitioners (principals and vice-principals) and was based on a foundation of promising practices gleaned from an extensive literature review.

Furthermore, the programme’s mentee-centric pairing methodology, power-neutral non-hierarchical relationship dyads and professional association rather than organizational control of the programme are transformations from a classic to non-traditional mentoring model. The socio-cultural context of the organization, while not part of traditional mentoring readiness assessments, played an important role in the inception and development of this local programme. The mentoring model in this case is a hybrid blending of mentoring within a professional development scheme and mentees are identifying a diverse and dynamic network of mentors including formal and informal mentors. There is a degree of duality in the blend of formal and informal mentors who provide a variety of transformational and situational mentoring support however contrary to some mentoring literature the role of the classic formal mentor is still very central to the mentees in this programme. Finally, the use of sociograms as a research methodology offers some promising opportunities to develop graphic representations or mentoring relationships as well as an opportunity for deeper dialogue with research participants. Interpreting these finds is the next step in this discussion of this research project.

**Interpretation of key findings.**

This section includes interpretation of the findings and how they fit within the empirical and theoretical knowledge base as well as discussion about the effectiveness of
using social cartography methods as a tool in mentoring research. This discussion continues along the themes introduced in the previous data analysis and key findings section starting with the early research experience at the provincial level, moving to the district and programme context then focusing on the mentee experiences.

**Subtle irony.** This project was intended to be a case study of a successful and non-traditional mentoring programme from school-based administrators in a British Columbia school district. The pre-screening process itself was a discovery experience and was far from what I expected as a researcher. School administrator mentoring seems to garner little interest at the provincial level and even the school principals’ professional association had virtually no information about non-traditional mentoring or any mentoring for that matter. If not for the responses of fellow school administrators through a web-based principal’s discussion board this research might never have happened. I find it ironic that provincial school leadership associations don’t seem to be aware or interested in mentoring as a school leadership development or support methodology considering its prevalence in the literature. I am at a loss to explain this finding and though there is research theory that describes organizational resistance to research and gate-keepers, any attempt to connect this experience to those theories would be speculative. What strikes me is that other school-based administrators are interested in this topic; I draw this conclusion from the strong support I received from the SD 101 Principals and Vice-Principals Association as well as the active school-based leader mentees and the retired administrator mentors.

**Subtle differences.** The SD 101 PVPA mentoring programme model initially appeared to be a classic expert/novice pairing however upon deeper analysis I realized
that it incorporates a complex and diversified mentoring experience that goes beyond the classic style. Critiques of the classic model include concerns about hierarchical power, organizational needs taking priority over individuals and mentor obsolescence in evolving organizations. The first aspect of the SD 101 PVPA programme that set it apart from a traditional classic mentoring model was the mentor pairing process which was mentee-needs based and subject to the final approval of the mentee. In addition, the formal assigned mentor, being retired, had no positional power over the mentee so the imbalance of power critique often identified in classic mentoring was reduced or arguably eliminated. As I gained further understanding about the programme I began to realize that it differs from traditional programmes that are founded on developing people to suit organizational needs and priorities. This programme was designed and maintained by the local school administrators’ professional association as part of a larger professional development plan. The programme is not controlled by the school district organization and the formal mentoring was strictly confidential so the district leadership could neither control the programme our use information from it as part of a human resources management scheme. These are important points that support the argument that the SD 101 PVPA mentoring programme is an example of a successful, non-traditional mentoring programme. While this was initially the goal of this researcher, there were other concepts that I came to understand that I feel are very important and need to be revisited at this time.

Classic expert/novice mentoring is often criticized as an inappropriate and obsolete hierarchical social construct that no longer meets the needs of individuals in contemporary social organizations. Critics suggest that multiple mentors, peer to peer
alliances and mentee-centric situational mentoring relationships based upon personal need and circumstance are the modern alternative to the classic pairing model. As already mentioned the SD 101 PVPA model nuances the classic model and provides an expert mentor but removes the hierarchical positioning by enlisting retirees as mentors. While that in itself is an interesting point, what is even more compelling is the co-existence and integration of the classic mentor within a diversified and dynamic mentoring network.

These subtle variations in the SD 101 PVPA from the classic model were intentional as the original programme developer mentioned that she developed the programme based on the theories and promising practices she discovered in a literature review. From a theoretical standpoint this case should be considered as an example of a contemporary mentoring model that reduces some of the classic shortcomings based on theoretical foundations or balanced relationships, mentee-centric dyads and entrenched professional learning.

**Socio-cultural context.** The discussion about the district organizational context introduced the idea that there is a link between the mentoring activities in SD101 and the socio-cultural environment. Though mentoring literature does discuss organization factors such as financial, human and time resources as well as needs assessments as part of programme planning links to socio-cultural context, in particular discontinuity, is not readily found. Hay (1995) argues that in unstable organizations people will initiate their own mentoring connections or learning alliances as a coping mechanism for their uncertain work environment. Hargreaves and Fink (2006) identify that changes in leadership can cause organizations to experience either planned or unplanned discontinuity which can destabilize an organization for a period of time.
School District 101 experienced a long period of leadership and organizational change with both planned and unplanned discontinuity. It was during this time that the SD 101 PVPA mentoring programme was developed and the SD 101 PVPA executive emphasized during field interviews that the development of the programme was a proactive step to maintain control over the personal professional development for school administrators. It may be worthwhile for mentoring programme planning and assessment theory to draw links between Hargreaves and Fink (2006) and Hay (1995) and consider the socio-cultural context, particularly leadership discontinuity, as an environmental factor as part of mentoring programme development. Additional questions in the promising practices checklists addressing mentoring programme development as a response to planned and unplanned organizational leadership discontinuity could emphasize deeper understanding of programme purpose or goals. Furthermore questions about individual needs assessment results can provide insight into the relevance of planned mentoring programme goals to individual needs and may also indicate the degree of balance between individual needs and organizational imperatives. Simply put there needs to be questions about both addressing individual and organizational needs keeping in mind that forms of mentoring might be used to address these factors.

**Hybrid mentee-centric networks.** Classic expert/novice mentoring is often criticized as an inappropriate and obsolete hierarchical social construct that no longer meets the needs of individuals in contemporary social organizations. Critics suggest that multiple mentors, peer to peer alliances and mentee-centric situational mentoring relationships based upon personal need and circumstance are the modern alternative to the classic pairing model. As already mentioned the SD 101 PVPA model nuances the
classic model and provides an expert mentor but removes the hierarchical positioning by enlisting retirees as mentors. While that itself might be an interesting point, what is more interesting is the co-existence and integration of the classic mentor within a diversified and dynamic mentoring network.

The mentees identified personal mentoring networks that varied in structure and complexity but all shared two similarities; multiple informal mentors with varying degrees of interaction and influence and a formal, and highly valued, personal mentor. The informal mentoring influences varied in the degree and nature of interaction with the mentee and there was a mix of both personal and professional informal mentoring relationships with peers, other practitioners, district and school staff in a variety of roles and positions, former colleagues, friends and for some a family or spousal support network. The informal mentoring relationships however all had a similar limiting factor that prevented the mentee from full disclosure: a sense of either professional or personal boundaries that limited what the mentee was willing to share with the mentoring influence.

In the case of mentoring interactions with supervisors, colleagues or collegial groups as well as other practitioners the mentees could not fully disclose their personal feelings or misgivings because there is a political aspect to the nature of the professional organization. In the case of family members or a spouse as a mentor many of the mentees made the conscious decision to shield their family or spouse from some of the aspects of their professional life in order to protect their loved ones. It seems that the formal mentors in the SD 101 PVPA are filling that gap and provide the mentees with a highly confidential yet supportive sounding board and personal advisor, something that both
mentors and mentees have described as being highly valued in their relationship experiences.

The mentoring literature has evolved moving from the idea that mentoring was reserved for the privileged few to the notion that everyone needs a mentor. More recently the idea that everyone needs a mentor has changed to the suggestion that everyone should have a network of reciprocal mentoring relationships which are more collegial or peer-to-peer in nature. Many critics argue that the classic mentor is either extinct or inappropriate in contemporary flattened organizations and evolving social expectations that no longer accept replication as the norm. Based on the SD 101 case study one might suggest that the concept of the classic wise advisor mentor may not be as obsolete and inappropriate as some critics argue. This version of the classic mentor, nuanced to reduce any power-over concerns, may actually be the lynch pin in a successful contemporary diversified mentoring network model: this seems to be the case in the SD 101 PVPA model which has successfully blended formal and informal mentoring within a professional development scheme. While the classic theorists might suggest that everyone needs a mentor and the critics argue that everyone needs a network of informal mentoring alliances, it may actually be the case that in our modern work and social environments people need both in order to be successful. The current literature does not specifically describe such a hybrid model but from the conversations and diagrams developed with the mentees regarding their mentoring connection it is clear that there is still a primary and central role for a formal mentor within a networked model.

In order to understand this apparent contradiction of current mentoring critique it might be worthwhile to consider the aspects of definition and power. This dissertation has
highlighted that many scholars often consider the vast variety of mentoring definitions used in the field to be inaccurate and confusing. Furthermore the classic mentor is often criticized for using positional power to replicate and maintain social dominance at the expense of the individual mentees and in particular people from marginalized groups. While contemporary critics may argue that the classic mentor is a power broker that does not necessarily represent a common definition. Levinson (1978) described how men in senior positions influenced and guided the careers of younger men and scholars such as Clutterbuck and Lane (2004) suggest that this is a contemporary definition of classic mentoring. In this example there is a clear senior/junior or expert/novice relationship however Levinson is rarely noted in contemporary definitions.

Most dictionaries reference Homer’s character Mentor and highlight the role of a mentor as a wise-advisor and trusted friend. Homer’s character did not have formal positional power in the kingdom and could not make decisions or control people but as a friend to the king he was entrusted to advise the king’s son. Whether he was effective in that role is open for debate however if one agrees that the definition of a classic mentor is a trusted friend and a wise advisor there is room to argue that the SD 101 PVPA experience is incorporating a classic mentor into their model. The mentees interviewed from SD101 spoke at length about the trust they had in their formal mentors that allowed them to share their innermost professional vulnerabilities while also noting their reluctance to share to the same degree with colleagues. While critics argue that the classic mentor should be replaced by a network of peer learners there is evidence from the SD 101 PVPA data to suggest that there is still a need for a formal mentor in the classic sense.
While most of the findings in this report have been mentee-centric focusing on the experiences and outcomes for the mentees there is an aspect of the mentors’ experience that I believe needs to be echoed at this time. The SD 101 PVPA mentoring program has funding in-place to pay the mentors a stipend which is something noted as promising practice in the literature. During the mentor interviews however none of the mentors noted the stipend as being a motivating factor for choosing to be a mentor. The mentors, all retired SD 101 employees, noted that their motivation was a mix of social and professional. From a professional aspect the mentors explained that this was an opportunity for them to give back to their profession by offering collegial support to colleagues still working in the field. The mentors described the opportunity for professional dialogue about educational and leadership topics as an enjoyable and fulfilling experience. The mentors also noted that though they were formally retired from the school district they still lived in the area and felt a continuing connection to the organization and their former colleagues. They explained that the mentoring experiences allowed them to share their knowledge and experience about the district and school leadership in general without, as one put it, “getting bogged down in the politics”. It seems that these retirees are experiencing the mentorship as form of phased-retirement where they are able to give back to their organization, profession and colleagues honouring their own personal legacy while supporting the current and future practice of their successors.

Limitations of the study

The use of case study as a primary method of analysis blended with narrative inquiry and social mapping tools allowed for a focus on the mentee experiences within
the SD 101 PVPA and SD101 context. The data and analysis derived from this project provides information that can help one understand some of the complexities of mentoring activities within a professional context. In part the data reflects current mentoring theory regarding mentoring networks. All of the mentees interviewed for this dissertation described a mentee-centric network of personal relationships with people who filled a variety of mentoring roles. What differed significantly from contemporary theory was the central role of the classic formal mentor. In this model people are choosing to have a formal mentor within their personal network and identify that personal as a close and critical mentoring relationship. This suggests that there is can be a hybrid mentoring model that blends the duality of formal and informal mentoring opportunities that balance a concurrent duality of situational and transformational mentoring. One way to explain why the formal mentor is still relevant in this case is to consider how the SD 101 PVPA model has nuanced the power position of the classic mentor. In the SD 101 PVPA model the mentor is retired and chooses to be a mentor so there is no positional power attached to the role. Furthermore the matching and selection is methodology is mentee-centric with mentees volunteering to be in the programme and having complete control over the choice of the formal mentor.

From a methodological perspective the data and research experience highlights the usefulness of sociograms in mentoring research. The mapping activity provided participants an opportunity to explore their mentoring relationships and map-out their connections and in some cases discovering mentoring relationships that they had not previously recognized. One final contribution of this data is linked to mentoring theory and in particular to field practitioner tools. The socio-cultural context of organizational
leadership discontinuity has not been included in the mentoring programme development
and assessment checklists used by some practitioners in the field. The data from this case
suggests that programme planners consider the organizational leadership context as an
influencing factor on the development of mentoring relationships.

Although the case study method allowed for examination of the SD 101 PVPA
mentoring programme and mentee experiences this study’s limitations is that the process
of data collection did not extend beyond this single case to gather data from other
mentoring programme contexts. It is worth noting that this programme was in a small and
somewhat isolated school district and there may be aspects of the smaller district that
differ from districts in other geographical contexts. While I am being cautious to avoid
claims that this case can be used as a benchmark for other mentoring programmes there is
reason to consider the data from this case as a means of informing practice through
improved understanding. Stake (1978) notes that case study methodology can be useful
for this purpose as it helps readers to “recognize essential similarities to cases of interest
to them” (p. 6) and the case details can provide grounds for the reader to develop
naturalistic generalizations in correlation to their own interests. This study offers a focus
on a particular type of hybrid mentoring programme. Readers must recognize that while
this case study provides some information about non-traditional mentoring but it is
neither conclusive nor exclusive because the data is limited to this one case and other
models from other districts were not studied in comparison.

This project is also limited by the challenges faced by working as a sole
researcher within a single district. The interviews and observations, while conducted with
as many participants as were willing to be in the study, only provided a relatively small
sample of the total number of administrators in the district and a very small sampling of administrators in the provincial context. Furthermore the interviews and visits with school-based mentees and their mentors were completed in a single visit and as such there was no linear data collection or re-assessment of the evolving mentoring relationships. Spending more time following changes in the mentee’s mentoring network may have helped to provide a clearer understanding and appreciation of these complex relationships.

**Informing future practice**

The data and observations from this project provide information for future research and practice in the field of mentoring. The use of the reverse-engineered readiness checklists was useful tool for assessing the structure and context of the SD 101 PVPA mentoring programme. Furthermore, the experience also suggest that there is value in considering the organizational context with a particular focus on discontinuity as part of an organizational readiness assessment something which is not currently addressed in the scholarly work or found in promising practices checklists. It may also be time to revisit the concept that the classic mentor is obsolete as in this case mentees are choosing to incorporate a formal mentor to fill the role of classic reflective methodology within a hybrid formal/informal model. Of particular note are the valued aspects of trust and confidentiality that school leader mentees are placing upon their formal mentors. This assumption should be tempered with the realization that a school district organization might not be representative of the flattened organizations that Hay (1995) refers to in her work. It might be of value to pursue this same line of research in business
or government organizations that can be demonstrated to be flattened in order to see if the classic mentor still plays a role in individual’s mentoring networks.

**Contributions to mentoring theory.** This study was based on the concept that contemporary mentoring theory has taken a new direction. Mentoring is now envisioned as an individual mentee developing complex personal network of relationships instead of the classic model of an organization assigning an expert/novice dyad for employee development. This foundation comes from Hay’s (1995) conceptualization of mentoring networks as a series of developmental alliances as well as Clutterbuck and Lane (2004) who suggest that mentoring has changed radically from classic sponsorship and management to contemporary networks of situational and reciprocal learning alliances. In both cases, these scholars portray the contemporary mentoring as mentee-driven with interactions based upon the needs and circumstances of the mentee. Another shift in the mentoring paradigm is that a good mentor is “anyone you can learn from” (Dahle, 1998, p. 3) rather than the traditional image of the mentor as a wise advisor and as such diverse informal mentoring networks are a contemporary alternative to the traditional expert/novice model.

The data and observations of this study support the contemporary arguments of Hay (1995), Dahle (1998) as well as Clutterbuck and Lane (2004). The mentees in the SD 101 PVPA programme identified diverse and dynamic personal mentoring networks that included a wide variety of informal mentors. These mentees have developed reciprocal learning alliances with colleagues, other professionals, family and friends in order to cope with the demands of their work as well as to grow personally and professionally. While this case study provides examples of mentoring networks that are situational learning
alliances and support contemporary theory there is one aspect of the case that differs from some of the contemporary theory.

Contemporary mentoring theorists argue that the classic formal mentor figure is obsolete; however in the case of the SD 101 PVPA programme the mentees still indicated a strong desire for a formal mentor. The confidential sounding board and reflective advisor role of the formal mentor has not been completely substituted with a network of informal mentors nor is that necessarily possible within the nature of the social organization. The mentees described how they were limited by professional bounds and politics in what they could say in various arenas of discourse for fear of being judged. The mentees emphasized that what they valued the most in their formal mentoring relationship was the comfort of knowing that they could say whatever they wished and that the mentor would keep the conversations confidential. The mentors also indicated that they most valued the trust and confidentiality aspects of the relationship with their mentee. While the mentoring literature notes that people can be reluctant to share personal misgivings with supervisors or with peers in circumstances that might cause them to be judged it is also noted by mentoring scholars such as Malderez and Bodóczky (1999) that personal disclosure is critical for learning and growth to take place within a mentoring relationship. It appears that the formal mentor is still a central and highly-valued confidant, advisor and sounding board for the mentees in this model because of the trust and confidentiality that both parties (mentor and mentee) are dedicating to the relationship.

In the SD 101 PVPA programme the formal mentor, nuanced in a way that removes positional power, actually plays a crucial and central role in the mentee’s
network of learning alliances. Mentoring theory may need to continue to evolve so it can include a new conceptualization of the classic formal mentor in a new role as a key contributor within a contemporary multiple-mentor networking model. The blending of a formal mentor within a network of informal mentoring relationships raises problems with aspects of defining mentoring. Classic mentoring is primarily defined in the literature as an expert/novice or senior/junior relationship and there is a plethora of alternate mentoring definitions in the contemporary literature. Though some scholars warn that the growing diversity in the contemporary definitions may cause confusion in the field I believe that the evidence from this research provides reason to incorporate further aspects of professional learning in the body of knowledge. The learning-based mentoring relationship networks described by the mentors and mentees raise the concepts of professional learning communities and peer-learning relationships as aspects to consider in contemporary mentoring definitions.

There is a growing body of literature in the field of education regarding the interpersonal development of professional learning relationships, or communities of professional learners, focused on the purpose of deepening the professional capacity of colleagues through mutual learning activities such as inquiry groups, reading groups and collegial dialogue groups. The participants in this research described their involvement in professional learning community activities as mentoring influences (sources of mentoring support) and described the people in these groups as a part of their network of informal mentors. Based on this evidence I suggest that networked mentoring relationships based on peer-to-peer and professional learning groups has a place in the contemporary mentoring definition.
Personal Conclusion

This research project was sparked from a personal mentoring experience that started in 2005. While working on a school leadership project with a cohort of school-based administrators I began to realize that classic formal mentoring had inconsistent results as assigned relationships can fail. I also began to realize that informal mentoring connections can occur as a result of gaps in formal mentoring activities. Furthermore, I quickly realized that my personal understanding of mentoring was based on folklore and observation rather than theory and practice and as such I had some serious gaps in my comprehension of the topic. The inconsistency in formal mentoring success, as well as my curiosity about the development of unsanctioned mentoring relationships and my desire to gain a better understanding of mentoring has motivated me, for personal, academic and professional reasons, to learn more about the concept called mentoring.

Initially I was led to believe that mentoring had evolved to the point that classic mentoring was no longer an appropriate methodology. Based on criticisms of the classic model and changes in contemporary organizations and technologies I went into this research thinking that the classic mentor was something from a bygone era. In my search for a contemporary alternative model I found that the classic mentor did not disappear but by design in the SD 101 PVPA model the role had been nuanced to reduce the classic flaws. While the mentees I spoke with did have networks of mentors, something I was expecting to find, what surprised me was that the classic mentor was not replaced by the network but instead was incorporated into the heart of the structure. The mentees not only valued the formal mentor but described the role as a primary anchor within a network of diversified and dynamic relationships. This has been an enlightening journey.
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Appendix 1

Personal Interview Questions – Association Representatives

At the beginning of the interview the participant will be reminded:
Please remember that your participation in this research must be voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any explanation. There will be no negative consequences if you choose to withdraw. If you do withdraw from the study, your data will not be used in any way in the analysis, unless it is logistically impossible to remove individual data.

My intention is to ask representatives of the supervisory organizations if they are aware of any districts in BC that are using a contemporary model. My questions will be:

- 1: Which school districts in BC are using a contemporary mentoring model to support new school administrators?
  - By contemporary mentoring programs I am referring to programs that rely less on expert/novice knowledge sharing and one that is more focused on novice-led learning. In other words, the relationship is based on the needs of the novice not on the expertise or knowledge sharing abilities of the mentor.
- 2: Describe the method or structure being used in the district to provide mentoring to new school administrators (principals and vice-principals)?
  - By method or structure I am referring to the organization of the relationships, for example, is the program structured along the lines of an experienced principal being matched with a novice?
  - Respondents will be encouraged to map or graph the structure or design of the mentoring program and the mentoring relationships.
- 3: What do you understand to be the theoretical foundations of this program? How do they inform the mentoring program and practice in the district?
- 4: What is the history or background of the program design and inception in the district?
- 5: Identify perceived benefits as well as challenges both to the success of the program and its sustainability.
- 6: What role has/does your association play(ed) in the district mentoring program?
- 7: What role could your association play in this program?
- 8: What role does/can your association play in the development of mentoring programs for new school administrators in BC school districts?
- 9: What recommendations or questions do you have regarding this research project into new administrator mentoring in BC school districts?

At the end of the interview the participant will be reminded:
Please remember that your participation in this research must be voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any explanation. There will
be no negative consequences if you choose to withdraw. If you do withdraw from the study, your data will not be used in any way in the analysis, unless it is logistically impossible to remove individual data.
Appendix 2

Personal Interview Questions – School District Administration

At the beginning of the interview the participant will be reminded:
Please remember that your participation in this research must be voluntary. If you do
decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any explanation. There will
be no negative consequences if you choose to withdraw. If you do withdraw from the
study, your data will not be used in any way in the analysis, unless it is logistically
impossible to remove individual data.

The main purpose of the personal interview with district administration will be to focus
on the background, structure and experiences with the district mentoring program for new
principals and vice-principals. The questions are open-ended in nature and discourse is
likely to follow however there is a pool of pre-planned interview questions (as follows).

You will also be asked to assist the researcher to identify district program members
(mentors and mentees). The researcher will use this information to contact and recruit
participants for this research project.

Mentor Program Leadership

- Who provides mentor program leadership, advice, or governance?
- Is there a formal, written governing agreement for the mentoring program?
  - If so, who are the parties to this agreement?
- What stake holders are involved in governing the mentoring program?
  - Mentors?
  - Mentees?
  - New but experienced employees?
  - Managers (at what levels)
  - Board members?
  - Union or association leaders?
  - Community members?
  - University faculty?
  - Retired employees?
  - Others?
- In what ways are stakeholder groups meaningfully involved in the program?
- How were selection & matching criteria processes developed?
- Is there a Mentor Program Leader or Coordinator?
- What are the roles and tasks of the program leader/coordinator?

Program Partners

- Do you involve partners from other organizations?
• Other organizations could include, but are not limited to, professional organizations, other school districts, unions, universities, government ministries, corporations, service groups, etc.
  • If so, what do they contribute to your program?
  • How might university or association pre-service programs prepare their students so their participation in your mentoring program is more effective?
    o By pre-service programs I am referring to programs such as the University of Victoria Certificate in School Management and Leadership or the annual BCPVPA/UBC summer “short course” program for new administrators sponsored by the BCSSA and the BC Ministry of Education.

**The Program's Conceptual Foundation**

- How do you determine that your mentoring program is designed to professionally develop new principals to be effective in their roles?
- What research-based model of human development is the basic structure of your mentoring program?
  o In other words, what do you understand the theoretical foundations of this program to be?
  o How do they inform the mentoring program and practice in your district?
- How does that conceptual framework effect program implementation, evaluation, or improvement?
- How does that conceptual framework shape the mentoring process?

**Process for Program Design & Development**

- What process was used for developing your mentoring program?
- Who is/was involved in the program development process?
- What research was done as part of the program development process?
- Did you use expert guidance during the process?
  o If so, how did you locate and select the right expert?

**Data-Based Planning**

- What data did you have or need to plan?
- How was the data used to build a plan?
- How did you design program that ensures identified needs are effectively addressed?

**Mentee Needs Assessment**

- Do you use needs assessment data and research for program planning?
- What did your research on new principal needs tell you?
- What local research did you do regarding new principal needs, and what does it tells you?
• What is your needs assessment process?
• How did you determine which needs are best addressed with training? With mentoring? With other program strategies?

**Organizational Needs Assessment**

• What organizational needs are addressed by the mentoring program?
• What organizational needs are there which programs other than mentoring address?
• What calendar issues and events are considered when planning the mentoring program?

**Other Contextual Issues to Consider**

• What policies and practices were barriers to mentoring and how were these be overcome?
  o External barriers?
  o Internal barriers?
• What barriers remain or endure?
• What operational changes needed to be made in your district to make mentoring possible?
• Is there a need to change the nature of new principals' initial assignments?
• Do mentors and new principals have ready access to information communication technology
  o Types? (i.e. email, phone, blogs, etc.)
• How do mentors interact with non program participants in the organization and others to ensure that new principals have appropriate access to needed professional development opportunities and support?

**Program Purpose and Goals**

• Do you have a stated mission and vision for the mentoring program?
• What goals and results can your program realistically be expected to attain?
• Do your mentor program goals compliment and not conflict with the goals of other improvement efforts?

**Program Approach**

• Describe the method or structure being used in the district to provide mentoring to new school administrators (principals and vice-principals).
  o By method or structure I am referring to the organization of the relationships, for example, is the program structured along the lines of an experienced principal being matched with a novice?
  o Respondents will be encouraged to map or graph the structure or design of the mentoring program and the mentoring relationships.
• Do you use
o informal mentoring
o formal mentoring
o A combination of formal and informal

• Is your mentoring program full or part time?
  o How much time is allocated to this program? (i.e. hours per week or days per schol year)

• What is the configuration of your mentoring program?
  o 1 to 1?
  o Teams?
  o Other structures?

### The Participants

• Which principals/vice-principals receive mentoring in your district?
  o New to the organization?
  o New to a principal assignment?
  o New to a site, but experienced in the organization?
  o New hires with previous experience?
  o New hires with previous, but not current experience?
  o Persons in disadvantaged minorities?
  o Underrepresented minorities and women?

• Is participation in the mentoring program mandatory or voluntary?
• How long does a principal or Vice-principal participate in a mentoring program?
• What and who determines how long a Principal or Vice-principal should be mentored?
  o Meeting a minimum a performance standard?
  o Self-assessment?
  o Mentor assessment & judgment of new principal’s need?
  o Manager assessment of new principal’s need?
  o A fixed time line, such as a year? Two years? Three years?
  o Externally set time line for certification or other compliance?

### Time & Timing

• How frequently do mentoring activities occur?
• How is time provided for mentoring?
• Are your mentors full-time or do they have other work duties too?
• How do you estimate how much time is needed to effectively mentor?
• How do you measure how much time mentors give to mentoring?
• How long do mentors serve?
• If the mentor is released from some or all work duties to serve as a mentor, how do you facilitate a mentor’s eventual return to work full-time?

### Roles & Tasks

• Mentors
o Given your goals, what are the roles and tasks that every mentor should ideally be able to fulfill?
  o Which mentoring tasks are the same for every principal or vice-principal?
  o Which mentoring tasks are unique to different people, or people with different levels of experience?
  o Which mentoring tasks will most mentors already know?
  o Which tasks are not likely to already be known?
  o Do you use check lists that include typical mentoring tasks?
  o How do you refine the focus of early mentoring on priorities, so new principals or vice-principals are not overwhelmed?

- Mentees
  o What do effective new principals or vice-principals need to be able to do regarding the mentoring program?

- Supervisors
  o What do effective supervisors of new principals or vice-principals need to be able to do regarding the mentoring program?
  o How do mentors and supervisors determine which tasks each needs to play?

### Recruitment of Mentors

- What are your mentor recruitment, selection, and matching processes?
- What are your best methods for recruiting mentors?
- What do you do to attract better candidates for mentoring?
- What incentives do you use to attract mentors?
- Can mentors nominate themselves or are mentors chosen?
- Do you use retired principals or vice-principals as mentors?
  o What percentage of the mentors in your program are retired?
  o Is the use of retired principals an effective mentoring approach?
- Have you experienced problems with insufficient numbers of people willing to be mentors?
  o What have you done about this?
  o What has been the result?
- What job descriptions, applications, or contracts do you use during recruitment?

### Selection of Mentors

- Who can become a mentor in your program?
- Do you use an exclusive or inclusive selection approach?
  o If the inclusive approach is used, how do you ensure that only appropriate people serve as mentors?
- Are supervisors also mentors?
- Who has a valued view point on mentor skills and has input on selection?
- What selection criteria are established to select mentors?
  o How does the criterion reflect the program's goals?
- What selection process is used to apply the criteria?
o What steps does the process include?
o What time line does the process need to follow so it works with
recruitment, hiring practices, mentor training, etc.?

Matching Mentors & Mentees

- What are your criteria for matching criteria?
- How important is close proximity to the mentor?
- Is it appropriate to match based on personality, working, learning, or philosophical styles?
- What is an appropriate matching process?
- What time line for matching do you follow?
- Who coordinates the matching process & communication?
- Who has a valued viewpoint on mentor skills and has input on mentor-new principal matching?
- How many new principals or vice-principals work with one mentor at the same time?
- What proactive steps are taken to avoid mismatches?
- What do you do if a mismatch occurs?

Initial Training

- Mentor Training:
  o What are the goals-outcomes for the mentor training?
  o When does mentor training take place and how many times do they train each year?
  o Is there a formalized agenda, sequence and length of training for mentors?
  o Are mentors required to participate in the training?
  o Do new principals and vice-principals attend any parts of the mentoring training?
  o What roles do other stakeholders have in the training?
  o Do you use an outside mentoring expert to provide mentor training?
  o What effective, proven mentor training materials do you use as part of your mentor training program?

- New Principal and Vice-principal Training
  o What are the implications of new principal/vice-principal roles and tasks for their training?
  o What are the goals-outcomes for the mentor training?
  o What needs assessment research and local data do you use to inform the training?
  o What local needs assessment data do you use and how do you obtain it?
  o How do you train new principals/vice-principals to work effectively with their mentors?
  o Is there a formal agenda, sequence and length of training?
  o What effective, proven principal/vice-principal training materials do you use as part of your mentor training program?
• Supervisor Training
  o What are the goals-outcomes for the supervisors' training regarding the mentor program?
  o How do you train & assist supervisors to learn what they need?
  o How do you train supervisors to work effectively with the mentors?

On-Going Support & Training

• What is the relationship between initial and on-going training and follow up support?
• What on-going support activities and groups are needed for effective mentoring?
• What on-going support activities and groups are needed for proteges?
• What on-going support activities and groups are needed for supervisors?
• What should be the balance between expert versus peer support for each stake holder?
• How often should support groups meet for each stake holder?
• What should be the goals of the support groups for each constituent group?
• Mentoring of Mentors
  o Why is the "Mentor of Mentors" role needed?
  o What is the support role of a Mentor Program Coordinator as "Mentor of Mentors"?
  o What is the actual process of mentoring the mentors?
• What written program materials and handbooks are needed for each stake holder group?
• What technological or other forms of support should be developed and provided to each stake holder group?

Resources For Mentors

• What resources and expertise are available to mentors?
  o Ongoing counsel from others?
    ▪ a mentor program coordinator?
    ▪ higher education faculty?
    ▪ a mentor of mentors?
    ▪ other mentors?
    ▪ external mentoring expert?
  o Office space?
  o Phone? Email? Fax?
  o Laptop computers and other equipment?
  o Other resources?

The Mentor-Mentee Relationship

• What are the critical factors in the relationship?
• How does the program support development of an effective relationship?
• What are the roles of participants in building the relationship?
• How do participants build trust into their relationship?
• Exactly what does "confidential" mean?
• How does the program ensure that the relationship remains confidential?
• How does the relationship change over time? How SHOULD it change?
• What should mentors do if mentees need to change a key behavior and won't?
• What should mentors say or do with supervisors if mentee behaviors that MUST change but haven't?

Mentor-Mentee Communication

• What strategies and skills do mentoring partners need for effective communication?
• How do participants learn what they need to maintain effective communications?
• What communication with supervisors is appropriate?
• What communication with a Mentor Program Leader is appropriate?
• What communication is appropriate with non mentor program colleagues?

The Developmental Mentoring Process

• How long does the mentoring process take?
• What are the typical phases that mentees go through as they gain experience and skill as school administrators?
• How long does each separate stage of the mentoring process take?
• What are the parallels or overlaps between the mentoring PROCESS and the mentoring RELATIONSHIP?
• Do the changes need mentor facilitation to occur, or do they happen naturally?
• How does the focus of mentoring change during the course of a mentee’s involvement in the program?

Incentives & Recognition for Mentoring

• What incentives do you use to attract the best candidates to serve as mentors?
  o Modified/reduced work assignments and schedules?
  o Leadership opportunities?
  o Stipends?
  o Recognition programs?
  o Other incentives?
  o None?
• Do you believe that there is a need to provide a mentoring stipend or other forms of incentives and recognition?
• In what other ways can mentors be compensated for their additional work and participation?

Evaluation of Program Participants

• Do you hold mentors accountable for their mentoring work?
• if so, how and for what do you hold Mentors accountable
• How do you ensure that mentors make a positive impact on new principal performance?
• What do you do if mentors don't seem to do their job according to program goals?
• Are your mentors assessed and if so, how and for what?
• Are your new principals and vice-principals assessed and if so, how and for what?
• Is the mentor program leader/coordinator assessed and if so, how and for what?
• Who is involved in mentor, new principal and program coordinator assessment?
• What evidence is used to evaluate and document the effectiveness of the participants?

Program Evaluation and Improvement

• What evidence is used to evaluate and document the effectiveness of the program?
• What data do you collect to demonstrate that you are accomplishing your program's goals?
• What BASE LINE data have you collected to demonstrate later that desired results have occurred?
• How do you demonstrate the value of mentoring when the mentoring conversations are confidential?
• How do you help decision makers understand the mentoring program's value?
• Who is involved in evaluating and documenting the mentoring program?
  o An independent external program evaluator?
  o Mentors?
  o New Principals?
  o Managers? At what level?
  o Union leaders?
  o Others?

Supporting and Sustaining the Program Over Time

• How do you assemble the funding needed to support and grow the program?
• How do you build support for the program with key decision makers?
• How do you build support for the program with others who are non-participants in mentoring?
• What are the program pitfalls that you need to avoid to keep building a better program and how can you avoid them?

Identification of Program Members – research recruitment

In order to interview program members (mentors and mentees) you are being asked to identify members of the program and to provide their contact information to the researcher who will contact the identified members inviting them to participate in the research project as per University of Victoria research ethics guidelines. The criteria that the researcher is looking for in research participants is as follows:
Mentee participants: The person is, or has been, a mentee in the district mentoring program and:
  o Is, or was, a serving principal or vice-principal in the district.
  o Can have a range of experience in the program, first-year, second-year, multiple years.

Mentor participants: The person is, or has been, a mentor in the district program and;
  o Can have a range of experience in the program, first-year, second-year, multiple years.

At the end of the interview the participant will be reminded:
Please remember that your participation in this research must be voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any explanation. There will be no negative consequences if you choose to withdraw. If you do withdraw from the study, your data will not be used in any way in the analysis, unless it is logistically impossible to remove individual data.
Appendix 3

Association research participation inquiry email/telephone call text

My name is Rob Hoban and I am a Vice-principal in the Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District currently working on my thesis for a PhD in Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria. I am calling/writing to request your association’s assistance with my research project which is a study of principal mentoring programs in BC school districts.

The title of my research project is Contemporary Mentoring: A Case Study of Non-traditional Mentoring for New Principals in British Columbia Schools. My goal is to study a new principal/vice-principal mentoring program in a BC school district that uses an approach beyond the more typical expert-novice pairing.

I would like to interview a representative of your association by phone, or in person, to discuss current mentoring programs for new administrators in BC schools with a particular interest in identifying districts that are using a non-traditional program model. I am hoping that this interview will help me to identify potential research sites (school districts) for this project.

Note: further telephone discussion will be based on the text of the Association Introduction Letter (Appendix 2)

additional email text

I have included with this email a copy of the Introduction Letter for my research project as well as a University of Victoria Participant Consent Form and the Interview Questions.

Your association’s assistance with this study would be greatly appreciated. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have about the project and can be reached at 250 245 XXXX or by email at hobanr@uvic.ca. My supervisors, if you wish to contact them, are Dr. Darlene Clover clover@uvic.ca and Dr. Catherine McGregor cmgreg@uvic.ca.

Please let me know (via email or telephone call) when it would be convenient for you to speak with me about this research.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely,

Rob Hoban.
Appendix 4

SAMPLE Association Letter of Introduction and Invitation to Participate (note: data fields modified and completed for each individual association)

Date
Mr/Mrs/Ms/Dr. _______________, Association Position (i.e. President/CEO).
Association name,
Address data.

Dear________,
I am a Vice-principal in the Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District currently working on my thesis for a PhD in Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria. The title of my research project is Contemporary Mentoring: A Case Study of Non-traditional Mentoring for New Principals in British Columbia Schools. My goal is to study a new principal/vice-principal mentoring program in a BC school district that uses an approach beyond the more typical expert-novice pairing. I am writing to request assistance from your association to help me identify a potential research site (district) for this project. Your association’s involvement would entail you, or a representative of your choice, participating in an interview with me by phone, or in person, to discuss current mentoring programs for new administrators in BC schools with a particular interest in identifying districts that are using a non-traditional program model.

This study will contribute to the body of knowledge and benefit the educational profession by taking into account that those involved in an innovative mentoring structure have a story to tell and can provide important information about contemporary mentoring practice. Examining their understanding of mentoring might also help to suggest more effective methods of getting mentoring research data out into the field to inform practice. The study poses minimal risk as the participants will remain anonymous and will participate voluntarily after giving their informed consent.

The research plan is to conduct fieldwork in a district in October and November and my request to your association is to participate in the research in early September to help me identify potential research districts. Your involvement will include a personal interview and possibly some brief follow-up telephone calls. Copies of the interview questions and a research consent form are included with this letter for your information. The total time commitment for you is anticipated to be no more than two hours. Your association’s assistance with this study would be greatly appreciated. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have about the project and can be reached at 250 245 XXXX or by email at hobanr@uvic.ca. My supervisors, if you wish to contact them, are Dr. Darlene Clover clover@uvic.ca and Dr. Catherine McGregor cmgreg@uvic.ca.

Should you agree to participate in this study, your signature is required on the attached Consent Form. This level of formality is required by the University to ensure that ethical
research standards are followed. You can either complete the form and mail it to me or if you prefer I can pick-up the consent form from you when we meet in-person. Please let me know (via email or telephone call) when it would be convenient for you to speak with me about this research.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely,

Robert Hoban.
Appendix 5

Superintendent research participation inquiry email/telephone call text

My name is Rob Hoban and I am a Vice-principal in the Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District currently working on my thesis for a PhD in Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria. I am calling/writing to ask your permission to include [school district name and number] in a research project that is a study of a non-traditional mentoring program for principals in a BC school district.

My goal for this project, which is a partial requirement for completion of my PhD program, is to complete a case study a new principal/vice-principal mentoring program in a BC school district that uses an approach beyond the more typical expert-novice pairing.

From what I understand your district is using a non-traditional program and I would like to conduct a case study of the program and its participants.

Note: further telephone discussion will be based on the text of the Superintendent Request to Conduct Research Letter (Appendix 6)

additional email text

I have included with this email a copy of the Request to Conduct Research letter for my research project as well as a University of Victoria Participant Consent Form, Interview Questions and Information Letters for the research participants.

Your district’s participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have about the project and can be reached at 250 245 XXXX or by email at hobanr@uvic.ca. My supervisors, if you wish to contact them, are Dr. Darlene Clover clover@uvic.ca and Dr. Catherine McGregor emcgreg@uvic.ca.

Please let me know (via email or telephone call) when it would be convenient for you to speak with me about this research.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely,

Rob Hoban.

hobanr@uvic.ca
October 29th, 2009
Mr. ********
Superintendent.
School District 101

Request to conduct graduate research in SD 101

Dear Mr. ********,

I am a graduate student currently working on my thesis for a PhD in Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria. I am writing to request your permission to include School District 101 in a research project that I will be conducting as a partial requirement for completion of my PhD program. The title of my project is *Contemporary Mentoring: A Case Study of Non-traditional Mentoring for New Principals in British Columbia Schools*. The purpose of the research is to study a principal mentoring program in a BC school district and the mentoring relationships that occur within the program. This research activity has been reviewed and approved by the University of Victoria’s Research Ethics Review Panel and is conducted under the direct supervision of university faculty.

Your district involvement would entail members of your central office and school-based administration staff associated with the development and leadership of the mentoring program, school principals or vice-principals who are either currently in the mentoring program or past members as well as the program mentors (current or past) participating in the study. The study poses minimal risk as the participants will remain anonymous and will participate voluntarily after giving their informed consent. No students will be involved in this research activity.

This study will contribute to the body of knowledge and benefit the educational profession by taking into account that those involved in an innovative mentoring structure have a story to tell and can provide important information about contemporary mentoring practice. Examining their understanding of mentoring might also help to suggest more effective methods of getting mentoring research data out into the field to inform practice. Due to the popularity and growth of mentoring programs this type of investigation is needed to understand how people are informing, understanding and practicing alternative mentoring models as well as what a living contemporary mentoring model can look like in a school district organization.

The research will be carried out during November and December 2009 and will include a short questionnaire, a personal interview, either by phone or “on-site” at the workplace, and possibly brief follow-up interviews by telephone. Part of the on-site interview with the principals and vice-principals (subject to the approval of your district and with the permission of the individual participant) will be an observation of the participant in the
work setting noting the characteristics of the workplace such as the size of the school, grade range, geographic location and site-based administrative support in the form of assistant administrators and para-professional administrative support staff. Copies of the research ethics approval certificate, survey documents, interview questions, research participant introductory letters and consent forms are included with this letter for your information. The total time commitment for each participant is anticipated to be no more than two hours.

Your district’s participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. It is, however, completely voluntary. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have about the project and can be reached at 250 245 XXXX or by email at hobanr@uvic.ca. My supervisors are Dr. Darlene Clover clover@uvic.ca and Dr. Catherine McGregor cmcgreg@uvic.ca.

Should you agree to allow me to conduct research in your district I will need a letter from you confirming your authorization to contact and interview your personnel as well as visit work sites within your district. This level of formality is required by the University to ensure that ethical research standards are followed.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely,

Robert Hoban.

cc: SD101 Director of Instruction
    SD 101 PVPA Pro-D co-chairs (x2)
Appendix 7

Central Office Administrator participation inquiry email/telephone call text

My name is Rob Hoban, I am a Vice-principal in the Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District currently working on my thesis for a PhD in Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria. I am calling/writing to request your participation in this research project which is a study of the principal/vice-principal mentoring program in your school district.

I have been approved by your school superintendent/board to conduct research in School District 101 as a partial requirement for completion of my PhD program. The title of my research project is *Contemporary Mentoring: A Case Study of Non-traditional Mentoring for New Principals in British Columbia Schools*. My goal is to study a new principal/vice-principal mentoring program in a BC school district that uses an approach beyond the more typical expert-novice pairing.

I would like to interview you in person, or by telephone, to discuss your current mentoring program as well as to identify members of your program (mentors and mentees) as potential participants in this research project.

Note: further telephone discussion will be based on the text of the Central Office Administrator Introduction Letter and Invitation to Participate (Appendix 8)

additional email text

I have included with this email a copy of the Introduction Letter for my research project and the Letter of Authorization from your district as well as a University of Victoria Participant Consent Form and the Interview Questions I plan to use in our discussion and also copies of the mentor and mentee questionnaires and interview questions.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have about the project and can be reached at 250 245 XXXX or by email at hobanr@uvic.ca. My supervisors, if you wish to contact them, are Dr. Darlene Clover clover@uvic.ca and Dr. Catherine McGregor cmcgreg@uvic.ca.

Please let me know (via email or telephone call) when it would be convenient for you to speak with me about this research.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely,

Rob Hoban.
Appendix 8

Central Office Administrator Introduction Letter and Invitation to Participate

Date
Mr/Mrs./Ms./Dr. _______________,
Central Office Administrator/Program Supervisor.
School District & address

Dear ________,

I am a Vice-principal in the Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District currently working on my thesis for a PhD in Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria and I have been approved by your school superintendent/board to conduct research in School District 101 as a partial requirement for completion of my PhD program. The title of my project is *Contemporary Mentoring: A Case Study of Non-traditional Mentoring for New Principals in British Columbia Schools.* The purpose of the research is to study a principal mentoring program in a BC school district and the mentoring relationships that occur within the program.

I am writing to invite you to participate in this research project. Your involvement would entail sharing your experiences, opinions and understanding about your school district principal mentoring program from the perspective of the central office administration as well as to provide background into the development and design of your mentoring model for new school principals or vice-principals. Your involvement would entail an in-person interview with me at your office and possibly a follow-up interview by phone. The in-person interview with me is expected to last less than 90 minutes. The interview will be carried out during September and October. There might be the need for some follow-up questions by telephone or email however your total time commitment is anticipated to be no more than two hours.

This study will contribute to the body of knowledge and benefit the educational profession by taking into account that those involved in an innovative mentoring structure have a story to tell and can provide important information about contemporary mentoring practice. Examining their understanding of mentoring might also help to suggest more effective methods of getting mentoring research data out into the field to inform practice. Due to the popularity and growth of mentoring programs this type of investigation is needed to understand how people are informing, understanding and practicing alternative mentoring models as well as what a living contemporary mentoring model can look like in a school district organization.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. It is, however, completely voluntary. The attached Consent Form will provide more details about the kind of information that you will be asked to share and measures taken to protect your anonymity. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have about the project and can be reached at 250 245 XXXX or by email at hobanr@uvic.ca or you can contact my supervisors Dr. Darlene Clover clover@uvic.ca and Dr. Catherine McGregor cmcgreg@uvic.ca.

Should you agree to participate in this study, your signature is required on the Consent Form. This level of formality is required by the University to ensure that ethical
research standards are followed. Please complete the form and return it to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope. I will then contact you to arrange for an interview.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely,

Robert Hoban.
Principal/Vice-principal (mentee) participation inquiry email/telephone text

My name is Rob Hoban, I am a Graduate Student currently working on my thesis for a PhD in Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria. I am calling/writing to request your participation in this research project which is a study of the principal/vice-principal mentoring program in your school district.

I have been approved by your school superintendent/board to conduct research in School District [ #/name ] as a partial requirement for completion of my PhD program. The title of my research project is *Contemporary Mentoring: A Case Study of Non-traditional Mentoring for New Principals in British Columbia Schools*. My goal is to study a new principal/vice-principal mentoring program in a BC school district that uses an approach beyond the more typical expert-novice pairing.

I would like to interview you in person, or by telephone, to discuss your mentoring program experiences.

Note: further telephone discussion will be based on the text of the Principal/Vice-principal (mentee) Introduction Letter and Invitation to Participate (Appendix 10)

additional email text

I have included with this email a copy of the Introduction Letter for my research project and the Letter of Authorization from your district as well as a University of Victoria Participant Consent Form and the Interview Questions I plan to use in our discussion.

I would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have about the project and can be reached at 250 245 XXXX or by email at hobanr@uvic.ca. My supervisors, if you wish to contact them, are Dr. Darlene Clover clover@uvic.ca and Dr. Catherine McGregor cmcgreg@uvic.ca.

Please let me know (via email or telephone call) when it would be convenient for you to speak with me about this research.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely,

Rob Hoban.
Appendix 10

Principal/Vice-principal (mentee) Introduction Letter and Invitation to Participate

Date

Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr. ___________________,
Principal.
________________ School
address

Dear ________,

I am a Graduate Student currently working on my thesis for a PhD in Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria and I have been approved by your school superintendent/board to conduct research in School District 101 as a partial requirement for completion of my PhD program. The title of my project is *Contemporary Mentoring: A Case Study of Non-traditional Mentoring for New Principals in British Columbia Schools*. The purpose of the research is to study a principal mentoring program in a BC school district and the mentoring relationships that occur within the program.

I am writing to invite you to participate in this research project. Your involvement would entail sharing your experiences, opinions and understanding about your mentoring as a new school principal or vice-principal with a brief survey questionnaire, an in-person interview with me at your school and possibly a follow-up interview by phone. The survey is electronic and will take approximately 10 minutes and the in-person interview with me is expected to last about one hour. The survey and interview will be carried out during October and November. There might be the need for some follow-up questions by telephone or email however your total time commitment is anticipated to be no more than two hours.

This study will contribute to the body of knowledge and benefit the educational profession by taking into account that those involved in an innovative mentoring structure have a story to tell and can provide important information about contemporary mentoring practice. Examining their understanding of mentoring might also help to suggest more effective methods of getting mentoring research data out into the field to inform practice. Due to the popularity and growth of mentoring programs this type of investigation is needed to understand how people are informing, understanding and practicing alternative mentoring models as well as what a living contemporary mentoring model can look like in a school district organization.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. The attached Consent Form will provide more details about the kind of information that you will be asked to share and measures taken to protect your anonymity. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have about the project and can be reached at 250 245 XXXX or by email at hobanr@uvic.ca or you can contact my supervisors Dr. Darlene Clover clover@uvic.ca and Dr. Catherine McGregor cmgreg@uvic.ca.

Should you agree to participate in this study, your signature is required on the Consent Form. This level of formality is required by the University to ensure that ethical
research standards are followed. Please complete the form and return it to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope. I will then contact you to arrange for an interview.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely,

Robert Hoban.
Appendix 11

Program Mentor participation inquiry email/telephone call text

My name is Rob Hoban, I am a Graduate Student currently working on my thesis for a PhD in Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria. I am calling/writing to request your participation in this research project which is a study of the principal/vice-principal mentoring program in school district [ # and name].

I have been approved by the school superintendent/board to conduct research in School District [ #/name ] as a partial requirement for completion of my PhD program. The title of my research project is Contemporary Mentoring: A Case Study of Non-traditional Mentoring for New Principals in British Columbia Schools. My goal is to study a new principal/vice-principal mentoring program in a BC school district that uses an approach beyond the more typical expert-novice pairing.

I would like to interview you in person, or by telephone, to discuss your mentoring program experiences.

Note: further telephone discussion will be based on the text of the Program Mentor Introduction Letter and Invitation to Participate (Appendix 11)

additional email text

I have included with this email a copy of the Introduction Letter for my research project and the Letter of Authorization from district [ #/name ] as well as a University of Victoria Participant Consent Form and the Interview Questions I plan to use in our discussion.

I would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have about the project and can be reached at 250 245 XXXX or by email at hobanr@uvic.ca. My supervisors, if you wish to contact them, are Dr. Darlene Clover clover@uvic.ca and Dr. Catherine McGregor emcgreg@uvic.ca.

Please let me know (via email or telephone call) when it would be convenient for you to speak with me about this research.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely,

Rob Hoban.
Appendix 12

Program Mentor Introduction Letter and Invitation to Participate

Date

Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr. ______________,
Position
address

Dear __________, 

I am a Graduate Student currently working on my thesis for a PhD in Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria and I have been approved by the school superintendent/board to conduct research in School District 101 as a partial requirement for completion of my PhD program. The title of my project is *Contemporary Mentoring: A Case Study of Non-traditional Mentoring for New Principals in British Columbia Schools*. The purpose of the research is to study a principal mentoring program in a BC school district and the mentoring relationships that occur within the program.

I am writing to invite you to participate in this research project. Your involvement would entail sharing your experiences, opinions and understanding about the school district mentoring program from the perspective of a program mentor for new school principals or vice-principals. Your involvement would entail brief survey questionnaire, an in-person or telephone interview with me and possibly a follow-up interview by phone. The survey is electronic and will take approximately 10 minutes and the in-person interview with me is expected to last about 45 minutes. The survey and interview will be carried out during October and November. There might be the need for some follow-up questions by telephone or email however your total time commitment is anticipated to be no more than two hours.

This study will contribute to the body of knowledge and benefit the educational profession by taking into account that those involved in an innovative mentoring structure have a story to tell and can provide important information about contemporary mentoring practice. Examining their understanding of mentoring might also help to suggest more effective methods of getting mentoring research data out into the field to inform practice. Due to the popularity and growth of mentoring programs this type of investigation is needed to understand how people are informing, understanding and practicing alternative mentoring models as well as what a living contemporary mentoring model can look like in a school district organization.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. The attached Consent Form will provide more details about the kind of information that you will be asked to share and measures taken to protect your anonymity. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have about the project and can be reached at 250 245 XXXX or by email at hobanr@uvic.ca or you can contact my supervisors Dr. Darlene Clover clover@uvic.ca and Dr. Catherine McGregor cmgreg@uvic.ca.

Should you agree to participate in this study, your signature is required on the Consent Form. This level of formality is required by the University to ensure that ethical
research standards are followed. Please complete the form and return it to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope. I will then contact you to arrange for an interview.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely,

Robert Hoban.
Appendix 13

Personal Interview Questions – Association Representatives

At the beginning of the interview the participant will be reminded:
Please remember that your participation in this research must be voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any explanation. There will be no negative consequences if you choose to withdraw. If you do withdraw from the study, your data will not be used in any way in the analysis, unless it is logistically impossible to remove individual data.

My intention is to ask representatives of the supervisory organizations if they are aware of any districts in BC that are using a contemporary model. My questions will be:

- 1: Which school districts in BC are using a contemporary mentoring model to support new school administrators?
  - By contemporary mentoring programs I am referring to programs that rely less on expert/novice knowledge sharing and one that is more focused on novice-led learning. In other words, the relationship is based on the needs of the novice not on the expertise or knowledge sharing abilities of the mentor.
- 2: Describe the method or structure being used in the district to provide mentoring to new school administrators (principals and vice-principals)?
  - By method or structure I am referring to the organization of the relationships, for example, is the program structured along the lines of an experienced principal being matched with a novice?
  - Respondents will be encouraged to map or graph the structure or design of the mentoring program and the mentoring relationships.
- 3: What do you understand to be the theoretical foundations of this program? How do they inform the mentoring program and practice in the district?
- 4: What is the history or background of the program design and inception in the district?
- 5: Identify perceived benefits as well as challenges both to the success of the program and its sustainability.
- 6: What role has/does your association play(ed) in the district mentoring program?
- 7: What role could your association play in this program?
- 8: What role does/can your association play in the development of mentoring programs for new school administrators in BC school districts?
- 9: What recommendations or questions do you have regarding this research project into new administrator mentoring in BC school districts?

At the end of the interview the participant will be reminded:
Please remember that your participation in this research must be voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any explanation. There will
be no negative consequences if you choose to withdraw. If you do withdraw from the study, your data will not be used in any way in the analysis, unless it is logistically impossible to remove individual data.
Appendix 14

Personal Interview Questions – School District Administration

At the beginning of the interview the participant will be reminded:
Please remember that your participation in this research must be voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any explanation. There will be no negative consequences if you choose to withdraw. If you do withdraw from the study, your data will not be used in any way in the analysis, unless it is logistically impossible to remove individual data.

The main purpose of the personal interview with district administration will be to focus on the background, structure and experiences with the district mentoring program for new principals and vice-principals. The questions are open-ended in nature and discourse is likely to follow however there is a pool of pre-planned interview questions (as follows).

You will also be asked to assist the researcher to identify district program members (mentors and mentees). The researcher will use this information to contact and recruit participants for this research project.

**Mentor Program Leadership**

- Who provides mentor program leadership, advice, or governance?
- Is there a formal, written governing agreement for the mentoring program?
  - If so, who are the parties to this agreement?
- What stake holders are involved in governing the mentoring program?
  - Mentors?
  - Mentees?
  - New but experienced employees?
  - Managers (at what levels)
  - Board members?
  - Union or association leaders?
  - Community members?
  - University faculty?
  - Retired employees?
  - Others?

- In what ways are stakeholder groups meaningfully involved in the program?
- How were selection & matching criteria processes developed?
- Is there a Mentor Program Leader or Coordinator?
- What are the roles and tasks of the program leader/coordinator?

**Program Partners**

- Do you involve partners from other organizations?
Other organizations could include, but are not limited to, professional organizations, other school districts, unions, universities, government ministries, corporations, service groups, etc.

- If so, what do they contribute to your program?
- How might university or association preservice programs prepare their students so their participation in your mentoring program is more effective?
  - By preservice programs I am referring to programs such as the University of Victoria Certificate in School Management and Leadership or the annual BCPVPA/UBC summer “short course” program for new administrators sponsored by the BCSSA and the BC Ministry of Education.

The Program's Conceptual Foundation

- How do you determine that your mentoring program is designed to professionally develop new principals to be effective in their roles?
- What research-based model of human development is the basic structure of your mentoring program?
  - In other words, what do you understand the theoretical foundations of this program to be?
  - How do they inform the mentoring program and practice in your district?
- How does that conceptual framework effect program implementation, evaluation, or improvement?
- How does that conceptual framework shape the mentoring process?

Process for Program Design & Development

- What process was used for developing your mentoring program?
- Who is/was involved in the program development process?
- What research was done as part of the program development process?
- Did you use expert guidance during the process?
  - If so, how did you locate and select the right expert?

Data-Based Planning

- What data did you have or need to plan?
- How was the data used to build a plan?
- How did you design program that ensures identified needs are effectively addressed?

Mentee Needs Assessment

- Do you use needs assessment data and research for program planning?
- What did your research on new principal needs tell you?
- What local research did you do regarding new principal needs, and what does it tell you?
• What is your needs assessment process?
• How did you determine which needs are best addressed with training? With mentoring? With other program strategies?

Organizational Needs Assessment

• What organizational needs are addressed by the mentoring program?
• What organizational needs are there which programs other than mentoring address?
• What calendar issues and events are considered when planning the mentoring program?

Other Contextual Issues to Consider

• What policies and practices were barriers to mentoring and how were these be overcome?
  o External barriers?
  o Internal barriers?
• What barriers remain or endure?
• What operational changes needed to be made in your district to make mentoring possible?
• Is there a need to change the nature of new principals' initial assignments?
• Do mentors and new principals have ready access to information communication technology 
  o Types? (i.e. email, phone. blogs, etc.)
• How do mentors interact with non program participants in the organization and others to ensure that new principals have appropriate access to needed professional development opportunities and support?

Program Purpose and Goals

• Do you have a stated mission and vision for the mentoring program?
• What goals and results can your program realistically be expected to attain?
• Do your mentor program goals compliment and not conflict with the goals of other improvement efforts?

Program Approach

• Describe the method or structure being used in the district to provide mentoring to new school administrators (principals and vice-principals).
  o By method or structure I am referring to the organization of the relationships, for example, is the program structured along the lines of an experienced principal being matched with a novice?
  o Respondents will be encouraged to map or graph the structure or design of the mentoring program and the mentoring relationships.
• Do you use
informal mentoring
- formal mentoring
- A combination of formal and informal

Is your mentoring program full or part time?
- How much time is allocated to this program? (i.e. hours per week or days per schol year)

What is the configuration of your mentoring program?
- 1 to 1?
- Teams?
- Other structures?

The Participants

Which principals/vice-principals receive mentoring in your district?
- New to the organization?
- New to a principal assignment?
- New to a site, but experienced in the organization?
- New hires with previous experience?
- New hires with previous, but not current experience?
- Persons in disadvantaged minorities?
- Underrepresented minorities and women?

Is participation in the mentoring program mandatory or voluntary?

How long does a principal or Vice-principal participate in a mentoring program?

What and who determines how long a Principal or Vice-principal should be mentored?
- Meeting a minimum a performance standard?
- Self-assessment?
- Mentor assessment & judgment of new principal’s need?
- Manager assessment of new principal’s need?
- A fixed time line, such as a year? Two years? Three years?
- Externally set time line for certification or other compliance?

Time & Timing

How frequently do mentoring activities occur?

How is time provided for mentoring?

Are your mentors full-time or do they have other work duties too?

How do you estimate how much time is needed to effectively mentor?

How do you measure how much time mentors give to mentoring?

How long do mentors serve?

If the mentor is released from some or all work duties to serve as a mentor, how do you facilitate a mentor's eventual return to work full-time?

Roles & Tasks

Mentors
Given your goals, what are the roles and tasks that every mentor should ideally be able to fulfill?
Which mentoring tasks are the same for every principal or vice-principal?
Which mentoring tasks are unique to different people, or people with different levels of experience?
Which mentoring tasks will most mentors already know?
Which tasks are not likely to already be known?
Do you use check lists that include typical mentoring tasks?
How do you refine the focus of early mentoring on priorities, so new principals or vice-principals are not overwhelmed?

- **Mentees**
  - What do effective new principals or vice-principals need to be able to do regarding the mentoring program?

- **Supervisors**
  - What do effective supervisors of new principals or vice-principals need to be able to do regarding the mentoring program?
  - How do mentors and supervisors determine which tasks each needs to play?

### Recruitment of Mentors

- What are your mentor recruitment, selection, and matching processes?
- What are your best methods for recruiting mentors?
- What do you do to attract better candidates for mentoring?
- What incentives do you use to attract mentors?
- Can mentors nominate themselves or are mentors chosen?
- Do you use retired principals or vice-principals as mentors?
  - What percentage of the mentors in your program are retired?
  - Is the use of retired principals an effective mentoring approach?
- Have you experienced problems with insufficient numbers of people willing to be mentors?
  - What have you done about this?
  - What has been the result?
- What job descriptions, applications, or contracts do you use during recruitment?

### Selection of Mentors

- Who can become a mentor in your program?
- Do you use an exclusive or inclusive selection approach?
  - If the inclusive approach is used, how do you ensure that only appropriate people serve as mentors?
- Are supervisors also mentors?
- Who has a valued view point on mentor skills and has input on selection?
- What selection criteria are established to select mentors?
  - How does the criterion reflect the program's goals?
- What selection process is used to apply the criteria?
What steps does the process include?
What time line does the process need to follow so it works with recruitment, hiring practices, mentor training, etc.?

Matching Mentors & Mentees

- What are your criteria for matching criteria?
- How important is close proximity to the mentor?
- Is it appropriate to match based on personality, working, learning, or philosophical styles?
- What is an appropriate matching process?
- What time line for matching do you follow?
- Who coordinates the matching process & communication?
- Who has a valued viewpoint on mentor skills and has input on mentor-new principal matching?
- How many new principals or vice-principals work with one mentor at the same time?
- What proactive steps are taken to avoid mismatches?
- What do you do if a mismatch occurs?

Initial Training

- Mentor Training:
  - What are the goals-outcomes for the mentor training?
  - When does mentor training take place and how many times do they train each year?
  - Is there a formalized agenda, sequence and length of training for mentors?
  - Are mentors required to participate in the training?
  - Do new principals and vice-principals attend any parts of the mentoring training?
  - What roles do other stakeholders have in the training?
  - Do you use an outside mentoring expert to provide mentor training?
  - What effective, proven mentor training materials do you use as part of your mentor training program?
- New Principal and Vice-principal Training
  - What are the implications of new principal/vice-principal roles and tasks for their training?
  - What are the goals-outcomes for the mentor training?
  - What needs assessment research and local data do you use to inform the training?
  - What local needs assessment data do you use and how do you obtain it?
  - How do you train new principals/vice-principals to work effectively with their mentors?
  - Is there a formal agenda, sequence and length of training?
  - What effective, proven principal/vice-principal training materials do you use as part of your mentor training program?
- Supervisor Training
  - What are the goals-outcomes for the supervisors' training regarding the mentor program?
  - How do you train & assist supervisors to learn what they need?
  - How do you train supervisors to work effectively with the mentors?

**On-Going Support & Training**

- What is the relationship between initial and on-going training and follow up support?
- What on-going support activities and groups are needed for effective mentoring?
- What on-going support activities and groups are needed for protégés?
- What on-going support activities and groups are needed for supervisors?
- What should be the balance between expert versus peer support for each stake holder?
- How often should support groups meet for each stake holder?
- What should be the goals of the support groups for each constituent group?

- Mentoring of Mentors
  - Why is the "Mentor of Mentors" role needed?
  - What is the support role of a Mentor Program Coordinator as "Mentor of Mentors"?
  - What is the actual process of mentoring the mentors?
- What written program materials and handbooks are needed for each stake holder group?
- What technological or other forms of support should be developed and provided to each stake holder group?

**Resources For Mentors**

- What resources and expertise are available to mentors?
  - Ongoing counsel from others?
    - a mentor program coordinator?
    - higher education faculty?
    - a mentor of mentors?
    - other mentors?
    - external mentoring expert?
  - Office space?
  - Phone? Email? Fax?
  - Laptop computers and other equipment?
  - Other resources?

**The Mentor-Mentee Relationship**

- What are the critical factors in the relationship?
- How does the program support development of an effective relationship?
- What are the roles of participants in building the relationship?
• How do participants build trust into their relationship?
• Exactly what does "confidential" mean?
• How does the program ensure that the relationship remains confidential?
• How does the relationship change over time? How SHOULD it change?
• What should mentors do if mentees need to change a key behavior and won't?
• What should mentors say or do with supervisors if mentee behaviors that MUST change but haven't?

Mentor-Mentee Communication

• What strategies and skills do mentoring partners need for effective communication?
• How do participants learn what they need to maintain effective communications?
• What communication with supervisors is appropriate?
• What communication with a Mentor Program Leader is appropriate?
• What communication is appropriate with non mentor program colleagues?

The Developmental Mentoring Process

• How long does the mentoring process take?
• What are the typical phases that mentees go through as they gain experience and skill as school administrators?
• How long does each separate stage of the mentoring process take?
• What are the parallels or overlaps between the mentoring PROCESS and the mentoring RELATIONSHIP?
• Do the changes need mentor facilitation to occur, or do they happen naturally?
• How does the focus of mentoring change during the course of a mentee’s involvement in the program?

Incentives & Recognition for Mentoring

• What incentives do you use to attract the best candidates to serve as mentors?
  o Modified/reduced work assignments and schedules?
  o Leadership opportunities?
  o Stipends?
  o Recognition programs?
  o Other incentives?
  o None?
• Do you believe that there is a need to provide a mentoring stipend or other forms of incentives and recognition?
• In what other ways can mentors be compensated for their additional work and participation?

Evaluation of Program Participants

• Do you hold mentors accountable for their mentoring work?
• if so, how and for what do you hold Mentors accountable

• How do you ensure that mentors make a positive impact on new principal performance?
• What do you do if mentors don't seem to do their job according to program goals?
• Are your mentors assessed and if so, how and for what?
• Are your new principals and vice-principals assessed and if so, how and for what?
• Is the mentor program leader/coordinator assessed and if so, how and for what?
• Who is involved in mentor, new principal and program coordinator assessment?
• What evidence is used to evaluate and document the effectiveness of the participants?

Program Evaluation and Improvement

• What evidence is used to evaluate and document the effectiveness of the program?
• What data do you collect to demonstrate that you are accomplishing your program's goals?
• What BASE LINE data have you collected to demonstrate later that desired results have occurred?
• How do you demonstrate the value of mentoring when the mentoring conversations are confidential?
• How do you help decision makers understand the mentoring program's value?
• Who is involved in evaluating and documenting the mentoring program?
  o An independent external program evaluator?
  o Mentors?
  o New Principals?
  o Managers? At what level?
  o Union leaders?
  o Others?

Supporting and Sustaining the Program Over Time

• How do you assemble the funding needed to support and grow the program?
• How do you build support for the program with key decision makers?
• How do you build support for the program with others who are non-participants in mentoring?
• What are the program pitfalls that you need to avoid to keep building a better program and how can you avoid them?

Identification of Program Members – research recruitment

In order to interview program members (mentors and mentees) you are being asked to identify members of the program and to provide their contact information to the researcher who will contact the identified members inviting them to participate in the research project as per University of Victoria research ethics guidelines. The criteria that the researcher is looking for in research participants is as follows:
**Mentee participants:** The person is, or has been, a mentee in the district mentoring program and;
- Is, or was, a serving principal or vice-principal in the district.
- Can have a range of experience in the program, first-year, second-year, multiple years.

**Mentor participants:** The person is, or has been, a mentor in the district program and;
- Can have a range of experience in the program, first-year, second-year, multiple years.

At the end of the interview the participant will be reminded:
*Please remember that your participation in this research must be voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any explanation. There will be no negative consequences if you choose to withdraw. If you do withdraw from the study, your data will not be used in any way in the analysis, unless it is logistically impossible to remove individual data.*
Appendix 15

Principal’s/Vice-principal’s (mentee) Questionnaire

Please remember that your participation in this research must be voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any explanation. There will be no negative consequences if you choose to withdraw. If you do withdraw from the study, your data will not be used in any way in the analysis, unless it is logistically impossible to remove individual data.

NAME: _______________________________________

Note: This data will be used as a guide to develop a biographical narrative for the report. The information will be fictionalized to protect the identification of the participant and school.

1. What is your gender?  □ Male, □ Female.
2. What is your age? □ 24 or under, □ 25-34, □ 35-44, □ 45-54, □ 55-64, □ 65 or older
3. How long have you been in your current school district? ______ years.
4. How many years as an administrator (principal/vice principal)? ______ years.
5. How many years have you been the principal in your current school? ______ years.
6. How many years of teaching experience do you have? (not including admin) ______ years.
7. What is the highest academic degree you have earned? ____________________________

8. Do you have post graduate training in educational administration? ____________________________

9. Please check any of the following that describes your role or position in your school district:
   • New to the organization (hired this year)
   • New to a principal/vice-principal assignment (assigned this year)
   • New to a site, but experienced in the organization as a principal or vice-principal
   • New hire with previous experience elsewhere: in BC ____ outside of BC ____
   • New hire with previous, but not current experience (not within the last three years)
     o within the district ____ in BC ____ outside of BC ____

School Information

10. What grades are included in your school? ________
    Speciality programs? (ie; Early Literacy, IOP, etc.)

11. How many students are currently enrolled in your school? ________

12. On average, what has been the full time equivalent (FTE) for your position at your current school over the last 3 years? (1.0 FTE =100% of your assignment)
    a)______ Administrative duties   b)______ Teaching duties
    c)______ Other (please specify) ____________________________________________
13. On average what has been the FTE for the past 3 years of the following administrative support personnel available to you within your school? (1.0 FTE = one full-time position)
   a) _____ FTE Vice or assistant principal   b) _____ FTE secretarial staff
   c) _____ FTE clerical staff   d) _____ FTE Information Tech technician/support staff

Please place the completed questionnaire in the self-addressed, stamped envelope along with your signed consent letter and mail them back to me. Feel free to keep a copy of the completed questionnaire for your records. Should you have any questions you may contact me, my supervisor or the University of Victoria. Contact information is listed in the consent letter.

Sincerely,
Rob Hoban.
Appendix 16

Program Mentor Questionnaire

Please remember that your participation in this research must be voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any explanation. There will be no negative consequences if you choose to withdraw. If you do withdraw from the study, your data will not be used in any way in the analysis, unless it is logistically impossible to remove individual data.

NAME: _______________________________________

Background Information (Please check the appropriate box)
Note: This data will be used as a guide to develop a biographical narrative for the report. The information will be fictionalized to protect the identification of the participant.

1. What is your gender?  □ Male,  □ Female.
2. What is your age?  □ 24 or under, □ 25-34, □ 35-44, □ 45-54, □ 55-64, □ 65 or older
3. How long have you been in your most recent school district?        ______ years.
4. How many years as an administrator (principal/vice principal)?       ______ years.
5. How many years have you been the principal in your current school?     ______ years.
6. How many years of teaching experience do you have? (not including admin) ______ years.
7. What is the highest academic degree you have earned?

8. Do you have post graduate training in educational administration?

9. What is your current role/job?

10. Are you retired? __________________________ if “yes” answer 11 otherwise go on to 12
11. How long have you been retired? __________________________
12. How long have you been a mentor for new administrators? __________________________
13. How long have you been a mentor in this program?

14. Were you previously a mentee in the district program? __________________________
14a. If yes to 14, when were you in the program and for how long?

15. Please describe any formal training you have in mentoring

________________________________________

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
Please place the completed questionnaire in the self-addressed, stamped envelope along with your signed consent letter and mail them back to me. Feel free to keep a copy of the completed questionnaire for your records.

Should you have any questions you may contact me, my supervisor or the University of Victoria. Contact information is listed in the consent letter.

Sincerely,

Rob Hoban.
Appendix 17

Personal Interview Questions – Principals and Vice-Principals (mentees)

At the beginning of the interview the participant will be reminded:
Please remember that your participation in this research must be voluntary. If you do
decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any explanation. There will
be no negative consequences if you choose to withdraw. If you do withdraw from the
study, your data will not be used in any way in the analysis, unless it is logistically
impossible to remove individual data.

The main purpose of the personal interview with the school principals and vice-
principals (program mentees) will be to focus on who provides the principal/vice-
principal with mentoring, what they get from mentoring and how they conceptualize their
mentoring relationships. The questions are intended to be open-ended in nature with the
understanding that discourse is likely to follow. The pre-planned interview questions are:

District Mentoring Program

- Is your participation in the mentoring program mandatory or voluntary?
- How much time are you expected to commit to the mentoring program?
  - (i.e. hours per week or days per school year)
  - How frequently do mentoring activities occur?
  - When do they occur?
  - Where do they occur?
- How is time provided for mentoring?
  - Release time provided (TTOC)
  - Time in Lieu
  - Other?
  - Time is not provided
  - How does time allocation, or lack of it, impact your mentoring
    experience?
- How long are you expected to remain in the program?
  - Until meeting a minimum a performance standard?
    - Self-assessment?
    - Mentor assessment & judgment of new principal’s need?
    - Manager assessment of new principal’s need?
  - A fixed time line, such as a year? Two years? Three years?
    - Please describe
  - No fixed timeline or set performance standards
- What is the configuration of your mentoring program?
  - 1 to 1?
  - Teams or groups?
  - Other structures?
    - Please describe or elaborate
- formal mentoring (mentors assigned by the district/program)?
- sanctioned informal mentoring (sanctioned meaning you have a mentor(s) who is not assigned or matched by the district program but is allowed to be involved in your mentoring within the program)?
- A combination of formal and informal?

- Do you have a formal mentor as part of the mentoring program (formal refers to someone who was assigned or matched-up with you as part of your participation in the district mentoring program)?
- What process was used to match you up with your mentor?
  - Assigned by district staff
  - A matching process was used (i.e. some form of questionnaire or criteria was used to determine matches based on factors such as personality, working, learning, or philosophical styles)
  - As a participant I was able to nominate my own mentor
  - My mentor self-nominated or approached me to be my mentor
  - Other (please describe)

- What are your thoughts about the matching experience?
  - What do you think should be the foundation or structure of a matching process?

- How long is this person assigned to be your mentor?
  - What are your thoughts about the length of time the mentor is assigned to you?

- Is your mentor full-time or does he/she have other work duties too?
  - What is that person’s position, regular job assignment or, if retired, former job assignment (i.e. experienced principal of a K-8 school or retired District Director of Instruction).

- Is your mentor’s job assignment, or former job assignment, different or similar to your own?
  - In what ways?
  - How do this effect your mentoring relationship and mentoring experience?
  - How much separation is there between you and your mentor in the hierarchy of the organization?
    - What are your thoughts on the impact this degree of separation might have on your mentoring experience?

- How close is your mentor to you geographically? (i.e. within the same city, 100 miles away, 500 miles away)
  - How does this effect your mentoring relationship and mentoring experience?

- Do you have ready access to information communication technology
  - Types? (i.e. email, phone, blogs, etc.)

- Do you use these technologies to interact with your mentor?
  - Which types do you use?
  - How do these technologies impact your mentoring relationship and experience?

- What strategies and skills do you believe you and your mentor need effective communication?
• What do you believe are the critical factors for success in the relationship with your mentor?
• How does the program support your development of an effective relationship?
• How does the mentor support the building of an effective relationship with you?
• How do you and your mentor build trust into your relationship?
• What role does confidentiality play in your relationship with your mentor?
  o What role should it play?
• How has the relationship with your mentor changed over time?
  o How SHOULD it change?
• How does your mentor interact with non-program participants in the organization and others to ensure that you have appropriate access to needed professional development opportunities and professional support?
• Where you part of any training in regard to the mentor program (i.e. attended mentor training activities, provided with mentoring literature, provided with training to better interact with your mentor, etc)?
  o What on-going support or training do you receive?
  o What are your thoughts on this experience?
  o What are your recommendations in this regard?

**Mentor’s Roles and Tasks**

You will be asked to consider what roles and functions your mentor(s) fulfills as part of your experience in the formal mentoring program. You may wish to consider the following organizers to help you determine and describe how your mentor influences or impacts you and the role that person plays in your development and learning experience.

Kram (1985) describes mentoring functions in two main categories: psychosocial functions (role modeling; acceptance; and confirmation; counseling; friendship) and career functions (sponsorship; exposure and visibility; coaching; challenging assignments).

Darwin (2000) describes mentors in eight *dimensions*: Authentic (being real, open), Nurturing (tolerant, active listener, sharing – power/authority), Approachable (positive, friendly, approachable, team-player), Competent (skilled, knowledgeable, sound advice, tough), Inspirational (charismatic, respected, visionary, risk-taker), Conscientious (honest and fair, accessible, loves the job, tells it the way it is), Hard-working (high energy, ambitious, liked or hated, wants like-minded protégés), Volatile (aggressive, intelligent, stubborn, intimidating, perfectionist).

Clutterbuck (2001) defines the role of the mentor in three distinct areas, these being: To encourage and motivate the mentee, to nurture the mentee to develop and to teach the mentee relevant skills and promote their learning potential.

Clutterbuck (2001) also suggests that as a role model the mentor can be a: guide, tutor, coach and/or confidant.
Given your situation and experience what are the roles and tasks that you perceive of your formal program mentor?
  o What roles and tasks do you believe your mentor should ideally be able to fulfill?
  o What roles and tasks do you need that your mentor is NOT providing?
  o What roles and tasks is your mentor providing that you do not believe you need?
  o How have the roles and tasks changed or evolved during the mentoring experience?
  o What are your thoughts on the experience and the roles and tasks of the formal mentor?

Other Mentoring Relationships

The traditional one-on-one definition of mentoring has been reconceptualized into a ‘multiple relationships’ phenomena (Baugh and Scandura, 1999; Higgins and Kram, 2001) where a protégé has a network of mentors, each providing different functions. Furthermore, Eby (1997) proposed alternative models of mentoring based on the form of relationship (lateral and hierarchical) and the type of skill developed (job-related and career-related). The mentoring literature has thus taken new directions, suggesting more complex networks of relationships that can go beyond a formal relationship within an organization and can include outside parties, organizations and social networks.

You will be asked to consider other mentors in your life and while this research activity is focused on mentoring that impacts your work as a new school principal or vice-principal you are encouraged to consider and describe the mentors that you feel have an impact on you regardless of their position, role or relationship to you. You will be encouraged to consider the following questions for all of the mentors you identify in your life.

- Do you have informal mentor(s)? *(informal refers to someone who was not assigned or matched-up with you as part of your participation in the district mentoring program)*
- How did your relationship with this mentor occur?
- How long has/was this person been a mentor to you?
- How is this mentor similar to you?
  o How is this mentor different?
  o What do you think is the effect of the similarities or differences on your mentoring relationship?
- How close is this mentor to you geographically? *(i.e. within the same city, 100 miles away, 500 miles away)*
  o How does this affect your mentoring relationship and mentoring experience?
- How do you interact with this mentor? *(i.e. in-person, through social activities or clubs, via information communication technologies)*
• What strategies and skills do you believe you and your mentor use for effective communication?
• What do you believe are the critical factors for success in the relationship with your mentor?
• How do you and your mentor build trust into your relationship?
• What role does confidentiality play in your relationship with your mentor?
  o What role should it play?
• How has the relationship with your mentor changed over time?
  o How SHOULD it change?

Roles of the informal mentor(s)

• Given your life situation and experience what are the roles and tasks that you perceive of your informal mentor(s)?
  o What roles and tasks do you believe your mentor(s) fulfill?
  o What roles and tasks do you need that your mentor(s) do NOT provide?
  o What roles and tasks do your mentor(s) provide that you do not believe you need?
  o How have the roles and tasks changed or evolved over time?
  o What are your thoughts on the roles and tasks of informal mentors?

Sociogram Activity

The next part of this interview is a social mapping activity intended to graph or map your mentor relationship(s) or network. I will provide you with a sample diagram of a classic mentoring relationship using basic wire frame geometric shapes such as circles and lines as icons. You are free to use these sample shapes or any diagram components you wish in your drawing. I will provide you with a drawing medium and you may ask for my assistance at any point. You are encouraged to discuss your conceptualization of the relationship diagram with me and I initiate dialogue with you both during and after the activity to gain a better understanding of the meaning you assign to the icons and drawing that you have produced.

Here is a sample of a classic mentoring relationship as drawn by me using Microsoft PowerPoint. I will describe the drawing to you as to the meaning I have assigned to the icons and graphics.
Sample Figure: Classic Senior – Junior Mentoring Model Diagram (Hoban, 2007)

The participant will be asked: Please chart or map your mentoring relationship(s) (or network if they view their mentors as part of a network).

The participant will be asked: Please explain the drawing describing the significance of the details, icons and components of the drawing as they relate to our earlier discussion about your mentoring experience.

**Program Evaluation and Improvement**

- What evidence is used to evaluate and document the effectiveness of the program?  
  - What are your thoughts of recommendations about this?
- What data is collected to demonstrate that the program is accomplishing its goals?
- How can participants demonstrate the value of mentoring when the mentoring conversations are confidential?
- How do you help decision makers understand the mentoring program's value?
- Who is involved (or should be involved) in evaluating and documenting the mentoring program?  
  - An independent external program evaluator?  
  - Mentors?  
  - New Principals and Vice-principals?  
  - Managers? At what level?  
  - Union leaders?  
  - Others?
- What are your thought and opinions about the effectiveness of the district program?  
  - Recommendations of suggestions for change or improvement?

At the end of the interview the participant will be reminded:
Please remember that your participation in this research must be voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any explanation. There will be no negative consequences if you choose to withdraw. If you do withdraw from the study, your data will not be used in any way in the analysis, unless it is logistically impossible to remove individual data.
Appendix 18

Personal Interview Questions – Program Mentor

At the beginning of the interview the participant will be reminded:
Please remember that your participation in this research must be voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any explanation. There will be no negative consequences if you choose to withdraw. If you do withdraw from the study, your data will not be used in any way in the analysis, unless it is logistically impossible to remove individual data.

The main purpose of the personal interview with the program mentor will be to focus on the mentoring they provide to the principal/vice-principal, what they get from mentoring relationship and how they conceptualize the mentoring program. The questions are intended to be open-ended in nature with the understanding that discourse is likely to follow. The pre-planned interview questions are:

**District Mentoring Program**

- Is your participation as a mentor in the district program mandatory or voluntary?
- How much time are you expected to commit to the mentoring program?
  - (i.e. hours per week or days per school year)
  - How frequently do mentoring activities occur?
  - When do they occur?
  - Where do they occur?
- How is time provided for mentoring?
  - Release time provided (TTOC)
  - Time in Lieu
  - Other?
  - Time is not provided
  - How does time allocation, or lack of it, impact your mentoring experience?
- How long are you expected to remain in the program?
  - Until the mentee meets a minimum a performance standard?
    - Self-assessment?
    - Mentor assessment & judgment of new principal’s need?
    - Manager assessment of new principal’s need?
  - A fixed time line, such as a year? Two years? Three years?
    - Please describe
  - No fixed timeline or set performance standards
- What is the configuration of your mentoring program?
  - 1 to 1?
  - Teams or groups?
  - Other structures?
    - Please describe or elaborate
formal mentoring (mentors assigned by the district/program)?

- sanctioned informal mentoring (sanctioned meaning the mentee has a
  mentor(s) who is not assigned or matched by the district program but is
  allowed to be involved in the mentoring within the program)?
- A combination of formal and informal?

- What process was used to match you up with your mentee?
  - Assigned by district staff
  - A matching process was used (i.e. some form of questionnaire or criteria
    was used to determine matches based on factors such as personality,
    working, learning, or philosophical styles)
  - I was able to nominate my own mentee
  - My mentee approached me to be a mentor
  - Other (please describe)

- What are your thoughts about the matching experience?
  - What do you think should be the foundation or structure of a matching
    process?

- Are you a full-time mentor or do you have other work duties?
  - What is your position, regular job assignment or, if retired, former job
    assignment (i.e. experienced principal of a K-8 school or retired District
    Director of Instruction).

- Is your mentee’s job assignment, different or similar to your own?
  - In what ways?
  - How does this effect your mentoring relationship and mentoring
    experience?
  - How much separation is there between you and your mentee in the
    hierarchy of the organization?
    - What are your thoughts on the impact this degree of separation
      might have on your mentoring experience?

- How close is your mentee to you geographically? (i.e. within the same city, 100
  miles away, 500 miles away)
  - How does this affect your mentoring relationship and mentoring
    experience?

- Do you have ready access to information communication technology
  - Types? (i.e. email, phone, blogs, etc.)

- Do you use these technologies to interact with your mentee?
  - Which types do you use?
  - How do these technologies impact your mentoring relationship and
    experience?

- What strategies and skills do you believe you and your mentee need for effective
  communication?

- What do you believe are the critical factors for success in the relationship with
  your mentee?

- How does the program support your development of an effective relationship?

- How does the mentee support the building of an effective relationship with you?

- How do you and your mentee build trust into your relationship?

- What role does confidentiality play in your relationship with your mentee?
What role should it play?

- How has the relationship with your mentee changed over time?
  - How SHOULD it change?
- What ongoing support or training do you receive as a mentor?
  - What are your thoughts on this experience?
  - What are your recommendations in this regard?

What incentives are used to attract you to serve as a mentor?
- Modified/reduced work assignments and schedules?
- Leadership opportunities?
- Stipends?
- Recognition programs?
- Other incentives?
- None?

Do you believe that there is a need to provide a mentoring stipend or other forms of incentives and recognition?
- In what other ways can mentors be compensated for their additional work and participation?

Program Evaluation and Improvement

- What evidence is used to evaluate and document the effectiveness of the program?
  - What are your thoughts of recommendations about this?
- What data is collected to demonstrate that the program is accomplishing its goals?
- How can participants demonstrate the value of mentoring when the mentoring conversations are confidential?
- How do you help decision makers understand the mentoring program's value?
- Who is involved (or should be involved) in evaluating and documenting the mentoring program?
  - An independent external program evaluator?
  - Mentors?
  - New Principals and Vice-principals?
  - Managers? At what level?
  - Union leaders?
  - Others?
- What are your thought and opinions about the effectiveness of the district program?
  - Recommendations of suggestions for change or improvement?
Human Research Ethics Board
Certificate of Approval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Investigator</th>
<th>Department/School</th>
<th>Supervisor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robert Hoban</td>
<td>EPLS</td>
<td>NIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D. Student</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-Investigator(s):</td>
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</tbody>
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**Project Title:** Understanding Mentoring: A Study of Mentoring Relationships of New Principals in British Columbia Schools

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<th>Protocol No.</th>
<th>Approval Date</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Expiry Date</th>
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<td>17-Sep-10</td>
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**Certification**

This certificate is the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations involving Human Participants.

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol. Extensions and/or amendments may be approved with the submission of a "Request for Annual Renewal or Modification" form.

Dr. Atzal Sultan
Associate Vice-President, Research