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Monique Jacob
Johnson & Wales University - Providence

Robert K. Gable
Johnson & Wales University - Providence, rgable@jwu.edu

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Repository Citation
Jacob, Monique and Gable, Robert K., "Expectations for Career and Social Support by Mentors and Mentees Participating in Formal Elementary and Secondary School Mentoring Programs" (2009). *Teacher Education.* Paper 2.
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Expectations for Career and Social Support by Mentors and Mentees Participating in Formal Elementary and Secondary School Mentoring Programs[1]

Monique Jacob
Rhode Island Department of Education

Robert K. Gable
Education Leadership Doctoral Program
Center for Research & Evaluation
The Alan Shawn Feinstein Graduate School
Johnson & Wales University

[1]Paper presented at the annual meeting of the New England Educational Research Organization, May, 2009, Portsmouth, NH.

ABSTRACT

Teacher shortages are a nationwide concern, attributable primarily to high attrition rates among new teachers (Ingersoll, 2003; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Ingersol & Smith, 2004). Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) claimed that an estimated 50% of new teachers left the profession within their first 5 years. Reasons for leaving include: isolating and non-supportive teaching environments, poor working conditions and overwhelming teaching assignments (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). To support beginning teachers, Rhode Island passed legislation requiring districts to develop a mentoring process (Law 16-7.1-2 Accountability for Student Performance).

One variable measuring mentoring success is how closely participants' expectations for the relationship were met (Young & Perrewé, 2000). This research looked at mentoring expectations in the context of Rhode Island's experience. The research questions were 1) What are participants' principal expectations for their relationship? 2) Are expectations similar between them? 3) What is the relationship between participants' level of satisfaction and roles, district classification, grade level taught, frequency of district-sponsored meetings, and perception of matched expectations?

A concurrent mixed method model was employed and data were collected using a questionnaire. The sample consisted of N = 153 participants. Descriptive statistics, t tests and an ANOVA were used to analyze item responses probing expectations for Career and Social support. Mentees (M=3.96) had significantly higher agreement scores than mentors (M=3.66) for "mentees should accept/request challenging projects to enhance skills (t=-2.89, p<.001, ES=medium). No significant differences were found regarding levels of satisfaction for participants' mentoring relationships between mentors and mentees, urban and suburban districts, or among grade levels taught. A significant positive correlation (r=.22, r^2=.05, p=.01, ES=small/medium) was found between participants' satisfaction and frequency of district-sponsored meetings, and for participants' satisfaction with their relationship and their perceived match of their expectations for their relationship (r=.66, r^2=.44, p=.001, ES=large). The open-ended responses underwent content analysis to identify themes that dealt mainly with the importance of mentoring partners being in the same building and sharing similar work assignments. Recommendations for establishing effective mentoring programs were offered.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research was to discover whether mentoring efforts in Rhode Island have managed to prepare their participants in a manner that promotes common expectations between partners. The following research questions were addressed:

1. What are mentors' and mentees' principal expectations for their mentoring relationship?

2. Are mentoring relationship expectations similar for mentors and mentees?

3. Is there a relationship between participants' reported level of satisfaction with their mentoring experience and the following variables?
    a. participants' role (mentor, mentee)
    b. district classification (urban, urban ring, suburban)
    c. grade level taught (elementary, middle and high school)
    d. frequency of district-sponsored meetings
    e. similarity of perceived shared expectations

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nationwide, school districts are reporting that they are experiencing teacher shortages. In a school staffing survey conducted by the National Center for Education (2000), 18.2% of schools reported that they hired less than fully-qualified teachers to fill their openings. Vacancies are especially difficult to fill in high demand fields such as math and science, and in urban, low income, minority schools and rural schools (American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), 2005; Ingersoll, 2003; Wong, 2005).

A major cause of teacher shortages is a high rate of attrition among teachers in general, but particularly with new teachers. Ingersoll (2003) found that 29% of new teachers leave education within their first 3 years of teaching and 39% leave by the end of 5 years (Ingersoll). Teacher attrition also has significant negative financial consequences for school districts. A conservative estimate of the cost of replacing a new teacher is 50% of a new teacher's salary; other researchers have cited figures of up to 150% of a new teacher's salary (Villar & Strong, 2007).

New teachers gave the following reasons for leaving the profession: their teaching environments were isolating and non-supportive, they experienced poor working conditions and/or they were overwhelmed by their teaching assignments (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004). Conclusions from research conducted by Kardos and Johnson (2007) stated that "…novice teachers report[ed] that their work [was] solitary, that they [were] expected to be prematurely expert and independent, and that their fellow teachers [did] not share a sense of collective responsibility for their school" (p. 2083). It stands to conclude that, given the hardship expressed by new teachers, the quality of instruction provided by them may not be up to par with that of a veteran

teacher. This is important to consider because research has shown that teacher quality is the most important factor in improving student achievement (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Berry, 2004).

Induction

Increasingly, schools and districts are recognizing the importance of providing continued and focused support and professional development to all teachers, thereby not only helping them be more effective in the classroom but also possibly stemming attrition rates. Programs specifically designed for beginning teachers are called induction programs. High quality induction programs consist of several components and arguably the most important one is the integration of a mentoring program (Wong & Wong, 2003). To a beginning teacher, mentoring provides the opportunity to work with an experienced teacher who can adapt the learning experience to his/her specific needs and professional development goals (Public Education Network, 2001). Ingersoll and Smith (2004) concluded that beginning teachers with same-subject mentors were less likely to leave their teaching assignments than new teachers who did not receive similar supports. Other research has demonstrated that comprehensive induction programs have reduced attrition rates in half and helped to develop beginning teachers into highly qualified teachers who, in turn, improved their students' achievement (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004). "What is more, induction has shown to create a payoff of $1.37 for every $1 invested" (Villar & Strong, 2007).

Mentoring in Rhode Island Districts

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) believes in the positive effect of mentoring on competence and retention of beginning teachers and, consequently, has legislated that districts adopt a formal process for mentoring them. Formal mentorships differ from informal experiences in so far as "Informal mentorships often result from a personal bond that develops from common interest, goals and accomplishments ... [and] formal mentorships develop from a conscious effort by decision-makers to pair together members of an organization" (Young and Perrewé, 2000, pp. 612-613).

Legislation efforts, however, have not produced uniformity of programs across the state. This situation is not unique to Rhode Island and researchers have claimed that there are almost as many different models of mentoring as there are school districts that employ them (Hood, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Richards, 2003). Programs vary in many ways, including the duration and intensity of the mentoring relationship, which can range from a single one-time meeting between participants at the beginning of a school year, to regularly scheduled weekly meetings. Additionally, some programs allow for time during the teaching day for mentors and mentees to meet and co-teach. Moreover, participation by new teachers in district programs is not always mandatory. This is true of Rhode Island where, although all school districts must provide an opportunity for new teachers to be mentored, not all districts require participation by all new teachers. Programs also vary with respect to what they consider to be a new teacher. Some districts require that all new teachers, regardless of previous teaching experience,

participate in mentoring. The number of years that a new teacher must be mentored also varies among districts that mandate participation. The range for length of the mentoring relationship in Rhode Island is from 1 to 3 years (RIDE, 2004).

Although there is little research that sheds light onto the esoteric elements that create successful mentoring experiences, there is considerably more information with respect to the structures that support them effectively (Evans, 2000; Young & Perrewé, 2000). Model programs share general characteristics such as carefully selected mentors and attention paid to matching participants. Mentors are selected on the basis of whether they are good teachers of students and of teachers, and teach the same subject area at a similar grade level as their mentees (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004). Additionally, successful programs provide mentors with training. Topics for preparation of mentors include "… understanding of teacher development, professional teaching standards, performance assessment, and student content standards, along with strategies for classroom observation and a variety of coaching techniques" (Moir & Gless, 2001, p. 1). Successful mentoring programs also offer on-going support for both mentors and mentees. This requires that districts design "… programs that ensure adequate time and resources for new teacher learning and mentor development … [and that they establish] policies that protect new teachers during the critical stage of induction" (Moir & Gless, 2001, p.1). Finally, at the end of a mentoring relation, participants must be afforded the opportunity to evaluate their experience (Hood, 2004).

Goals of Mentoring

Although all mentoring programs do not necessarily share the same characteristics, they do share the same overarching goal of "…providing beginning teachers with a structured and supportive entry into the profession so as to ease their transition from university students to accomplished teachers" (Odell, 1990). Additionally, as schools are increasingly accountable for the quality of educational programming, it is essential that increased student achievement through improving teacher quality also be a central goal of mentoring. When mentoring is paired with a comprehensive induction program, it improves student achievement by improving teacher quality (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004). School districts may also hope to use mentoring in order to hone top talent, broaden staff skills and/or integrate new employees (Fisher, 2005; Hood, 2004). Attrition rates decrease and the quality of teaching and learning increases when characteristics of good programs come together (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Ingersoll, 2003; Odell, 1990).

Participants' Expectations

Kram, in an article entitled *Phases of the Mentor Relationship* (1983) identified the following stages of mentoring: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition. These stages are marked by distinct mentoring behaviors, which Kram labeled as *career-related* and *psycho-social* support behaviors. In general, these two types of support behaviors continue to serve as the basis for mentoring research when studying mentoring participants' expectations for their relationship (Young & Perrewé), which is to say what support behaviors are mentors and mentees most likely to expect and

provide. “Career-related [supports] include coaching, protecting, providing challenging work assignments, and enhancing visibility …psycho-social supports include activities such as role modeling, counseling, and acceptance” (Young & Perrewé, 2000, p.613).

Expectations of support behaviors by mentors include that they must understand and accept differences between themselves and their mentees (Odell (1990). Additionally, mentors need to be able to help their mentees move along a continuum that eventually leads them to increasingly more sophisticated stages of cognitive development, which is to say that mentees need help in moving from simply managing a classroom to helping each student reach his/her potential (Odell).

Similarity of Expectations for Participants. Young and Perrewé (2000) pointed out that current research on mentoring mostly addresses the structural factors of effective programs, while what is the nature of effective exchange between mentors and mentees receives little attention. As a response to this need for additional data, they conducted two pieces of research, which in turn, served as the catalyst for the research presented in the following sections.

The findings of Young and Perrewé’s initial research were published in *What Did You Expect? An Examination of Career-Related Support and Social Support Among Mentors and Protégés* (2000). In this study, they sought to “…identify influential factors related to the formation of perceptions of relationship effectiveness and trust by identifying the link between perception of relevant behaviors, and perceptual outcomes of relationship effectiveness and trust” (pp.624-625). They collected data from doctoral students and Assistant Professors in Management who were in later stages of their relationships. Young and Perrewé concluded that “…met expectations [were] indeed found to mediate the relationship between career and social support behaviors exhibited by a partner and the resulting perceptions of relationship effectiveness and trust” (p. 625). They also found that mentors valued career-related support behaviors exhibited by mentees more significantly than mentees, who valued social support behaviors exhibited by mentors more greatly. Young and Perrewé’s follow-up research was entitled *The Role of Expectations in the Mentoring Exchange: An Analysis of Mentor and Protégé Expectations in Relation to Perceived Supports* (2004). “The purpose of this study [was] to examine mentoring relationships and identify aspects of the relationship that [were] likely to yield positive perceptual outcomes” (p. 103). The findings of both these researches and other discoveries made during the literature review, prompted the inquiry into whether or not expectations for their mentoring relationships were shared by participants who were involved in Rhode Island districts mentoring programs.

Methodology

Sample

The analyses were conducted on N = 153 questionnaires; n = 72 of these questionnaires were completed by individuals who indicated they were mentors, n = 80

were mentees, and *n* = 8 indicated that they were not currently in a mentoring relationship. Those indicating that they were not currently mentoring anyone were either program coordinators or mentors without an assigned mentee. These data issued from 10 different school districts, of which *n* = 85 participants worked in districts classified as urban and *n* = 67 participants worked in suburban districts. All were educators in Rhode Island's Kindergarten through High School public institutions.

Research Method

The preliminary data regarding mentoring and participants' expectations for their relationship were collected via a review of the literature. This review was critical, not only in helping to form the research questions, but also in guiding the choice of the research method. The research made use of a concurrent mixed method design model, which means that both quantitative and qualitative data were collected at one time, using the same instrument and different sources of data.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was adapted from one described in a study by Young and Perrewé (2004). Their questions were tailored to the groups that they were studying and therefore, for the purposes of this research, slight modifications were needed to better address the target sample. The final version of the questionnaire was comprised of three pages. The first two pages listed 32 items, divided between expectations regarding mentors and mentees; these items were further divided into two categories: expectations for career support and expectations for social support. The questions utilized a 5-point Likert scale, with items rated from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The third page of the questionnaire included questions that collected demographic information, including the role played by the respondent, the district name, the grade level taught, the number of years teaching, the frequency of district-sponsored meetings, the level of satisfaction with the current mentoring relationship, and the perception of whether or not expectations between mentor and mentee match. The final question of this page asked participants to supply any additional information that could be of assistance in the improvement of mentoring programs. Answers to this question were used to conduct the qualitative analysis component of this research.

Data Collection

The data were collected over a period of 6 months, with initial email contact having been made in September of 2006. The distribution and collection of questionnaires took place from October of 2006 through March of 2007. When a district agreed to participate in the research, either the researcher attended a mentoring meeting and distributed the questionnaires herself or the mentoring coordinator requested copies of the questionnaire, distributed them among his/her mentoring participants and returned them via a pre-paid envelope. Prior to distribution of the questionnaires, the researcher and the mentoring coordinator agreed as to the protocol and the time frame for its administration.

Data Analysis

Questionnaire

Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation were calculated at the item level. These data were used to address the first research question that asked the following: What are mentors' and mentees' principal expectations for their mentoring relationship? To determine answers to the second research question ("Are expectations with regards to their mentoring relationship similar for mentors and mentees?"), differences at the item level were computed using the *t* test statistic. Statistical significance was measured at the $p = .01$ level. The third and last research question asked: "Is there a relationship between participants' reported level of satisfaction with their mentoring experience and participants' role, b) district classification, c) grade level taught, d) frequency of district-sponsored meetings, and e) similarity of perceived shared expectations". To compare satisfaction and participants' roles and district classification, *t* tests were used. To address the relationship between satisfaction and grade level taught, a one-way ANOVA was computed. Correlations were calculated to determine whether there was a relationship between satisfaction and frequency of district-sponsored meetings and perceived similarities of expectations.

Open-Ended Question

The last question asked participants to note "…any additional information that could assist in the improvement of mentoring programs." These comments were first typed into a word document and content analysis was conducted which identified, coded, categorized and labeled the primary patterns in the data (Krippendorff, 2004; Patton, 2002). The method used to uncover themes from the transcripts is described by Krueger and Casey (2000), as the "long-table approach" (p.132). An *audit trail* (Lincoln & Guba 1985), also known as a *chain of evidence* (United States General Accounting Office, 1990), was kept by the researcher.

Research Limitations and Delimitations

Quantitative Data

The researcher's inability to reach all districts in the state, and thereby engage more mentoring participants, is a threat to external validity and reliability since this affects the potential of drawing inferences for the sample data to other persons or programs and assuring that similar research, conducted on a larger sample, would yield the same results. Additionally, the portion of the questionnaire used to collect quantitative data was derived from an existing questionnaire whose authors had established validity and reliability scores obtained from past use of the instrument. When an instrument is modified, the original validity and reliability estimates may not be true for the new instrument; therefore it becomes necessary to re-establish these measures subsequent to data analysis. Factors that could affect validity and reliability estimates in the adapted

version of the questionnaire include changes in the language of specific items, changes in the nature of the intended audience, and changes in the format of the questionnaire.

A significant threat to validity occurred as a result of a draft form of the questionnaire being administered to one group of mentoring participants. This earlier version of the questionnaire differed from the final version in that, its first item read “To what extent do you agree that a mentor should nominate the mentee for awards or professional opportunities?”, whereas in the validated final version of the questionnaire, this question was made into two separate questions. In order to salvage the data collected from the other questionnaires, a decision was made to delete this question from the questionnaires that came from this district and consider only other data collected from them.

Qualitative Data

Credibility refers to the “confidence in truth of the data and interpretations of them” (Polit & Beck, 2004, p. 430). Credibility requires in part that the researcher keep in-depth field notes, that s/he be aware of the effects of his/her presence on data collection, and that data analysis procedures be reviewed by an outside judge to prevent bias by the researcher (Beck, 1993). To limit this threat, the researcher employed triangulation, that is to say used one data source to confirm the veracity of another and verification of the audit trail was conducted by an informed third party.

Confirmability “refers to the objectivity or neutrality of the data, that is, the potential for congruence between two or more independent people about the data’s accuracy, relevance, or meaning” (Polit & Beck, 2004, p. 435). Because respondents were not isolated from one another, in a number of cases, participants were observed discussing the questions with one another, it is possible that some participants were influenced by the responses of others which might affect confirmability.

Transferability is “the extent to which the findings of an experiment can be applied to individuals and settings beyond those that were studied” (Gall et al., 2003, p. 374). Although at first glance, this sample might seem limited in terms of its transferability to other settings due in part to its size (n = 37) and the fact that no data were collected from urban ring districts, applying what Trochim (2006) calls *Proximal Similarity Model*, it can be assumed that the results found regarding the actual sample can be generalized to populations that are similar to it. The description of the actual sample, which includes demographic points such as district classification, the role played by participants and the number of years they have taught should enable further studies to determine for themselves, the degree of transferability to their particular settings.

Findings

Demographic Data Analysis

Districts

Completed questionnaires were collected from *n* = 10 districts and totaled *N* = 153; 55% of questionnaires were completed by participants working in districts classified by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) as urban and 44% of the questionnaires were collected from suburban districts. In response to the question on the frequency of district-sponsored meetings, *n* = 144 participants (94% response rate) provided answers that indicated slightly more than half of participants attended such meetings on average about once a month or more.

Participants

Data collected from mentor coordinators revealed that districts who participated in the research engaged approximately *n* = 300 mentoring participants. The researcher therefore concluded that a 50% response rate was garnered. Further consultation of the data showed that *n* = 72 participants were classified as mentors, *n* = 80 recorded they were mentees, and *n* = 1 participant provided no response to this question. Mentors and mentees were almost evenly distributed among grade levels taught. Those who identified themselves as not teaching fell into the following categories: coach, student support staff (e.g., social worker, school psychologist, occupational therapist, diagnostic prescriptive teacher), job embedded mentor, or administrator.

Quantitative Analysis

Principal Expectations for Mentoring Relationship

Tables 1 and 2 address the first research question regarding principal expectations for mentors' and mentees' relationships. Table 1 ranks, in descending order, the means of all questions that relate to items that begin with "To what extent do you agree that a mentor should…", and Table 2 ranks the means of the items that begin with the stem "To what extent do you agree that a mentee should …"

Upon inspection of these tables, it is apparent that participants agree that confidentiality of their conversations, a Career Support item, is an important expectation of their relationships and it was valued highest by both mentors and mentees (*M* = 4.71). Note that the standard deviation for mentors is .72 and that for mentees is .58, which might indicate that participants are in greater agreement over the importance of confidentiality on the part of mentees than on the part of mentors.

Confidentiality of conversations is not the only Career Support item that ranks among the top five for participants' expectations of mentees' behaviors; in fact, out of the top five expectations, four are Career Support items. Participants also felt that mentees should seek advice before beginning a risky project (*M* = 4.29); they should

Table 1

Item Means and Standard Deviations for Questions That Begin With This Stem To What Extent Do You Agree That Mentors Should ... (*N* = 153)

Item number	Questions	*M*	*SD*	*f*
CSo10	Keep conversations confidential.	4.71	.72	145
SSo15	*Professionally conduct him/herself in a desirable manner (meeting deadlines, arriving to meetings on time, etc.)*	4.44	.73	153
SSo16	*Personally conduct himself/herself in a desirable manner.*	4.36	.68	153
CSo5	Provide specific strategies and information about how to enhance the mentee's ability to achieve his/her objectives.	4.32	.67	151
SSo12	*Tolerate differences between him/her and mentee.*	4.18	.74	153
SSo11	*Show a personal interest in the mentee and his/her values, goals, and aspirations.*	3.99	.78	152
CSo7	Suggest projects which enhance mentee's technical knowledge.	3.95	.74	152
CSo2	Nominate the mentee for professional opportunities.	3.94	.86	123
CSo8	Discuss with mentee any personal concerns and problems which may hinder his/her progress.	3.83	1.04	152
SSo13	*Like the mentee for who he/she is.*	3.76	.83	152
CSo4	Make the mentee visible to influential others through verbal or written communication, or personal introduction.	3.75	.87	151
CSo6	Reduce risks or threats to mentee by supporting him/her or speaking on his/her behalf.	3.66	.98	152
CSo3	Assign the mentee to, or nominate him/her, for useful projects valued by the school/district.	3.35	1.07	152
SSo14	*Interact with mentee as a friend.*	3.16	.83	152
CSo1	Nominate the mentee for awards.	3.14	1.04	123
CSo9	Be mostly responsible for mentee's professional growth and development.	2.78	1.08	153

Note. Shaded questions in italics pertain to the Social Support domain; non-shaded questions pertain to the Career Support domain.

Table 2

Item Means and Standard Deviations for Questions that Begin with this Stem: To What Extent Do You Agree That Mentees Should … (*N* = 153)

Item Number	Questions	*M*	*SD*	
CSe10	Keep conversations confidential	4.71	.58	152
CSe5	Seek advice about risky projects before serious problems arise or provide information about current projects which may be problematic.	4.29	.60	152
CSe4	Request advice or information about how to enhance his/her ability to achieve objectives.	4.25	.57	151
SSe15	*Model professional behavior after mentor's (meeting deadlines, arriving to meetings on time, etc.)*	4.20	.71	153
CSe9	Be mostly responsible for his/her professional growth and development.	4.13	.87	151
SSe12	*Tolerate differences between each other.*	4.12	.71	153
CSe2	Show interest in projects valued by the school/district.	3.99	.50	151
CSe7	Discuss with his/her mentor any personal concerns and problems which may hinder his/her progress.	3.92	.82	153
CSe3	Put forth effort in attending functions at mentor's invitation.	3.84	.64	152
CSe6	Accept or request challenging projects which enhance his/her technical knowledge.	3.82	.66	152
SSe13	*Like the mentor for who he/she is.*	3.71	.78	153
SSe11	*Show a personal interest in the mentor and his/her values, goals, and aspirations.*	3.61	.84	152
CSe1	Put forth effort beyond that required by a project.	3.60	.75	151
CSe8	Question mentor's advice.	3.39	.68	152
SSe15	*Model personal behavior after mentor's*	3.33	.95	153
SSe14	*Interact with mentor as a friend.*	3.18	.77	153

Note. Shaded questions in italics pertain to the Social Support domain; non-shaded questions pertain to the Career Support domain.

request advice about how to enhance their practice (*M* = 4.25); and they should be mostly responsible for their own professional growth and development (*M* = 4.13). The ranking of this last expectation was especially interesting since it could be argued that the mentor is in the best position to significantly assist the mentee with his/her growth as a professional. However, this finding is consistent with what was noted in the section of the questionnaire that addresses participants' expectations of mentors. The suggestion that a mentor should be mostly responsible for a mentee's professional growth and development ranked last (*M* = 2.78) when participants were asked this question.

In contrast with the above mentioned predominance of Career Support items among the top five items listed as expectations of mentees, Career Support items were more often at the bottom of the list of expectations of mentors for the mentoring relationship. The Career Support items which participants agreed were least valid expectations by mentees of their mentors are that the mentor should reduce risk or threats to mentee by supporting him/her or speaking on his/her behalf (*M* = 3.66); the mentor should assign or recommend the mentee for projects valued by the school/district (*M* = 3.35); s/he should nominate the mentee for awards (*M* = 3.14); and, as previously mentioned, the mentor should be mostly responsible for the mentee's professional growth and development. Another observation is that of the top five ratings for mentors, 3 of the 5 are expectations pertinent to the Social Support domain while only one expectation from the Social Support domain ranked as a most important expectation of the mentee. Participants indicated that a mentor was more responsible for attending to the Social Support Domain of mentoring than a mentee, which is supported by the fact that the inverse is true when considering the least significant expectations of mentors and mentees.

There is only one Social Support expectation (i.e., mentor should interact with mentee as a friend (*M* = 3.16)), ranked among the five least important expectations of mentors; of the 6 least important expectations of mentees, there are 4 Social Support items. These were: like mentor for who s/he is (*M* = 3.71); show a personal interest in the mentor's values, goal and aspirations (*M* = 3.61); model personal behavior after mentor's (*M* = 3.33); and interact with mentor as a friend (*M* = 3.18). This last Social Support item ranks in the bottom five for expectations of both the mentor and mentee which seems to indicate that mentoring participants see their relationship as primarily a professional relationship and not a personal one. An overall look at the standard deviations confirms that participants' expectations for mentors and mentees are similar since the scores in the distributions do not deviate greatly from the means. Note that scores for expectations of mentees' deviate less from the means than those for expectations of mentors, which might indicate that participants are clearer on the roles of mentees than that of mentors. These findings are consistent with Young and Perrewé's (2000) findings who, in their research on Career-Related and Social support expectations among mentors and mentees, found that "…mentors value career-related behaviors exhibited by [mentees] and [mentees], on the other hand, value social support behaviors exhibited by mentors" (p.625).

Similarity of Expectations Between Mentors and Mentees

Tables 3 and 4 present item means, standard deviations and *t* test data for questions that probe whether there is agreement on expectations for mentor and mentee roles. Table 3 presents data collected as a result of questions asked regarding expectations of a mentor in the domains of Career and Social Support; Table 4 presents similar data for the expectations of the mentee. These tables address the second research question that aims to discover if expectations by mentors and mentees for their mentoring relationship are similar. To analyze this question, independent sample *t* tests were completed to examine the differences of expectations between the two groups of participants.

No significant differences were found between mentors and mentees with regards to expectations for their mentoring relationship in all but one case, CSe6, which asked "To what extent do you agree that a mentee should accept/request challenging projects to enhance skills". The mean score for this question was significantly lower ($p = .001$) for mentors ($M = 3.66$, $SD = .53$) than for mentees ($M = 3.96$, $SD = .72$). The researcher calculated an effect size of $d = .48$ with respect to the difference of expectations in mentor and mentee mean scores (Cohen, 1988). On the basis of the guidelines provided by Cohen, an effect size of .48 would be considered in the medium range.

Satisfaction with the Mentoring Relationship

The third and last research question asked whether there was a relationship between the level of satisfaction with the mentoring relationship, as reported by participants, and the following variables: mentoring role, district classification, school level, frequency of district-sponsored meetings and similarity of perceived shared expectations.

Satisfaction and Participants' Roles. Slightly more than 87% of participants who responded to the question "How would you rate your mentoring relationship?" ($n = 145$) indicated that their relationship was satisfying or very satisfying. Analysis of the data shows that a slightly higher percentage of mentees (86% versus 81%) indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their relationship.

The mean score for the level of satisfaction with the mentoring relationship on a 5-point scale was 4.50 ($SD = .83$) for mentors and 4.51 ($SD = .85$) for mentees. Levene's test for equal variance was computed with no significant differences at $p < .001$ being found, so the equal variance *t* test was used. There were no significant differences found between the means for mentors and mentees with respect to satisfaction with their relationships ($t = -.01$, $p = .93$).

Satisfaction and District Classification. As stated earlier, Rhode Island groups its school districts into three classifications: urban, urban ring and suburban. Urban and suburban districts comprised the bulk of participants in the research. Therefore, the analysis omitted the urban ring variable due to the fact that $n = 1$ questionnaire was collected from an urban ring district. In order to determine whether there was a

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Responses to Questions Pertaining to Expectations for Career Support (CSo) and Social Support (SSo) by Mentors from Both Groups of Participants (*N* = 153)

		Mentors (*n* = 72)		Mentees (*n* = 80)			
To what extent do you agree that a mentor should:		*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*T*	*p*
Career Support							
CSo1	Nominate mentee for awards	2.98	1.04	3.26	1.04	-1.47	.14
CSo2	Nominate mentee for professional opportunities	3.96	.90	3.92	.85	.22	.83
CSo3	Assign/nominate mentee for projects valued by school	3.24	1.08	3.46	1.06	-1.26	.21
CSo4	Make mentee visible to influential others	3.60	.95	3.89	.78	-1.98	.05
CSo5	Provide specific feedback about how to achieve mentee's goals	4.25	.69	4.40	.56	-1.45	.15
CSo6	Protect mentee from risks by intervening on his/her behalf	3.54	.94	3.79	1.00	-1.59	.11
CSo7	Suggest projects which enhance mentee's skills	3.94	.71	3.96	.77	- .15	.88
CSo8	Discuss personal concerns with mentee	3.65	1.06	4.00	1.00	-2.10	.04
CSo9	Be mostly responsible for mentee's professional growth	2.79	1.07	2.78	1.10	.09	.93
CSo10	Keep conversations confidential	4.71	.82	4.74	.52	- .32	.75
Social Support							
SSo11	Show a personal interest in the mentee's values and goals	4.07	.76	3.94	.80	1.04	.30
SSo12	Tolerate differences between him/her and mentee	4.23	.74	4.15	.73	.72	.47
SSo13	Like the mentee for s/he is.	3.81	.88	3.71	.78	.77	.44
SSo14	Interact with mentee as a friend	3.30	.82	3.03	.82	2.00	.05
SSo15	Professionally conduct him/herself in desirable manner	4.40	.88	4.49	.55	- .72	.47
SSo16	Personally conduct him/herself in a desirable manner	4.49	.75	4.26	.59	2.05	.04

Table 4
Means and Standard Deviations for Responses to Questions Pertaining to Expectations for Career Support (CSe) and Social Support (SSe) by Mentees from Both Groups of Participants (*N* = 153)

		Mentors (*n* = 72)		Mentees (*n* = 80)			
To what extent do you agree that a mentee should:		*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*P*
Career Support							
CSe1	Put forth effort beyond what is required	3.49	.84	3.69	.65	-1.60	.11
CSe2	Show interest in projects valued by school/district	3.97	.53	4.00	.48	- .34	.73
CSe3	Put forth effort to attend functions at mentor's request	3.71	.64	3.96	.58	-2.46	.02
CSe4	Request advice/information about improving his/her performance	4.16	.48	4.33	.63	-1.72	.09
CSe5	Seek advice before taking on a risky project	4.23	.55	4.35	.64	-1.14	.26
CSe6	Accept/request challenging projects to enhance skills	3.66	.53	3.96	.72	-2.89	.001**
CSe7	Discuss personal concerns that might hinder his/her progress	3.83	.79	4.01	.85	-1.34	.18
CSe8	Question mentor's advice	3.54	.60	3.26	.72	2.63	.01
CSe9	Be mostly responsible for his/her professional growth	3.94	.81	4.29	.89	-2.48	.01
CSe10	Keep conversations confidential	4.80	.47	4.64	.66	1.64	.10
Social Support							
SSe11	Show a personal interest in the mentor and his/her values	3.50	.84	3.72	.83	-1.63	.11
SSe12	Tolerate differences between each other	4.13	.73	4.14	.69	-.11	.91
SSe13	Like mentor for s/he is.	3.71	.78	3.71	.78	-.03	.97
SSe14	Interact with mentor as a friend	3.22	.74	3.14	.81	.67	.50
SSe15	Model professional behavior after mentor's	4.15	.64	4.26	.76	-.96	.34
SSe16	Model personal behavior after mentor's	3.35	.86	3.33	1.04	.14	.89

* Unequal Variance Assumed; ** Using the Bonferroni adjustment required significance at the p < .008 level.

relationship between the levels of satisfaction reported by participants and the type of district where they were employed, the researcher a conducted *t* tests. Levene's test for equal variance was computed with no significant differences at $p < .001$ being found, so the equal variance *t* test was used. No significant differences were found between urban ($t = .09$, $p = .93$) and suburban ($t = -.31$, $p = .76$) districts with regards to level of satisfaction for participants' mentoring relationships.

Satisfaction and Grade Level Taught. The researcher was also interested in discovering whether the level of satisfaction for their relationship was connected to the grade level at which participants taught. To determine the answer to this question, the researcher conducted a one-way ANOVA. No significant differences were found among grade levels taught with respect to satisfaction with their mentoring relationships ($F = 2.47$, $p = .09$).

Satisfaction and Frequency of District-wide Meetings. To address the question of whether there is a relationship between participants' level of satisfaction with mentoring and the frequency of district-sponsored meetings, a correlation analysis was conducted. A significant positive correlation ($r = .22$, $p = .01$) was found between participants' satisfaction and frequency of district-sponsored mentoring meetings. The effect size of this correlation is $r^2 = .05$, which lies between guidelines defining a small effect size to be $r^2 = .01$ and a medium effect size to be $r^2 = .09$, so the relationship can be classified as having a small/medium effect size.

Satisfaction and Perceived Match of Expectations. The response rate for the question that posed "How closely do you think your expectations for the mentoring relationship match the ones of your partner?" was 94%. The mean score, on a 5-point scale, for how closely expectations between participants matched was $M = 4.20$ ($SD = .91$) for mentors and $M = 4.19$ ($SD = .98$) for mentees. To determine whether there was a relationship between the level of satisfaction derived from their mentoring relationship and the perceived level of match between their expectations, a correlation analysis was conducted. A significant positive correlation ($r = .66$, $p = .001$) was found between participants' satisfaction with their relationship and their perceived match of expectations for their relationship. The relationship between how closely participants believe their expectations for their relationship match one another and the level of satisfaction with the mentoring relationship is not only significant, but the strength of the relationship is strong. The effect size of this correlation is $r^2 = .44$, which exceeds the guidelines defining a large effect size which is $r^2 = .25$

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Qualitative Data Analysis

In order to collect new and/or clarifying data from the participants, the last question on the questionnaire was written in an open-ended format where respondents were asked to "…supply any additional information that [could] further assist in the improvement of mentoring programs."

Uncovering Themes

The open-ended question elicited short responses from *n* = 37 respondents, which translated to a 24% response rate; *n* = 21 responses were from mentees (57%) and *n* = 16 responses were from mentors (43%). When the comments were typed into a word document, it became evident that some individual comments contained more than one theme. These responses were broken into their single topic parts before general themes were assigned to groups of like comments. The breakdown of the original *n* = 37 quotes, yielded *n* = 58 distinct statements that were subsequently organized into six general categories: matching mentoring partners, programmatic suggestions, satisfaction with mentoring experience, participants' responsibilities, elements of specific programs and research instrument.

Matching Mentoring Partners. The most frequently recorded comments concerned the importance of choices made with regard to matching mentoring partners (*n* = 20). Respondents (*n* = 3) noted the importance of mentoring partners being in the same building and sharing a similar work assignments. When such accommodations could not occur however, participants voiced their opinions regarding their preferences of either being in the same building or engaging in the same work assignment. The same number of comments were made by mentors and mentees with regards to whether priority should be given to the location of partners or to the nature of the work performed; *n* = 8 comments were noted in support of being in the same building and *n* = 8 comments stated that sharing the same work assignment was more important. Mentors indicated a preference for matching on the basis of location (*n* = 5 for mentors versus *n* = 3 for mentees), whereas mentees believed that matching on the basis of the work performed was more important (*n* = 6 for mentees versus *n* = 2 for mentors).

Program Issues. The second most frequently recorded comments (*n* = 16) pertained to participants' experiences with the content of mentoring programs. This theme was labeled as *Program Issues* and five relevant ideas within this theme were identified: district-wide meeting topics, making time for mentoring, district-wide meetings schedule, differentiated programming and program standards. The data indicated that fewer mentors made *Program Issues* related comments than mentees; mentors made *n* = 3 comments and mentees made *n* = 13 such comments. With respect to district-wide meeting topics, mentees indicated a desire to discuss topics relevant to their work. One mentee wrote "The mentoring in-service that I go to is geared toward regular education and is not helpful to me. So I feel as though the required mentoring hours that I have to do are a waste of time." The one comment by the mentor indicated that s/he would appreciate the reinstatement of professional development geared at becoming a better mentor; this was echoed by a mentee who wrote "Do mentors receive materials regarding specific topics to discuss with mentees? If not, it may be a decent idea to do so."

Mentees made all four comments recorded with regards to making more time available to participants to engage in mentoring exercises. Their main concern was the lack of time available for meeting with their mentor; one participant wrote "[Provide

opportunities to] …weekly touch base at pre-designated times/consistent times" and another noted that "Mentoring time comes out of planning time which can cause time conflicts." Interestingly, of the mentors who provided written comments, none noted a problem with the amount of time available for meetings with their mentees.

Based on the *n* = 2 comments made regarding district-wide meetings, it would appear as if these meetings are valued by participants. One comment, made by a mentee, indicated a desire to begin the meetings as soon as the school year began and a mentor expressed a desire for regularly scheduled monthly meetings. As previously mentioned in the discussion on descriptive statistics, most mentees are new to teaching. However, the research collected questionnaires from *n* = 12 mentees (15%) who had six or more years of teaching experience. As can be expected, the needs of such mentees are different from those of new teachers and *n* = 2 mentees confirmed this by suggesting that districts should adjust their programs for teachers new to the district but who have teaching experience. They suggested that mentoring programs provide different alternatives for mentees with previous teaching experience. One mentee wrote, "There should be a separate program for beginning teachers and teachers new to the district with previous teaching experience. For example, I have been teaching for 9 years and still had to attend all the sessions that did not relate to me because I am not a new teacher!"

Level of Satisfaction with Mentoring Experience. The third most frequently recorded comments (*n* = 14 by *n* = 14 respondents: *n* = 3 mentors and *n* = 11 mentees) pertained to participants' level of satisfaction with their mentoring experience. All but one participant indicated that they were satisfied with their mentoring relationship and the preponderance of positive comments was made by mentees. The participant who wrote that s/he was dissatisfied with his/her partner was a mentee whose mentor was neither in his/her building nor performed the same work as s/he did.

Participants were satisfied with their mentoring experience for different reasons; they either mentioned that they thought the mentoring program was *good* (*n* = 7), or they wrote that they *liked* their partner (*n* =3). It was also noted by *n* = 2 mentors that they believed the relationship was "…beneficial for [them] as well as [their] mentee[s]." Other comments made by *n* = 2 mentees praised the competence of their mentors.

An interesting finding with regards to satisfaction with the mentoring experience and the expressed desire to differentiate programs based on whether or not the mentee is an experienced teacher is that, of the *n* = 12 mentees who have more than 6 years of teaching experience, *n* =10 of them rated their relationship as *very satisfying* when responding to this question on the questionnaire. It would appear as if, despite being in a program that does not quite match the needs of mentees with previous teaching experience, these participants are nonetheless satisfied with the experience.

Participants' Responsibilities. The over-arching theme concerning what is within the purview of participants, collected *n* = 4 comments. Two main ideas were identified: mentee responsibilities and elements of the mentoring relationship. Although only one

comment was noted with respect to the latter idea, it was retained due to the fact that it directly addressed items on the questionnaire. One mentor wrote:

> The goal of the mentor/mentee relationship is a professional one – the point being to help acclimate the new teacher to the new school with little difficulty. The relationship is neither personal nor social and should be regarded in a strictly professional manner – in order to best serve the teacher, department, students and school.

As for *mentee responsibilities*, *n* = 2 mentors wrote comments relevant to this sub-theme. In one case, the mentor shared two thoughts that were split into *n* = 2 comments. The first, "I think a mentee should decide for him/her if and when s/he should get involved in projects beyond the classroom", is a direct response to several items on the questionnaire that suggest that a mentee should be involved in extra-curricular activities. The second topic included in this mentor's comment states that it is the mentee's responsibility to ask for a different mentor should the relationship s/he is involved in prove to be dissatisfying. Another mentor commented that some questions were difficult to answer due to the fact that s/he would have different answers for certain questions depending upon the mentee's personality. Note that no comments relating to *Participants' Responsibilities* were made by mentees with respect to mentors.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Social Support Expectations

Analysis of the responses revealed that there were twice as many items related to Social Support expectations of mentors ranked among the top eight, as there were for mentees. In other words, mentors were expected to exhibit more Social Support types of behaviors than mentees. An interesting contrast was observed in response to the item that asked "To what extent do you agree that a mentee should model his/her personal behavior after the mentor's" (SSe14). Although it was expected that a mentor should personally conduct himself/herself in a desirable manner, this Social Support behavior was not as strongly expected from a mentee. In fact, the expectation that a mentee model personal behavior after the mentor's, ranked second to last as a Social Support expectation for mentees. The implication of this findings is that districts should spend some time exploring behavioral norms between mentors and mentees in order to avoid problems caused by a mentor who lacks professionalism and/or a mentee who behaves too informally with his mentor.

A related discovery resulted from the responses to the item that asked, "To what extend do you agree that participants should interact as friends" (SSo14 and SSe14). All participants agreed that this expectation ranked among the least important expectations. It ranked last as a Social Support expectation of mentees, and third to last for mentors. This finding was corroborated by the qualitative data. Note that in the course of administering the questionnaire, the researcher observed many instances of mentors and mentees acting in what appeared to be a very friendly manner. The conclusion might be that although friendship might result from a mentoring relationship, it is not necessary in order to ensure its success.

Career Support Expectations

In the expectations for Career Support domain, mentors and mentees agreed that confidentiality of their conversations was the most important expectation (CSo10 and CSe10). This finding concurred with statements made by the Educator Quality specialists at the Rhode Island Department of Education who, at the time they were reviewing the questionnaire's items, indicated that the notion of confidentiality was stressed during mentoring coordinators' training sessions (S. Hendrix, M. Kazin-Boyce, C. Petrarca, H. Potrzeba, personal communication, November 15, 2006).

While the means for Career Support expectations of confidentiality were computed as $M = 4.71$ for mentors and mentees, a greater deviation around the mean was calculated for mentors ($SD = .72$), than for mentees ($SD = .58$). Although this difference was not found to be statistically significant, it might indicate that confidentiality of conversations is important to all participants but is somewhat less *expected* of mentors. This might be a reflection of some districts' practices of holding separate meetings for mentors in order to help them improve their mentoring skills. In this case, perhaps it is expected that mentors would share their experiences with the group in order to learn from their situation.

Whereas Social Support expectations for mentors were more prevalent than Career Support expectations, the opposite can be said for mentees; of the top eight expectations for mentees, two were related to Social Support expectations and six to Career Support expectations. Participants agreed most strongly that mentors should not be mostly responsible for the professional growth and development of their mentees (CSo9 and CSe9). It would seem logical to expect that a mentor would feel a certain responsibility towards helping mentees with their professional development given the nature of the mentors' roles. Perhaps the term *professional development* was the culprit in this apparent incongruity. Mentors may feel responsible for helping mentees with school and/or classroom related development, whereas *professional development* may have been interpreted as activities such as graduate course work and participation in professional organizations.

Similarity of Expectations

The only question for which the difference in expectations was significant stated: "To what extent do you agree that a mentee should accept/request challenging projects to enhance skills" (CSe6). Mentors disagreed significantly more strongly than mentees did on this particular question. The qualitative analysis collected one comment made by a mentor on this particular question. It read: "I think a mentee should decide for him/her if and when s/he should get involved in projects beyond the classroom. They have enough to deal with in adjusting to their new professional life." In order to gain insight into this finding, it was brought to the attention of Shirley Hendrix, an Educator Specialist at the RIDE, who stated that she was not surprised by this discovery since

new teachers often displayed great enthusiasm in their positions and as a result, often "…bite off more than they can chew" (S. Hendrix, personal communication, March 3, 2008). Mentors understood the demands of teaching better than new teachers and were reluctant to encourage them in taking on too many responsibilities beyond the scope of their classroom.

Satisfaction with the Mentoring Relationship

Despite the fact that the participants who provided qualitative data made many recommendations for programmatic improvements, the quantitative analysis led to the conclusion that overall, participants were satisfied with their mentoring relationship and 83% of participants rated it as either very satisfying or satisfying (95% response rate). Furthermore, analyses conducted on satisfaction with the mentoring relationship and the following variables were not found to be statistically significant: roles of participants, grade level taught and district classification.

A significant, albeit small, positive correlation ($r = .22$, $p = .01$) was found between participants' satisfaction and frequency of district-sponsored mentoring meetings. This finding is corroborated by data uncovered in the literature review that confirmed that regular district-wide meetings are one characteristic of effective mentoring programs and contribute to higher levels of satisfaction among participants (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Johnson, 2004; Moir & Gless, n.d.). A weak correlation may be explained by the fact that although participants in districts with regular meetings tended to be more satisfied with their relationships, they might be even more satisfied with their mentoring program in general if they had the opportunity to provide input as to the topics and frequency of district-sponsored meetings.

A significant strong positive correlation ($r = .66$, $p < .001$) was found between participants' satisfaction with their relationship and their perceived match of expectations for their relationship. This finding goes hand in hand with the findings that there were no significant differences between participants for their expectations for Social Support and Career Support from mentoring. Mentors and mentees who have satisfying relationships also communicated each other's expectations.

Pairing Mentoring Partners

The inability of districts to consistently match mentors and mentees who teach a similar topic in the same building generated the most number of comments (n =20) collected via the qualitative data. When both conditions could not be met, n = 8 comments were noted in support of being in the same building and n = 8 comments stated that sharing the same work assignment was more important. Noteworthy is that mentors indicated a preference for matching on the basis of location (n =5 for mentors versus n = 3 for mentees), whereas mentees believed that matching on the basis of the work performed was more important (n = 6 for mentees versus n = 2 for mentors).

Recommendations

Mentoring Programs

- Mentees should be counseled against taking on too many extra-curricular responsibilities due to the demands of being a beginning teacher.
- Mentoring coordinators should consult with mentees before make a mentor assignment who is either in the mentee's building or teaches the same content as the mentee, but does not fulfill both qualifications.
- Schools and Districts should sponsor regular mentoring meetings.
- Mentoring participants should be surveyed as to what topics they would like to discuss during school or district sponsored meetings
  Mentors need training, including being made aware of the contributions mentoring a beginning teacher can have on their own career.

Questionnaires Distribution

- Contact mentoring coordinators in the year previous to data collection.
- Make questionnaire available on-line.

Questions for Future Research

- Although similarity of expectations might be the main factor contributing to the overall level of satisfaction with participants' relationships, what other factors might contribute to a successful mentoring experience? For example, the assertion that mentors and mentees are not expected to interact as friends, for instance, begs the question "Might being friends enhance/hinder the relationship?"
- How might the findings have been different if the data were collected earlier in a mentoring pair's relationship? Future research should collect data from participants before the mentoring relationship begins, and then again at the end of the relationship, to compare and contrast how expectations change over time.
- What is the impact of mentoring on improving teaching and learning? Is the mentor/mentee collaboration paying off in the classroom? If so, where are the benefits most noticeable? What is the evidence that supports this claim?
- Additional qualitative data collected via case studies would certainly deepen the understanding of the findings. Interviews with mentoring participants would enable the researcher to probe more deeply into the qualities that make these relationships more or less successful.

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