

THE PROCESS OF MENTORING;
A CLOSE LOOK AT THE CONTEXT, THE CONTENT, AND THE
INFLUENCE OF MENTORING

by

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(ABSTRACT)

In efforts to bridge the gap between the conceptualized theories about mentoring and the realities of mentoring in progress, this study looks closely at the process of mentoring. Six veteran teachers and their beginning teacher partners were observed during their mentoring sessions which were the basis of one public school district's mentor program.

Three issues were addressed: the context of mentoring, the circumstances and conditions in which the mentoring occurred; the content of the discussions between mentors and beginning teachers, the types and degree of thought and interaction during mentoring; the nature of any influence that the mentoring experience had upon the mentor. The mentoring sets met at similar times and places, after school in a classroom; however, the contexts in which they met differed in that each set

established a unique tone. The mentoring sets discussed the same topics, the classroom, the school, the BTAP, and personal matters; however, the content of their conversations differed in that the interaction between the teachers in each set was unique. The veteran teachers in each set reported being influenced by the mentoring relationship.

The three issues were discussed separately but the connection between them is apparent and the effect that the context and the content of the mentoring relationships had on the influence that was felt by the mentor is summarized. Conclusions about the dynamic nature of mentoring relationships and suggestions for future mentoring programs are included.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Literature: Overview of Context, Content, and Influence of Mentoring..... | 10 |
| Discussion: The Process of Mentoring..... | 29 |
| Context of Mentoring..... | 30 |
| Literature: Focus on Context..... | 82 |
| Content of Mentoring..... | 87 |
| Literature: Focus on Content..... | 141 |
| Influence of Mentoring..... | 147 |
| Literature: Focus on Influence..... | 195 |
| Summary and Conclusions..... | 202 |
| Questions and Recommendations..... | 211 |
| Reflections..... | 216 |
| Methodolgy..... | 222 |
| Program that was studied..... | 227 |
| Analysis: | |
| Context..... | 229 |
| Content..... | 234 |
| Influence..... | 237 |
| References..... | 243 |
| Appendix | |
| Literature: History and Nature of Mentoring..... | 253 |
| The Beginning Teacher Assistance Program..... | 281 |

INTRODUCTION

Having formerly been a bewildered first-year teacher working without adequate support and guidance, and having recently been a veteran teacher working as a mentor in my school system's mentor program, I have come to believe that mentoring can benefit both the beginning teacher and the veteran. I still clearly recall how needy I was as a beginning teacher and how unfulfilled I became as a veteran teacher.

In the fall of 1969 I began teaching English in a suburban public school system. I was given a black grade book, a green plan book, and a huge blue curriculum guide book. I taught six class periods a day and had four different classrooms; I had a collapsible shopping cart with which I wheeled around books, student folders, and assorted pens, pencils, and chalk. During the day I taught 12th grade English, 10th grade English, journalism, and a mixed class of 9th, 10th, and 11th grade repeaters. Despite my itinerant status and despite the emotional upset that Billy Stevens, from the mixed class, caused me throughout the year, I liked being in the classroom and I enjoyed working with students. By far the most negative feeling I recall from that first year was that I was absolutely alone and that I really

didn't know what I was doing.

During the day teachers had about 30 minutes of potential talk-time with one another. Usually this time became a time for action rather than for reflection as we had to scurry about running off dittoes, trying to get access to the one unrestricted phone in order to call parents, or perhaps trying to track down additional copies of The Scarlet Letter for fourth period. When we did have a chance to talk, the tendency was to recreate ourselves with faculty gossip or with tales of summer vacation plans. The young teachers chatted with other young teachers; the more mature teachers kept to themselves also. I can still picture the experienced teachers as they talked among themselves, sharing what I felt was their special knowledge. I wondered how, when, and if I would ever be privy to it. I was in awe of the English department chairman who taught all honors classes and never had any discipline problems.

I worked in this school system for several years, gradually eased out of the "new teacher" category, attended the required in-service sessions, taught classes successfully by all the traditional external standards, but I was never encouraged to really think or

talk about what I was doing. We were all so very busy in our own rooms trying to get the job done that there was never the time or inclination to discuss teaching. It never occurred to me to ask the English department chairman for help, and it apparently never occurred to her to offer it.

When my family relocated and I went to work in another school system, some years had passed and I found that I was now viewed as an experienced teacher. I became English department chairman, and taught the honors classes. I now realized that the absence of discipline problems is one of the perks of teaching honors classes and is not necessarily the result of some special skill that the veteran teacher possesses. I also realized the irony of allowing inexperienced teachers to wrestle with the problems of unwilling students in many basic level classes while giving the most experienced teachers the self-motivated honors level students who all but teach themselves.

Although I still felt that I had no "special knowledge", I did find that some new teachers came to me occasionally with urgent requests for help with specific problems such as which novel to use after The Great

Gatsby, how long to spend on Julius Caesar, or if the ninth grade research paper should be five or ten pages long. They needed answers; they didn't want to talk about teaching. They didn't have time; they needed information that would expedite their preparations for the next day or for the next period.

Meanwhile, I was feeling the lull which comes early in a teacher's career, the time when the stepping stool career ladder of public education has leveled off and you're on the top of the stool with nowhere to go. I still enjoyed being in the classroom and took pleasure in helping individual students, but the challenge was gone. I had settled in and I didn't like the feeling. Taking graduate courses was thought-provoking but I did want something more as a part of my professional life in the classroom. The casual, sporadic, superficial help I had provided to some beginning teachers never evolved into reciprocal relationships with other teachers. There was never the feeling of working together, and I was never formally recognized as a helper.

In the spring of 1987 when a memo explaining the new mentoring program came from the central office, I was already primed to apply. A selection committee of

teachers and administrators reviewed the applications and selected the forty teachers who would serve as mentors for the next school year. I felt honored to be selected.

During the summer mentors were notified that they were to be present at a mentoring workshop to be held at a county middle school in late August. At the workshop mentors met their preassigned beginning teachers. The teachers learned that the purpose of the county mentor program was to help the beginning teachers pass the Beginning Teacher Assistance Program, a state-mandated performance evaluation which would take place in late October. In order to pass, the beginning teacher would have to display minimum competency in twelve of the fourteen designated areas.

Because there were only twenty new teachers who required mentors, many veteran teachers were not given new teachers at all. Unfortunately, I was one of the "unassigned" veteran teachers. Although I was disappointed, I soon learned that a new teacher would be reporting to work in my high school and that she would be my beginning teacher. This new teacher worked part-time and was only in the school for the first three

periods of the day. Also, she was a social studies teacher and I was an English teacher. As we worked together, I was interested to find that her concerns had little to do with the BTAP evaluation which was the stated focus of the mentoring program, but that she had more urgent concerns which revolved around classroom management and curriculum matters. I began to wonder whether or not I was mentoring appropriately.

The following year I reapplied to the mentoring program and at the August workshop found that I had been assigned two beginning teachers. This time the teachers were not scheduled to teach in my school, but they were both English teachers. I approached the process of mentoring just as I had the preceding year, trying to let the needs of the beginning teachers determine the nature of our mentoring sessions. Again I began to wonder about the process called "mentoring". The sessions with each of my beginning teachers were so different; I was curious about when, where, and under what conditions other mentors and their beginning teachers might be meeting. I also wondered about whether other mentoring pairs were considering ideas and holding conversations similar to those which dominated our

mentoring sessions. I realized too, that all our talk about teaching was having an effect upon me, upon the way I felt about my own classroom and on the way I felt about teaching. My personal interest in the concept of mentoring and my desire to know more about the actual process guided me toward this research project.

Theoretically, mentoring should promote the reciprocal communication which can bond teachers. As veteran teachers welcome beginners and start to make them privy to a shared body of knowledge about teaching, the veterans have their knowledge recognized and reinforced and have their long-held notions subjected to scrutiny. The beginners, for their part, have the chance to test the theories of the college classroom against the realities of the public school-room. The mentor can come away rejuvenated; the beginner, reassured.

What we don't know, and perhaps fail to ask about mentoring, are those questions that focus on the actual nature of the mentoring process and which require close observation of the process itself. We can imagine what mentoring should be, can find out what participants felt it actually was, but unless we conduct in-depth studies of the mentoring process in practice, we cannot say what

mentoring is.

In order to begin to bridge the gap between mentoring theory and mentoring practice we need to look carefully at mentoring as it occurs. The purpose of this study is to observe mentors, their beginning teachers, and the mentoring process and to address the following issues:

1. What approaches and environments form the context of mentoring?
 - a. Under what conditions do the beginning teacher/veteran teacher pairs meet?
 - b. What are the personal and professional characteristics, personality traits, teaching experiences, attitudes about teaching, of the mentors? How do these characteristics contribute to the context of the mentoring relationship?
 - d. What influences do the beginning teachers have on the context of the mentoring relationship?
2. What is the nature of the conversations between the teachers during the mentoring sessions?

- a. What do mentors and beginning teachers discuss during mentoring sessions?
 - b. What are the dynamics of the interaction during the mentoring sessions?
 - c. What types of thinking, descriptive or analytical, are evidenced in the conversations during the mentoring sessions?
3. How does mentoring influence the veteran teachers in the mentoring relationship?
- a. How is the veteran teacher's mentoring experience influenced by that teacher's motivation for becoming a mentor and expectations for the mentor/beginning teacher relationship?
 - b. How does the context of the mentoring relationship influence the veteran teacher?
 - c. How does the content of the conversations during mentoring influence the veteran teacher?

LITERATURE:

Overview of the Context, Content, and Influence of Mentoring

Literature describing the long history of mentoring and detailing a variety of approaches to mentoring in private industry, in nursing, and in education provided an overview of the field of mentoring and gave me an informed perspective from which to consider the mentoring that I observed. Although the review of this literature does not bear directly on the study reported in this paper, it was invaluable to me as background for all of the work that I did. The review of this literature which discusses the history and types of mentoring is included in the appendix of this document.

The literature review which is presented in this chapter contains those topics and ideas which I used throughout the data collection and analysis phases of this study and which were pertinent to the three issues: the context or setting for mentoring, the content of the conversations between the veteran and beginning teachers during mentoring, and the influence that being a mentor had upon the veteran teacher. The literature suggests

settings in which mentoring can occur, discusses the reflective processes that can occur between the veteran and the beginner, and speculates about the possible effects of the mentoring process on the mentor. However, there is a surprising lack of detailed descriptions of mentoring in practice. As I read the literature on mentoring and focused on the context, the content, and the influence of mentoring, I realized the connections between each of the issues. The settings of the mentoring experiences and the conversations the teachers had during the mentoring sessions affected the influence that the veteran teachers reported having felt.

The Context of Mentoring

The context in which mentoring occurs includes the traditional elements of setting, the time, place, and external conditions under which the mentoring took place. I also found the mood, tone, or atmosphere which predominated at each session was an important aspect of the context of mentoring.

What happens after a mentoring program has been approved in a school system, mentors have been chosen

and trained, and the mentors and their proteges have met and become acquainted? The program that I studied has guidelines requiring that a minimum of ten hours be spent in active mentoring. These ten hours are supposed to occur outside of the 8:30 to 3:30 school day. There are no guidelines concerning just how the ten hours are to be spent. What is the context in which the mentoring occurs? Few have provided the field of education with a clear conceptualization of the act of mentoring (Merriam, 1983). The literature does reiterate the impact that two factors, the isolation of teachers and the demands upon teachers' time, may have on the context in which teaching, learning to teach, and mentoring take place.

The context in which most teaching occurs is one of isolation. Although classroom teachers engage in countless interactions with students each day, they are isolated from colleagues most of the day (Davis, 1986). The casual faculty lounge chatter provides relief from classroom stresses but the opportunity to interact with fellow teachers is brief and there is little time to talk about teaching. Isolation and independence have become part of the culture of teaching (Lortie, 1975).

Teachers learn to rely on themselves and develop individualistic strategies for addressing their concerns (Wildman, Niles, Magliaro, & McLaughlin, 1986).

Wright and Wright (1987) point out that mentoring activities can occur more easily in business than in education because of the pronounced hierarchical structure in most business settings. Unlike induction activities in most schools, in most businesses there is a built-in structure through which bosses instruct subordinates. While there are no superiors or subordinates within most teaching staffs, there are experienced and inexperienced teachers and mentoring recognizes the potential for veterans to help novices in much the same way that experienced workers help newcomers in private industry. In many school systems, although teachers share common problems and resources, they are encouraged, by administrations and/or by the structure of the system, to work independently. Mentoring activities should foster communication and reduce isolation. This prescription is supported by the findings related to peer coaching (Hall & McKeen, 1988) and its effectiveness in reducing isolation, and mentoring activities parallel peer coaching activities

in the ability to reduce isolation. Once teachers become less isolated, the context of induction into teaching should create an environment that is conducive to teacher-learning as well as to teaching.

The context in which teachers work during the first years of their careers may be crucial to the effectiveness and duration of their careers. According to a report issued by The National Institute of Education (1978):

The conditions under which a person carries out the first year of teaching have a strong influence on the level of effectiveness which that teacher is able to achieve and sustain over the years; on the attitudes which govern teacher behavior over even a forty year career; and indeed, on the decision whether or not to continue in the teaching profession (p.3).

Successful mentoring relationships require an environment that promotes inquiry and reflection. Having studied educational theory, having practiced in a student teaching situation, and usually having significant enthusiasm, most new teachers coming into

the schools are ready to learn to teach (Nemser, 1986), to put into practice the ideas that they have entertained in college. The attitude of the school district administration, the degree of support from the school principal, and the relationships the new teacher develops with other teachers help shape the context of learning to teach. "Contexts which encourage reflective practice are contexts which provide relevant information to inform reflection and provide structures for the exchange of information" (Veal, Clift, & Holland, 1988, p.3). Over the course of my study I observed the enthusiasm of the new teachers who were encouraged to inquire and to be creative. To create collegial environments, schools should encourage teachers to observe each other's teaching, to provide suggestions for improvement, and to discuss professional problems (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). Such activities can be part of the context of mentoring.

As I read and reviewed the literature which detailed possible contexts for mentoring, possible ways in which mentoring could take place, I realized the diversity of approaches from program to program. Some programs have trained mentors and proteges in ways of

observing and collecting data about their classrooms; the pairs regularly record critical events and then analyze their findings alone and as a pair (Howey, 1988). After watching mentoring in progress, I feel that preservice training for mentors would help the veterans promote inquiry and reflection in the mentoring relationship.

While some mentoring programs encourage mentors to work with their proteges in creating an appropriate context for mentoring, in other programs developers decide appropriate mentoring activities that will express what the developers see as the essential functions and strategies of mentoring (Anderson & Shannon, 1988). Such prescriptive approaches may expedite the creation and implementation of mentoring programs but their value to the teacher-participants who have little control over them may be limited. Teacher involvement in all aspects of mentoring, the planning, the implementation, and the process can promote communication among teachers and can begin to diminish teacher isolation.

In addition to teacher isolation, another key element in the context of mentoring is time. Wildman and

Niles (1987a) caution against ignoring the importance of the relationship between time and complex learning. It is difficult to build more time into teachers' schedules (Wildman & Niles, 1987a). Due to the complexity of the school day and the demands on teachers' time, schools become anti-intellectual places where action is valued above reflection (Rogus, 1988). Sergiovanni (1985) concurs that teachers aim at action, not knowledge. During the school day teachers are absorbed in the act of teaching and have little time for considered analysis. Pressed for time, teachers must take action to resolve problems. There is often no time to inquire or reflect. Mentoring activities have the potential to alter the context of teaching and learning for new teachers and for veterans by providing sanctioned time to inquire and reflect.

If mentoring relationships that encourage thinking and talking about teaching become a recognized part of the process of inducting beginners into teaching, administrators and teachers may come to expect veterans and beginners to take time for sharing ideas and for passing knowledge to one another. As the literature suggests, suitable contexts for mentoring and for

teacher-learning may be those which promote communication and sharing and which acknowledge the importance of mentoring relationships and provide adequate time for them.

The Content of Mentoring

The second aspect of the BTAP Mentoring Program this study will address is the content of the mentoring sessions. By "content" I mean the conversations that the teacher-pairs have during the designated mentoring sessions, and the dynamics of the interactions between mentors and their proteges.

Interaction and conversation are essential for mentoring. They are the cause and effect of inquiry and reflection. "To encourage mentoring relationships, dialogue--and not monologue--must be nourished, especially about the age-old teachers' questions: what knowledge is of most worth and how might it best be taught" (Gehrke, 1988, p.45). New teachers want someone to talk to about teaching. One new teacher explains (Wildman, Niles, Magliaro, & McLaughlin, 1989, p.16), "To have a good listener there, because if you're all

alone you can make yourself crazy. You need to bounce this stuff off someone that can relate to it".

Having had little opportunity or encouragement to talk with other teachers about teaching during the school day, many experienced teachers find it difficult to articulate just why they use a particular tactic in the classroom. Teachers have had little training to help them talk about their practical knowledge (Lortie, 1975; Wildman & Niles, 1987b). Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986) also discuss the problem of converting practitioner knowledge into a form which will allow discussion and inquiry:

A central problem in research on the cultures of teaching is how to get "inside teachers' heads" to describe their knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and values.

Practical knowledge is difficult to describe. People often know how to do things without being able to state what they know. Furthermore, neither teachers nor researchers have an adequate vocabulary for describing practical knowledge, much of which is tacit (p.506).

Training and practice in observation and analysis

of teaching practice may allow teachers to become skilled at looking at and talking about their own teaching and that of their colleagues (Wildman & Niles, 1987b). Training in developing skills used in talking about teaching should be included in mentoring workshops (Wildman et al., 1986). Like Veal, Clift, and Holland (1988) I try to answer the question, "What is the nature of conversations among teachers?"

Niles, McLaughlin, Wildman, and Magliaro (1989) posited four categories of reflection in their analysis of teachers' discussions about teaching. The most common statements, 62% of those categorized, were "Descriptive or Evaluative", dealing with how and what the teachers did in their teaching. The second category, "Critical Understanding", accounted for 16% of the categorized statements. These were statements in which teachers inquired about why they used particular practices in their own classrooms. The third category was "Thinking about Students", which represented 12% of teachers' reflective responses. The final category included those responses (10%) which showed teachers thinking back to their own induction into teaching (Niles et al., 1989, p.5-6). Although I didn't categorize the

teachers' statements in this study into the four categories identified by Niles et al. (1989), I did use the two general delineations, what and why, to identify conversations which seemed generally descriptive or generally reflective and inquiry-oriented.

In addition to the content of the mentor/protege conversations, I examined each pair's interactions. I was interested in seeing who controlled and directed the discussions during the mentoring sessions. "The types and nature of the interactions that the experienced teacher has with a beginner are also unique to the mentoring association (Niles et al., 1989, p.16). Because of the varied personalities that existed among the mentors and proteges, a range of "ways of relating" to one another developed. Silver and Hanson (1984) identify one model which depicts four natural tendencies or preferences for relating to others and which I kept in mind as I observed the teachers interacting: the mastery style in which practicality and concern with details are important; the interacting style in which empathy, tact, and harmony dominate; the understanding style in which logic, analysis, and concern with the broad picture predominate; and the searching style which

values creativity, enthusiasm, and concern for the future. When mentoring is in progress and the mentor and protege begin their discussion, the style that they develop is determined by the context in which mentoring occurs, by the personality traits of the two people, and/or by the given purpose of the mentoring relationship.

Kram (1985) says that mentoring must be purposeful, that the mentoring process must be relevant. For the veterans and novices in the BTAP Mentoring Program, the focus is clear and the purpose is relevant. The mentor's primary responsibility is to assist the novice in passing the Beginning Teacher Assistance Program, a statewide mandated requirement for full certification.

The conversations I heard during the mentoring sessions were clearly influenced by the program's purpose. The teachers felt compelled to focus their discussions on matters related to helping the beginning teacher pass the BTAP. Comeaux and Peterson (1988) report the influence that use of another performance-based evaluation system had on the reflections of student teachers and their supervisors. Post-observation conferences held after use of the Florida Performance

Measurement Instrument were largely focused on teaching behaviors that paralleled those listed in the performance evaluation criteria. Conferences following use of the non-performance based tool, the Analytical Recording Form, showed teacher reflection on 71 behaviors that represented a broader view of teaching. The discussions and interactions that were witnessed in this study were certainly influenced by the program's focus on BTAP.

If mentoring succeeds and teachers become truly inquiry-oriented, they can become knowledge producers themselves. To enhance their own professional status and to broaden the knowledge base that guides their teaching, more practitioners must participate in knowledge production activities. Effective mentoring will encourage those skills which allow both mentor and protege to inquire into and reflect on teaching as requisites to professional growth (Howey, 1988). "Unlike theoretical knowledge, which emerges from a downward flow, professional knowledge is created in use" (Sergiovanni, 1985, p.16). This cycle of action and reaction distinguishes reflection that takes place in action from reflection that takes place on action

(Comeaux & Peterson, 1988). Comeaux recalls Schon's (1983) description of professionals as "reflecting in practice while they are in the midst of it, listening to the 'back talk' from a situation and making adjustments to behaviors accordingly (p.3). This concept of the teacher as a feedback system is in keeping with Wiener's (1950) cybernetic model which explains the operation of a closed-feedback loop during which the system, the teacher, processes, or reflects on, information or feedback and attempts to make the appropriate adjustments in behavior. During my observations I sometimes listened to teachers reflecting on their classroom actions, but usually listened to them reacting to what their partners had to say about provisions for passing the BTAP. The teachers in The BTAP Mentoring Program felt pressed for time. Although many of the conversations analyzed in this study do not show evidence of sustained reflection or inquiry, I could hear the teachers testing their ideas on one another and being influenced by the thoughts and attitudes of their partners. Active involvement in talk about teaching can alter ideas and attitudes and may influence behavior or practice in the classroom.

The Influence of Mentoring

As Little (1990) reports, mentoring in education differs from mentoring in business and industry in that it does not offer career advancement to either the veteran or the beginner. The point of the BTAP Mentoring Program is to enable new teachers to be able to demonstrate the minimum competencies required to become fully certified. If the program does its work, new teachers will exhibit the competencies. However, I was curious about the effects that mentoring might have on the mentors. The third area I studied was the nature and degree of the influence that was felt by veteran teachers in the mentoring relationship.

The literature suggests that, for most veterans, mentoring was a positive experience; mentoring was refreshing or rejuvenating for careers that had become routine; and mentoring provided practical ideas that had some effect on the mentors' classroom practices.

In preliminary interviews for this study three mentors said that being a mentor had been "invigorating" and "rewarding", and two of the three mentors said that consideration of the BTAP competencies had influenced

their classroom practices. One of these two teachers described in detail how the competency, "Clarity of Structure", had altered her daily teaching practice. She explained that although she had always started the daily lesson with a short explanation of the objective and activities for the day, it wasn't until she had considered the BTAP competencies in light of her own teaching that she realized the advantage of ending the lesson each day with time to review and summarize the main points of the lesson.

Various studies report the enlightening effect that mentoring has upon mentors. "The mentor will sometimes become the helped, as the protege shares her or his unique talents, strengths, and knowledge" (Gehrke, 1988, p.45). Mentors report a sense of professional growth (Wildman et al., 1989) and a new appreciation for the complexity of the act of teaching (Niles, Wildman, McLaughlin, & Magliaro, 1988). Veterans and beginning teachers who engage in inquiry into their own classrooms are using their insights to plan for further instruction (Howey, 1988). As teachers reflect about practice, they can use that reflection to engage in inquiry in order to improve practice (Zimpher, 1988). Niles et al. (1989)

found that mentors reported that mentoring influenced their behaviors as well as their ideas. In this study mentors reported becoming better organized and more prepared; they also reported gaining other practical information from mentoring: knowledge of legal responsibility in the classroom, procedure for locating and securing supplementary materials, and better communication and problem-solving skills (p.10).

The mentors who participated in this study reported the same practical and philosophical influences as those found in previous studies. This study attempts to determine those influences and also tries to identify the influences that the focus of this program (BTAP) has upon the classroom practices of the mentor. The competencies of BTAP may not be irrelevant for the veteran (Journal, 1986). A Printout from the VA Department of Education (1986) asks veteran teachers the question, "Do you measure up?" and advises that these competencies could very well begin to influence evaluation procedures for practicing classroom teachers. Directions for a self-assessment meant to determine strengths and weaknesses relative to the BTAP competencies are a part of this article. Veteran

teachers can rate themselves against the minimum requirements deemed necessary by the state department of education. The veteran teachers in this study did compare their classroom behaviors with those desired behaviors described in the BTAP literature. The mentors in this study may never be formally evaluated by the BTAP, and it is interesting that they all are charged with helping new teachers pass an assessment requirement that they (mentors) themselves have never experienced and have never had to pass.

Although conceptual frameworks for mentoring are widely discussed, the gap from theory to practice is only lightly bridged in the literature. As Little (1990, p.341) suggests, "There are few comprehensive studies, well informed by theory and designed to examine in depth the context, content, and consequences of mentoring." The purpose of this research is to add to the knowledge of the process of mentoring by looking closely at four mentor/protege sets and by studying the context in which their mentoring relationship occurs, the content of their conversations during mentoring sessions, and the influences felt by veteran teachers from having participated in the mentoring process.

DISCUSSION:
THE PROCESS OF MENTORING

From late August to late November I met regularly with three mentor/beginning teacher pairs and with one group of six teachers, three mentors and their respective beginning teachers. I attended their mentoring sessions, recorded their conversations, took field notes as I watched them work, and conducted individual interviews with each of the teachers. My observations of the teachers' meeting times, meeting places, and interactions during their mentoring sessions enabled me to see the context, or environment, in which mentoring occurred for each of the teacher-sets. My recordings of the teachers' mentoring sessions enabled me to hear the content, or nature, of their conversations during mentoring. My individual interviews with each of the teachers helped me to understand how the mentor teachers felt they had been influenced by the mentoring process. The context, the content, and the influence of mentoring are closely related, but I have analyzed and reported them separately because they are distinct aspects of the mentoring process.

The Context of Mentoring

At 8:30 in the morning on August 23rd, 1989 twenty-five beginning teachers who soon would be evaluated by the obligatory Virginia Beginning Teacher Assistance Program gathered at a centrally located junior high school in Trenton County. They had assembled this morning for a mandatory three and a half hour workshop that the County called the "BTAP Mentor Program Pre-Service Seminar." Some of these beginning teachers had practiced "BTAP behaviors" in college and were well-acquainted with the fourteen required competencies; other new teachers had not previously heard of BTAP and were amazed to learn that their certification would be denied if three "tappings" found them to be incompetent.

Also present on the twenty-third were thirty-some veteran teachers who had been selected as mentor teachers in Trenton County. These teachers had not experienced the BTAP performance evaluation themselves but understood that the primary purpose of their mentoring relationship was to assist the beginning teachers in passing the BTAP assessment. The BTAP teachers and their mentor teachers met for the first

time at this seminar. With varying degrees of knowledge, understanding, and enthusiasm, the beginning teachers and veteran teachers began their formal mentoring relationships.

With the County's permission, I was present at this seminar and was allowed to request volunteer participants for my study of the mentoring process. Because my presence at all of their mentoring sessions would constitute somewhat of an invasion of the teachers' privacy, I was anxious about whether or not I would get the requisite four volunteer pairs. It was important for both teachers in each pair to be comfortable having a third party present during their discussions because any uneasiness could have damaged their mentoring relationship. So I presented my plan, made my request and waited.

By noon I had been approached by two teacher-pairs who eagerly volunteered to be part of the study. One mentor who had not been assigned a BTAP teacher supplied me with the names of two more mentors who would probably be willing to work with me. I approached them; they agreed, and I felt ready to move ahead with the study. As I was leaving, I was approached by a BTAP teacher who

volunteered himself and his mentor and by another mentor and her BTAP teacher who offered to participate if I needed them. As it turned out, I did need them. One of the two pairs whose names I had been given had to withdraw from the study because of scheduling conflicts. The official participants in the study became Alma and Allison, who had been the first pair to volunteer; Carol and Carrie, who had stopped me as the seminar ended to offer to help out if I needed them; Beryl and Bev, who had been the second pair to volunteer and who later became a group which included Martha and Melissa, and Joan and Jessica; and Dorothy and Debbie, whom I had asked to participate and who had agreed, with just a few initial reservations. As the general meeting adjourned, the newly formed mentoring pairs left their co-workers, and within the County's guidelines each pair began to interpret the mentoring process differently.

To anyone not privy or witness to the happenings which transpired at each pair's mentoring sessions, the context in which the mentoring took place might be thought to be predictable and quite similar for each of the pairs. The times at which the teachers could meet were controlled by the program guidelines which stated

that none of the ten hours of formal mentoring were to occur between the hours of 8:30 and 3:30, the regular school day. In fact, with the exception of one early morning session held by Carol and Carrie, all of the sessions were after school and lasted from one to two hours. The other contextual elements, place where and conditions under which the mentoring occurred, varied from pair to pair and from session to session.

Alma and Allison were the first pair to plan a mentoring session; in fact Alma, the mentor, had given me the date, time, and place of this first meeting before the pre-service seminar adjourned. The pair met at 4:15 on Wednesday, August 30th, one week after they had been introduced. Because the two teachers were assigned to separate schools, they decided to alternate meeting sites, one time at Allison's school, the next time at Alma's. Today's session was held at Allison's school, in Allison's classroom. The school was brand new. Roads into the school were still being completed; the library was empty save the unopened boxes stacked in the corner; the vice principal was trying to fill in for an ailing principal in order to have the school ready for children on the day after Labor Day.

I arrived at the school before Alma and when I checked in at the office I was asked to wait in an anteroom until Allison was excused from a faculty meeting which was running late. About five minutes after I had settled down with a magazine, Alma arrived. We reacquainted ourselves and she began to talk enthusiastically about this chance she had been given to work with a new teacher. Although she had previously been selected as a mentor, she had never actually been paired with a new teacher because each year there are several surplus mentor teachers chosen. Alma was ready to mentor. She already had plans to take Allison to dinner after BTAP was over and she described to me the silver apple necklace that she would give to Allison in November. Apples became something of a symbol in their relationship over the next few months. Alma often described Allison as an "apple person" and cautioned her about "keeping apples" in her own basket, or keeping herself happy and healthy. Although the relationship between Alma and Allison became one of respect and reciprocity, the tone set by Alma in this first session, that of nurturing a talented young teacher, was sustained throughout the formal mentoring relationship

and was punctuated each time the "apple theme" was mentioned in their sessions. As Alma reminded Allison in their first session, "Remember what I told you before. I'm like a doctor; I'm on call day and night and there will be times when you need an apple or two."

The immediate environment that surrounded Alma and Allison for their first meeting was warm and welcoming. Allison had decorated her room with teacher-made materials, bulletin boards, and a personalized greeting for each of her students. When we positioned ourselves in the room, Alma was undaunted by the miniature primary grade chair on which she was forced to perch. Seated across a small table from Allison, Alma leaned forward eagerly, questioning her new friend about her ability "to survive" on the small partial paycheck that she would receive the next day. From my spot nearby at a student desk I could see that Allison appeared to be inclined back in her chair in reaction to Alma's enthusiastic approach, and I thought about Alma's advice that Allison should wave a red flag if she felt Alma becoming overzealous in her mentoring. Alma was clearly in charge of this session and felt responsibility for the direction it would take. "That's why I made a little

lesson plan and I said, 'I'm going down there and I'm going to sit down with her and spend an hour...' and then we'll come up with what our goals are, or kind of like what we're going to do and then..um...we'll have a plan. We'll know what we're doing."

As the teachers talked, I heard them repeatedly mention the same topics and concerns I had known as a teacher and that I had considered when I was a mentor. As I thought about the repetition in their discussions, I realized that three themes or recurring ideas were apparent at this initial mentoring session: 1. uncertainty and apprehension, 2. initiation and collaboration, and 3. urgency and time. These themes appeared and reappeared in the sessions held by each of the pairs; they formed threads which tied the frustrations, satisfactions, and anxieties of all of the teachers, beginners and veterans. Allison was unsure of some of the practical concerns of her contract and reported hearing only "bits and pieces" of information about health insurance coverage. She was apprehensive about teaching the new reading series that was being introduced this year. Still, even at this first session, the two teachers enthusiastically discussed the

possibilities of video taping Allison's class. To Allison it was "just incredible; someone can sit there and tell you all you want but until you see it yourself...It's really great." Alma agreed that, "if you go back and look at [the tape] and talk together, you see things or you hear things." The third recurring theme, that of time, the lack of it, its passing, and the use of it, was first mentioned by Alma who discussed "spending a certain amount of time on reading, a percentage of class time on reading", and when she notes, "but the problem is our [observation] window is coming up real fast and we don't even have ten weeks", and is reiterated by Allison who voices the common concern of teachers, "We didn't have the time". Her grade-level meeting and the important scheduling information she needed would have to be put off until the next day because in-service sessions and the cafeteria procedures meeting had consumed the day.

The mentoring relationship that Alma and Allison started this day was further influenced by their home school environments, especially the one in which Allison was working. Alma had been teaching in the county "forever", as she put it, and was secure in her position

at her school. She knew people. She knew what to expect. Allison however, in addition to being a first-year teacher, was helping to open a first-year school, and was expected to introduce a reading series that was in it's first year. There were unknowns everywhere. She felt reassured by the fact that there were other BTAP teachers in this large elementary school and in a meeting that the vice principal held with all of the BTAP teachers, they wrote down important BTAP dates and requested "staff recognition on the days that they were going to be observed so that other staff members knew not to send people down." Alma concurred, "cause that's your big day." Clearly, the focus in this relationship was upon the needs and concerns of the beginning teacher.

Alma and Allison ended this first session having decided not to meet again until after the first hectic week of school was over. However, as Alma and I walked to our cars, she was rethinking some things that Allison had said, especially a comment she had made about the first day of school; "I've had a nightmare about the first day of school, that they [students] all start crying and I don't know what to do so I just cry along

with them." The thought of Allison standing in her room, crying along with her students, coupled with the very real fact that Allison's school library was not yet opened and that Allison seemed to be without certain teaching materials prompted Alma to telephone Allison and me in order to arrange an emergency meeting before the opening of school. We would meet at Alma's school at 3:30 on Friday. Also meeting on Friday were Carol and Carrie who had offered to participate if I needed them and whom I had called when another pair withdrew from the study.

At 7:40 on Friday I found Carol, the mentor, in her classroom and we walked around the corner to Carrie's classroom. In many ways Carrie's teaching situation was similar to Allison's. Carrie was a young first-year teacher in a brand new school and was also about to teach the new reading series that reportedly "had veteran teachers stymied". Carrie must have spent hours getting her room ready. It was a kaleidoscope of colors, with brightly colored fish swimming across the bulletin board and M & M people, each one bearing a student's name, posted on the classroom door. As was the case with Allison's school, Carrie's building hadn't yet achieved

a particular atmosphere or personality of its own. Road crews were still paving the access road to the school; the playground blacktop had not been completed, and the unpacked boxes in the library held teaching materials waiting to be inventoried and distributed.

Carrie was a few minutes late for the session and she apologized profusely and unnecessarily. She was living at her parents' home and there had been an emergency there this morning. Carrie's mother was also employed in the school system, and living at home allowed Carrie to discuss school problems and to compare notes with someone who understood the situation. Allison also lived in an environment where school and teaching were major topics of discussion. She lived nearby with a roommate who was a teacher in a neighboring county. Both Carrie and Allison were devoted to becoming effective teachers; they had both spent untold hours getting ready for the first day of classes. Extremely conscientious and quick to criticize herself, Carrie was unduly worried about not having arrived promptly for this first mentoring session.

Carol and Carrie shared equal enthusiasm as they sat side by side at a small table near the front of

Carrie's room. Carol talked animatedly with her hands held in her lap unless she was making a point, and Carrie leaned forward taking notes. Carrie's quiet voice compared with Allison's equally quiet voice as I listened to the tapes of the sessions. Their voices contrasted with the more demonstrative voices of Alma and Carol. Carrie seemed to like to listen to Carol talk and Carol cajoled Carrie into thinking and talking about her teaching. "Just what are you kinda thinking in your mind as to what your morning is gonna look like?" When Carrie chuckled and said, "Well", Carol teased her and said, "Let's pretend." A spirit of discovery and possibility ran through this session and helped establish a positive, upbeat tone which was sustained during their relationship.

Being teachers in the same school allowed Carol the convenience of stopping by informally to ask Carrie how the day had gone, and it gave Carrie the chance for a quick question before or after school. However, because Carol was part of a staff development project which was merely housed in this new elementary school, she was not a regular member of the school's teacher force which meant that she was excluded from many teacher duties and

probably from much of the teacher-culture within the school. Also, because the school had no history as yet, Carol could not really answer Carrie's many questions about school procedures. "Just make a note to ask [the principal]. Different principals run it different ways..Being that this is a new school, I'm not sure." Also, the realities of the teaching day allow for very little teacher-to-teacher discussion. A quick "how's it going?" or a wave in the hall are often the extent of adult interaction among classroom teachers.

The three themes that formed a common thread that ran through the mentoring sessions were present in this pair's first session. Carrie's apprehension was clear in the many questions she asked about policies, procedures, and techniques which she would be expected to know, to follow, and to use when school opened in three days. The pair's sense of collaboration prompted the frequent use of the first person plural, "we", in their conversations and Carrie began her initiation into the teaching via Carol's humorous anecdotes about bathroom emergencies and lunchroom antics. The ever-present concern over time brought Carol to note that "we're right down to the wire here before school starts."

Despite the unknowns and uncertainties Carol and Carrie both remained eager for their next session. Carol was "having a great time...it's exciting." Forever appreciative, Carrie declared, "Well, you've been so good to me already."

That same afternoon at 3:30 I arrived at Alma's school and saw that she was assembling a "CARE" package for Allison. She asked me to take a look at some old puzzles she was offering Allison. We worked for a few minutes trying to find and fit missing pieces and Allison swept in, on the run, from a busy day of meetings and last minute attention to her classroom. The context of this second mentoring session differed from that of the first. In addition to a change of location, the purpose of this meeting was a change from their meeting the previous Wednesday. Once again Alma took charge but her purpose today was to intervene and to address what she saw as the urgent needs of her beginning teacher who was about to begin teaching with only scant supplies. Neither teacher sat down. Alma scurried about, chatting and shopping for supplies from her shelves and file drawers. Allison seemed a bit overwhelmed at this flurry of activity, watching Alma as

she gave suggestions and filled a large box with several types of paper, puzzles, crayons, paper clips, magic markers, tag and poster board, and a list of "to dos" for the first day of school. Alma had spoken with other primary grade teachers in her school and had assembled a fifteen-page packet, "Hints from Alma", that she gave to Allison. Included in the packet was a schedule for the first three weeks of school and a complete guide for the first portion of the year. Alma picked up the apple theme again when she presented Allison with a magnet she had found. "You can put it anywhere...and it's a basket." It was a reminder not to allow her basket to become empty, to save some apples for herself so that she would have the energy and initiative she would need to work with her students.

As had been the case with their first session, Alma had determined the nature of this meeting. There had been very little conversation as Alma had had so much to tell Allison. The one occasion that Allison took to ask for help was in reference to a guinea pig that she hoped to bring into her classroom. Her questions about the appropriateness of animals in the classroom sparked a humorous anecdote from Alma about the care and feeding

of guinea pigs, their tendency to become vitamin C deficient, their reproductive patterns, and the need to muck out their cages regularly. She used another anecdote to explain to Allison just how important it was for students to read books of high interest level. Alma described the way in which "Auntie Alma" had used such books to motivate a non-reader and to help her through the second grade. The retelling of episodes from their years of experience as teachers was one of the most often used and one of the most effective means of illustrating ideas and supporting the points that the mentors were trying to make for their beginning teachers. A majority of the anecdotes were humorous, but others were serious, sometimes poignant.

This meeting between Alma and Allison had the same tone as their first meeting. Allison looked overwhelmed; she sighed, frowned, and shuffled the growing pile of handouts Alma was giving her, yet she was positive and eager about what she saw as the job at hand. Alma remained ever-eager, looking out for Allison's well-being. The time of the mentoring session was after school as usual, but other contextual elements, the place and the conditions under which they met, were

altered. This session had been spontaneous, a direct result of an immediate need that Alma had seen. Also, during this session we three were accompanied by a fourth person; the piano tuner was busily going about testing out and tuning the piano. It was a meeting of action, not conversation. When the last of the supplies had been loaded into Allison's gift box, I helped her carry it to the car and she commented to me that she was very thankful that Alma had seen the need and had taken the initiative to gather so many supplies and teaching tips for her. I looked at my watch on the way to my car. It was five o'clock and Allison was headed back to her school to keep on working.

The first day of school was Tuesday, September 5th. I had not heard from the two other mentors in the study, Beryl and Dorothy, but Carol had scheduled a second mentoring session for Thursday, September 7th. I phoned Beryl on Wednesday and she invited me to a "get together" on Friday at the home of another mentor from her school. The three mentors and three BTAP teachers from her school would be there. I assumed it was a get-acquainted session and told her I would be glad to go. I had phoned Dorothy before school started to see if she

and Debbie had arranged a meeting, and on Wednesday evening Dorothy called back to say that they also would be holding their first session on Friday. She agreed to gather data for me and to phone me after the session was over. This conflict between Beryl and Bev's first session and Dorothy and Debbie's session was the first of six scheduling conflicts throughout the study.

Carol and Carrie's second session on Thursday the 7th was the next session I attended. At 3:30 the three of us met in Carrie's room. Carrie looked tired after the first hectic week of school and Carol asked her if she really felt like meeting today. From the start Carrie's attitude had been that she needed and wanted to meet regularly with Carol. These sessions were important to her. Like Alma, Carol brought goodies for her beginning teacher. "Look what else I brought for your fish file..and this is a tadpole which I love dearly." Carrie was genuinely pleased. "Oh, that's great! I tell ya, you're spoilin' me." Before they began their session, they had once again established a positive, mutually enthusiastic tone.

As before, Carol appeared to control the session. She reviewed what they had done at their first meeting

and suggested that, "this time we'd spend some time and have a chance to say, how are things going?" Despite the appearance of control, Carol was responding to Carrie's desire for information and direction. Carol wanted to tailor their sessions to fit Carrie's needs. "I want this to be what will help you". But Carrie wanted Carol to take the lead; "What would you suggest..Any way it's gona be beneficial...If you know of a way that's worked best...because you've been a mentor.." Carol left the question open by saying that previously "everybody was approaching it in a different way." Typically, Carol's approach to mentoring was eclectic. She felt that there were so many good ideas, philosophies, and possibilities that there usually wasn't only one definitive solution to a problem. After discussing several choices Carol would usually say, "It's whatever you're comfortable with", and she really meant it.

The general themes resurfaced during this session. Uncertainty and apprehension were clear in Carrie's voice as she described this first week as "mind-boggling...but hopefully next week it'll all just fall right into place." The theme of initiation and collaboration appeared when Carol reassured her that,

"the first week is so...I don't care how many years you teach; it's just so unusual." And the constant reminder of time was present in Carrie's concern over budgeting her time in class and in Carol's concern that Carrie might have too much to do in too little time. "Well, so that you can get back to what you have to do...Do you want to set up a time....Is this okay with you..to go one a week or is that pushing you too much?"

During this session Carol and Carrie once again sat side by side on small chairs in Carrie's room. They both talked, although Carrie seemed to prefer listening, and she took notes when Carol made suggestions. Their thinking was very student-centered. As Carrie said, "This is a cute class. It's gona be hard but it's exciting to me to know that they're all different and there's a different way I can help all of them. But I know I'm gona get heart-broken if I feel like I haven't done enough." And both teachers welcomed new ideas. Carol felt, "There's always something to learn and there are always so many options to try." And Carrie shared her own feelings about the first few days of teaching. "It hasn't been perfect, but this is my first year and I'm learnin'...and I'll learn every year, so I'm just

open." This spirit of openness, possibility, and discovery was an outstanding feature of the pair's relationship and appeared to influence the context in which the mentoring process occurred for them.

The context or environment in which mentoring occurred for the two remaining pairs of teachers contrasted with the environment created by Alma and Allison and by Carol and Carrie. The meeting times were similar. After school was really the only reasonable time for the pairs to meet. Also, like Alma and Allison, Dorothy and Debbie alternated meeting places, first at one school, then at another. Beyond these superficial similarities, the mentoring contexts differed.

The structure of Beryl and Bev's relationship altered. They joined two other pairs and became a group. The arrangement that had at first appeared to be a purely social gathering became a significant contextual factor. The mentors at Beryl's school felt that meeting as a group would allow the two less experienced mentors the chance to work with a mentor who had been in the mentoring program previously and would give the beginning teachers the chance to share their problems and concerns. These six teachers all worked in the same

school; however, their mentoring sessions were held in the home of one of the mentors who lived nearby. The fact that they were a group and that they were meeting away from the school helped to make their mentoring relationship unique.

Beryl, the mentor, had given me directions to Martha's house but suggested that I meet them at the junior high school and follow someone over to the session. I waited in the office and Bev came to escort me back to Beryl's room. After tending to the usual after school clean-up and hasty reorganization for the next day, the teachers were ready to depart to Martha's. The pairs were: Beryl, the mentor, with Bev, the beginning teacher; Martha, the mentor, with Melissa, the beginning teacher, and Joan, the mentor, with Jessica, the beginning teacher.

Martha's two young school-age children and one toddler were home when we arrived. The older children seemed glad to see us and perhaps anticipated a party as guests arrived and Martha served yogurt pie and iced tea. The homey setting for this session was a marked contrast to the schoolroom settings of all the other mentor/BTAP teacher pairs. One of the teachers had

brought a more comfortable change of clothes and she excused herself to get into them; others chatted and joked about the first week of school; others passed out the two kinds of yogurt pie. At around 3:30 they all sat down around Martha's kitchen table. Martha's children and their friends came in and out.

The tone that began to develop, and which lingered throughout the formal mentoring process, was the result of a complex mixture of personality types and beginning teacher needs rather than the result of a direct relationship between just two teachers in a mentor/BTAP teacher pair. An uninformed observer would not have been able to distinguish the three separate pairs, either from their seating arrangements or from their conversations and interactions. Martha was the most vocal of the mentors and was quick to answer classroom-oriented questions; on matters of BTAP, she deferred to Joan who was the most experienced mentor in the group. Beryl, who was the one mentor in the group who had volunteered for the study, was not feeling well, was naturally soft-spoken, and said very little during this first session. Her beginning teacher, however, was quite outspoken and gave the impression of taking charge.

On this Friday afternoon there was a "TGIF" atmosphere, a sense of unwinding, that set the mood for a candid discussion of the first week of school. Because the teachers knew one another and knew the other teachers and students at the school, there was a tendency to discuss mutual students, interpersonal staff problems, and administrative idiosyncrasies. Complaints about students, staff, and curriculum were aired during the group's sessions. The same three general themes that had appeared in the sessions of the two pairs that had met prior to this date appeared in this group session as well. However, the themes, uncertainty and apprehension, initiation and collaboration, and various aspects of time, were treated differently by this group than by the pairs.

The beginning teachers were apprehensive. Although Jessica, who was the only married beginning teacher in the study, was rather quiet, Bev and Melissa explained their worries. Bev worried that because of the nature of her subject area, she would be marked down during her BTAP observation. The equipment she used would make group work unrealistic. Melissa worried that the curriculum in her subject area would be impossible to

"cover". Both teachers felt that their problems or uncertainties were not caused by them but rather were the result of external forces, the room and equipment or the scope of the curriculum. Within the group there was a real feeling of collaboration and initiation. Several humorous anecdotes were used to initiate the beginners into classroom management techniques. As one mentor advised, "Say, 'I trusted you'; put a guilt trip on em." Even at this early session the teachers were collaborating on possible ways to beat BTAP. It was generally agreed that the BTAP observation would require a staged performance and that the mentors would work toward helping the new teachers orchestrate the performance. The last theme, time, was mentioned in this first session and gained importance at subsequent sessions. Removed from the school setting, this group did not seem to feel the urgency of time passing that had been a pressing force for those pairs that met at school. Bev did mention that she couldn't believe that BTAP was next month, but generally the mood at this session was relaxed and social. The teachers began to posture themselves as a problem-solving group. The beginning teachers, usually Melissa and sometimes Bev,

voiced their problems with faculty members and curriculum and the veteran teachers, usually Martha and sometimes Joan, would offer solutions.

The other session that took place this Friday afternoon was a contrast to the relaxed conversational meeting of Beryl's group. At 3:30 Dorothy made the twenty minute drive from her school to her beginning teacher's school. Although this was Debbie's first year as a public school teacher, she did have previous experience teaching preschool. Her quiet voice reminded me of Allison and Carrie and she was even more reticent about sharing her ideas and feelings. There was little conversation at this session as Dorothy briefly reviewed the competencies that would be required to pass BTAP. Debbie's reserved behavior and unchanging countenance never revealed any uncertainties or apprehension. She merely reported "feeling shakey" the first two days of school. Dorothy, however, did report some concern over the lack of feedback she was getting during their first session. The theme of initiation and collaboration was hinted at as Dorothy indicated the process that the two of them would have to follow in order to prepare Debbie for her BTAP observation. The element of time was

discussed in relation to the lack of time that Debbie felt she had. Her school was involved in a self-study this year and Debbie sometimes found it difficult to find time for self-study meetings and for regular sessions with Dorothy. Although Dorothy and Debbie were teaching in different schools, the fact that both teachers lived in the same neighborhood opened up the possibility of meetings, formal or otherwise, outside of the school setting.

The school in which Debbie was working was quite small and she was the only teacher on her grade level. It was an older school in an established neighborhood. New teachers were closely scrutinized by parents in the community. Being part-time, on a half-day schedule, also minimized the daily contact that Debbie had with other teachers. Dorothy was aware of the problems and pressures under which Debbie was working and although Dorothy described this session as one in which she "basically talked and got oriented", she made a "game plan" for the next few weeks which included the chance for Debbie to visit other classrooms on her grade level.

So by the end of the first week of school, each pair, or group, of teachers had held at least one

mentoring session. The parameters of the mentoring program dictated some basic similarities between the pairs, but each set of teachers had established a particular context in which the mentoring sessions would occur. In various forms and to differing degrees, the themes of uncertainty and apprehension, initiation and collaboration, and of time were present in all of the sessions. Beyond these themes each pair had already evidenced its own theme or characteristic that helped to distinguish it. Alma and Allison were the apple team, with Alma using apples to reflect her concern for Allison's well-being. Carol and Carrie were enthusiastic and were excited by the discoveries they would be able to make together. Beryl and Bev, Martha and Melissa, and Joan and Jessica formed a group that became a problem-solving center. The beginning teachers voiced their complaints and the group tried to assuage their problems and concerns. Dorothy and Debbie's relationship remained more monologue than dialogue. In a phone conversation with me Dorothy revealed her uncertain about Debbie's ideas and feelings.

In the next two weeks each pair held one more mentoring session. Beryl's group did not meet again to

hold a formal session until September 28th. Being in the same school did facilitate their casual interaction and because they had decided to continue meeting as a group, it was sometimes more difficult to schedule a meeting that everyone could attend. The pairs that did meet during this two-week period, Alma and Allison on the 12th, Dorothy and Debbie on the 13th, and Carol and Carrie on the 14th, maintained the same context that had characterized their previous sessions. The teachers now knew what to expect from one another and had a more concrete notion of just what a "mentoring session" meant for them. Alma had phoned Allison and knew that she had a terrible cold. Alma sent flowers and a note reminding Allison to "keep that apple basket full". Dorothy continued to dominate the conversation during their meetings and Debbie continued to play a passive role. Carol and Carrie were still having fun; as Carrie said, "You may see the weirdest things up in this classroom", and Carol laughed and replied, "I can't wait!"

On September 20th all of the BTAP teachers in the county and most of the mentors attended the area BTAP Orientation Session. This meeting was a turning point

for the mentors and beginning teachers. It was at this session that their attention was turned toward BTAP, the County's intended focus for the mentoring program. For some of the teachers this meeting was a signal to get serious about the preparations for the BTAP observation window. For others, the meeting was a confirmation of their feelings that BTAP was just foolishness. The representative who conducted the session supplied some of the vital statistics of BTAP. The statewide average was 86% passing on the first assessment. In this area, 95% had passed on their first assessment and 100% had passed by their second assessment. No one in Trenton County had been dismissed for failure to pass the BTAP.

The BTAP representative informed the beginning teachers that they would each be receiving a letter giving the names of the observers they were to call in order to set up the three observations. In efforts to be candid, the representative conceded the obvious, that BTAP is a test, an assessment, and that attempts at assistance would come only after the requisite competencies were not demonstrated. She advised the new teachers that "it's your show, and if you want to call it a show, that's fine."

She answered questions about BTAP and gave helpful hints. "BTAP does not take content into account at all. You could give a lousy lesson and still get credit." When one concerned teacher asked how she could get credit for "Questioning Skills" when she had a room filled with non-verbal students, the reply was, "ask the questions anyway, even though you won't get answers; the evaluators can't bubble the lack of response on their bubble sheet." Additional suggestions were that "things in the room won't get marked unless you refer to them." A lovely bulletin board would go unnoticed or at least unrecorded unless it was referred to during the observation. The beginning teachers were encouraged to "write up an impressive plan, whatever looks good on paper; you can say $2+2=5$ but the observer has no place to mark it." Some of the teachers at this orientation were busy taking notes; others raised their eyebrows and looked at one another. The nature of subsequent mentoring sessions was determined by the teachers' reactions to the reminder of the looming presence of the BTAP.

Alma and Allison, and Dorothy and Debbie were the two mentoring pairs who next held sessions. Since the

orientation meeting Allison was clearly focused on plans to pass BTAP. She valued Alma's input but definitely saw the stake she had in giving a good performance on the BTAP days and was accepting responsibility for success or failure. The relationship between the two teachers had become much more reciprocal. Alma no longer seemed to dominate the sessions, either by leaning forward on the edge of her chair or by directing the nature and flow of the conversation. This time Allison was the one to come to the session with a plan, a schedule of the competencies she would like Alma to watch for when she observed. Because Alma could only observe Allison twice, the two made plans to have Alma's husband come to school to videotape Allison's class so that the teachers could determine whether or not she had demonstrated all of the competencies in three tries. The two of them were collaborating, and with a sense of humor, Alma was welcoming Allison into teaching. Allison shared the story of a close call she had had this week when a new student arrived and fortunately was assigned to another teacher. "Jean and I both had 24 and they gave her this new student and apparently this child is an absolute terror. Thank God I didn't get her...Oh, my gosh!" Alma

laughed; "Oh, Allison, this is the way of the world. But if you get a new student that [BTAP] week, you are shipping her next door or down the hall or to music for the entire three days!"

Across town this same afternoon, Dorothy and Debbie were meeting, this time at Dorothy's school. The BTAP orientation meeting had affected the context of their relationship also, but the primary influence had been upon Dorothy, the mentor. In a phone conversation she told me that she was worried about the continued lack of communication between herself and Debbie, and she wondered if Debbie would be ready for the October observations. Dorothy had invited Debbie and me to meet her in the classroom of another teacher who was working with students on the same grade level as Debbie's students. Dorothy admired this other teacher's abilities and hoped that Debbie would be as impressed with the teacher's room and with her creative ideas as Dorothy had been. We all roamed around the room and as Dorothy pointed out various decorations and teaching ideas, Debbie really had very little to say. Dorothy felt that Debbie should prepare her room because its appearance would be a factor in the BTAP observation. She was

having trouble getting Debbie to be enthusiastic or even accepting about the ideas she was offered today. Referring to a cozy corner of this teacher's room complete with book sets and headphones, Dorothy asked Debbie, "Do you have a listening center?" Debbie replied, "Um...huh..but I don't bother with the headphones. We just use the tape player and books." Dorothy was concerned, "And that's not disruptive to the others?" Debbie cut off the conversation with her response. "No".

Perhaps Debbie felt intimidated by the implied comparison of her room and teaching strategies with those of this seasoned teacher. Dorothy explained, "Another thing that she does cause she's got a big group like you do is..apparently they have to have half an hour of play time; is that right?" Debbie seemed unconcerned, "Well I have been having a real hard time getting it in with all my other stuff this year. Some days we have it and some days we don't." Dorothy didn't hide her surprise, "Really? Well I thought you had to have it."

Dorothy felt that it would be a wonderful idea to give Debbie the opportunity to visit some other

classrooms to watch other teachers in action, and both Dorothy and her building principal, who happened to drop by, encouraged Debbie to take advantage of the class coverage that was offered. Debbie was slow to agree, "Well, I think I'd rather save up my leave." Dorothy explained, "You wouldn't have to take leave. That's what we're saying. It wouldn't go against you." Dorothy said later that she wondered if Debbie was backing away from their relationship. Debbie excused herself from meeting again soon. "Next week is kind of crazy for me cause we're doing that self-study and both of my reports are due next week." They didn't meet again until October 11th.

On Thursday of the week after the orientation meeting Carol and Carrie met, as did Beryl and her group. Again, these mentor/beginning teacher combinations showed signs that the nature of their mentoring sessions had been influenced by the BTAP meeting. Carol and Carrie met at the same time and place and Carol's analytical style of mentoring was maintained; however, Carrie was now considering all of her plans and preparations in light of BTAP. "Some kids, I have them tell me a story. I pull them aside and help

them, but that's probably totally wrong with BTAP because I wouldn't be monitoring the rest of the class." Carol understood Carrie's concern and agreed that the planning document "can make you or break you." However, she tried to encourage Carrie not to stage a completely contrived performance because, "you won't be comfortable and you won't be flowing naturally; whereas if you are teaching as naturally as possible in that situation, then you are more likely to perform better than you would if you are so out of character. So don't try to structure yourself so much that you're not comfortable with it."

When Beryl's group met, also at the same time and same place of their previous meetings, they too had been affected by the BTAP orientation meeting. The atmosphere in which they met and considered BTAP had gone from skepticism in their pre-orientation sessions to sarcasm in this session. One of the beginning teachers could not contain herself, "If that woman the other day who was runnin' this thing even said out loud, you know, she said, 'Just put on the act, just do it.' I thought to myself, oh, so you're testing whether or not I'm an actress, not a good teacher. You just ruined the

validity of your own damned test!" More expletives from the other group members supported her feelings and the discussion that followed confirmed what they already thought they knew.

Bev related, "But ya know, I had a teacher who named it the BWOP instead of BTAP. He named it the Beginning Teacher Weed-Out Program." Jessica countered, "Yeah but like I say, you're not weeding out any teachers." Martha agreed, "Everybody passes it." And Jessica reiterated, "It's just something else for us to have to do." Beryl agreed, "And they even said to teach a lesson you've already taught, just to perform."

The teachers were now thoroughly disillusioned with BTAP and as BTAP was the central focus for the mentoring program, their attitudes toward their sessions were influenced. Jessica started missing sessions and although she spoke with her mentor informally before school or between classes, she ultimately dropped out of the group. Melissa saw BTAP as an ugly reality of her teaching life and the negative feelings she felt about it spread to her discussions of the curriculum, her co-worker, and her classroom. Bev claimed that she understood the need for BTAP. She continued to insist

that BTAP was not a test. Beryl enjoyed the after-school sessions which offered the chance to relax with friends and to catch up on school news; she didn't like the artificiality of BTAP but generally left discussion of it to others. Martha and Joan were starting to get worried. They felt guilty at not being sufficiently "on task" with regard to BTAP. At the end of this session, after the beginning teachers had left, Joan asked me, "How are the other groups doing?" She said that she planned to look at the BTAP literature over the coming weekend and that they should discuss the competencies at their next meeting. Martha agreed that it was time to encourage her beginning teacher to get organized and to focus. "I'm feeling more pressured, I think right now, than she is to get it down on paper."

The sessions that were held between the BTAP Orientation session and the two-week BTAP observation window occurred in their same respective surroundings. Alma and Allison alternated their after school meetings between the two schools. Carol and Carrie still met each week at 3:30 in Carrie's classroom. Both Allison and Carrie were working in large new schools and had the support and encouragement of other grade level teachers

and of the administration. Beryl's group continued to meet at Martha's home and to enjoy refreshments and the company of Martha's children. Dorothy and Debbie continued to switch their meetings back and forth from school to school.

Notable differences between the sets of teachers also remained the same. Alma and Allison's apple motif continued. Allison was feeling the strain of the last few weeks before BTAP and Alma reminded her, "The apples are being taken out of your basket faster than you can imagine..and what you have to do..something... whatever...to get those apples back in your basket." Alma had observed Allison's classroom and was completely satisfied with what she saw. "I'll tell you that it was a joy for me to do this [observation]...'cause you did everything that you were supposed to do."

For Carol and Carrie the remaining pre-observation sessions were a chance to work on their ideas and to plan together. In the inquiry-oriented, "let's pretend" context, the two teachers worked on Carrie's observation lesson and their enthusiasm never waned. Carol noted, "This whole thing [the plan]..It's just that having another person to talk about it [helps]." Carrie

insisted, "Well, you've helped me so much.." And Carol returned the credit to Carrie, " Well, no, you just kept sayin' 'time' and everything. You came up with this whole format. I think this is wonderful. I'm gonna copy it!"

During the mentoring sessions that closely preceded the observation window, Beryl's group broke up into pairs in order to work one on one with the BTAP planning documents. Beryl and Bev met at the school and had more of a chance to interact directly than they had had at the group meetings. Beryl still spoke in her naturally quiet voice and Bev was still more demonstrative but they had established an effective working relationship. Beryl was unflappable and maintained a wonderful, understated sense of humor. Beryl had come to realize that her help and advice would be of real value to Bev, even though Bev had sounded so confident and independent at first that Beryl was prompted to confide that sometimes she felt like the beginning teacher.

Later that same afternoon Martha and Melissa held their session at Martha's house. Melissa had been unable to shake her negative feelings about her situation, the BTAP, the curriculum, and her fellow content area teacher. However, by meeting alone the pair were able to

work specifically on the planning document that would be used during the BTAP observation window. Joan and Jessica did not meet formally in the weeks before BTAP to work on Jessica's plans. Although she agreed that she would come through with "something in the way of a plan" for her three observations, Jessica was just so opposed to the whole notion of BTAP that she couldn't bring herself to validate it or to magnify its importance by having official meetings about it.

Finally, Dorothy and Debbie found themselves short of time as BTAP approached. Dorothy had observed Debbie. Debbie's building principal had observed Debbie. The elementary instructional supervisor had observed Debbie. Dorothy had been busy trying to help Debbie work out organizational and instructional problems and things were just starting to fall into place when the BTAP observation window was upon them. The pair still had communication problems and Dorothy told me that she was afraid that she wasn't being of sufficient help to Debbie. Dorothy still dominated the conversation, changing topics and moving the discussion along. As they sat on the small chairs, across a low classroom table, Dorothy tried to get regular, noticeable responses but

there continued to be few indicators, either physical, emotional, or intellectual, from Debbie. Fortunately Debbie was able, as the BTAP representative had suggested, "to look good on paper", and she was able to draw up a suitable plan on her own that Dorothy reviewed at home. The pair never really worked on Debbie's lesson plan or on her actual planning document together.

Alma and Allison had been the first pair to meet for a mentoring session and they were the first pair to stop the formal mentoring sessions. October 18th was the date of their final meeting. The pair had worked hard together and had participated equally in their relationship. Also, these two teachers, despite their working in separate schools, had established and had maintained the most frequent informal contact of all the sets of teachers. Messages through the mail, or the county courier, and regular phone calling kept the teachers in touch, even after the formal sessions had ended. As BTAP approached, Allison had taken the responsibility of arranging three practice BTAP sessions and had listed the competencies she would be trying to demonstrate in each lesson. Alma had taken full advantage of the observation times provided by the

county and she was certain that Allison was "born to be a teacher". Allison had used Alma's knowledge, enthusiasm, and friendship as a primary support in getting through the first weeks of school and in preparing for BTAP. Allison was probably the most practiced and prepared of the six beginning teachers as the observation window approached.

Carol and Carrie held two mentoring sessions during the observation window, one on October 23rd and one on November 1st. They also had one emergency meeting in between, before Carrie's second observation because Carrie had a question about whether or not her lesson plan would allow her to demonstrate the Individual Differences competency. When we gathered in Carrie's room on the 23rd, she confirmed that she had indeed been "tapped" that morning. Having been through one BTAP observation put Carrie in the interesting position of being more experienced than either Carol or myself, who understood the theoretical and political implications of BTAP but who had never lived through the practical realities of it as they applied to our classrooms or our careers.

Carrie was relieved to have one observation over

but, as was natural for Carrie, she had some worries. "The thing that concerned me is I never know when they [observers] stop. I fit my summary in but she hadn't put her things up and I don't know if she cut me off or what happened." She was afraid that she had completely missed the competency that dealt with questioning techniques. "It's just those questionings..I didn't really, you know, other than 'tell me this and tell me that' and 'how could this be a thing'. And I was so nervous I was glad to get through that much. So questioning is probably one I didn't get then. But I have two more chances." Carol convinced her that she probably did get credit for questioning but that they would especially consider questioning as they worked on the remaining two lesson plans.

At each session I was impressed with the latest decorations that Carrie had made for her room. Halloween was the theme this week. "Spooktacular Things Happen in Room 7". Carol always complimented Carrie for her hard work and creativity, and she maintained her enthusiastic, supportive attitude even in the midst of the pressures of the BTAP observations. She was a calming influence as she continued to help Carrie to

focus. "Okay, so what's going to happen Wednesday?" And she was reassuring as she encouraged Carrie to look at the lesson in its entirety rather than dwelling on individual competencies. "See, you were so well-prepared and organized for it [the observation]. Just keep thinking of it [the lesson] in terms of, is it meaningful."

At their final session on the first of November, Carol and Carrie met for over two hours. They labored over the wording of the planning document. And Carol, who herself was consistently analytical, cautioned Carrie about her tendency to think too much about things. "You are so analytical..You worry about things that people forget about." Carrie had continued to be overly conscientious, and Carol, like Alma who cautioned Allison to "keep that basket full", found herself trying to temper Carrie's enthusiasm and diligence. Carrie, a self-described "workaholic", knew that "that's why I'm so sick all the time, because I worry about the silliest things...My goodness I fainted. I fell down the stairs this morning." The context or situation in which Carrie found herself during the week before the BTAP observation was a whirlwind of conferences and school

commitments. A series of unavoidable circumstances had created a nearly impossible schedule for Carrie. She was away from school attending meetings during the day and was returning to school and staying late in order to meet with parents. She was already stressed and was placing unreasonable pressure upon herself. "You just don't know how thankful I am to you guys because you will be the reason why I make it." Carol tried to correct Carrie's thinking. "No, no. Don't you dare say that." But Carrie insisted, "I feel like I'm nothing. I'm a basket case or something. I want to do good because I want to look good for you guys." Carol realized that Carrie's personality type was a match with her own. "You impose it [stress] upon yourself. I mean, I'm saying that because I know; I'm that way. And people tell you to calm down and slow down, but when you get to a point that you're getting sick, you just have to shake yourself up a little bit and say, okay, some priorities." During this session Carol reassured Carrie of her commitment to their relationship. "I hope we'll still...I know we'll keep in touch with each other, but I don't want you to feel like, well, we've got ten hours in so I can't ask you to have a meeting with me." There

was little doubt that Carrie would continue to rely on Carol.

On the Thursday of the first week of BTAP observations, Beryl's group met once again as a group. Beryl herself was not present as she was away at a school conference, and Jessica, who had unofficially withdrawn from the formal mentoring session, also was not present. The teachers continued to hold their meetings away from school at Martha's home and I could almost hear them issue a collective sigh of relief as they relaxed around her kitchen table and were able to be away from the rush of school and to discuss it with jokes, and snacks, and perspective. Today was Bev's first observation and Martha and Joan were anxious to hear about it. "Tell us everything." Bev, who had been so assertive and confident at earlier sessions, was admittedly down today. "I just don't feel good about it. I don't know why. I just...Maybe it's the day." The two mentors were able to cajole her into feeling better about the lesson. Martha concluded, "Seems like you covered everything." And Joan assured Bev, "Your plan was wonderful." Bev asked, "Think so? Oh, okay." Martha joked, "Are you kidding? Nothing gets by us."

The group's discussion was held in the midst of what Martha herself described as "a zoo". The kitchen table sat adjacent to Martha's family room which stabled a spring-mounted hobby horse with a built-in whinny, and often during the sessions artificial hoofbeat sounds and various horse noises were heard. At this session Martha's youngest child rode the horse for a while, watched cartoons for a while, and crawled up onto Bev's lap where Bev enjoyed feeding her grapes. The activity prompted Martha to comment, "You have some interesting background music on your tapes; don't you?"

Having brightened Bev's outlook, the two mentors turned to Melissa who had also been observed this week. "Well, tell us about yours. So did you feel good about it?" Melissa responded negatively, "It was just like any other lesson as far as I was concerned." The discussion turned to the third "phantom member" of the group. Although Jessica no longer attended the sessions, it was apparent from their discussions about her that Martha and Joan had kept in touch with her regarding BTAP. "Did you talk with Jessica? I was talking with her after school. She didn't have a real positive observation. I got the impression that her first one

went better than her second one." The opinion of the beginning teachers was that the feelings of success or failure during the BTAP observation were directly related to the personality of the observer. Jessica's problem this day had been that "this lady was stiff, and very proper, not a communicator, no smile, just stiff. The next woman Jessica has is the one I [Bev] had today, and the one you [Melissa] had. She's real nice." The group didn't really see this meeting as a last session. Although they would not formally meet again, their relationships as teachers in the same school would continue. Their discussion soon turned from BTAP lesson plans to "hot topics" at their school, the new Family Life Curriculum and what to wear to school on Halloween dress-up day. Should Martha go as the "Devil with the blue dress on" or as a "Care Bear?"

The final pair, Dorothy and Debbie, held two mentoring sessions during the two-week BTAP window. The first one was on the afternoon of Debbie's first observation. "So, how did it go today?" were Dorothy's first words to Debbie. "I don't know", was Debbie's reply; "It was hard to tell what she [observer] thought. We met in Debbie's room and it was evident that she had

made some of the housekeeping suggestions that Dorothy had offered, and had decided not to make others. Debbie showed no emotion as she answered Dorothy's questions about the BTAP observation. She seemed reluctant to elaborate on her experiences but did admit to "feeling nervous". Debbie had completed her lesson plans independently and when Dorothy asked her if she wanted her to proofread them, Debbie said, "I don't think there's going to be a lot that really changes."

On Halloween the two teachers met for the last time. Debbie came to Dorothy's school. The remnants of Dorothy's class Halloween party were evident; ghosts hung from the ceiling and bowls of popcorn were still on the front tables. Dorothy was somewhat distracted today because her young son was sick. She was anxious to take a look at Debbie's lesson plan for her final observation. Debbie seemed tired today and she didn't have the lesson plan with her. She yawned as Dorothy made suggestions and asked questions. "So, how did it [observation] go? I called after your last observation but you weren't home. I talked to your mom." Debbie was brief. "It went pretty well, I guess." Throughout their mentoring relationship Dorothy had taken the lead,

coaxing Debbie with questions. Debbie had seldom asked any questions but today she ended the session by telling Dorothy, "I don't really have any more questions." After the session Dorothy told me that she still felt that she had failed to connect with Debbie. She was still uncertain about Debbie's feelings about their relationship and about whether or not she had been of help to Debbie.

On November third the BTAP observation window for the Trenton County area closed and the deadline for veteran teachers to have completed the requisite ten hours of mentoring came. The relationships that had been initiated by central office personnel and had commenced on August 23rd at the pre-service seminar could now officially end. Working toward the common purpose of the BTAP Mentoring Program and following its guidelines, the teachers had been at will to interpret the model according to their mutual desires and needs. What occurred was a sameness in the three common themes that emerged; to varying degrees all of the teachers revealed uncertainty and apprehension, experienced feelings of initiation and collaboration, and were pressured by the urgency of preparing to teach and by the swift passing

of time as they made their preparations. There was a similarity in the patterns of meeting times and frequencies, a slight variation in the patterns of meeting places, and a divergence in the tone and personality of each of the mentor/BTAP teacher pairs. By establishing the context in which their mentoring sessions occurred, each set of teachers created a unique environment for the discussions they had during their meetings. Although the context in which the mentoring took place is intertwined with the content or nature of the conversations which occurred, the context of the mentoring was primarily composed of those aspects that could be seen. The content of the conversations are those aspects that could be heard, what was said, how it was said, and by whom it was said. The relatedness of context and content understood, and the nature of the context of the mentoring having been considered, the stage is set for discussion of the content of the conversations that the teachers had while the process of mentoring was in progress.

Literature: Focus on Context

The literature which discusses the context or environment in which mentoring occurs formed a solid base for my observation of the actual process of mentoring. The form that the process took was varied. As Merriam (1983) points out, the act of mentoring has not been clearly conceptualized. Although the central office personnel who initiated the BTAP Mentor Program had set certain definitive guidelines to structure the program and had clearly identified a tangible goal for the process, no one had suggested how the mentoring should occur. Within the BTAP Mentor Program veteran teachers were given the freedom to interpret mentoring according to the needs they saw and according to the particular situation in which they found themselves. The success of the Merrill Lynch Mentoring Program (Farren, Gray, & Kaye, 1984) suggests that indeed mentoring relationships do evolve most successfully when mentors are encouraged to use their own mentoring styles.

The approaches to mentoring in this one mentoring program which I observed ranged from protecting and nurturing (Murray, 1908), to advising and counseling (Klepf & Harrison, 1981), to overseeing (Zey, 1984).

The types of mentoring I saw in practice were versions of two of the six types of mentoring described by Phillips-Jones (1982), the traditional mentor and the professional mentor.

The educational dichotomy of isolation and independence (Davis, 1986; Lortie, 1975) seemed to be the reason for the necessity of the mentoring program and at the same time seemed to be a reason for some of the problems within the mentoring relationships. Teachers, isolated by the structure of the schools, needed the officially recognized opportunity to get together to share concerns and ideas; at the same time, however, autonomy and independence, which are part of the culture of teaching (Lortie, 1975), seemed to have made some of the beginning teachers reluctant to ask for or to accept help. Some of them, like Bev, Melisa, and Debbie, seemed to want to be completely on their own. The school system does foster individualism in teachers (Wildman et al., 1986), but some of the beginning teachers seemed to have already learned that being a teacher means working on your own, and they seemed to view the mentors' offers of help as a painful reminder of the fledgling status of beginning teachers.

The contexts in which the mentoring in this program took place included the encouraging of classroom observations of other teachers (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986), "just being there" for their beginning teachers (Niles et al., 1988), and following a structured approach (Howey, 1988), complete with a lesson plan for various mentoring sessions.

In some mentoring situations described in the literature the beginning teachers took the initiative in seeking help from identified mentors within the system (Lowney, 1986). Being willing participants in a mentoring relationship may make such beginning teachers more receptive partners than some of the beginning teachers in this study, those who were surprised at being assigned a mentor and were disgruntled with the performance assessment which was the reason for the existence of the program. The focus upon the protege is a common element in mentoring programs in business (Levinson et al., 1978; Roche, 1979), in nursing (Bidwell & Brasler, 1989; Hamilton, 1981; Smoyak, 1978), and in public education (Lortie, 1978; Goodlad, 1983), so that when the beginning teacher comes reluctantly to the mentoring relationship, which was sometimes the case

in this study, the tone of the relationship may be influenced negatively. The reverse is also true. The one beginning teacher (Carrie), who did know about the mentoring program and who did expect to be helped by a mentor, reported having positive feelings about the relationship from the very beginning. Although Allison recovered from her initial reluctance at having a mentor, some of the other beginning teachers did not, and their hesitancy seemed to influence the context of the mentoring process in a negative way.

One most important aspect of the context of the mentoring I watched was the element of time. The literature suggests what I observed, that adequate time is necessary for inquiry and reflection (Wildman & Niles, 1987). I had thought that the requisite 10 hours of mentoring time in the BTAP Mentor Program would provide the teacher-sets with adequate time for inquiry. However, either because of the hurried nature of the school day and the after school commitments of the teachers, or because of the pressure of the upcoming BTAP evaluation, or because most of the sets worked in a context which seemed to value action above reflection (Rogus, 1988), the tone of most of the sessions was one

of getting results and providing appearance rather than one of analysis and reflection. The mentoring sets did not all work in contexts which provided maximum benefits which would positively influence the beginning teachers throughout the year and which could impact positively on the level of effectiveness that the beginning teachers might achieve during their careers (National Institute of Education, 1978).

The Content of Mentoring

The structure of the mentoring program in Trenton County gave me the unique opportunity to listen to teachers conversing in a mentoring relationship. Because the meetings held by the teachers were recognized by the teachers, by other staff members, and by the county as "mentoring sessions", and because the sessions were generally the only opportunity that the teachers had for conversation, the tapes and subsequent transcripts I collected and produced represented the four mentoring relationships, each in its entirety. As I watched and listened to the teachers over the months of their mentoring relationships, I developed a strong sense of the tone or personality of each of the teacher-sets. Apart from the "look" or context of their meetings, the sound of their sessions is still with me.

The discussion which follows results from my treatment of each set of teachers as a distinct unit. I used the same criteria for the analysis of each set, but wanted to report the findings set by set rather than diluting the essence of each set through a prolonged comparison and contrast. Natural likenesses existed among the relationships because they occurred as part of

the same mentoring program and took place in similar contexts; however, the nature of the conversations within each set gave each relationship a life and development of its own. Distinct differences were apparent in the diction used by the sets during their discussions. Stylistic peculiarities among the four sets and relationship alterations within each set were reflected in the conversational components of word choice, syntax, and usage as well as in the content, or topic choice, of each set of teachers during their discussions.

Alma and Allison

Over the course of their mentoring relationship Alma and Allison held seven official mentoring sessions. The nature of their conversations changed substantially as their relationship developed and as external influences gained importance with the passing of time. The uncertainties which initially affected their relationship diminished and were replaced with a mutual admiration and respect for one another.

Alma was mentoring aggressively at their first meeting on August 30th. She had already determined what

the content of the pair's conversation should be. She had a list. Of the four general topics or discussion categories covered to varying degrees by each set of teachers in most of their sessions, Alma spoke most often about matters pertaining to school in general, rather than to Allison's classroom in particular. For instance, she spent much of the session explaining the logistics of joining the credit union, the purpose of the local teacher association group, the daily planning requirements in the school system, and the extent of the county health insurance coverage. The topic area which next most often appeared was the area of personal matters, any financial concerns Allison might be having, and matters affecting Allison's general well-being, eating properly and getting sufficient rest. Third in the amount of time spent discussing it was the topic of classroom matters, those factors such as students, their parents, and the curriculum, those matters which seemed to pertain directly to Allison's own classroom. Of least significance in this early session was the topic of BTAP. Although it was to demand more and more time as the weeks passed, it was now pushed aside in favor of much more pertinent and urgent matters.

The dynamics of this session were interesting as they too would change greatly as the relationship developed. In pure amount of time spent talking and in numbers of words uttered, Alma dominated decidedly. She controlled the conversation and initiated the transitions from topic to topic. Using a direct approach, Alma zeroed in on basic needs she felt must be met before Allison could manage to focus on her teaching. "A suggestion, join the credit union while you still have five dollars and twenty-five cents." Somewhat bewildered, Allison asked, "What, what do you mean?" Alma pressed on with an outpouring of information and Allison took notes and stopped her for clarification. Already, Allison was being asked to make professional choices; "Another thing, has anyone ever approached you to join TEA?" "What's TEA", posed Allison. "Trenton Education Association. And what you do is you join and it's your professional organization and they work for us and I think it's very important to do."

The rhythm of the first half of the conversation was information--response, or question--response. Alma led with several declarative sentences and Allison acknowledged her with a one or two syllable response,

"Uh..huh", "Right", "I see", "Sure", "Okay". Alma's voice remained more audible than Allison's, but as Alma made her way down her list of information, Allison was obviously involved and attentive. The exchanges became less lopsided:

Allison: Yeah, I know that you're given two half-days to come in here. Do you have to take them, like a whole half-day?

Alma: I don't know about that. I don't want to.

Allison: Right. I wouldn't want you to either.

Alma: No, I would rather come for an hour.

Allison: Right, I think that would be better.

Alma's easy laughter punctuated the conversations during each of the sessions. And her word choice was often colloquial and idiomatic. "If I could pull that off"; "If you want to just cool it"; "That's another whole ball game". The two teachers ended their first session with a wonderful exchange that was typical of many of their conversations; it captures the spirit of their relationship.

Alma: Ya happy?

Allison: Yeah (laughing). I'm certainly working for my money. Let me tell you.

Alma: (With a chuckle) Yeah, Baby, you sure are. And when we get through this I want you to call me and tell me "I got the word" and I'm going to say, "Allison, we're going out to dinner". I already know what I'm going to do. We're going to get through this. We are going to get through it. And we're going to get through it the first time and it's going to be a good job.

At the second session, just as at the first session, there was a feeling that so much needed to be said, so much information imparted, and that there was so much to do, that there was not time to slow down, step back, and ask "why". The level of discussion was aimed at answering the question, "what?". What needed to be done to expedite preparations for the opening of school? What needed to be done to expedite preparations for the BTAP? There was little inclination toward analysis or inquiry.

Because of the atypical nature of the second session, conversation was minimal. Most of the time Alma was busy loading supplies and giving directions for their use. With Alma so busy packing and talking, and with the piano tuner tuning vigorously in the middle of the room, Allison was barely able to get in her one

burning question: "Uh, I have a guinea pig I want to bring in and I thought I'd ask..." Alma looked up from her work and cut her off with some practical advise. "Oh, you would? I wouldn't. It's like a nun who said, 'It's better to repent'. Cause if you ask and they have no policy, they'll come up with one."

This exchange brought forth the first of many of Alma's illustrative anecdotes. She surprised and amused Allison with the tale of Honey Pie, the guinea pig who became deficient in vitamin C. "I ended up squashing a Vitamin C pill, putting it on a spoon with a little bit of water and, you know, sucking it up into an eyedropper." Allison laughed in disbelief, "Oh, no!"

At the third session Alma and Allison were once again seated in small chairs in Allison's room. During their brief meeting at Alma's school on the first of September, the only topic really discussed was the classroom, with a short interruption as Alma told the personal story of her guinea pig and made mention of her own children when they were young. At today's session the classroom was once again the dominant topic but general school matters and the BTAP were also part of the discussion. This was their first meeting after the

opening of school and Allison was anxious to ask Alma some classroom management questions and to get advice on how best to deal with two precocious students.

Alma once again was in charge of beginning and ending the session, but the body of conversation during the session had become much more reciprocal. The amount of conversation was equally distributed between the two teachers. Alma set an informal, supportive tone for the session by relaying a funny story to Allison.

Alma: Okay, the first thing I'm gonna do is give you a message. There is a little boy in this school who is in Mrs. Robert's room. And he came to see the teachers and he was lookin' in your room and he said, "Why can't I have that good lookin' chick for a teacher!"

Allison. No kidding. Oh my gosh!

Alma: Yes, and this story got passed on down and Sara, Sara Martin, told me. And she said, "You've got to tell Allison".

Allison: Oh, that's hysterical!

Alma: I thought you'd get a big charge out of it.

Alma and Allison often used the word, "okay", to signal a change in the conversation, and Allison started

taking the lead more often. "Okay, let me tell you about one of my children, two of my children." Alma encouraged her, "Tell me." And Allison welcomed Alma's advice, "And I'll take any suggestions I get." During Alma's explanation and the long discussion that followed, the teachers were able not only to talk about what should be done to quell the students' disruptive behavior, but also to explore why a certain behavior modification approach might work. It was interesting to note that even though Alma and Allison were discussing two "problem" children, they were never angry, never disparaging in their discussions of the two young students. With regard to sending notes home, Alma suggested that Allison, "Try and pick out the good stuff". And in trying to solve the problem of a gifted, totally bored, child who was "hyper" in class, Allison explained, "Yeah, but my concern is, I don't want to give him meaningless work".

Although participation in the discussion had remained equal throughout the session, Allison was taking more and more charge of the matters about which they spoke. She suggested, "Do you want to go through one [competency] right now?" Alma agreed,

"Well, we can, sure." Near the end of the session, Allison redirected the discussion in order to share a success with Alma. "Let me tell you one thing that happened that was good today. I was so excited." As she told of teaching new words to non-readers, Allison concluded, "I've taught these kids something!" And Alma agreed, "You have taught these kids something. And you know, once you get that far, it's great because it snowballs."

On September 26th Alma and Allison met for the first time after the BTAP Orientation Session. Predictably, the main topic of conversation was the BTAP. Also, Alma had observed Allison's class that morning and part of their discussion naturally turned to the classroom. The topics, school and personal matters were not included in this session.

The dynamics of the conversation at this fourth session had stabilized. Both teachers were now focused on the task of getting Allison through the BTAP. Alma was impressed with Allison's organized approach and was intent on giving her the support she needed.

Allison: Well, I was thinking that next time you come and observe me you could observe, like my

introductory lesson, and then maybe I could get your husband to videotape the middle lesson (they had discussed this idea previously) and then I'll tape record the last part of my lesson and figure out which observation fits with each of those lessons and see if...

Alma: We can count...

Allison: We can count and see if I really do it (all of the competencies).

Alma: I think that's a good idea, an excellent idea.

Alma was genuinely impressed with some of the classroom techniques that she had seen Allison using that morning. One of them Alma especially liked, and one which she mentioned during the next two sessions, was Allison's use of a particular phrase that "worked like magic" at redirecting the students to the task at hand. As Alma talked, she was not only calling the phrase to Allison's attention, but was also telling me how well it worked. "And she went around and she saw some kids and she went, 'So and so's got a good start' [on the assignment]. You know what it did..It shut them down. The children took it to heart. The noise level went

down."

Alma and Allison were serious and aggressive in their efforts to prepare for the BTAP. However, they seemed to have put the real business of teaching on hold while they worked on the BTAP. Alma advised Allison, "On that third day [after BTAP], if you don't get anything done after they're gone, forget it. Have fun with it, ya know. Tomorrow you can start over and be a real teacher, after this BTAP is over." Alma apparently felt that the BTAP evaluation was separate from being "a real teacher".

When Alma and Allison met for their fifth session, they discussed each of the four topics: school, classroom, BTAP, and personal matters, but the focus was clearly upon preparation for BTAP. In most instances the other three topics were brought up only in the context of their relation to the BTAP. Allison's school was discussed because she wanted to make the rest of the staff and the administration aware of BTAP observation dates. "I'm gonna put a sign on the classroom door that says, 'BTAP in progress from 8:45 til 9:45' on certain days so that no one comes in." The classroom was discussed because it was the stage for the BTAP

observation and Allison was worried about how "normal" classroom problems might impact on her BTAP scoring. "I had a child wet her pants last week and I thought, if this happens during BTAP, oh, if this happens during BTAP, I would write in my note to the office to keep this child in the office til quarter of ten." Even their mention of personal matters, or things at home, was related to BTAP. Because both teachers were spending more and more time on BTAP preparations, they were making adjustments at home. Alma was thinking, "My husband's gonna be cookin dinner lot's that week [week before BTAP observation]. We'll have hotdogs and baked beans every night." Allison agreed, "Yeah, that's about what I'll be having."

The fifth session lasted for over two hours and was the first of the sessions at which reading became fundamental in the interactions between the two teachers. With the BTAP literature and Allison's practice planning document before them, they read each competency and the suggested behaviors that would demonstrate each competency, and then they specialized the behaviors to Allison's lesson plan.

Allison: (Reading from BTAP literature) Six, "The

beginning teacher demonstrates knowledge of this competency if it is seldom necessary to restate rules of conduct...The teacher deals with misbehavior in a non-punitive manner". They're active so I think that someone will misbehave. I figured number three I would do.. "Clarity of Lesson Structure....Help student to understand the relationship between part of a lesson and another." So we'll learn these words....

Alma: Oh, that's really good and if you make a big deal of that, "We did this, and now we're going to do that, and this. These are the words we used before, and this is what's special about the 'e'".

They discussed behaviors related to the "Individualizing Instruction" competency and Alma maintained her lighthearted tone.

Alma: You can always individualize instruction right on the spot just by zeroing in on one of the little darlings.

Allison: One of my activities is to do worksheets, so I can go around and....

Alma: Check 'em, right, and give your little "so and so's doing nicely". I love that. I just love that. It shuts those little dudes down.

The nature of the conversation during this session and during the sixth and seventh sessions was that it was not actually conversational at all. The nature of the passages between the two teachers was controlled by the impending BTAP observation window. One teacher would read from the BTAP literature and the other would comment or would read from the next part of the literature. The level of thinking that dominated these final sessions seemed to be "what" rather than "why". Allison wanted to know, "What do I write in the plan? What should I do for tomorrow's lesson?" She never asked why. The teachers were concerned with what Allison would have to do during her observation; there was no time to discuss the why, beyond the obvious, which was to pass BTAP.

Even though part of the conversational nature of their relationship was thwarted during the final sessions, the two teachers maintained their easy, relaxed interaction. When Allison described an unusual and unfortunate misbehavior that had occurred in the school cafeteria, Alma tempered Allison's reaction to it:

No, I'm sure you weren't (pleased), but this

is the way the cookie crumbles sometimes. But if you can keep your sense of humor, that's what half of it's about. Yes, you have to do the disciplining. Yes, you have to send that little note to them, or whatever, but this is a lesson. This is part of learning, ya know.

Allison chuckled and replied, "Yeah, I know."

Both teachers felt that Allison was ready for the BTAP. She was practiced and prepared. They agreed, "This [the lesson] is pre-programmed. There's no turnin back, no turnin back."

Carol and Carrie

Whereas Alma might describe herself as "down to earth", Carrie described herself as "analytical". Like Alma, Carrie was an especially helpful and effective mentor. Although both teachers drew from their own extensive teaching experience in order to assist their beginning teachers, the words they used in their conversations differed according to their personalities and situations. Because Carol was working in a staff development program this year and had been involved in reading current educational research, she found the

"language" she used in the staff development program, "creeping in" to her discussions with Carrie. Carol encouraged Carrie to think things through, as when Carrie said that she would look to see if other teachers allowed their classes to play on one of the newly-made blacktops. Carol suggested, "But then you have to analyze sometimes, what other people are doing too and say, 'Do I want to follow or is this one time that I think my group would be better over here?'".

This was the first of their nine formal mentoring sessions and it took place a few days before the opening of school. Naturally Carrie was most interested in talking about her own classroom and how her very first day as a teacher would go. She had questions about how to introduce a lesson, about what to expect from the students, about the new reading series, and about discipline. As she talked about discipline, Carrie was hard on herself. "If the child's totally tearing the room up and running around, that's when I'll want him to go. But otherwise I don't like to bother the principals ya know. If I can't handle it myself, then I shouldn't be in the classroom." Although Carol generally shared Carrie's feeling about handling discipline on her own,

she didn't want Carrie to foolishly bear the entire burden of discipline. "Well, the office is there. It's nice to know it's there in case you ever get in a position that you've tried everything and you're not being successful."

The second most significant topic that was discussed at this session was that of the school. Being a brand new teacher in a brand new school, Carrie was concerned about such logistical matters as the best route for her class to follow to the cafeteria, appropriate firedrill procedures, and the school's afternoon dismissal techniques. Carol suggested that some teachers "buddy up" their primary grade children at dismissal time. "That way you could build their confidence a little bit as they're leaving." Carol's attitude that there were many effective ways to get good results was reflected throughout the mentoring sessions in her use of such phrases as "some teachers", and "everybody does it differently", and "whatever is comfortable for you".

The remaining two topics, the BTAP and personal concerns, were only discussed briefly. Carrie had already mentioned to Carol that the BTAP and all of its

competencies had been an entire course of study at her college, and so both teachers decided the BTAP could wait, at least until their next session. The only non-teaching, or personal, matter that was discussed was the emergency at home that had made Carrie a bit late for the session.

The entire discussion during this first session was of a "professional" nature and was in a serious tone. Carrie, the beginning teacher, had a series of questions she wanted to ask and a series of ideas she wanted to offer for Carol's opinion. Carrie was an active, equal participant in their discussions and Carol responded to the thoughts Carrie shared with her.

Carrie: To me, silent lunch would be more for the cafeteria.

Carol: I agree.

Carrie: (Discussing her FISH bulletin board) That's sort of what the fish remind me of. You know, they're in a group, but when they get taken out, they see that they're not swimmin' in the right direction.

Carol: Right. That's a good point.

As Alma had done, Carol took time to illustrate a point with a humorous anecdote. Typically these humorous

anecdotes surprised and amused the beginning teachers and seemed to be not only the chance to share a laugh, but also a way for the veteran to share a part of the teacher-culture with a newcomer.

Carol: I'll never forget the worst one (means of discipline) I ever heard was...There was a school that had a cafeteria and they came up with this elaborate model of a person with wild looking hair. And they thought, who... I can't imagine which person didn't think this through, but they said, "You know when the cafeteria gets so wild like this, the teachers in the cafeteria feel like they're going to pull their hair out. So when it gets very loud, we're gonna have to pull her hair out..."

Carrie: Oh, No!

Carol: And they had these strands of things that came out. Well, you know what happened. The cafeteria went wild!

Inadvertently following the Clarity of Structure competency, Carol linked the content of session number one to the content of session number two. "Well, I thought, last time we talked about getting ready, and this time we'd spend some time and have a chance to say,

'how are things going?'" She reviewed session one and presented the objective for session two. This meeting was a follow-up. School had been in session for three days now and Carol was anxious to see Carrie's reaction to the experience of actually teaching her own class of students.

Although each of the four topic areas was discussed during this session, the main concern was still with matters that pertained directly to Carrie's classroom. Curriculum and daily scheduling were difficult for a new teacher who was very conscientious, wanted to do what was right, but wasn't sure just how much to do or how to fit it all in during the day. "Things are goin okay. The one thing I'm concerned about is my schedule." Carrie's concern over doing the most for each student was causing her to agonize over the best approach to take. "So I don't know. I feel like the poor things, ya know, because I'm just not one to have a child do something and then say 'okay'...and go on and leave it, ya know. But I have this horror of, ya know, I want to get Language Arts in and...but...I don't wanta just give it to them to do..." Carrie went on in this stream-of-consciousness manner and Carol reacted with, "Um...huh"

each time Carrie paused. When Carrie seemed finished thinking out loud about a concern, Carol tried to help her focus. "How much time did you, in your mind, think a spelling lesson would be?"

Carol's open approach to Carrie's questions may have helped to start Carrie's teaching career on an inquiry-oriented note. To Carol the possibilities were numerous, both in classroom management techniques and in instructional strategies. She consistently encouraged Carrie to think for herself. She suggested the need to analyze:

What is it I want them to do next? How am I gonna emphasize, ya know, proper handwriting, or is it necessary. You know, some people emphasize that it has to be done really neat. And other people say, "I'm not worried about neatness as long as it's correct". And other people say, "Well, I'm worried about both." So that's a style that you'll decide for yourself. Which one do I really want to emphasize?"

Carrie was concerned about the rapid-fire decision making that she was called on to do constantly during the school day.

With feedback coming at her quickly, and reaction time limited, Carrie felt insecure. Carol assured her that mistakes would be made, but that if she kept thinking and analyzing, the mistakes would be made less often. She said, "There are so many little things to deal with. It's something you just have to work through each day." Carol just didn't pass judgment. She offered possibilities.

At this session Carol shared some of her feelings about the county mentoring program and about the purpose of the program as the county had designed it:

I really do want it to be things you can walk away with but the county emphasis on the mentor program is to make sure that everybody gets through this (BTAP) and nobody later can say, well we didn't work on this enough. So the main bulk of their time is on BTAP. I mean, that's the program. But there are lots of ways that we can work with the time that we have.

For all of the remaining sessions, the focus was on the BTAP. However, Carol worked hard at helping Carrie to see the "whole picture" so that the competencies weren't seen as completely isolated behaviors, a

fragmented approach to teaching, but rather as overlapping aspects of teaching that would naturally occur in a coherent lesson. "They all tie together. Like you said from the questioning here and that's what number two addresses, is the questioning. And then you think back to the questioning areas so..and then see, it ties into number three." Although Carol acknowledged that the actual observation was far from a typical slice of classroom life, that it was "so forced", she kept reminding Carrie that the observers weren't necessarily there to record a "perfect" lesson. She said:

It goes back to the fact that they're observing you. I mean as much as you plan ..(something unexpected may happen)..I mean, in your wildest imagination, a parent could walk in, a child could throw up in the middle of this. I mean, there could be an interruption. They'll be seeing how you handle it.

At the sessions, as Carrie's actual lesson plan started to take form, Carol delighted in the good job Carrie was doing and pointed out inherent elements that Carrie herself may not have thought about. Referring to Carrie's lesson on nouns, Carol noted, "Like if I say,

'Carrie, book is a noun, and you give it back to me, that's knowledge. Application is, like right here, when they really work with it. You've gone to application, and watch this one kiddo...You have gone to analysis because when you do that you're actually doing a comparison and contrast here." Although the focus of their work was the BTAP, Carol did not separate a good BTAP performance from a good classroom lesson. Both teachers enjoyed their collaboration.

Carol: Well that's one thing that's good about having a mentor is, or just having a partner, or like the peer coaching they're getting into, is you can bounce ideas off somebody.

Carrie: It is. It's wonderful. Thank you for your suggestions.

Carol: Well, that's a good lesson. When I teach again, I'm gonna use that lesson.

Although Carrie joked about it, the way in which the students should be prepared for the actual BTAP observation was a concern to all of the beginning teachers. Should the students be told? Should they not be told? Should they know the nature and importance of the observations? Should they be programmed and become a

part of the performance?

Carrie: I've already told them that I have..that I'm gonna be watched and I really need them to practice to be on their best now.

Carol: Um...huh. "Are you still in college Miss Jones?" Well, sort of.

Carrie: Sort of.

Carol: Not really, but...

Carrie: Unless you want a teacher with a wart on her nose to take over in October..

Carol: Like Miss Nelson..."If I don't do well, then you'll have..." Oh, what's her name, in Miss Nelson Is Missing?

Carrie: Viola Swamp!

Carol: (Both teachers laugh). Just threaten them, "Viola will be in if I don't make this!"

The final formal session for Carol and Carrie was on November first. Carrie had been "tapped" twice and had one final observation left. This was an unusual session, first, because it dragged on and on; secondly, because so much reading from the BTAP literature and from Carrie's planning document occurred; and finally, because of the staccato nature of many of the

conversation passages. One teacher would begin a thought and it would be picked up and finished by the other teacher as they attempted to get the wording the way they wanted it on the planning document.

Carrie: See, I don't want to say that...so...

Carol: No, just say...wait a minute...

Carrie: I'll say, "Students are..."

Carol: Students are provided with enrichment activity, which...

Carrie: gives them...application and the skills...to create...I don't even need "enrichment"..

Carol: No, you could just say,....

Carrie: "with an activity that extends application of..."

Carol: That's fine....

Neither teacher wanted to quit until they had the lesson right. Carol noted, "We're going marathon; do you need to leave? We're going for the big one here." Carrie had no desire to leave. "This is making me feel so much better when we go over this. I just hate to keep you guys."

Throughout their formal mentoring relationship Carol and Carrie maintained their excitement about

working together, and their enthusiasm about teaching. Even though the program's focus on the BTAP, compelled them to spend the largest percentage of their time together working on BTAP, they were able to use BTAP to talk about teaching, not only what teachers could do, but also why they might do it. The pair used the words, "analysis" and "reflection" when they spoke about teachers learning to teach, and learning to teach more effectively.

Beryl and Bev, Martha and Melissa, Joan and Jessica

Because of the nature of their configuration, this pair that had become a group, spoke differently during their mentoring sessions. The topics they discussed; the school, the classroom, the BTAP, and personal matters, were the same as those discussed by the pairs of teachers in the study. However, the emphasis they placed upon each topic was different as was their manner of discussion. Because all six teachers were working in the same school, much of their session time was spent talking about people and happenings within the school. And because they were a group, the direct interaction which might be more likely to occur between one mentor

working with one beginning teacher, may have been diluted by the presence and conversation of other mentors and other beginning teachers.

Typically the conversation did not occur between the mentor and beginning teacher who were an official pair. At different sessions the amount of "talk-time" varied from teacher to teacher. An exception was that Martha, the mentor at whose home we met, was the dominant speaker at each session. From session to session, the beginning teacher who seemed to be having the most difficulty became the central concern of a particular session and for most of that session, would describe her current concerns.

At their first session on September 8th, they had already completed the first week of school, and the beginning teachers were concerned about things that had happened in their classrooms, problems with individual students, general discipline problems, and curriculum problems. Although they often joked during the sessions, some of the beginning teachers were disillusioned by the realities of teaching, and their cryptic comments injected a dose of the negative into the generally fun-filled sessions. Throughout the sessions, the sense of

the group pervaded. Inquiries into the progress the new teachers were making were usually made in general, rather than specific, terms. "So, how's everybody doing." The beginning teachers in the group did not receive the one-on-one, undivided attention which was focused on the beginning teachers in a pair relationship. If the mentor or mentors were focusing on the concerns of one beginning teacher, the other beginning teachers had to wait. However, it is also possible that those teachers "in-waiting" could have benefited from the counsel they heard given to their fellow-teachers. Even though they weren't having their problems addressed directly, those beginning teachers who were actively involved in listening to the discussion could have had some of their questions answered by listening to the advice that was given to others or by entering the conversation at appropriate openings. Sometimes they did enter in to the discussion; sometimes they started adjacent conversations of their own.

The sessions usually started amidst the pouring of drinks, the passing of food, and chit chat about something at school. The group laughed often, but they

weren't always happy. At the start of the second session some of the teachers chuckled, others howled, at an amusing innuendo, and Joan, the most experienced and most reserved mentor, labeled them, "a crazy group". Others joined in:

Martha: Sounds like it's been as wild as it has been in our department today

Joan: Has it been a crazy week?

Bev: You should have seen me last night. You did see me last night.

Melissa: It's been a hellacious week!

Bev: She's had a bad week.

Melissa: I've had a bad week.

Martha: Have you?

In a playfully patronizing tone, Joan offered, "Well, Dear, tell us about it." And Beryl reiterated, "Yeah, tell us about it."

Melissa presented part of her problem. "I don't know. I think I'm more down on myself than anything else. After I test them, I still don't know if they've picked it up or not." Martha was not too reassuring; "Sometimes you never do. Seriously, you really...You don't ever know." After thinking about it, Jessica

chimed in:

Isn't that amazing. These kids do things that are amazing and you know something, Melissa, I'm sorta feeling the same way you are. Like I kinda look to get some kind of response out of them and you don't get it. I mean..and it's so different.. last night (Back-to-School Night) I noticed, you talk to these adults, and I didn't have to say "shut up" to one adult.

Although the group laughed at this story, they nodded their heads in agreement.

Because the teachers were all familiar with the other staff members at the school, the conversation sometimes drifted to personnel matters, personal relationships, and the school grapevine. Early in the session a staff conflict between Melissa and one of her department members surfaced. This problem was so pervasive that it completely seemed to influence Melissa's outlook. A couple of the other teachers fueled Melissa's fire by adding their own disparaging remarks about this co-worker who had become Melissa's adversary. "She's not your boss", advised one mentor. Using the first in a long series of "yeah but"s, Melissa

persisted, "Yeah, but still, I can't go over her." Bev encouraged her, "Sure you can". And Joan agreed, "Yes you can". Bev concluded, "She may need somebody to do that to her." Melissa seemed convinced that her situation was hopeless, and she greeted each suggested action with, "Yeah, but".

Also at this session Jessica brought up a potential problem that was developing between two teachers in her area of the building. "I think they're having a little bickering going back and forth. They've got completely different teaching styles." Bev inquired, "You're not being pulled into that are you?" Jessica assured her that, "No, no, no, no, no...I hear both sides and I nod and smile." Joan wondered, "Is it the beginning of a conflict situation sort of?" All of the teachers seemed interested in hearing about this potential trouble spot. Most of the discussion this day was about happenings at school in general rather than about specific teaching matters.

BTAP was mentioned at this session. Actually, it was blasted. One beginning teacher in particular was "mad". After issuing a few deletable expletives, she teased me about "turning that thing [recorder] off." She

had made her point and the others agreed. The mentors continued the discussion of BTAP and revealed their confusion about it. Joan described a teacher who had had excellent plans and an obedient class and who had failed to pass on her first try. "I don't know how it's phrased but total class control, certain things that were in that competency area of control, and ya know, it was almost like, if they'd been worse..." Jessica wasn't surprised, "No one thinks they're measuring good teaching." And Martha added an example, "Well, we've got an excellent teacher in our school who didn't pass the first time, and there's one that I couldn't believe, who passed the first time through, did it with flying colors."

The confusion over BTAP remained into the next session.

Jessica: So they're gonna be looking to see how much time you spend speaking about on-task behaviors rather than watching to see how many students are actually on-task?

Joan: I think so.

Martha: So the time we're lecturing, they're off-task?

Jessica: So they're watching to see how much time I'm on task?

Martha: Yeah, not if you've got a kid in the back who is off-task....

Bev: Is that right! Is that if the kids are off or on?

Joan: I think it's the teacher.

Joan continued reading from an old opscan sheet she had gotten from "somewhere". "Um..this means in answer to a question I assume...!teacher re-enters, redirects....!"

Bev: What's that mean?

Martha: I assume that would be asking the question from another direction.

Joan: Yeah, I think you're right.

Beryl: That's negative, or positive, or neutral?

Jessica: (In a whisper) We don't know. It's all a big secret!

The group had become a forum for airing complaints and problems. It was a support system for the beginning teachers but the tone was skeptical, the mood tainted by the disillusionment that some of the members brought to the group. As Jessica said, "Friday I was just in tears.

Why am I doing this. I wish I was delivering newspapers. You guys help me. I think I had had a rough day with some kids. I felt like beltin' them and I knew I wasn't allowed to." Despite her feelings that the group was a help to her, Jessica felt so adamantly negative about the BTAP that she did not come to any more group sessions.

In fact, for the next session, Beryl and Bev decided to meet as a pair and Martha and Melissa decided to do the same. The interactions between the two teachers were more easily visible in the pair meetings than they had been in the group. The dynamics of the group interaction had been influenced by all of the teachers, but actually had been controlled by none. However, the conversational roles that the teachers assumed in the group were approximately the same roles that they played in the pair. Bev remained demonstrative and sometimes decidedly cheery, "Okeedokee, Okeedokee!" And Beryl proceeded in her same understated manner. They were both aware of their differences.

Bev: You talk so softly. I have a booming voice.

Beryl: Yeah, the kids can't hear me half the time.

Although Beryl initially had felt insecure with a

beginning teacher who seemed so self-assured, she had come to understand Bev and handled their conversations with a low-key style and a soft southern accent. Bev was describing her boyfriend and an interesting interaction occurred:

Bev: He treats me so well. He doesn't mind that I'm intelligent.

Beryl: Mind that you're intelligent? I mean, why would he mind?

Bev: Most guys I have ever met are so scared to death of my intelligence.

Beryl: (Laughs) I didn't think you were that smart...

Bev: I scare them all. But see, I was a 3.8 average student in college and people on campus know who's the honor students. And so you know, I just felt kind of awkward. I mean I don't show around here that I'm that smart.

Beryl: I thought you were dumb. (She enjoys a laugh.)

So, in their session this day, the teachers spoke of external concerns--evaluations, school policies, marriage plans--and didn't delve into the actual act of

teaching. At the end of this session, I left the junior high school and went to Martha's home for the meeting with Martha and Melissa.

Martha provided the momentum that started this session and kept it moving, but the content of the session was tailored to Melissa's needs. Martha met some initial resistance.

Martha: Well, what are you going to be teaching?

Melissa: I don't know.

Martha: Okay, so we need a calendar, don't we.

Melissa: No, I don't do mine that way.

The pattern of conversation was long directive passages as Martha explained what needed to be done, followed by brief replies from Melissa. The conversation stayed on the purely practical level of what would expedite Melissa's readiness for the BTAP observation. She seemed willing to be directed by Martha.

Melissa: So you're sayin' on the first day of BTAP, do this...?

Martha: Uh...No. I would do it the day before BTAP...

Melissa: Then do this on the first day of BTAP?

Martha: Right.

Melissa: Well, what should I do on the second day of BTAP?

Melissa's negative attitude toward BTAP, and the real concerns over her classroom were apparent in their discussion. She exclaimed:

Oh this is stupid. You know I really should just dialogue all of this, put on a little play. I'm havin' a hard time. I don't think I'm really gonna have any trouble with this (BTAP). I don't know if I'm gonna pass the first time, and frankly I don't care any more. I'm just so worried about gettin through the first twelve weeks.

Together, the teachers made light of the wording of the BTAP literature as Martha read from one pamphlet.

Martha: "Negative teacher responses such as public rebukes of student behavior should be avoided." (She laughs.) You jerk! Hope you never plan to go to college cause you'll never make it!

Melissa: (Now reading) "If a student is not pleasing you, or needs to be corrected.." Do you think you're making me happy? (She laughs.)

Martha: (Sarcastically) You're not pleasing me. Do you want your sticker today? Then let's change our

behavior.

Martha: (Reading) "Do not use sarcasm as punishment or threats." Do that again and I'll kill you!

And recognizing a device she often used, Melissa said, "I like to use sarcasm."

Martha brainstormed and as the session wore on, and on, a tentative plan for Melissa's observation evolved. It was generally understood that the entire group would convene in one week at Martha's house and that each beginning teacher would have a rough draft of the observation lesson plan.

On October 19th, the week before the BTAP window opened, we reassembled at Martha's. Jessica did not have a plan ready so she decided not to attend. Her mentor also did not attend. The discussion at this session focused on the BTAP, its planning document and the impending observations. This session consisted of three distinct parts: 1. Bev describing her lesson plan as Martha responded, 2. Melissa describing her lesson plan as Martha responded, and 3. all of the teachers discussing school news.

During the first part of this session, the other teachers sat, and perhaps listened, as Bev told what she

was going to do during her observation. Martha coached her along, reminding her of some of the particular BTAP behaviors.

Martha: Put your objectives on the board. Um...do you have a particular rule that you're gonna have to point out to them?

Bev: I'm going to make a list of the rules and put them in the room.

Martha: Okay...and make sure verbally, that you...

Bev: That'll be no problem 'cause they always put their feet on the floor. I mean every day.

When Bev finished talking about her plan, she gave the floor to Melissa. "Okay, your turn." Martha encouraged her to begin. "Okay, tell 'em what you're teaching." The interaction which followed was primarily between Melissa and Martha, with occasional interjections from Bev.

Melissa: Okay, I'm ..uh..doin' communication. And first, well, after roll call and all that neat stuff...

Bev: The way I do it..My kids come in and sit down and I do it even before class starts. My kids come in and sit down.

Melissa: Everybody says I should have a seating

chart. Mrs. Wilson is tryin to tell me that's the way to do roll. But I wanted something cute.

Martha: Just as long as it's an efficient way that will take very little time.

Throughout their sessions, as they talked and planned, joked and commiserated, the group of teachers did not get into any considered discussion of the intentions behind the actions they spoke of taking. They discussed the act of teaching as it related to the BTAP performance; the only intention they discussed was the intention of passing the BTAP. In order to plan for the BTAP observations, the teachers talked only of those classroom actions that would demonstrate the BTAP competencies. They were taking these actions "to pass BTAP".

A third of the way through this session, the talk turned to wedding plans and news from the school grapevine. As Martha explained, "Sometimes we need to relieve ourselves of the daily stress of BTAP." And Bev joked, "See, I feel better already." Melissa was continuing to have problems with her department co-worker, and Bev had a pertinent incident to relate to Melissa.

Bev: She (Mrs. Wilson) wasn't there during homeroom I hope you know. She was up in the copy room with me.

Melissa: Yeah, I heard.

Bev: Where'd you hear about it?

Melissa: Well, no, I didn't hear about today. But I heard that Darlene was in the copy room and Mrs. Wilson walked in and told her to go to the other machine.

Bev: No! It was me she told.

Melissa: Oh! Darlene said that it was her.

Bev: Well, then she did it to her too. She got behind me and she's like, "You're not supposed to use this machine for less than so many copies." If anybody in this daggone school knows a copy machine, I do.

At about the time that the BTAP window approached, all of the county teachers were also preparing for the first round of observations by their building principals and vice principals. The teachers were formulating goals and objectives to which they were to aspire during the year. These goals and objectives were not always profound, nor were they always seriously followed.

Melissa: Oh, I came up with three (objectives). Um..getting along with my department...Uh...getting along with colleagues..Um I don't have 'em with me.

They're out in the car. I have to make a copy of them so I can remember.

Martha: Greg (the administrator) called me in one year and said, "Do you feel like you've met all those objectives?" And I said, "Absolutely! But I can't remember diddly-squat about what they were." I said, "I'm sure I must have, cause I had one hell of a year!"

The content of the conversation that was heard in the meetings of these mentors and beginning teachers in the group was, of course, determined in part by the personalities and motivations of all of the individuals in the group. It may also have been significantly influenced by the fact that the members came together as a social unit. The mentors' interactions with their beginning teachers were indirect. The closeness that marked some of the pairs' relationships, was not apparent in the group environment. In the social context of their meetings, joking and reporting school news seemed more natural than in-depth discussions or analysis of teaching. The group had formed as a support system for the mentors, had dispersed into pairs to work on the BTAP plans, and had re-formed as a group of five teachers rather than as a group of six.

Dorothy and Debbie

During their times together Dorothy and Debbie contributed unequally to the conversations which passed between them. Dorothy, quick to smile and to talk, was stymied by Debbie's reserve. There was never reason to think that Debbie had "tuned Dorothy out", but just the same, there was not good reason to think otherwise. To the listener, it sounded as though the conversation would surely have fizzled and died if Dorothy had not persevered with her prompting and probing. There were times when, in desperation, Dorothy turned to me for a reaction.

The focus for the first two sessions was on a piece of BTAP literature which gave suggestions of appropriate teacher-behaviors. Dorothy read from the literature, awaited a response, got none, and then elaborated on what she had just read. At the start of the second session, Dorothy tried to use an icebreaker to spark the conversation.

Dorothy: I have a famous line that I use in my conferences, I always tell the parents, "If you believe just half of what your child comes home and tells you that I've said or I've done, then I'll believe just half

of what they come to school and tell me goes on at home."

She laughed, awaited a response and, getting none, continued with a specific anecdote. Dorothy told the brief tale, and concluded with, "but, you know, when they're little and they blurt it out in front of God and everybody too!" Again she awaited some reaction. Getting none, she took a different approach. "Well, okay. We kinda talked about last time we'd go over the form so we'd know what we're lookin' for and then start going over the competencies. Does that still sound good?" Taking this direct questioning approach worked. Debbie responded, "Um...huh". The pattern of speech continued in this manner. Dorothy spoke for several seconds and ended with a question or some other means of direct address that usually prompted a brief response from Debbie.

There were times during their second meeting when the two teachers seemed at odds; their exchange carried a tenseness, a reluctance to compromise. I can recall the troubled expressions on their faces. Dorothy finished reading a section of the BTAP handbook and asked, "Uh...do you have your book?"

Debbie: Not with me..No, I don't

Dorothy: Okay...We'll just go through and mark in this one. Maybe we should do it with pencil or different color ink..

Debbie: I can just take notes on here.

Dorothy: Yeah, but you don't want to write all of this...all of this down.

Debbie: I could use numbers though.

Dorothy: Well, okay. Let me use the different color then.

On September 26th we met at Dorothy's school so that Debbie could tour the classroom of one particularly creative teacher. Dorothy had set aside any further focus on BTAP in order to work on classroom strategies. After talking at length about the benefits of visiting other classrooms and observing other teachers, "like I say, those are the two things that I've gotten the most out of," and after getting no response from Debbie, Dorothy rephrased things; "My question is, would you like to do that?" Debbie agreed, "Yes, I would." Much of the conversation as we moved around the room, Dorothy talking, Debbie walking, and me toting the tape recorder, ended up being between Dorothy and me. She

spoke so enthusiastically, showing the clever teaching materials, and when no one responded and Dorothy looked at me, it seemed almost rude not to acknowledge what she had said. She never gave up. "She [the creative teacher] is great as far as helpful ideas, but I didn't get as much out of her as I wanted. I'll keep doin' that [asking her for ideas] and then as I come I'll share different ideas with you."

True to her word, Dorothy brought another idea with her to their next session. "This is what I was tellin' you about this morning that Loretta [the creative teacher] showed me. They're called 'Clowning into Readiness' or 'Surface Readiness'." Debbie remained unimpressed, "Um..huh, right. I've seen them. I've made some before." Dorothy persisted, "Right, well, these are ready-made and all you need is..." Debbie interrupted, "But you have to write them on the clothes pin."

Dorothy had observed Debbie's classroom that morning and had spoken with an administrator who had also observed the class. Dorothy was worried. She put BTAP aside and she spoke, skirting the problems at first, and then pressing harder, being more direct as her words seemed to be having no effect.

Dorothy: You know, 'cause at this stage of the game there should be a lot of direct instruction going on. You know, the orientation is over. We need to, ya know, start getting the instruction in. Get them working. Get them responsible for their actions, for their work so that they'll be working towards getting ready for next year."

Debbie: Um...huh.

Dorothy kept trying. She talked on, offering ideas and materials.

Dorothy: I had that down as an idea. I think I said something about that, a different colored folder for each group. I'll give you...I've got colored folders; let me get some.

Debbie: Dorothy, No!

Dorothy: I've got a whole box of them that I ordered last year. What are your three color groups?

Debbie: Blue, orange, and yellow....

Dorothy: Blue...

Debbie: I have a blue folder...

Dorothy: Orange...that's alright...and yellow...and what you can do is staple...Get...I've even got a little sheet. This would work..or something similar to this.

Debbie: Dorothy, that's okay!

Dorothy: No..I've got these..'cause you could use something like this, or something like this...

Debbie: I've got those.

Perhaps Debbie really didn't want to trouble Dorothy. Perhaps Debbie really didn't want to be troubled by Dorothy.

The initial exchange at their next session showed that Debbie was trying some of the suggestions Dorothy had made. "Those carpet squares, like I said, I agree with you that that worked a lot better. I was really glad to see that." She pressed Debbie to go a step further, "The only thing is I think that could even work better for you if you try assigning them their own." Debbie's "Really!" indicated that she didn't quite agree.

As Debbie reported on her visit to observe in another school, she uncharacteristically led Dorothy through a series of questions and answers about giving children the necessary practice doing workjobs. "I was just wondering; am I wrong to have them redo the same workjobs more than once?" When Dorothy had assured her that practice was appropriate, Debbie then reported that

she had seen the teacher at Meadow View apparently not allowing practice. "Now, I was just curious whether I was doing something wrong by permitting the extra practice on it?" Dorothy had really already answered her question. "Well", Dorothy asked, "Did you get any ideas?" Debbie replied, "I got a lot of questions."

At the sixth session, on October 20th, Debbie was more conversant. She had worked on writing her lesson plan and she wanted to ask a few questions about the wording. This session was also the longest session that the two teachers had. In three days the BTAP observations would begin.

Debbie remained fiercely independent. Dorothy suggested an alternative means of taking attendance.

Dorothy: That was one suggestion that they made at the BTAP meeting. You know, to come up with ideas that would dispense with calling roll. You know what I'm trying to say?

Debbie: I think it's nice. I like calling the names out. I think it.....

Dorothy: That doesn't bother you?

Debbie: No. I like it.

Dorothy had tried to convince Debbie to take a firm

hand with her classroom aide who was employed to carry out part of Debbie's instructional program. Dorothy felt that the aide was floundering, and she advised Debbie:

You need to, you know, stay on her and make sure she follows through with what you're asking her to do because that's going to reflect on you as far as the observation. Because as far as that's concerned, you're the one that is in charge and it's up to you to see that she is being utilized and is following through with what she's supposed to do.

Dorothy was concerned, and she was even more concerned because Debbie did not seem concerned.

The final two sessions were held during the BTAP observation window. They each lasted 45 minutes. At the first one Dorothy wanted Debbie to answer the question, "How did it go today?". With several follow-up questions from Dorothy, Debbie described what sounded like a fairly smooth first observation. Debbie seemed very calm about what was happening in her class. She didn't show concern over the problems or excitement over the accomplishments. At the final session Debbie still really wasn't speaking unless spoken to. Dorothy's

attempts at conversation had noticeably diminished. Today she had a sick baby at home. She had a cold herself. It was a miserably cold and wet Halloween, and she faced the prospect of taking her oldest child trick-or-treating in the rain. She verbalized what she must have been thinking, "Okay, let's get through this thing. I need to get out of here as soon as possible."

Within this one county mentoring program the six mentors and six beginning teachers spoke so differently as they worked toward achieving the intended purpose of the program. Their conversations were both product and producer of the relationships the teachers developed. The complex task of meeting a stranger and in a few short weeks developing a meaningful, effective partnership was a welcome challenge to some of the teachers and was a burdensome disappointment to others. Although the topics they discussed were a result of the similar circumstances in which they found themselves, teachers involved in a mentoring program with one specific purpose, the words they used, the way they used them, the sounds of their mentoring differed.

To varying degrees, the teachers sounded as though

they had enjoyed the relationship, or had relied upon the relationship, or had learned from the relationship, or had merely tolerated the relationship. When I later asked the beginning teachers and the mentors to discuss their feelings about the mentoring program and its possible influence on them, some responses did not seem to match with the words I had heard them say in their discussions, but the majority of answers were easily predictable from having watched and having listened to the teachers during the mentoring process.

Literature: Focus on Content

The literature on the content of mentoring, the nature of the conversations between the teachers, informed my study of this issue, and my own observations were predicted in the background literature. Gehrke (1988) describes the primary role that dialogue between the teachers in a mentoring relationship plays. As Gehrke says (1988), and as I observed watching Dorothy and Debbie, when monologue replaces dialogue as a means of communication, the reciprocity necessary for inquiry and reflection, and even for a satisfying personal relationship, does not exist. Those relationships which nourished a balanced exchange of ideas, Alma and Allison for instance, and which evidenced active involvement even when ideas were difficult to verbalize, as was the case with Carrie who was only moderately verbal but was fully involved, were those relationships which were viewed by the participants as having been generally rewarding. Being a good listener, as other teachers in mentoring relationships have reported (Wildman & Niles, 1989), was also a positive factor in the teacher interaction at the mentoring sessions.

Although none of the teacher-sets exactly fit the

model described by Silver and Hanson (1984), when they interacted, each set showed varying degrees of the four preferences described in the model. Most of the mentoring sets fluctuated between styles, from mastery, to interacting, to understanding, to searching, (Silver & Hanson, 1984) and did not fit neatly into one of the four categories.

Each mentoring relationship was different, yet they all exhibited some of the qualities that are unique to interaction between experienced teachers and beginning teachers (Niles et al., 1989). The teachers, mentors and beginners, in this study reported that they had spent most of their conversation time talking about how or what with regard to their teaching. Only a small percentage of their discussions inquired into the why behind their teaching practice. This same dominance of the what over the why was reported by Niles et al. (1989). One reason for the small percentage of inquiry-oriented discussion may be the program's focus. As Kram (1985) reports, a clear focus is a characteristic of an effective mentoring program; however, as Comeaux and Peterson (1988) suggest, when the focus is on a performance-based evaluation, such as the BTAP, most of

the discussion generated revolves around those teaching behaviors necessary to demonstrate the performance evaluation criteria, rather than around inquiry into more philosophical or analytical views of teaching.

The conversational feedback and interaction during the mentoring sessions were similar to that described by Weiner (1950) in which the teacher is a feedback loop, a system which processes information and makes necessary adjustments in behavior. In the sessions it was usually the mentors who were the primary feedback systems, being sensitive to the needs of the beginning teachers and acting accordingly. For instance, I was able to see and hear a mentor begin a discussion with the beginning teacher partner; when the feedback from the partner was unexpected or when it presented new information or attitudes, the mentor would quickly process the feedback and make adjustments in the manner or content of conversation. Although the mentors generally dominated the conversation with regard to volume (loudness) and amount (percentage of talk-time) of conversation, it was the needs of the beginning teachers which most seemed to influence the content of the conversations. If the beginning teacher was having problems with disruptive

students, discipline would be the topic discussed; if the beginning teacher needed help with the new reading series, curriculum and instructional techniques were discussed; if the beginning teacher wanted help with the BTAP plan, the BTAP observation took priority during the discussion.

An obstacle for many of the mentors as they met in their sessions with the beginning teachers was the problem of how to take the tremendous amount of practical knowledge they had and to change it into a form that would allow it to be shared. Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986) refer to this problem when they discuss the fact that people often know how to do things without being able to explain what they know. The mentors in this study had an average of 18 years of experience in the classroom. They had a wealth of practical knowledge (Lortie, 1975; Wildman & Niles, 1987b) about teaching. However, with the exception of Carol, they had had no real experience or training in how to impart this knowledge. There didn't seem to be an appropriate vocabulary, understood by veterans and beginners, which would allow the describing and sharing of the mentors' practical knowledge (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986).

The ability to talk about teaching will not necessarily come from additional teaching experience. Training is necessary if teachers are to become skilled at discussing what they do (Wildman & Niles, 1987b). The mentors in this study, with the exception of Carol whose staff development position this year requires her to discuss teaching, were not trained. Carol was the most effective in prompting her beginning teacher to think about why she was choosing a particular plan or course of action in her classroom. As I listened to Carol and her beginning teacher, Carrie, I could see what Sergiovanni (1985) meant in describing the kind of professional knowledge that is created in use. As the teachers spoke and thought and spoke again, the knowledge was compounded. One partner voiced an idea; the other teacher considered it and responded and both teachers arrived at a new understanding. Carol and Carrie worked on a lesson plan for one BTAP observation; Carrie explained her idea for using colors during the lesson and Carol said "yeah!", and she explained how she had just realized how colors and shapes could be used to help students associate the new ideas being presented with those they had learned in a previous lesson.

The knowledge was created by the teachers rather than coming to them in a downward flow as theoretical knowledge often does (Sergiovanni, 1985). The teachers I heard talking during the sessions may have even more knowledge than they realize. It is just important to provide the teachers with the inquiry techniques and discussion skills necessary for tapping their reservoirs of knowledge and for bringing it to the surface in a form that can be shared with other teachers.

The Influence of Mentoring

After the formal mentoring sessions had concluded, and after the two-week BTAP observation window was closed, I met separately with each of the teachers who had participated in the study. The questions I asked the teachers during these sessions were aimed at finding out how they felt about the relationships with their assigned partners, relationships I had watched, listened to, and formed impressions about over the course of the preceding months. With the beginning teachers I focused on what their first few months of teaching had been like, and especially the role that the BTAP, their mentor, and the mentoring program had played in their entry into teaching. With the veteran teachers I focused on their role as mentors, what their motivations for becoming mentors had been, what the mentoring experience had been like for them, and especially what influence, general or specific, idealistic or pragmatic, personal or professional, being a mentor had had upon each of them. Although I had originally planned to isolate those influences felt by the mentors and to dwell upon those reported influences, as I spoke with each teacher I

realized two things: first, that because the influences felt by the mentors resulted from the complex interactions between the two teachers in a particular mentoring relationship, they should not be considered in isolation, and; second, that the mentors, who had been focusing almost exclusively on the beginning teachers and their needs during the mentoring process, had not even considered how the mentoring relationship had influenced them. As the mentors and beginning teachers worked together within the mentoring program, a feedback cycle evolved. The mentors and the beginning teachers were continually being influenced by the relationship and were, in turn, continually influencing it. The influence was cyclical. What the teachers brought with them to the sessions, their frame of mind, their ideas, their conversations, their degree of commitment, was entered into the relationship and was returned to them in the form of influence which then influenced their next interaction. The influence was on-going.

As I asked the mentors to start thinking about mentoring and to verbalize a summative estimate of its influences on them, they hesitated as if asking, "You mean I'm supposed to have been influenced?". The

program's focus was so clearly on the influence that would be felt by the beginning teacher, who would be helped to pass the BTAP, that the mentors had not considered mentoring's impact upon them. "You mean they were supposed to get something reportable out of the relationship?" The context and the content of the mentoring process had reflected the perceived needs of the beginning teachers. The pairs met when and where the beginning teachers found it most convenient; the discussions in the sessions revolved around assisting the beginning teachers. Even the tone of the relationship seemed to reflect the beginning teacher's attitude more than it did the attitude or spirit of the mentor. The intended outcome of the BTAP Mentoring Program was to have the beginning teachers pass the BTAP. This overt measure of the influence that was felt by the beginning teachers contrasted with the often more subtle, less tangible influences felt by the mentors. What was clear however, as the mentors spoke about the influences they had felt, was that these influences were linked, 1. to the mentor's expectations, as explained in their individual motivations to become mentors, 2. to the context of the mentoring relationship, its mood,

tone, atmosphere, and 3. to the content of the conversations held by the two teachers, the levels of thinking and talking about teaching.

Alma

After the first two sessions when it appeared that Allison would be overwhelmed by Alma's zest for mentoring, the two teachers found the role that each would play in their relationship and to the observer it looked like a very positive, highly productive, reciprocal relationship. Both teachers also agreed that it was.

In each of the relationships it was the mentor who had advance knowledge of the mentoring program and who had applied for the privilege of being a mentor. The beginning teacher did not ask for help, but received it nonetheless. Of all of the mentors, Alma gave the most obvious signs of being pleased at having been chosen. I was interested in what had prompted her to become a mentor in the first place.

She explained:

Well, I've been teaching a long time. And I think probably the beginning teachers need help.

It's..Teaching is a lonely profession. I mean in that you, you go to school and you learn all these methods and you do a little bit of student teaching and you come out and all of a sudden they put you in a room and say, "go"...And I just thought that it might be fun. It might be fun to help somebody else.

And the experience was fun for Alma. I could see it when she sat down and looked over the copies of the Master Teacher with Allison, grinning as she pointed out a new article on using creative writing in a science lesson, and I could hear it when she spoke with Allison about the students in Allison's class and chuckled over what she had seen "one of those little dudes" doing. Alma found that her expectations about being a mentor had been met. The context of their relationship was responsible for the positive influences Alma reported. Her personal regard and affection for her beginning teacher helped to create the environment in which the pair worked so compatibly. Over and over Alma credited Allison with much of the success of their relationship. "I had a terrific person to work with. She was already self-confident and she had a lot of good ideas about how

to do discipline and how to take care of a lot of little details and things."

Alma talked about the mentoring program, its focus, and about how she interpreted her job as a mentor. She referred to the apple theme, that a teacher must learn to take care of him/herself, to keep apples in the basket:

Because you're always getting these things that say "due yesterday". And if you don't have a technique that's gonna protect you, even though you try to get all these things in on time and try to do what you're supposed to do....Ya know, the most important thing is the kids and I have ta...I just wanted to make sure that she (Allison) realized that then, the next, right after that, comes her.

Although Alma did not dispute the soundness of the BTAP competencies, she sympathized completely with the beginning teachers:

That's a terrible trying time. Emotionally that's (BTAP) terrible on you. I mean cause it's like, do I get my certificate or don't I? And I've got three hours to prove this. And um so I guess

our main thing to do is to get them through BTAP. And also in the process, uh if they're not a good teacher, you know, change a few things to help em to be a good teacher. But Allison of course was...She was already a good teacher.

A potential influence upon the veteran teacher was the experience and training they received before becoming a mentor. Alma had been selected as a mentor the preceeding year. She had attended the half-day training session and the BTAP Orientation Session but had not been assigned a beginning teacher. This year the mentors had a forty-five minute discussion session at the pre-service seminar but had really had no specific training. Alma was glad she had participated in the training session last year:

I felt that the first year that I was in it, which was last year, but I didn't have a person then...I got better training than I did this year. And I'm glad that I went through that last year's training because I think that I was better prepared because of that to help my new teacher. Last year we watched videotapes and then we had to pick out competencies and we had to rate this

teacher. And we had big discussions about why you felt this way and why you felt that way, and what that person could have done. So that was better training for me than what I got this year.

Actually the mentors were not trained this year. The program guidelines were discussed and the mentors and BTAP teachers were given handbooks describing the fourteen BTAP competencies. The veteran teachers who had worked previously as mentors explained that their experience was different from year to year, depending on the beginning teacher with whom they worked. As I listened to the teachers during the sessions, it was clear that even those teachers who were mentoring for the second or third year were uncertain about just how to interpret many of the competencies. They read and re-read the BTAP literature with their beginning teachers and often had to settle for, "This is what I think they [State Department of Education] mean". The veteran teachers used a commonsense approach, relying on their years of experience in order to give the beginning teachers advice on classroom matters and on the BTAP competencies. The mentors would say, "Well, this is a way that worked for me when I had third graders" or

"Some teachers I know have had good results by having work-jobs for 15 minutes after snack time". As they read from the literature, the veteran teachers related the theory on the printed page to their own practical experiences with "what had worked" and "what had not".

When I asked Alma to talk about the influences she may have felt from having been a mentor, she talked first about feelings, the positive feelings she had felt from her relationship with this particular beginning teacher:

She's terrific. She's a nice lady. She's mature. Uh.....and I don't know if this would mean anything to anyone else, but I'm an old lady but she never, she never relates to me in that way. She related to me more as a peer.

Alma was able to compare her own entry into teaching to the entry she was watching Allison make:

She loves teaching. I felt like I was born a teacher...I made lesson plans before I even knew what they were. They were lists in those days, but they were so I could get things done. And that's how she is. Yeah, she's a born teacher. I lucked out, really, cause I got somebody who was already

ready made.

The context of the mentoring relationship they had formed had given Alma the positive intrinsic rewards she had sought when she applied to become a mentor.

She also spoke about the influence that the content of their mentoring sessions had had upon her thinking with regard to her own classroom. "Well, I am so much more aware". Alma, like most of the mentors, felt that she had been influenced by their discussions of the BTAP competencies. When the mentor teachers read the competencies, thought about the competencies, and talked about the competencies, they had their years of experience to apply them to and to reflect upon. The competencies seemed to be far more meaningful to the veteran teachers than to the beginning teachers. Although the beginning teachers knew they had to pass the competencies, they spoke about them as if they were merely a step-by-step string of behaviors which must be executed in order to score well on the assessment. None of the beginning teachers at any time, either during the mentoring sessions or in my interviews with them, ever spoke of the BTAP competencies in relation to their "real teaching" practice. The mentors, however, spoke

repeatedly about how their classroom practice compared to those behaviors advocated in the BTAP.

Alma explained:

You know, you are always supposed to be positive. You know that's one of the competencies. Um, there's a lot of them. Lots of times when I do it or I don't do it and I say, "Oh Alma..You know you should have done that differently. I'm glad the observer's not here." I personally feel that everybody should have an in-service or be aware of those competencies because I do think they are good. And you, you just go on your way. You know, after you've taught 100 years, you need to go back and review. It kicks things into your head that you didn't think about before. I think it's made me more aware and possibly a better teacher because of working with, ya know, the BTAP competencies.

Allison

When I spoke with Allison she described what a help Alma had been to her and reiterated what Alma had said about being a mentor:

I know that she (Alma) said in the mentoring

program it's really helped her to see what.....to help her teach better because she knows what the competencies are now. When she's been teaching she's thought, "Okay, uh I don't want to have any negative reinforcement, and this is a way I can give positive reinforcement, and this is a way I should, ya know, keep walking around the classroom"..and just things like that. She said it's just being aware...just made her aware of the competencies that should be exhibited by a good teacher.

Allison talked about her relationship with Alma and about the mentoring sessions they had had:

I had no idea that we were going to have a mentoring program until I walked in for the BTAP orientation in August. I wasn't too thrilled. I thought that it was gonna be more work, more trouble than it was worth, to have someone else to have to set up meetings with. At first....I think that my personality is more..that I'm more outgoing. And I would rather do the speaking than the listening. So at first that (Alma's talkative nature) irritated me a little bit. But then I

realized that this woman was just an immense help to me. So that I just let her keep going and she really..She gave me some good advice. Alma was a tremendous help. I would have felt totally lost without Alma.

Like Alma, Allison mentioned the training that the mentors received. Actually, she wondered if it existed at all. Her inquiry raised the question of whether or not years of teaching experience, a kind heart, and a willingness to help a beginning teacher are sufficient preparations for mentorship.

Allison felt that, in her case, the mentoring program was working well, but she did pose a question about the training:

Actually I do think it's doing what it needs to do. Um, except I'm not sure if the mentors have.....Do the mentors meet before? Um, are the mentors told how to mentor? Fortunately, I was given a very good mentor.

When I asked Allison about the levels of thought or conversation during their sessions, the what versus the why, she was quick to respond and to share a philosophy about BTAP:

It (their discussion levels) was just what I do. Because there just....This was just cut and dry. Just do it. Alma explained BTAP to me like a game. And if I don't play by their rules I won't win. And if I do, then I'll be alright. And their rules are, you do this and this and this. And we just didn't have time to get into any of why this is a good thing and why this is.... I just wanted to play the game, and I hope I played it alright.

Allison was enthusiastic about teaching and her enthusiasm had helped to make her a dynamic participant in the mentoring process. Despite the stress and the pressures of time, Allison said she was committed to a career in education:

It's a lot more work than I thought it was gonna be. It really is. I really didn't understand how valuable a teacher's time was until I became one. There's a lot more time involved. But it's been great. In fact, I was walking out the door yesterday and I was thinking, there's nothing I would rather do than teach.

Carol

Carol's discussion about her experience as a mentor reinforced those ideas I had observed her trying to pass on to Carrie during the mentoring sessions. In her discussions she so often used, "analyze", as she suggested possible approaches to teaching situations. When she explained her motivation for becoming a mentor, she again brought up the importance she placed on inquiry.

Having the opportunity to work with somebody that is just starting and to give them the support that they need, but also to be there...It was an opportunity to have some input into the direction they went. Because when I worked with the student teacher, I always tried to get her to analyze what she was doing, not to look to me to tell her all the answers, but for her to start analyzing. So I was excited when this (mentoring program) came out. I just saw it as....I was looking for more things to do then just the regular classroom things and to me this was an opportunity to extend.

The context of their relationship influenced the intrinsic benefits that Carol felt she had received from

the relationship. She felt that the fact that she and Carrie were in the same school not only helped to strengthen their relationship, but also was going to ensure that the relationship continued beyond the official mentoring commitment. Carol distinguished between last year's mentoring situation and this year's situation with Carrie. Last year Carol's beginning teacher had already worked in the building as a longterm substitute, was married, and was having a baby. Carol felt that she had to avoid anything that would appear "too cutesy". Also, last year's beginning teacher only had six students and she had the help and support of an aide. The context of Carol's relationship with Carrie had been quite different. As Carol explained:

It's just been very upbeat. And this year I'm lookin at it from a totally different angle that most mentors won't have. I don't have a class of students. So it's my...It's being involved still with a class. I hear her talk about her kids and I get to see them. She's been the kind of person that has been so open, you know, to help me and guide me, and I mean she looks for me so that I

have to be really conscious of the fact that she's she's...Ya know, I have to watch what I say or else my word is taken as...as God. One day she said, "Your word is God". I said, "Oh!". But it is, it's rewarding to think that somebody values your opinion. I mean, it's just been so...She's so upbeat and positive. And it's like I'm getting just as many strokes as she's getting.

Carol also reported having been influenced by the content of their discussions during the mentoring sessions. She got new ideas, such as those which were a part of Carrie's first BTAP observation lesson, that she used as examples in her staff development class. And the reading and discussion of the BTAP competencies had caused her to think about, and change, her own classroom practices:

It made me stop and think through what I did in terms of the competencies. And a couple of things that I knew that I would be talkin' to somebody else about I had to begin to think, do I practice it? The one I remember a lot is the area on guided practice and how you need to monitor and all this. And I thought, boy over the years, a

lot of times I say, "Okay, now go ahead and do this worksheet". And that's five minutes I can check a paper or talk to somebody I've been waiting to talk to. And it began to dawn on me, "Oooh, gee, maybe that's why sometimes somebody [students] keeps makin' the same mistake. I need to jump in". I just remember thinking it was good to go over it because you just get in the habit of doin' things your own way. You get into a routine and you sometimes don't analyze what you do as much.

Carol found it difficult this year to have the dynamics of the mentoring relationship as balanced as she would have liked them to have been:

You want them to take the lead and you want them to accomplish what they want to accomplish but I had a hard time getting her to take the lead. And that I think is hard when you're trying to have an equal give and take and say, I'm here to kinda help you out in a certain area but I want you to determine the direction, or I want you to have as much input as I...I just want to stimulate you to think on your own. And sometimes that's hard.

Carrie

When I spoke with Carrie, she explained that it had definitely been her choice to have Carol do most of the talking.

Carol did most of the talking, even when she wanted me to respond. You know.....She never said something and left it. She always wanted my feedback. So it was in the sense that I wanted her to do most of the talking because I, you know, looked up to her. I wanted to take in everything she said. But she never...It wasn't the fact that....It wasn't to the point where I wasn't talking because what I said wasn't important. I just wanted to soak in what she said.

Even though Carrie was very positive about teaching and about the mentoring program, she shared the negative attitude that all of the beginning teachers held of the BTAP:

I understand that they need to do something to assess what I'm doin' in the classroom, but as a new teacher, when I'm really tryin to focus in on my children and what I've got to teach and what I've got to get done in the beginning of the year to

start me off...But then with BTAP comin' along I'm thinkin' about you know, how I've got to pass BTAP and it takes my mind from teachin'. And to me a good teacher is one that puts her time into her class and into each individual student and helping them at the beginning of the year, and not worrying about, I've got to do this to pass (BTAP). I don't think it really separates the good from the bad because I could be an excellent teacher and not get marked on showin (particular) competencies. But I could be a poor teacher and be really good at showin' those competencies that particular time and get filled in.

The way Carrie felt about Carol had a clear influence on the context and content of their relationship:

She's who I want to be when I grow up! She really is. I think she's wonderful. I feel so fortunate to have had her as a mentor. I really do. She's someone where I know that our relationship hasn't ended with BTAP. She is still comin'in and helpin' me and she's gonna be a life-long friend. And this might not be good to say, but I think BTAP

was really one of our least....I mean we got through it and everything but that's not what I saw. I didn't see her as....Oh, here comes my mentor. I felt like I've known her for years... workin' with her. But I see a life-long friendship. Cause she's so supportive and it's all outside of BTAP."

Beryl

I interviewed each of the group members individually and asked them to talk about the relationship they had had with their assigned partners. Because of the context in which their mentoring sessions had occurred, the teachers made reference to the group and to other individuals in the group as well as to their own partner.

Beryl explained her motivation for becoming a mentor:

Well, the money was....I had helped a lot of first-year people, coming from other schools, that are new to the area, and I thought, you know, every single year, every single semester, I've helped. And I thought, why not get paid.

Beryl saw mentoring as a job she had signed up to do, one which she had performed according to county guidelines and which had been a logical outgrowth of services she had been performing previously at no charge. Her emotional investment in being a mentor somehow didn't sound or appear as great as Alma's or Carol's. She said, "I enjoyed it, you know, I'm glad I did it. But you know, this is over now, basically. And it's a good thing to have done."

She was not sure she would be a mentor again if it meant working with someone "out of school". As she explained, "Because, I mean it's really convenient to have them in the same school". Another aspect of the context of her mentoring situation that she felt was beneficial was the fact that she had the support of the two other mentors in the group. "I liked the three. I thought that was....especially it being my first time. I felt that was real helpful." Beryl's relationship with Bev had been strained at first because Bev had given the impression that she absolutely did not need help. However, the group discussions revealed Bev's insecurities and made it easier for Beryl to help her.

As Beryl explained:

It was tough right at first. I think she didn't want to admit that she needed help and I didn't want to force myself on her. And through the sessions with other people, you know, three sets, other people began talking about problems they were having. I thought everything was going fine, and then all of a sudden it wasn't going fine.

Beryl described the dynamics of the group as she had felt them:

The three BTAP people were up and down with their process. You know, it would be a down day for them and then we all tried to give her things to try..And then the other, and it seemed to be somebody different each day that seemed to be having a problem. I feel like the BTAP weighed heavy on all of us. But we knew that we had to get beyond that, and to give them (the state) what they wanted.

Beryl felt that one of the mentors had dominated the conversation and because it was perhaps "part of her personality", was quick to answer all the questions that arose in the group. Beryl found Joan to be particularly

helpful because:

She helped bridge some gaps that Bev and I were having, and sort of, through our sessions, brought out that, you know, Bev had been going to her (for help). But, you know, I think she helped mine and Bev's relationship and it got better.

Beryl did not report any of the "good feelings" or intrinsic influences that Alma and Carol had felt. Beryl and Bev had just not made the close personal connection that the previous pairs had made. The context of the group had not encouraged direct interaction or closeness.

Beryl did feel that her thinking about her own teaching had been influenced by the conversations the group had had and by their consideration of the competencies. She explained:

As we were talking about the competencies, it really made me stop and think, you know, am I doing that? Well, I thought twice about a lot of things because, you know, I know how I've done it and it has been successful but I was real conscious of what I was doing and was it the best thing for Bev to do. I was very conscious of what I said

and what I did. You know, it was tough sometimes because, especially since I've done it this long. I think especially at this time in my career, you get set in your ways.

Although they were in the same school, Beryl felt that the end of the formal mentoring relationship would mean the curtailing of her relationship with Bev. "I will still see her at lunch, and I probably won't see her as much. But I'll see her, not in lengthy times like with BTAP, but I'll see her here and there, in the office."

Bev

When I talked with Bev, she sounded ambivalent about the context of her mentor/beginning teacher relationship:

I did practically everything, you know, on my own. She (Beryl) came in but she never found a single thing wrong....Melissa and Jessica were so upset about it (BTAP)...I tried not to get worked up about them (competencies), and I didn't until they started getting worked up about it. And I guess I knew a lot more about BTAP than they did,

coming from a Virginia school. And I kind of knew what to expect. And I realized I, in my mind, can make a distinction between an evaluation and an observation. I don't think that they (Melissa and Jessica) were. They kept calling it an evaluation, evaluation, evaluation, and I think it really got them worked up.

Bev felt that Joan had been most helpful:

Joan really helped me out more than anybody because she's been through it before. Beryl really didn't know what to tell me. Beryl didn't say much at all. And Martha, sometimes I found helpful and sometimes I didn't. It seemed she had a solution for everything. You know; "I've tried that before; it doesn't work". I didn't like the part where we started talking about the other teachers. I just didn't think that had anything to do with BTAP. I think we got off track a lot in our meetings.

With regard to the mentoring program itself, Bev felt that, yes, it should continue in some form. However, she suggested, "I think maybe they need to train the mentors a little better."

Martha

Martha, like Carol who viewed mentoring as an opportunity to extend beyond the classroom without really leaving the classroom, felt that mentoring offered professional opportunities:

I think it was a challenge, to throw your name in the hat and see whether or not the selection committee would be willing (to choose you). But also I felt like I needed a little revamping. I needed to go back and focus on teaching.

She also reported that, "Yeah, it was a good experience. I think, well, it's nice to feel you're doing something of value."

Being one of the more forceful members of the group, Martha was able to influence the direction of the discussion during many of their sessions. Martha preferred talking about classroom matters, as opposed to BTAP matters, and the course of the group's conversation reflected Martha's preference. The group was the last mentoring set to actually begin to deal seriously with BTAP during their sessions. As Martha explained:

I'm not so sure that the mentoring process, for me, has anything to do with BTAP. I think what

it has more to do with is giving some guidance to people who are out there and maybe having some difficulties the first year, and helping to maybe alleviate some of their concerns.

When Martha spoke about the context of the mentoring situation, she was not as enthusiastic as Alma and Carol had been about their personal feelings for their beginning teachers, but she did say that she felt that the group setting worked well and that it had had a positive influence on all of the teachers.

I think the group is supportive for those, for the mentors as well as the BTAP people...I think it eased....I think there was a little hesitation from the BTAP people at the beginning, as to what they could expect us to do. And I think there was also a little of, "I can do this myself", and "I don't need your help"....Putting it on a group level, it was several colleagues getting together and discussing this..It gave the mentor or the BTAP people a chance to ask some questions without feeling like they were novices.

Martha described her relationship with her beginning teacher as a "co-worker" relationship. "But

she makes me feel old." She said that working with a young teacher made her look back to her own entry into teaching and she remembered the experienced teacher who had unofficially taken her "under his wing." When she observed Melissa, Martha saw "a lot of myself in there. you know, things, little things that she did."

Although Martha felt that giving the beginning teachers a chance to "vent whatever it was that had bothered them that week" was a good way to determine the "hot topic" for a particular session, she did have some qualms about the group's tendency to "get off track":

I think it almost got to the point where it wasn't structured enough. I don't think it wasn't valuable, but I think if I were in their position as a BTAP person, I think I would have wanted more concrete help on the BTAP process itself. It became much more social-oriented than BTAP-oriented.

The open discussion among the six teachers allowed Martha to test some of her long-held beliefs and to relate the ideas she heard to her own teaching. "There were a lot of years of experience sitting there and discussing the things that they [all the teachers] were coming up against." She felt that it had been a "real

value, not only for the new teachers, but it was kind of a shot-in-the-arm for us [mentors] too." Consideration of the plans and techniques that others had tried, gave Martha some specific ideas for her own classroom:

You know, Joan would say, "Well these things worked in my class". And I'd think, "Gee, I hadn't thought about that". And Jessica said something about music in her class and how valuable that was. I think there were a lot of suggestions that were thrown up on the table, that I thought were very effective.

She mentioned some specific influences that she had felt from the group discussions, influences that had caused her to focus on her own classroom practices. "I think I've become a much better planner, making sure that everything is planned to the inth degree, which I didn't necessarily do before." Many of the influences that Martha reported having felt were produced from the group's discussion of the BTAP competencies:

Reminding myself that little things like moving around the classroom are important..and I really found myself, I think, teaching through a teaching model, much more so this year than I have

in the past, trying to get to all those kids, trying to make it relevant. I think looking at the competencies and seeing what they (beginning teachers) were going to be judged on, it kind of made me more aware of what I'm doing. I mean I could feel myself teaching a lesson sometimes and wondering, gee, if there was somebody in here right now...if this would pass the competencies.. and thinking, "thank God I'm not" (being tapped).

Melissa

I spoke briefly with Melissa during her planning period to listen to her feelings about the BTAP, the mentoring program, and her entry into teaching. She was not satisfied with any of the three. Having gone to college in a state other than Virginia, Melissa did not know about BTAP when she accepted a job in this Virginia school system. She was disgruntled that, on top of all the inherent stresses of the first few months of teaching, she would have to worry about and prepare for an important assessment of her teaching abilities. "I don't like the BTAP and feel it comes too soon in the year. It's just a performance anyway."

Melissa did not like the group mentoring sessions and in fact, felt that "the sessions were a waste of my time. I would have done better working on my own." Although there were not overt signs that Melissa was unhappy with her mentor, her general dissatisfaction with her situation was clear at each session. Melissa perceived the other two mentors as having been more supportive than her assigned partner. "My mentor was of little help to me. The other two mentors were more help to me than my own mentor. My own mentor always thought she had all the answers."

A major source of Melissa's displeasure was her teaching situation at school. From the start of the sessions, she had worried about the curriculum for her content area and about just how she would be able to accomplish the goals of what she saw as a rather vague curriculum. One of the most distressing facets of her life as a teacher was, as she put it, "I have trouble working with the other person in my department." This "trouble" she was having was discussed throughout the mentoring sessions but Melissa continued to feel that there was really nothing that could be done about it.

It is difficult to surmise whether or not Melissa's

problems could have been dealt with more effectively in a pair, one-on-one relationship. Perhaps her problems were compounded by the open complaint forum that the group provided. It is interesting that although Melissa's experience was generally negative, her mentor, Martha, reported having had a generally positive experience.

Joan

The relationship that Joan and Jessica shared did not follow the same developmental course that the other mentoring relationships had followed. Although there was mutual respect for one another, Jessica was so opposed to the BTAP that she did not participate in the last portion of the formal mentoring process. The two teachers remained in contact at school and Joan continued to attend the group's community mentoring sessions. I spoke first with Joan about her feelings toward being a mentor and toward the experience she had had this year.

Joan described her reasons for applying to become a mentor and explained them as a logical outgrowth of a role she had been playing in the past. When BTAP

started, and the county mentoring program had not yet been developed, Joan found herself helping a young BTAP teacher:

My neighboring teacher, Elaine, was going through the BTAP program. She was a first-year teacher and she was in tears a lot of the time. It was very difficult and I found that I was servicing as a mentor with Elaine, just to help her get through it. And when the county developed the mentor program, I decided that I, I would apply and get paid for something that I was doing all along. Another factor in her decision to become a mentor was the memory of her own entry into teaching:

I got the book and the job one week before school started and I was frantic. The other two teachers who were here (in her department) at the time were very nice people, but I didn't have any help at all. And when I did ask for help, in a lot of ways I felt like they were giving up their time and their ideas which they sorta wanted to keep to themselves. And it was a very frustrating, difficult year for me just trying to find things and to figure out what was going on. And I swore if

any other teacher in the department ever came into this building, I was going to give them help.

Joan felt that the group setting was a help, especially in the early stages of the process:

We did have a situation where one teacher in the program said, she wasn't having any problems. Everything was just fine...no need..So the mentor was in a position where she was feeling like.. well, where do I go from here? She doesn't want me. And I think the group sessions and the way we dealt with that opened up communications. I'm not sure that the two of them could have effectively worked that out.

The frustrations of working with the group came later, when Joan felt it was time to focus on BTAP and it was difficult to move the entire group in that direction.

After our initial meetings, I began to get frustrated, a little bit, because I felt we were diverging a little bit too much into the discuss-what-happened-during-the-day mode and not getting into enough of, hey look, this is what we should be doing. You know, I felt for a while that the balance

was off.

One major regret that Joan voiced was the attitude that was conveyed about the BTAP:

There's one thing that I'm very sorry about and that is...I don't want the participants to think of the BTAP program as just a playacting sham. But I think we got across the idea that they were just sort of on a stage and they had to do certain things. Cause there's just an awful lot of resentment about the program.

Joan found that her observations of Jessica's class and their follow-up, one-on-one discussions, were more helpful than the whole-group discussions. "I was observing certain things and it was easier to come up with a why because I could feel the whole dynamics of what was going on, whereas in our group sessions we were talking more in generalities I think." She felt she had been influenced by her discussions with the new teachers and by talking with Jessica about things she was doing in class.

In observing Jessica's class and making suggestions, I came up with ideas that I could see that I could use. In fact she said, "Well, do you

do that?" and I said, "No, I don't, but I think it would be a good idea." I find that teachers that are just out of school sometimes, ya know, they have classroom management ideas that are new and that can be incorporated. I'm always looking for new thoughts, new ways of doing things.

Jessica

Joan's partner, Jessica, was an honest, straightforward person who, although she bulked at the BTAP, was described by one of the mentors as "probably the most conscientious of all the beginning teachers." Most of what Jessica had to tell me was about the BTAP. It still made her angry to think about it. "I think the key word is 'hostility'." She felt that the BTAP had been a hindrance to her teaching:

It really, I think, detracted from my actual teaching. It made me a more nervous teacher. I made rules that were actually arbitrary so that the kids would be behaving on that (BTAP) day in a way that's not really normal or even necessary in this type of classroom." As she spoke, Jessica decided, "Hostility is a mild word for how I feel about

it...and resentment. This was not a learning process. This was a trick and I was not evaluated on my teaching, and I resent it.

Jessica did have a negative attitude toward the BTAP; however, she was never sour, never whining, and her presence in the group had been a welcome influence before she dropped out. She didn't criticize the group but found the sessions:

Sort of just turned into a chance to unwind and to have a glass of tea with friends, and chit chat. But I didn't find them of any more assistance than I would have if I had sat down with my husband or with my mom and my dad and sat around and had a glass of tea and unwound. But I didn't find them as any direct assistance in teaching or towards BTAP for me. I felt them as nice social gatherings that were kind of relaxing.

The one-to-one contact that she had with her mentor was a help to Jessica:

Joan has just been a wonderful mentor and she truly has been an assistance to me. I appreciate that wholeheartedly. I have appreciated her for all the other reasons. But whenever we got talking

about BTAP, I just was not very interested, or it seemed like a game and I sort of decided not to play exactly. My relationship with her didn't have too much to do with BTAP. In fact, we both said, "BTAP is over now". Now she's really going to help me with real teaching things instead of just playing the game.

Like most of the other beginning teachers, Jessica was working long and hard at her job. She had not made definite plans about next year and was just seeing how the remainder of this year would go. "It [teaching] takes up all of my time. It's a 24-hour a day job, and I do think what else I could be when I grow up." She also was not sure about the results of her BTAP observations, but she felt strongly that she had done what was necessary for her:

I wrote the lesson plan the day before the observer came in and, on all three occasions...And on two occasions the observer came in and just watched me walk around the room and help the kids with all their projects, because I wasn't going to play the game. So I might fail, but I thought, they can spend all their money and have those observers

come right back. And they can do it all they like, but I wasn't going to frustrate my kids for it or ruin the little bit of a curriculum I had finally gotten a hold of and gotten together, not for the sake of this strange person with the bubble sheet.

Dorothy

From all outward signs, Dorothy's mentoring experience seemed to have been one that might have left her feeling disappointed or at least uncertain. Money had not been the motivating force behind her becoming a mentor and I thought that the failure to connect with her beginning teacher might have been discouraging for someone like Dorothy, who had become a mentor "to be of help". Another teacher in her school had been the inspiration for Dorothy to become a mentor:

Patty was definitely a mentor to me when I first came, and continued, not only as one of my best friends, but as a mentor until she passed away. And I originally became, you know, when the program first started, that's what I thought about it.. I thought, well, I would really like to be able to do for somebody else what Patty did for me.

Because of some classroom problems her beginning teacher was having, Dorothy sometimes found herself put in the role of evaluator by Debbie's building principal, and it was not a role she liked playing. "I don't feel it's really the mentor's responsibility. I mean we shouldn't be making a judgment or an evaluation. You know, we are not evaluators."

As far as Dorothy was concerned, the needs and personality of her beginning teacher were the primary determiners of the nature of their mentoring sessions. "This time (this year, as opposed to her experience last year) we mainly talked about the classroom. As a matter of fact, only the first two sessions did we actually spend working with the competencies." She added:

There's no two ways about it, I obviously did the majority of the talking. I think a lot of that had to do with the personality of the person that I was working with. Each time I tried to draw her in it was difficult to do. I was aware of it (doing all the talking) and I was trying to draw her in, but I wasn't always as successful as I would like to have been.

When I spoke with Dorothy, she was still trying to

sort out whether Debbie had felt that their relationship was helpful to her or whether it had just been a bother:

I got really mixed feelings and messages about that (Debbie's opinion of their relationship). She was very gracious, you know, thanked me always for my help and time and whatever. However, during the time that I was working with her, I often felt that she was resentful almost of having someone offer suggestions, or being in the classroom.

Dorothy liked taking Debbie into other classrooms because the opportunity to look at other teachers' ideas was something that Dorothy valued:

Any time I walk into another building, walk into another teacher's classroom, I always get ideas. You know, that's one thing that happens to us after we've been teaching for these umpteen years...Sometimes we feel like we're running...or I feel like I'm running kind of dry.. hitting the bottom of the barrel and you know, your creativity is starting to get stifled.

The content of her conversations with Debbie influenced Dorothy in that she had to rethink practices

and procedures which were the foundation of her teaching. "When you sit down and work with someone, as I was working with Debbie this time, on a very basic level, you have to think back to what you are doing and why you are doing it."

Although Dorothy said she really did feel better "the first time around" as a mentor, "because I really did feel that I had helped" (last year). She said, "At the conclusion [of her work with Debbie] I feel that I did make some, what's the word I'm looking for, not 'impression', but, 'contribution'."

At the end of our talk Dorothy added that:

Any mentor worth her or his, salt can get a new teacher through the BTAP. All you have to do is go over those competencies and fill out that plan, because you can get so many of the competencies just from the plan. So in that sense, BTAP really doesn't measure the effectiveness of the new teacher or even if he or she is competent.

Debbie

When I spoke with Debbie about the events of the recent months, I thought that she might voice a

dissatisfaction with the BTAP, with the mentoring program, or with her teaching situation. She was not negative about any of them.

The extent of her derogatory comment about BTAP was that she "wished it hadn't been so early in the year." But she said, "I can understand the reason of doing it, and I think there's a good reason behind it."

With regard to the mentoring program, Debbie said "I think the mentoring program is good. I think it's nice to have somebody to coach you along and to get you through the BTAP, and get you started. I was glad Dorothy was available to coach me on that."

She contrasted her view of the mentoring program with a view she had heard expressed at a recent meeting for all BTAP teachers:

There was one girl that said that she really was unhappy with the mentoring program and didn't feel like, as a beginning teacher, she had time to spend 20 hours or whatever with somebody else talking about lesson plans. But I didn't feel that way. I felt it was really helpful and I appreciate somebody else taking the time to help get me through this.

The things that Debbie was saying to me just didn't match with what I had seen and heard during the sessions.

I think it was nice that Dorothy suggested I go observe other classrooms. I think that was a big help and I think that would be adding to, you know, as a standard part of this mentoring program to go observe other teachers. I think it was helpful because she gave me an idea of what exactly is expected from me. You don't really get that from books.

When Debbie talked about the mentoring sessions, it was surprising to hear her say that some of her questions went unanswered, or to hear her suggest that there wasn't the chance for her to say what she wanted to say.

"There were a lot of times when I wanted to say, 'Oh, well I have this kind of a situation,' but that's not really what the program was for and I didn't.... There wasn't always time to get it in."

As we talked, Debbie used the same calm, steady tone I had heard her use in the mentoring sessions. I asked about the actual BTAP observation and Debbie said,

"They were okay. I mean nothing disastrous happened. Things could have gone a little bit better here, or a little bit better there, but that's the way it goes." When I asked Debbie how the year was going so far, she concluded, "I think it's going really well".

As I interviewed all the teachers, one by one, and then went back over what they had said about their experiences as participants in the mentoring program, I realized that the "what you put in to an endeavor, you get back out" adage worked in some cases, but not in all.

Under usual circumstances it might seem obvious that a fledgling teacher would welcome the assistance of a veteran teacher. However, given the fact that the beginning teachers were already so pressed for time and the fact that the "mentor" was often associated with the infamous BTAP, some of the new teachers in Trenton County would have preferred to have been left on their own.

The veterans however, sought out the privilege of being mentors. Some of the mentors applied so that they would be paid for services they were providing anyway,

and some of the mentors applied for the professionalizing effects they might feel, and others applied in order to have the chance to officially assist a beginning teacher. All of the mentors said that they would like to be mentors again. The mentors, Alma and Carol, who had the most positive relationships with their BTAP teachers, reported the highest degree of satisfaction with mentoring. They had also been the two most enthusiastic mentors in the study. Their good relationships with their beginning teachers fueled their enthusiasm over the course of the program.

Dorothy had also started the program as an enthusiastic mentor, but found that her drive was blocked by her beginning teacher's reserve and that she would have to settle for just "getting the job done." The three mentors in the group really had their mentoring experience and their relationship with their beginning teachers diluted by the group identity which became more significant than any of the individuals.

All of the mentors reported having been influenced. In the case of Alma and of Carol, the context of their relationships themselves was a positive force or influence. It made both partners in each pair "feel

good" about themselves and about what they were doing. It seemed apparent that, as Little (1990) suggests, some of the veteran teachers may have felt constrained by the organizational circumstances in which they were working. In the case of the group members, and of Dorothy and Debbie, the context of their relationships may have been a detractor, and the mentors in those sets reported that the influence that they felt was primarily from the content of the conversations and the application of the competencies to their own teaching experiences. The relationships that Alma and Allison had and that Carol and Carrie had were rich relationships that went beyond the mere accomplishment of the task at hand. The mentors and beginning teachers in these two relationships were continually influencing and being influenced in positive, constructive ways by what was said and what was done during the mentoring process.

Literature: Focus on Influence

The influences reported by the mentor teachers in this study were much the same as those described in the literature on mentoring. In several cases the mentors in this study seemed to borrow words from the literature, "rejuvenating", "professionalizing" (Lowney, 1986), to describe the influence they had felt. Several of the teachers in this study reported that one reason they decided to become mentors was in order to receive pay for those services they had been providing over the years. This remuneration may have also provided for them the official recognition of their mentor status, the validation of their relationship with a beginning teacher, which has been found to be important in colleague relationships (Niles et al., 1989). The school system's acknowledgement of the process of mentoring may have encouraged many of the veteran teachers to apply to become mentors "officially" even though they had been involved in mentoring activities for some time. Several mentors suggested the professionalizing effect mentioned by Niles et al. (1989) that being accepted into the program had had for them; they described feeling proud, challenged, and as though mentoring had given them the

opportunity to extend.

Mentors in The Mentor Program in California (Lowney, 1986) reported the same initial enthusiasm and excitement that characterized the initial attitudes of most of the mentors in the BTAP Mentor Program. Other teachers in the California model (Lowney, 1986) reported the value of the training they had received and suggested the important role their increased skills and knowledge had played in upgrading their status as teachers and in allowing the mentoring relationship to work well. The teachers in the BTAP Mentor Program had not received training. Only Carol, who had been training and reading in preparation for her staff development program, seemed prepared with the words and the skills, as well as with the practical knowledge, to develop an inquiry-oriented mentoring relationship with her beginning teacher.

The influences reported by the teachers in the BTAP Mentor Program did not come from mentor training that the teachers had received. They came from the context and the content of the mentoring process itself. All of the mentors reported having gained some degree of insight, knowledge, and satisfaction, as reported by

Klopf and Harrison (1981).

Levinson et al. (1978) describe the disadvantage of society's tendency to sometimes structure relationships according to the age of the participants, keeping the young with the young, the mature with the mature. The mentors in this study reported an age-awareness which they had felt from being in a relationship which juxtaposed the young and the mature, the beginner and the veteran. The mentors benefited themselves by helping the novices (Krupp, 1985).

The reciprocity of benefits explained by Keele and De LaMare-Schaefer (1984) was apparent in the mentoring relationships I observed. However, depending upon the specific relationship, some of the benefits were contrasting. Those mentors who entered the mentoring relationship in hopes of establishing a bond with their protege and who found the protege did not seek this bond, did report some of the disappointment described in earlier studies (Kram, 1985; Wright & Wright, 1987; Clawson, 1985). However, all of the mentors reported some positive effects and said that they would like to be mentors again. For the mentors whose relationships flourished in a context of mutual personal respect and

admiration, the excitement they had felt when they applied to become mentors was sustained and all of them reported feeling the benefits from the "workteam" they had built (Keele & De La Mare-Shaefer, 1984).

All of the mentors reported having been influenced by the content of their conversations during the mentoring sessions. The instructional dilemmas they discussed with their beginning teachers served as a way for the veteran teachers to test some of their own long-held beliefs about teaching (Hall & McKeen, 1988). The mentors reported having to reevaluate their own classroom practice in order to make helpful suggestions and to offer specific advice to the beginning teachers. Mentoring reportedly had an empowering effect upon the veteran teachers and at the same time instilled in them a feeling of responsibility, as described by Garrison (1988).

A significant influence which was constantly reported by the mentors and which seemed to stem from the content of their conversations, was the effect that mentors felt from discussion of, and their own subsequent reflection on, the BTAP competencies. Although such a specific focus, the emphasis on the BTAP

and its competencies, may be peculiar to this one mentor program, the relevancy of the competencies has been discussed in the literature (Journal, 1986). This printout from the VA Department of Education asks veteran teachers whether or not they would "measure up" to the competencies, and in fact, that is just what the veteran teachers reported considering. Having read and thought about the BTAP competencies, the mentors were constantly measuring their own classroom practice against the suggested behaviors in the BTAP literature (BTAP, 1986). Having such a clear and central focus, getting the beginner through the BTAP, the BTAP Mentor Program does have the strong sense of intent and relevancy which Kram suggests is a key element in effective mentor programs (Kram, 1985). The mentors and their partners talked about the BTAP competencies in the mentoring sessions but did not seem to have time for reflection. These veteran teachers often did as Howey (1988) and Zimpher (1988) suggest; they took time later, apart from the mentoring sessions, to consider the competencies in light of their own classroom practice and then used their reflection to plan what their future classroom strategies would be.

Even though most of the mentors in the study explained that they had become mentors, at least in part, to experience benefits, rewards, or influences that were primarily related to attitude or personal feelings [to help someone; to grow] the mentoring experience did influence the veteran teachers in ways that were tangible. In addition to considering and reacting to the BTAP competencies, the mentors reported influences similar to those reported in a study on mentoring by Niles et al. (1989) in which teachers reported that mentoring had influenced their behaviors as well as their ideas. Like the mentors in this earlier study (Niles et al., 1989), mentors in the BTAP Mentor Program reported the phenomenon which sometimes occurs when knowledge is passed from person to person. The veteran teachers found that they had to clarify their own existing knowledge, or had to acquire knowledge so that they could pass it on to their beginning teachers. They reported, as did the mentors in the 1989 study (Niles et al., 1989) that they became better organized, better planned, and generally more knowledgeable about their own school and about the school system. When they got ready to explain the practical application of a

concept that the beginning teachers had learned in college, the mentors gained, as Niles et al. (1988) suggest, an awareness of the complexity of the act of teaching.

Little (1990) concludes that the incentive to mentor is diminished when the expectations of the veteran teachers are unfulfilled. However, all of the veterans in this study, even those whose expectations were not met or who had to lower their expectations during the course of their mentoring, reported that they had benefited personally and/or professionally from mentoring and that they planned to mentor in the future.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The BTAP Mentoring Program in Trenton County is working. The primary purpose of the program is to assist beginning teachers in passing the Beginning Teacher Assessment Program (Ackerman, 1989). This year each beginning teacher in this study did pass the requisite number of competencies. In fact 100% of the beginning teachers in the county passed BTAP during the first observation window. Their success in passing BTAP may be the main characteristic that these teachers had in common. Predominantly, they were a varied group, each teacher having had a unique relationship with a veteran teacher. Each relationship occurred in its own context; each relationship evolved its own content, and each relationship produced its own influence upon not only the beginning teacher but upon the veteran teacher as well.

Context

The times and places which helped to form the mentoring setting were dictated by the mentoring program guidelines that the program developers had established,

a means described by Anderson and Shannon (1988), and by the limitations of time and space. It was just easier to meet after school, in school (or close by) than to meet at night, on weekends, or in locations more removed from the workplace.

Having been selected as mentors several months before the mentoring actually started, the veteran teachers came to the first mentoring session with some idea of how they would approach mentoring. Alma was demonstrative, yet nurturing; Carol was analytical, yet sensitive; Beryl was "laid-back" and quiet; Martha was fun-loving and assertive; Joan was conscientious and reserved; Dorothy was talkative and eager. Carol, Joan, and Dorothy had each had one year of experience as mentors working with beginning teachers; Alma and Martha had previously been selected as mentors but had not yet worked with beginning teachers, and this was Beryl's first year in the mentoring program. As the experienced mentors explained, each mentoring experience was different. They were starting from scratch this year in trying to be the most effective mentor for this particular beginning teacher. With the exception of Carol, who seemed confident that the competencies need

not be isolated and who relied mainly upon what she knew about effective teaching to guide her, the veterans who had been mentors in previous years seemed just as uncertain about the BTAP competencies and the ways in which they could be demonstrated as did the first-time mentors.

When Alma met Allison who was pensive and focused, and Carol met Carrie who was quiet and admiring, and Beryl met Bev who was boisterous and outgoing, and Martha met Melissa who was depressed and angry, and when Dorothy met Debbie who was passive and reluctant, each mentor found that what was said and done in the mentoring sessions was going to be determined not only by the county's guidelines for the task at hand, and not only by the will of the mentor, but also by the needs, desires, and personality of the beginning teacher.

The tone or atmosphere that developed in each mentoring set made that relationship unique. Alma and Allison and Carol and Carrie created positive tones of respect and cooperation in their relationships and worked enthusiastically to solve problems and to meet the challenges of the BTAP evaluation and of beginning the school year. The teachers that met as a group and

Dorothy and Debbie were unable to establish strong positive feelings about their relationships and they often viewed the daily dilemmas of the classroom and the demands of BTAP as annoyances and obstacles rather than as possibilities for meeting challenges. The mood or attitude of the mentoring relationships, this least tangible aspect of the context of the mentoring process, may have been the most significant element in that it influenced the feelings of both teachers, not only about themselves and about each other, but also about what the two of them were doing together in the mentoring process.

Content

The mentoring sets met an average of once a week over the four months of formal mentoring. When they met, the teachers understood the intent of the program and they understood that these meetings were "mentoring sessions." The topics that were discussed by the teachers were influenced by the focus of the program. Although four topics were discussed repeatedly: the school, the classroom, the BTAP, and personal matters, the fact that passing BTAP was the program goal made

BTAP the topic which ultimately received the most discussion time. Despite the fact that BTAP had to be reckoned with, the topic of classroom matters was an urgent topic. Most of the beginning teachers pressed for answers to classroom questions of curriculum, instructional techniques, and discipline.

Even though the same four subject threads ran throughout all of the mentoring sessions, the sound of mentoring within each set was unique. The dynamics of the interaction within each set ranged from those of Alma and Allison who became equally enthusiastic contributors to the discussion; to Carol and Carrie, with Carrie eagerly hanging on Carol's words; to Beryl and Bev, Martha and Melissa, Joan and Jessica with their open forum approach; to Dorothy and Debbie whose interaction remained lopsided, with Dorothy seeming to reach out but apparently never really connecting to the extent she desired.

As the teachers spoke and listened to one another, their thinking and speaking seemed to be guided by the sense of an objective to be met and of the passing of time. Kram (1985) suggests that having a narrow, clearly understood focus may be an important attribute of

effective mentoring programs. The mentor teachers knew that their job was to get their partners through BTAP and they knew that they didn't have much time. The beginning teachers knew that they had to prepare for BTAP and they knew that they didn't have much time. Unfortunately, this time constraint may have been responsible for the failure of all of the sets, except Carol and Carrie, to reach a level of inquiry about what they were doing. Their work and their talk was aimed at what would expedite the passing of BTAP. Only Carol, who did not separate the BTAP competencies from effective teaching, was able to stop and talk to Carrie about why, and to ask Carrie to really think about possibilities, repercussions, alternatives.

Influence

Unexpectedly for some of the mentors, they all reported having felt the influence of having been mentors. Although they had all focused on their respective beginning teachers during the process of mentoring, when they took time to think about it, the mentors all realized they had been influenced. The nature and degree of the influence they felt was

connected to their motivations for becoming mentors, the context of their mentoring relationships, and the content of their conversations during the mentoring sessions.

Some of the teachers had decided to mentor in order to be reimbursed for work they had always done anyway. Not having made a large emotional investment in the relationship, they were satisfied when the program was over that they had done their job. They approached mentoring in the utilitarian manner described by Gehrke (1988) as one possible method of mentoring. Alma and Carol had become mentors in order to be of help to a new teacher. Because the relationships they had with their partners were quite positive, both Alma and Carol did have their mentoring expectations met. Dorothy had also joined the mentoring program because of the desire to be of help. Her emotional investment did not pay off because her partner did not seem to reciprocate and Dorothy was left questioning the amount of good she had really done.

Closely tied to the mentor's motivation and expectations were those conditions under which the mentoring took place. Although the mentoring times and

places were similar, the atmosphere or conditions of the mentoring sessions differed from set to set and were a reported influence on the veteran teachers. The mentors in the group did not become close to their partners and they did not report any particular personal influence from the mentoring experience. Alma and Carol had made a commitment to their partners, a commitment which was returned by their beginning teachers. Both veterans reported having felt strong personal benefits from their mentoring experiences with these particular beginning teachers. Dorothy also had made a commitment at the start of her mentoring relationship. When she found that the commitment was not going to be reciprocated, she reapproached the task, changed her expectations, and redefined mentoring as a job she would complete.

The third aspect of mentoring that reportedly influenced all of the veteran teachers was the content of the conversations during the mentoring sessions. To the beginning teachers the BTAP competencies were merely a bothersome hurdle to be overcome. To the veteran teachers however, the competencies and the discussion of behaviors which would demonstrate them, served as a point of reference and reflection for their own

classroom practices. The veteran teachers explained specific influences that consideration of the competencies had had upon their own teaching. Although they started off reporting a general "awareness" or a "refocusing", all the veterans could describe specific times in their own classrooms when they had thought, "I should be using positive reinforcement", or "I should be giving guided practice", or "I wonder if my questioning technique would pass the questioning skills competency?"

The interesting fact about the influence that was felt was that it was dynamic. The mentors came to the mentorship with certain motivations and expectations, met a beginning teacher with certain needs and attitudes, and began to build a relationship. As the periodic meetings occurred, each session was an isolated experience. During the session the teachers were influenced by one another, and by what was said and done during their meeting. When they met again, they brought their influences with them, and when they parted they had once again been influenced by the time they had spent together. These feedback cycles or loops, as explained by Wiener (1950), occurred at each session. By the end of the formal mentoring process, the

relationships had stabilized and the mentors were able to think back and to consider how the context and the content of the mentoring experience had influenced them.

Questions and Recommendations

As I watched mentoring in progress, three questions kept occurring to me: 1. What can a veteran teacher do to be of greatest help to a beginning teacher?, 2. Should the veteran teacher be trained before becoming a mentor?, and 3. Is there a future for the practice of mentoring if the problem of time cannot be solved?

Beginning teachers in more and more states are being required to pass some manner of performance evaluation. A veteran teacher hoping to assist a beginning teacher would necessarily have to consider this assessment and would have to help the new teacher be prepared for it. The new teacher who has been dropped into the classroom, who doesn't know where the thermofax machine is much less how it works, who doesn't know whom to call to get the pencil sharpener replaced or how to order new crayons, and who doesn't know what bus duty

and lunchroom duty are, may desperately need to know these things. The new teacher who will meet students in two days, who doesn't understand "the pie" which shows how the content areas should be divided up daily, who has never written a six-weeks lesson plan, and who has no idea how to present the new reading series, may urgently need to know these things. The answers to these "What do I do?" questions are the survival techniques with which new teachers must be armed. However, I can't help wondering if our mentoring programs which are inherently answer-giving are actually doing all they can or should do for the beginning teachers.

Perhaps mentoring programs can be more than hand-holding directive experiences in which the veteran teacher fills in the blanks for the beginning teacher. Perhaps they can be, as Carol tried to make hers in the short time that she had, opportunities for inquiry, discovery, and talk about teaching.

The second question which occurred to me and which also occurred to some of the teachers in this study was, "What type of training, if any, do the veteran teachers need before they begin to mentor?" If the intent of the mentoring program is to help the new teachers pass BTAP,

should the mentors be given specific training in each of the competencies? If the mentoring program doesn't have such a specific focus, what should the mentors be trained to do? Should they just be told to "be there" for the beginning teacher?, to draw on their years of classroom experience in order to answer questions and give support?

There are many teachers willing to assist a beginning teacher, teachers who have had years of classroom experience and who are kind-hearted and well-intentioned, but who have never really thought about their teaching beyond what they have tried and found successful, and who have never really talked with other teachers about why they do what they do or about how they feel about teaching. They have, as Rogus (1988) and Sergiovanni (1985) suggest, always been action-oriented rather than inquiry-oriented. Perhaps the mentoring relationship is not the place for the veteran teacher to begin an inquiry into teaching. Perhaps some reflecting, beyond a half-day seminar, would be appropriate so that the veteran teacher would come to the mentoring role, already having a disposition toward inquiry and already having the skills and vocabulary to talk to a beginning

teacher about teaching. With the ability to convert practitioner knowledge into a form which would allow discussion and inquiry (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986) such a mentor could hope to foster in the beginning teacher, a similar disposition toward inquiry and reflection.

The final question which I have wondered about is "What role will time play in the success or failure of specific mentoring relationships and of mentoring programs in general?" The first concern about the role of time deals with the duration of the mentoring relationship. How long should mentoring relationships be expected to last? In a program such as the one in this study, would there be any point in continued mentoring after the BTAP has been passed? Can an assistance program really be called "mentoring" if the focus is so restricted and the duration is so brief? It seems to me that a mentoring experience that lasts for less than the entire school year is too abbreviated, somewhat incomplete. It is difficult to meet a partner and to develop and establish a meaningful relationship, personal or professional, in a mere four-month period. It is often the case that real problems and crisis

situations that were not apparent in the early months of school often evolve and multiply as the year wears on. The help and support of a mentor might be highly valued mid-way through the school year.

The second part of the question about the role time will play in whether or not mentoring relationships work is, "How will there ever be enough time to allow classroom teachers the luxury of reflection and inquiry?" Successful relationships will continue to be difficult to form in rushed meetings held after school. Inquiry and reflection take time (Wildman & Niles, 1987a). The mentors and beginning teachers in this study spoke often of time and of the need to cut corners and take shortcuts in order to get the job done. The present climate in many schools does not promote reflection and inquiry, not because the teachers and administrators are opposed to them, but because there simply is no time for them. This dilemma is compounded for beginning teachers who are typically working harder and longer at the daily task of teaching. Mentoring needs to be recognized as a valuable part of career development and time needs to be provided during the school day for the beginning teacher to talk about teaching with a capable mentor. If the

first year is treated as an apprenticeship year or as a survival-stage year, the mentoring requirement could last for two years. In the spring of the first year, after the beginning teacher has been assisted with taking the crucial but rather mundane first steps into teaching and has had some experience on which to reflect, the focus of the mentoring experience can shift toward inquiry and analysis. This process of reflecting could continue into the beginning teacher's second year of teaching. In the second year the new teacher could be freed of the obligatory bus duty, or hall duty, or lunch duty and could be given that time for mutual discussion and reflection with a mentor. Little's (1990) concern that mentoring activities remove capable teachers from the classroom is lessened if veterans are merely freed from non-teaching duties, homeroom, test duty, parking lot patrol, which are easily fulfilled by an aide.

Reflections

As I sat at session after session and watched the sets of teachers engaged in the mentoring process, I saw for myself what Levinson et al. (1978) meant when they said that the process can be described but cannot be clearly defined. Even within the rather strict confines

of the BTAP Mentor Program guidelines, once the process of mentoring started, it was defined or redefined by those teachers who were part of the process.

My curiosity about the mentoring process was what prompted me to conduct this study. I hoped to find out how mentoring was done by others, to see it and hear it in progress. I have a clear picture of the mentoring I observed, but I still am not certain what mentoring is; however, I have a much clearer picture now of how I feel mentoring should be.

Going back to study a school system of which I had been a part, and going into mentoring sessions to observe a process in which I had participated caused me to reflect upon my role as a teacher in the system and as a mentor in the program. I have always worked in high schools and the fact that many of the study participants were elementary teachers allowed me to be in their rooms, to hear the ideas they have and to marvel at their creativity, enthusiasm, instructional techniques, and seriousness of purpose. Twice I was able to observe a first grade class and I just kept wondering at the gap between the eager hand-waving first graders and the lethargic, window-gazing seniors in some high school

rooms. I imagined what "school" would come to mean to these first graders, and what role their teachers would play in these students' next eleven years of education.

The sabbatical leave that I have taken this year has given me the freedom of time and space that few classroom teachers ever have. Although there is some contact between department members within a school, and minimal contact between like departments in high schools and middle schools, there is not professional contact between elementary and high school teachers. The time to visit these schools and the freedom to watch the students and to listen to the teachers has filled a gap, which I didn't realize existed, in my own knowledge about the process of education in the county, and about how it begins in those first years of a child's life as a student.

As I watched the mentors doing what I had also done during the previous two years, I realized how the context of the three mentoring experiences I had had affected the relationships I had with each of the teachers, and I realized how the content of our conversations had been determined both by the needs of the individual beginning teachers and by the focus of

the mentoring program. The context and the content of the mentoring experiences that I watched this year sometimes seemed beyond the control of the individual teachers involved; however, it was clear to me that some mentors mentored better than others. As I compared the mentors' successes and failures to things I had done as a mentor, I was able to see my own strengths and weaknesses, ways my mentoring had been effective, times when it had fallen short. Some of the mentoring sets worked so well together, they were an inspiration to watch. They made me glad I am a teacher. Other sets just didn't connect, or had to settle for just getting the job done. As I watched beginning teachers who did not appear to want any help, I realized, as Clawson (1985) points out, that mentoring is not a panacea. Yet I continued to feel that there are important bits of knowledge, theoretical and practical; there are certain "wisdoms"; there are important attitudes about teaching that sensitive, adept mentors can offer to other teachers who are entering the field. Inquiring, reflective veterans who become mentors have the opportunity during those first one or two formative years in a new teacher's career, to help influence the

foundation upon which the new teacher's career will be built.

I realize now that when I was a mentor I was doing what most of the mentors in this study were doing. We all were earnestly trying to help our beginning teachers in any way we could. We knew that the BTAP was to be our focus and that we had limited time to help the beginning teachers prepare for it. None of us had ever been "tapped"; our knowledge of BTAP was based upon handbooks and BTAP pamphlets, yet we felt that we could help, and the assessment results and the personal thanks that many of us received made us feel that we had made a difference.

For me the opportunity to be a mentor was a natural next step after the short, vertical career ladder of teaching had leveled off. I suppose I felt that mentoring was a chance to take some control. It was, as Garrison (1988) suggests, an empowerment. It was a chance to interact with other teachers, and was a recognition of some knowledge that I possessed about teaching. I know now that I did do an adequate job as a mentor. My three beginning teachers passed the BTAP. We worked well together and remain in touch with one

another. I have always had a sense though, that there should be more to mentoring than what I remember doing, that, as Gehrke (1988) suggests, the term "mentor" connotes more than a handy reference for new teachers in need. Throughout my observations over the course of this study, I have been reminded of the potential that mentoring has for helping teachers. Adequate time and training could help raise expectations for the roles that mentors can play. Veteran teachers can become more than ready-resources, encyclopedias of teacher-information; they can affect the way new teachers think and feel about teaching (Nemser, 1986); they can inspire and be re-inspired in return.

METHODOLOGY

The initial impetus for this study came from my own participation in my school district's mentoring program. The fact that the program was called "The BTAP-Mentor Program" made it of even greater interest to me because I had been curious about the BTAP performance assessment since the new teachers in my school started talking about it in the fall of 1986. I made BTAP the focus of several class projects in the coursework I had been doing in my Curriculum and Instruction program.

I decided that following the mentoring relationships of four mentor/BTAP teacher sets might provide interesting findings and still be within my limits as a single researcher. I contacted the assistant superintendent and the coordinator of the BTAP Mentor Program and was told that I could conduct the study of the county mentor program as long as I got willing volunteers who understood that I would be present at all of their mentoring sessions. At this point the program coordinator agreed to give me a few minutes at the county's pre-service seminar to ask for participants.

The section of this paper which addresses the issue of the context of mentoring describes the ease with which I was able to get volunteers at this seminar in August. I was surprised and encouraged.

The participants were six veteran teachers and the six beginning teachers with whom they had been paired in the BTAP Mentor Program. The set of teachers which met as a group were secondary teachers; the sets of teachers which met as pairs were elementary teachers.

From the pre-service seminar until the completion of the final follow-up interviews, I was in regular contact with all of the mentors except for Martha and Joan. My contact with the mentoring group was Beryl, the secondary level mentor who had originally volunteered. Contacting me by phone, the mentors called to tell me of planned meetings or to reschedule, or sometimes just to talk. Often the mentors and beginning teachers would use the last few minutes of one mentoring session to establish dates and times for the next session. At first I was worried that the sets of teachers which seemed slow to schedule meetings might have a meeting without me, but as I came to know the teachers, I saw how very reliable they were and how they considered me a fixture

at their sessions.

Although I always sat apart from the teachers during the sessions, there were some occasions when I was drawn briefly into the conversation. I sat where I could observe the teachers as they spoke and I took field notes which were a tremendous help when I went back and tried to recreate each session. Early in the study I had trouble with my tape recorder and learned the value of always having two recorders going at the each session. During the course of the study there were six times when more than one mentoring set was meeting at the same time and I either had to arrive late or couldn't attend at all. The teachers were very accommodating, taping the sessions for me and being very conscientious about seeing that the recorder was running properly.

I tried to keep up with the transcribing, but as the sessions became more numerous, I was bringing home stacks of tapes each week. I was faced with approximately 62 hours of tape to transcribe. I worked steadily at the word processor trying to keep up, but my diligence couldn't make up for my limited skills at the keyboard.

The mentoring sessions ended; the follow-up interviews were completed, and I still had stacks of tapes to transcribe. I called the local court reporting service and arranged to send them ten tapes to transcribe. Their rate was \$2.50 per page, and had I realized those ten tapes would amount to 600 pages of double-spaced copy, I might have cancelled my request. However, knowing that those ten tapes were being taken care of by someone else was a tremendous boost to my spirits and to my progress in this study.

Because I had listened to almost all of the mentoring sessions and had transcribed most of the tapes myself, I was very familiar with the data I had collected and assembled. I organized the transcriptions by teacher-sets and created spread-sheet forms (figures 1, 2, and 3) for each of the three issues: the context, the content, and the influence of mentoring. Although the three issues overlapped, I approached their analysis and the reporting of my findings, issue by issue. The actual recordings of the mentoring sessions and the field notes from each session, and from phone calls and casual conversations I had with the mentors, provided the data for the issues of context and content. For

issue three, the influence of mentoring, I arranged separate interviews with each of the teachers in the study. After these tapings were transcribed, I approached their analysis, again with a spread-sheet which helped to categorize the teachers' responses.

During the study, its original form remained the same. I continued to gather data and to watch and listen, keeping the three primary issues: the context, the content, and the influence of mentoring, in mind. The focus of the issue of context changed slightly in that I became more interested in the personal and professional characteristics of the teachers and how these characteristics influenced the context of the mentoring relationships. I found that the previous experience of the mentor teacher was not an important aspect of the relationships I was observing and so I removed it from my discussion of the context of mentoring. The focus of issue three, the influence of mentoring, also changed as I found that the mentors' motivations for mentoring and the context and content of their mentoring relationships contributed to the influences, both personal and professional, that the veteran teachers reported having felt. I broadened this

issue to include more than just consideration of the influence of mentoring upon the mentor's classroom practice. The focus of issue two, the content of mentoring, remained as it had been in my original plan. I found that by listening to the teachers and by watching them interact, I was witnessing the nature of their conversations, the topics, the dynamics, and the levels of thought which were present during the mentoring process.

The Program that was Studied

The program that was studied was initiated in 1987 by administrators in the school district's central office. Eventually the program may become one part of a projected "New Teacher Induction Program". This study was confined to the formal mentoring program which was in its third year of operation and is called the BTAP Mentor Program. The structure of the program is definitive and the basic responsibilities of the mentors are explicit.

In the spring of 1989 any teacher in the school system who had completed at least three years of

teaching in the county and who had received a satisfactory rating was given the opportunity to apply to become a mentor. A selection committee composed of seven previous mentor teachers and three supervisors screened the applications and selected thirty mentors. Efforts were made to assign mentors to BTAP teachers in similar content areas. Although secondary mentors were assigned secondary BTAP teachers and elementary mentors were assigned elementary BTAP teachers, many mentors were not assigned BTAP teachers in their home schools. Because of the impossibility of knowing in May the exact number of new employees who would be required to take BTAP, an excess number of mentors were chosen and some mentors were not assigned BTAP teachers at all.

The stated purpose of the BTAP Mentoring Program was to assist the BTAP teacher in passing the requisite number of BTAP competencies. The mentors received \$120 for attending the workshop in late August. The mentors met their pre-assigned BTAP teachers at this workshop. Mentor teachers were expected to meet with their BTAP teachers for ten one-hour sessions conducted on non-school time. Mentors received:

\$400 for one BTAP participant for ten hours, or

\$600 for two BTAP participants assisted together
for ten hours, or
\$800 for three BTAP participants assisted together
for ten hours.

The duration of this study spanned the entire period of the formal mentoring relationship, from late August when mentors met their BTAP teachers until November, when the final observation window and the follow-up interviews had been completed.

Analysis

The Context of Mentoring

I organized the data I had collected from each mentoring session by creating one large spread-sheet which allowed me to show the meeting times and places of each mentoring set from the start of their mentoring relationship in August to the end of the formal mentoring requirement in November. By arranging the data on a time-line I was able to compare and contrast the frequency and regularity of the sets' meetings and to

chart significant happenings in the mentoring relationships over time. Using this calendar format, I was able to note external events which seemed to influence the mentoring process; for instance, the pre-service seminar in August, the BTAP Orientation Meeting in September, and the BTAP observation window which occurred from October 23 to November 3.

As I read and reread the transcripts of each session, I noted ideas and concerns which recurred within each set and among all of the sets. I recorded these recurring ideas, or themes, on the spread-sheet and was able to see how each mentoring relationship had developed and how all of the mentoring relationships compared to one another.

In addition to noting time, place, and themes during each session, I went back through the transcripts and my field notes and looked for indications of the contextual element, tone. When I found evidence, either behavioral or conversational, of a particular mood or tone during a mentoring session, I keyed this evidence in the appropriate section on the spread-sheet. The spread-sheet was an important tool because it provided a picture of all of the formal mentoring that had taken

place over the course of the entire study.

Schedule of Mentoring Sessions

Alma and Allison

Alma and Allison were the first pair to hold a mentoring session and were the first pair to stop having the formal sessions. Their seven sessions occurred regularly from August 30 to October 18. The teachers always met after school and alternated, first in Allison's classroom at her school and then in Alma's classroom at her school. For the first two sessions Alma leaned forward, talking and giving advice. Allison seemed reserved. At the third session Allison started talking more and began to take the lead in formulating a BTAP observation plan. After the BTAP Orientation Session the teachers focused almost exclusively on the BTAP planning document and the lessons for the observation days. The two teachers worked as a team, Allison coming to respect Alma, and Alma offering pertinent, good-humored advice. They maintained a positive tone throughout the mentoring process.

Carol and Carrie

Carol and Carrie held the most mentoring sessions, a total of nine formal meetings. They first met on September 1 and met last on November 1. Their first session was in the morning before the school day started, but the rest of the sessions were held in the afternoon, at the end of the school day. Both teachers were working in the same school and all of their sessions were held in Carrie's classroom. Carol always encouraged Carrie to think and to talk; Carrie wanted to absorb everything that Carol said. The early sessions were spent discussing matters particular to Carrie's classroom. During the third session the focus started moving toward BTAP, but Carol continually related the competencies to actual teaching situations. The pair's sessions had a positive tone and an air of excitement and inquiry.

Beryl and Bev, Martha and Melissa, Joan and Jessica

Beryl and Bev, the pair who had volunteered for the study, joined with the two other pairs at their school and formed a group which started meeting on September 8

and concluded six sessions later on October 26. Each session was held after school at Martha's house. Most of the sessions were spent discussing school and classroom matters. Although the BTAP was discussed, actual work on the planning document was not done in the group sessions. The group had refreshments and listened to the classroom problems that individual beginning teachers were having. The tone wavered; sometimes the group laughed and joked and other times became negative and complaining. Jessica did not attend after the third group session.

Dorothy and Debbie

Dorothy and Debbie met for the first of their eight mentoring sessions on September 8. Their last session was held on October 31. They alternated their after school meetings, once at Debbie's school and next at Dorothy's school. The first two sessions were spent going over the BTAP competencies. At the third session, after Dorothy had observed Debbie's classroom, the focus of the sessions switched to classroom management and instructional ideas. Dorothy did most of the talking at all of the sessions; Debbie was always reserved.

Although the sessions were not characterized by complaining or overt negativism, there was an apparent lack of communication which at times produced a tension between the two teachers. (Refer to figure 1).

The Content of Mentoring

In efforts to form a picture of the nature and types of discussions which were held by each mentoring set, I used four spread-sheets, one for each set. Each spread-sheet was designed to have a section for each mentoring session held by a pair. For instance, Carol and Carrie had nine sessions; their spread-sheet had nine sections. Each section was intended to show the major topics of that particular session and to illustrate the dynamics of that session.

I identified four topics which recurred throughout the sessions: 1. the school--those teaching-related matters which were not particular to the teacher's classroom, 2. the classroom--those teaching matters which were particular to the teacher's classroom, 3. BTAP--matters directly related to the Beginning Teacher Assessment Program, 4. personal matters--non-school

| DATE | TOPICS | LOCATION | TIME | TONE | BTAP OBSERVATION |
|----------|---|----------|------|------|-----------------------------------|
| NOV. 1 | | | | | TB LS PM P |
| OCT. 31 | | | | | |
| OCT. 26 | | | | | TB LH PM N |
| OCT. 24 | | | | | TB LS PM P |
| OCT. 23 | | | | | |
| OCT. 20 | | | | | TC LS PM P/N |
| OCT. 19 | | | | | TB LH PM P/N |
| OCT. 18 | | | | | TB LS PM P |
| OCT. 16 | | | | | TB LS PM P |
| OCT. 12 | | | | | TS LS PM P B+B I+J |
| OCT. 11 | | | | | TB LS PM P |
| OCT. 9 | | | | | TB LS PM P |
| OCT. 5 | | | | | TS LH PM P/N |
| OCT. 4 | | | | | TB LS PM P |
| SEPT. 28 | | | | | TB LS PM P |
| SEPT. 26 | | | | | TS LH PM P/N |
| SEPT. 20 | BTAP Orientation Meeting, County-wide | | | | TC LS PM P/N |
| SEPT. 14 | | | | | TB LS PM P |
| SEPT. 13 | | | | | TB LS PM P/N |
| SEPT. 12 | | | | | TC LS PM P |
| SEPT. 8 | | | | | TC LH PM P/N |
| SEPT. 7 | | | | | TB LS PM P |
| SEPT. 1 | | | | | TC LS AM P |
| AUG. 30 | | | | | TS LS PM P |
| AUG. 23 | BTAP Mentor Program Pre-Service Seminar | | | | |

SCHEDULE OF MENTORING SESSIONS

KEY
 TOPICS - TB= BTAP
 TC= CLASSROOM
 TS= SCHOOL SYSTEM
 TP= PERSONAL
 LOCATION-LS= SCHOOL
 LH= HOME
 TIME - AM= BEFORE SCHOOL
 PM= AFTER SCHOOL
 TONE- N= NEGATIVE
 P= POSITIVE
 P/N= COMBINATION

FIGURE 1
 THE CONTEXT OF MENTORING

matters. Working from the transcripts, I noted the frequency with which each topic had occurred during each session. I also noted the nature of the discussion about each topic. For example, if the teachers were discussing 2. the classroom, were they discussing curriculum, discipline, or how to introduce the new reading series?

To look at the Dynamics of the interaction during each session, I first looked at Control of the conversations. The three areas I examined under Control were: 1. volume of talk, 2. transitions from topic to topic, and 3. initiator and responder, which of the two roles a speaker was assuming. The words of both the mentor and the beginning teacher were examined for each of these three categories.

Both teachers' contributions to the conversations were also examined for what I called Types of conversation. The eight types I identified were: 1. General information giving, 2. Directive, 3. Supportive, 4. Asking for help/advice, 5. Prompting, 6. Responding, 7. Reciprocal, and 8. Reading.

The last component of Dynamics was the consideration of the level of thought as reflected in the conversations. I was interested in looking at

whether or not the teachers were talking primarily about what they were doing or primarily about the why behind their actions, or about both. Again, I noted the what and the why of discussion contributions made by both mentors and beginning teachers.

Two additional considerations I made for each session held by each mentoring set were those of the tone of the session and of any pertinent comments which I felt highlighted a significant occurrence during the session. In considering the tone of a particular session, I tried to identify an adjective that best characterized the tone for that day and also tried to supply a supportive example from the transcripts. The comments that I recorded on the analysis sheets were those quotes which I felt were pertinent or typical. (Refer to figure 2).

The Influence of Mentoring

Working from the transcripts of the individual interviews with each of the teachers in the study, I charted each teacher's responses separately. I focused on the mentors and recorded their responses to the questions which pertained to how they felt that being a

TABLE 2
THE CONTENT OF MENTORING

| TOPICS | FREQUENCY | NATURE |
|--|--|--|
| School (General, External) Classroom (Specific, Internal) BTAP (State Mandated Program) Personal (Matters of life "outside of school") | How often was this topic discussed during session? | What specific talk evolved about each topic during session? |
| DYNAMICS | MENTOR | BTAP TEACHER |
| <u>Control of Discussion</u> Volume (Amount of participation in discussion) Transitions (Changing the discussion topic) Initiator/Responder (Passive or Active role in discussion) | What roles, general and specific, did the mentor play in the dynamics of the conversation? | What roles, general and specific, did the BTAP teacher play in the dynamics of the conversation? |
| <u>Types of Interaction</u> General Information (Declarative statements) Directive (Imperative statements) Supportive (Affirming) Asking for help/advice Prompting (Encouraging partner to speak) Responding (Answering questions) Reciprocal (Balanced conversation of volleying) Reading (As from BTAP literature) | | |
| <u>Levels of Thought</u> What (Action-oriented thought and discussion) Why (Inquiry-oriented thought and discussion) | | |
| Tone: (General mood of talk during the discussion) | PAIR #: | SESSION #: |
| Comments: (Significant happenings memorable quotes) | | |

The above criteria were used to analyze each set of teachers, session by session, over the course of their mentoring relationship.

mentor had influenced them. As I reviewed their responses, I was able to pick out those reported influences which seemed to stem from the context of the mentoring relationship and those which seemed to stem from the content of the conversation during the mentoring sessions. For example, comments such as, "The upbeat tone of our sessions was rejuvenating for me", were recorded as influences felt from the context of the mentoring relationship; comments such as, "When we discussed the Guided Instruction competency, I realized I had not been giving enough guided practice", were recorded as influences felt from the content of the conversations during the mentoring sessions. As I recorded these influences in the appropriate categories, I was able to see the degree and nature of the influence that each mentor teacher reported having felt from the mentoring experience.

During the interviews with each mentor teacher I was interested in hearing them discuss their reasons or motivations for becoming mentors. By categorizing their motivations for becoming mentors, I was able to tell whether or not the mentoring experience had had the influence that the mentors had anticipated and was able

to better understand what the mentors meant when they explained how and why mentoring had been fulfilling or disappointing for them.

Because mentoring is a dynamic process which involves the beginning teachers as well as the mentors, I included individual comments from each beginning teacher as I proceeded with my analysis. Going back through the transcripts of the interviews with the beginning teachers, I identified comments or explanations which were pertinent, either for their support of or for their conflict with, the statements made by the mentor teachers. As I read and recorded the beginning teachers' comments and compared them with the mentor teachers' comments, I was able to create a more accurate picture of the mentoring relationship than if I had considered only the mentors' responses. By analyzing the mentors' responses in light of what their beginning teacher partners had said, I felt that my understanding of the mentors' reported influences was greater than if I had considered their responses in isolation. (Refer to figure 3).

The categories, Motivation and Influence, served to organize what the mentors reported as their reasons for

Table 3
Influence of Mentoring

| Mentors | Alma | Carol | Beryl | Martha | Joan | Dorothy |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| Motivation | She wanted to help meet needs of new teachers. | She saw mentoring as a chance to extend beyond the classroom. | She was pleased to be paid for helping novices. | She liked being paid and welcomed the challenge of mentoring. | She wanted to help the novice teachers. | She was inspired by a teacher who had been her "unofficial" mentor. |
| Influence | She re-evaluated her teaching. She felt rejuvenated. | She felt more professional and felt rewards from helping. | She enjoyed being a mentor and reassessed her own teaching. | Mentoring caused her to think back to her own start as a teacher. | She got good classroom, management ideas. | She reassessed her own teaching. She wondered about her effectiveness as a mentor. |
| Context | Despite age differences, the two teachers worked well together. | Sessions had a positive upbeat tone. | She liked the support of the group and the convenience of being in school with her partner. | Liked group meetings. Worried about being on task. | Worried about not concentrating on BTAP. | Worked hard on communication with her partner. |
| Content | Thought about own class during discussion of BTAP competencies. | Encouraged "analysis" during their discussions. | Discussion of competencies made her think of her own teaching. | She practiced behaviors mentioned in BTAP competencies. | She got new ideas from the talks with her partner. | Talks about the "basics" of teaching made her rethink what she did in her own class. |
| Misc | Purpose of program is to get new teacher through BTAP. | Tried to focus on why as well as on what in her discussions. | At first she was uncertain about her role as a mentor. | She saw herself in her beginning teacher. | Was able to focus more on BTAP in the one-to-one sessions. | Wondered about her role as a mentor. |
| Beginning Teachers | | | | | | |
| | Allison | Carrie | Bey | Melissa | Jessica | Debbie |
| Comments | Felt the pressure of too little time. Wondered if mentors had been trained. | Admired her mentor. Described herself as a "workaholic". | Wondered if mentors had been trained. | Felt she could have worked well independently. | Questioned whether or not she would remain in teaching. She valued her mentor. | Thought BTAP was needed but that it came to early in the year. Glad to have someone help her. |

becoming mentors, their expectations about the experience, and their perceptions of the degree and nature of any influence they had felt. The categories, Context and Content, were used to organize the influence reported by the mentors into that influence which seemed to have resulted from the context of the mentoring sessions and that which seemed to have resulted from the content of the conversations during the mentoring sessions. The Miscellaneous category was used to gather additional comments, pertinent ideas, or notable quotes from the mentors. Key words, ideas, and page numbers which referred to the interview transcriptions were recorded in each category.

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APPENDIX

Literature: The History and Nature of Mentoring

Mentoring has a long history which is documented and described in the literature. It is a process which varies with individual mentoring situations and which defies easy definition. That mentoring is a reciprocal relationship that influences both members of the pair is reiterated throughout the literature. The literature provided a firm conceptual base from which to begin a study of the practical realities of the mentoring process. Familiarity with the long history of mentoring and knowledge of the various forms of mentoring, in private industry, in medicine, and in education, allowed me to approach my own study of mentoring with an understanding of the field and with a sense of the possible approaches to mentoring.

History and Definition

In his epic poem, The Odyssey, Homer first created Mentor, the wise and trusted counselor in whose care Odysseus left his son, Telemachus, for some twenty years

(Hamilton, 1940). From this early role-model (Anderson, 1988) comes the name and concept that has been used in private industry and, more recently, in public education. Notable mentors in times past were pedagogical prototypes: Sigmund Freud, the mentor of Carl Jung; Socrates, the mentor of Plato; Aristotle, the mentor of Alexander the Great; Anne Sullivan, the mentor of Helen Keller, and Ruth Benedict, the mentor of Margaret Mead (Gehrke, 1988). Although a principal role of one who is a mentor remains the imparting of wisdom and knowledge, the process of mentoring continues to be broadly defined. From the original activity which bears the name "mentor", Anderson and Shannon (1988) have drawn four conclusions about the process of mentoring:

First, mentoring is an intentional process. Mentor intentionally carried out his responsibilities for Telemachus.

Second, mentoring is a nurturing process which fosters the growth and development of the protege toward full maturity. It was Mentor's responsibility to draw forth the full potential in Telemachus.

Third, mentoring is an insightful process in which the wisdom of the mentor is acquired and applied by the protege. Clawson (1980) asserts that it was Mentor's task to help Telemachus grow in wisdom without rebellion.

Fourth, mentoring is a supportive, protective process.

Telemachus was to consider the advice of Mentor, and Mentor was to "keep all safe". (p.38).

Martin Buber (1970) identified two primal relationships which may inform our present notions of mentoring. Buber explains that we all have two ways of relating to others, I-Thou and I-It. Most often we use I-It. In so doing we protect ourselves by being inauthentic when necessary and by manipulating others (objects) for our own purposes. It may be organizationally expeditious to advocate I-It relationships or a "no-nonsense" approach to mentoring. Kram (1985) provides guidelines for using the mentoring concept as "another important development tool, consistent with existing programs" (p.40). She would improve the mentoring process by giving it

relevant focus, by getting around interpersonal problems, and by involving the entire organization (It) in an organizational alternative to mentoring. Clawson (1985) reports data which "highlight a modern definition of mentoring that centers on the work place but excludes the development of personal characteristics which clearly influence a person's effectiveness at work" (p.37).

Others (Dodgson, 1986; Gehrke, 1988) favor the I-Thou relationship as one to which mentors should aspire. Described as "rarer" and "more powerful", the I-Thou relationship is achieved (usually only momentarily) when all pretense is dropped and an "authentic" relationship develops. When the I-Thou relationship occurs, what goes on between the two people "confirms their existences, their worth, and their potential" (Buber, 1965).

Gehrke (1988) feels that "the mentor label in some beginning teacher assistance programs seems to be employed in a primarily [I-It] utilitarian fashion"(p.44). Contrasting with such I-It relationships are those described by Pablo Casals (1970) who speaks lovingly of his mentor, the Count de Morphy and by Margaret Mead who writes affectionately of her mentor,

Ruth Benedict (1974). Given the contexts and purposes of contemporary mentoring relationships in public and private workplaces, it is doubtful that we could or should look to these classical descriptions of mentor-protege relationships as an achievable ideal. However Gehrke (1988) feels that the ultimate danger of substituting the more common for the rare is that we lose the "betweenness" once signified by the terms "mentor" and "protege" and that the more we accept the I-It relationship for the "real thing", the less likely we will be to find the real thing (p.45).

In the last ten to fifteen years, since mentoring has been a frequent topic in professional literature, it has been hailed as "one of the most complex and developmentally important relationships a man [sic] can have in early adulthood" (Levinson et al., 1978,p.97) and has been decried as an overrated panacea which may not be necessary at all (Clawson, 1985). In the mid 70's mentoring first became a topic of research (Clawson, 1980) perhaps as a result of the Human Resources Development Movement in business which was occurring at the same time (Eng 1986). "Mentoring" is a term which has been applied to a wide range of helping activities

(Anderson & Shannon, 1988). Perhaps because the activities and purposes of mentoring have been tailored to fit the needs of various organizations and systems, no commonly accepted definition of mentoring has been developed (Speizer, 1981).

Lexical definitions of the word, "mentor" are found in A New English Dictionary (Murray, 1908) and date from around 1750. The classical definition of "mentor" as one who protects, guides, and nurtures is upheld in these dictionary definitions and the word is expanded to imply that a mentor may be a person or personified thing. Current studies which report mentoring activities describe mentoring as a means of career assistance and development rather than as a holistic means of achieving life goals. The definitions of mentoring vary as the context and purpose change (Levison et al., 1978; Klopff & Harrison, 1981; Phillips-Jones, 1982; Daloz, 1983; Zey, 1984; Alleman, 1986; and Anderson, 1988).

Levison et al. (1978) feel that "no word currently in use is adequate to convey the nature of the relationship we have in mind here. Words such as 'counselor' or 'guru' suggest the more subtle meanings, but they have other connotations that would be

misleading. The term 'mentor' is generally used in a much narrower sense, to mean teacher, advisor, or sponsor. As we use the term, it means all these things and more (p.97).

Klopf and Harrison (1981) also view mentoring as a broad enabling process. Mentors are "competent people who serve as teachers, advisors, counselors, and sponsors for an associate, who may be younger and of the same or different sex" (p.42). Phillips-Jones (1982) further defines "mentor" by identifying six types:

Traditional mentors are usually older figures who, over a long period of time, protect, advocate for, and nurture their proteges.

Supportive bosses are persons in a direct supervisory relationship with their proteges. They function more as coaches than as long-term protectors and advocates.

Organizational sponsors are top-level managers who see that their proteges are promoted within the organization.

Professional mentors comprise a variety of career counselors and advisors. Proteges pay for services

from these mentors.

Patrons are persons who use their financial resources and status to help proteges prepare for and launch their careers.

Invisible godparents make "behind the scenes arrangements and recommendations which help proteges reach their career goals without their knowing it (pp.22-24, 79-89).

Three functions of a mentor are identified by Daloz (1983) who sees the mentor as a guide on a journey. The mentor points the way, offers support, and challenges. Zey's (1984) explanation of mentoring is far less personal and less formal than some earlier definitions:

A person who oversees the career and development of another person usually a junior, through teaching, counseling, providing psychological support, protecting, and at times promoting and sponsoring. The mentor may perform any or all of the above functions during the mentor relationship (p.7).

Alleman (1986) offers an expanded definition of mentoring and identifies nine mentor functions:

1. giving information
2. providing political information

3. encouraging challenging assignments
 4. counseling
 5. helping with career moves
 6. developing trust
 7. showcasing protege's achievements
 8. protecting
 9. developing personal relationship/friendship
- (pp.47-48)

Anderson and Shannon (1988) offer a conceptualization of mentoring based upon a broad definition of the process and delineated by five functions. Mentoring is defined as:

A nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role-model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and/or personal development. Mentoring functions are carried out within the context of an ongoing, caring relationship between mentor and protege (Anderson, 1987).

The five functions which attend this definition are: teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counseling, and

befriending (Anderson & Shannon, 1988).

To mistakenly dwell on a succinct, well-suited definition of mentoring is to thwart efforts to understand the actual process. Since the mid 1970's mentoring programs of varied dimensions have been in place in private industry and more recently in public education. The concept of mentoring is flexible enough to be adjusted to fit the context and purpose for which it is needed.

A look at studies of mentoring which have moved from policy to practice can provide an understanding of the actual process of mentoring.

Nature of Mentoring

Mentoring in Private Industry

Mentoring in its various forms is now being practiced in business and in service professions such as nursing and teaching. Wright and Wright (1978) iterate the value of mentoring relationships to the career development of young professionals, be they in the private or public sector. Although the focus of this paper is upon the act of mentoring as it is practiced in education, a look at the groundwork in mentoring laid by

the business world has import for mentoring programs which are now in existence or are being developed.

The business community has found that having a mentor is an important asset in the induction of new professionals to the field and to the continued professional development of the proteges (Levinson et al., 1978). Roche (1979) found that having a mentor was associated with success on the job: greater job satisfaction, higher salary, better promotion, more certain career goals, and with increased probability that the protege would someday become a mentor.

A leader in the area of career development is Merrill Lynch whose management readiness program has served as a model for other Fortune 500 companies to follow. Farren et al. (1984) established guidelines for developing mentoring relationships. These guidelines are based upon experiences drawn from the Merrill Lynch program:

1. Ensure the voluntary participation of mentors.

In the Merrill Lynch program, the coordinator talks to all applicants before making final selections.

2. Minimize rules and maximize the mentor's per-

sonal freedom.

When the Merrill Lynch program first started, volunteers were given explicit directions and readings to follow. Now they are urged to use their own management styles.

3. Create networking possibilities for mentees.

This important principle of career development can increase a mentee's ability to move across functional areas and across hierarchical layers.

4. Reward mentors and increase their visibility

In the Merrill Lynch program mentor's names appear on the written summary of the individual accomplishments circulated around the firm at the conclusion of each program. Mentors attend a banquet at the end of each program and receive a token gift and a personal thank-you from senior level executives. The ideas, accomplishments, and activities of mentors are cited in a company newsletter.

5. Include the managers of proteges.

At Merrill Lynch the direct managers of individuals in the management readiness program sometimes felt left out. Mentors should avoid this

by keeping lines of communication with proteges' managers open (Gerstein, 1985, p.157).

Mentoring in Public Education

The business community suggests that those in education can profit from following the mentoring lead that many corporate mentoring programs provide (Kram, 1980; Wright & Wright, 1987). Leaders in nursing education have followed the lead and are using mentoring relationships as well as the more traditional role-modeling strategies in their career development programs (Bidwell & Brasler, 1989). Those who favor mentoring over role-modeling suggest that while role-modeling can offer an adequate start in a profession, it is essentially imitative behavior and will not necessarily foster growth above and beyond that of the model (Hamilton, 1981; Smoyak, 1978). In mentoring relationships proteges observe their mentors and go on to establish their own attitudes, values, and standards (Moore, 1982). "Proteges are not clones of their mentors. Instead, proteges integrate mentors' views with their own (Wright & Wright, 1987, p.205). Nursing educators concerned about the selection of appropriate

mentors have used Darling's assessment tool, the Darling Measuring Mentoring Potential Scale (Darling, 1984), which lists fifteen characteristics identified as being important to mentoring.

The nature of mentoring in education is changeable as programs are developed to fit the wide variety of needs and purposes in diverse school systems. The 1963 Conant Report was one of the first publications to make specific recommendations about support for beginning teachers. Educators continue to call for attention to the developmental needs of both novice and veteran teachers. Lortie (1978) and Goodlad (1983) explain that although school contexts offer an array of experiences which influence novice's learning and initiation into teaching, there is little direction provided to guide the learning or to assist with problem solving.

Mentoring Programs

Reports of actual mentoring programs presently in operation give a sense of the range of approaches taken. The Chesterfield County, VA Induction Program (Wildman et al., 1989), the Vermont Mentor Program (Fuller, 1987), the California Model (Lowney, 1986), and the

Ohio's statewide mentoring program (Zimpher, 1988) are examples of programs which have passed beyond the theoretical stage and have been working for an average of three years. Although the programs vary in scope and in manner of implementation, the intent of the programs is similar and helps to explain the nature of working mentoring programs. The intention of each of the programs is to meet the needs of beginning teachers. Although none of the programs were teacher-originated, the active participation of teachers in each program was apparent at the outset and is reported to have increased.

Initially, the control of each of these four mentoring programs was not in the hands of the classroom teachers; however, the programs have recognized the central role that classroom teachers must play. The mentoring program in Chesterfield County was developed as part of the 1983 Virginia Colleague Teacher Project (Wildman et al., 1987) but is coordinated by a full-time coordinator who is a classroom teacher. The Vermont Mentoring Program which commenced in 1986 is a joint venture of the state department of education, local vocational center directors, and the Vermont State

University (Fuller, 1987). The California model was developed in the Chula Vista City School District and was the result of 1983 legislation, the Comprehensive California Educational Reform Package, Senate Bill 813. The Chula Vista Board of Education initiated the mentoring program which started in 1985 (Lowney, 1986). In Ohio the Board of Education mandated creation of entry level programs to include mentoring components. Individual school districts were to be responsible for designing and implementing their own mentoring programs (Zimpher, 1988).

Support, both moral and financial, facilitated the initial mentoring in these four states and will be important for the continuation and expansion of the programs. In Virginia the Colleague Teacher Program received support from the Virginia Department of Education and from the Virginia Tech College of Education. The mentor program in California was funded by powerful legislation which pumped more than \$3.2 billion in new money into public schools. Unfortunately, many teacher unions were reluctant to accept the concept of the Mentoring Program because they feared the strings of merit pay would be attached (Lowney, 1986). In

Vermont a formal agreement exists between the University of Vermont and the State Division of Adult and Vocational-Technical Education to implement the mentor program. A Variety of financial resources (university grants and fellowships, honoraria from area vocational centers, and state funds) were used to fund the initial program (Fuller, 1987).

The scope of the mentoring programs differs from state to state. In Virginia the program in Chesterfield County started with only a small number of new teachers and their mentors and was expanded in 1987-88 to accommodate all 70 of the county's beginning teachers (Wildman et al., 1989). The Chula Vista program is part of a statewide program in which 83% of the local school districts participated in 1985-86. Statewide, more than 5,000 mentors were participating in the program in 1986. The local program in Chula Vista, California started with 17 mentors (Lowney, 1986). The mentor program in Vermont had a total of 26 participants during its first full year of operation. The program has 14 active mentors, includes 12 of the states vocational centers and is reported to be growing (Fuller, 1987). Across

Ohio collaborative mentoring programs which initially numbered only 15 have grown to include over 150 sites. Typical site is that in Franklin County where 60 mentor/inductee pairs work annually (Zimpher, 1988).

Because veteran teachers who serve as mentors in any mentoring program are a key element in its success or failure, the selection and duties of these mentors are of primary importance. In Chesterfield the initial selection of mentor teachers was left to the building principals. The selections were based upon criteria explained at an orientation program and after consultation with the program coordinator. As the program has grown, "super mentors" are being used to train and support new mentors (Wildman et al., 1989). The approach in California is a legislated one. The California Education Code delineates provisions for the structure of the Mentor Teacher Selection Committee. In concurrence with Article 56 of Chula Vista's collective bargaining agreement, the Mentor Teacher Selection Committee "shall consist of eleven members, six classroom teachers and five administrators". Members serve for three years. A total of 17 mentors were selected to begin the program (Lowney, 1986). In this

highly structured formal program, teachers must request help from a mentor by submitting a Mentor Teacher Request Form to the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. Similar to the Chesterfield program in its willingness to turn responsibility for mentoring over to classroom teachers, is the program in Ohio. The "Teacher Leader Cadre" is composed of veteran mentors who are now mentoring mentors and providing instructional and research assistance in their local districts (Zimpher, 1988, p.53).

As more mentoring programs are conceived, implemented, and reported, there will appear many regional differences in the nature of the approaches to mentoring, but the central concerns for finding a workable system of teacher support may remain the same. A 1987 review of the pervasiveness of mentoring across the country (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1987) reports 16 states already have legislation mandating entry year or initial year programs, and another 16 states have such legislation in progress. If the definition of mentoring and the nature of individual mentoring programs are somewhat elusive, the effects of the mentoring process are more

consistent.

Effects of Mentoring

With the exception of a limited number of studies reporting dissatisfaction with a particular mentoring relationship (Kram, 1985; Wright & Wright, 1987; Clawson, 1985), most of the effects reported by mentors and by their proteges are positive. Collegial relationships offer a way for teachers to test their own ideas, knowledge, and effectiveness as teacher (Hall & McKeen, 1988). Emotional support and encouragement are by-products of teacher collaboration (Wildman & Niles, 1987a). Isolation of teachers from one another is inherent in the departmental organization of our schools. Teachers usually are unaware of the trials and tribulations, the successes and accomplishments of other teachers. Collaboration allows teachers to find out that they can take risks in a supportive environment (Niles et al., 1988). The participatory nature of effective mentoring fosters inquiry which can empower prospective teachers and cultivate in them attitudes of directness, open-mindedness, and responsibility (Garrison, 1988).

Specific positive effects are reported by proteges

in mentoring programs. "Excellent. She did all she could in the required time. She was happy to work with three other classes too. A VERY positive instructor" and "Not only were my objectives met, but he continues to send me information and ideas" (Lowney, 1986, p.25). Mentors assist newcomers in the socialization process, learning about the profession and in dealing with the ins and outs of work and politics on the job (Bidwell & Brasler, 1989). Mentors provide the proteges with a sense of what they are becoming (Levinson et al., 1978). Wildman et al. (1989) identified five major categories of support that mentors provide for their proteges. They help beginners learn about teaching, feel good about teaching, manage their work loads, and become a part of the school community. Personal support came from the friendships that developed between mentors and proteges. Those proteges being assessed by performance based evaluation systems reported the immediate positive outcome of passing the education competencies required for certification (Fuller, 1987). In business, companies have found that mentoring programs can encourage the development of employees with high potential, can help pass on the corporate culture, can increase loyalty to

the company, and can promote accepted organizational norms (Gerstein, 1985). Finally, an important consideration in the field of education is described by Nemser (1986) who suggests that although survival may be the paramount goal of beginning teachers, how they survive will have consequences for the kind of teacher they will become. Support and guidance during the induction phase of teaching can help new teachers avoid limiting, survival techniques that can ultimately stall their professional growth (Nemser, 1986).

The benefits which accrue to mentors in a mentoring relationship may not be as immediately apparent as they are not the ones for whom the programs were initially designed. However, it is clear that there exists a tremendous reciprocity of benefits. Keele and De LaMare-Schaefer (1984) found that reciprocity seemed to underlie all aspects of the mentor/protege relationship. Their study concluded that whether or not a person has had a mentor, career benefits can come from their being a mentor and building a workteam. Also, many of these benefits are the same as those of being a protege in a mentor-protege relationship. The mentor and protege gain "insight, knowledge, and satisfaction

from the relationship" (Klopf & Harrison, 1981, p.42).

Niles et al. (1989) point out the importance of formal recognition of teacher/teacher relationships. Although these assistances may occur naturally and informally, validating them by recognizing as "mentoring" and giving them the sanction and support of the school system increases the priority of the relationships and helps assure that they will occur. "The formal assignment of mentors to beginners as part of a systematic induction program is a significant factor in promoting the mentor's professional growth" (Niles et al., 1989, p.15). This same study reports that veteran teachers found the mentoring experience "rewarding, revitalizing, and informative" (p.13). Similarly, those mentors asked to write a candid statement regarding their views of the Mentor Teacher Program in California (Lowney, 1986) repeatedly spoke of the professionalizing, rejuvenating effects they felt from having participated:

"The Mentor Teacher Program provides an exciting opportunity for open communication and professional growth among teachers. I am excited and eager to be part of it"

"I consider the Mentor Teacher Program to be the most powerful effort ever initiated to upgrade the educational process and status of Teachers as they avail themselves of the training and services offered."

By helping others, mentors gain for themselves (Krupp, 1985). As Levinson et al. (1978) stated:

Given the value that mentoring has for the mentor, the recipient and society at large, it is tragic that so little of it actually occurs. We are held back by limitations in our individual development and in our institutional structures. These limitations serve to intensify intergenerational conflict and undermine relationships between youthful and middle-aged generations (p.254).

A case has been made for mentoring; it is a positive positioning of the veteran and the novice which has its roots in the early history of civilization. Many of the most outstanding contributors to our culture have been the products of protege-mentor relationships. The definition of mentoring and the nature of mentoring programs must be altered to fit the intent and purpose of specific organizations or school systems.

Researchers report findings from studies which describe the results of mentoring programs and which detail the manner in which the programs were set up and carried out. However, there has been scant reporting of how mentors and proteges actually interact during the process of mentoring. The issues addressed in this study deal with the actual process of mentoring: the context of mentoring sessions, the content and dynamics of thought and conversation during mentoring sessions, and the influence that being a mentor has had upon the veteran teacher.

The figure on the page 280 is designed to show various types of mentoring. The categories Classical, Business, Nursing, and Education are categories derived from the discussion of mentoring programs which are reviewed in the literature on mentoring. The category, Trenton County, shows characteristics of the mentoring program as designed by the county and as defined according to county guidelines. The remaining four categories under "Types of Mentoring" show the characteristics of the mentoring relationships as they occurred for each set of teachers in this study.

Definitions for some of the potentially overlapping characteristics are included at the bottom of the figure. Within the categories, symbols indicate whether the characteristic is most likely to impact upon the mentor, upon the protege, or upon both. The symbol, * (Varies), indicates simply that that characteristic, although likely to appear, may not always be present.

TABLE 4
CHARACTERISTICS OF MENTORING

| | | Career Advancement | Career Induction | Counseling | Friendship | Imparting Knowledge | Imparting Wisdom | Intentionality | Longevity | Networking | Nurturing | Participant Control | Protecting | Reciprocity | Reimbursement | Role Modeling | Selflessness | Senior/Junior | Showcasing Protege | Supporting |
|-------------|---|--------------------|------------------|------------|------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------|------------|-----------|---------------------|------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|------------|
| Classical | M | | | △ | | △ | △ | □ | △ | | △ | □ | △ | | | △ | | □ | | △ |
| | P | | | | | | | △ | | | | | | | | | | △ | | |
| Business | M | △ | △ | △ | ● | △ | △ | □ | | △ | | ● | | □ | | | | □ | | △ |
| | P | | | | ● | △ | | □ | | | | ● | | □ | | | | □ | | |
| Nursing | M | | △ | △ | ● | △ | | □ | | | | ● | | □ | ● | | | □ | | △ |
| | P | | | | ● | △ | | □ | | | | ● | | □ | | | | □ | | |
| Education | M | | △ | △ | ● | △ | | □ | | | | ● | | □ | | | | □ | | △ |
| | P | | | | ● | △ | | □ | | | | ● | | □ | | | | □ | | |
| Trenton Co. | M | | △ | △ | □ | △ | | □ | | | | □ | | □ | | | | □ | | △ |
| | P | | | | □ | △ | | □ | | | | □ | | □ | | | | □ | | |
| Alma | M | | △ | △ | □ | △ | | □ | | | | □ | △ | □ | | | △ | | | □ |
| | P | | | | □ | △ | | □ | | | | △ | | □ | | | | □ | | |
| Allison | M | | △ | △ | □ | △ | | □ | | | | □ | | □ | | | | | | □ |
| | P | | | | □ | △ | | □ | | | | △ | | □ | | | | □ | | |
| Carol | M | | △ | △ | □ | △ | | □ | | | | □ | △ | □ | | | | | | □ |
| | P | | | | □ | △ | | □ | | | | △ | | □ | | | | □ | | |
| Carrie | M | | △ | △ | ● | △ | | □ | | | | □ | | □ | | | | | | □ |
| | P | | | | ● | △ | | □ | | | | □ | | □ | | | | □ | | |
| Group | M | | △ | | ● | △ | | □ | | | | | | □ | | | | | | □ |
| | P | | | | ● | △ | | □ | | | | | | □ | | | | | | |
| Dorothy | M | | △ | | | △ | | □ | | | | □ | | | | | | | | □ |
| | P | | | | | △ | | □ | | | | □ | | | | | | | | |

TYPES OF MENTORING

Counseling = giving advice or guidance (esp. as solicited from a knowledgeable person)
 Networking = establishing professional contacts for career enhancement
 Nurturing = fostering development of; promoting and sustaining (rearing; upbringing)
 Protecting = keeping from harm or injury; guarding
 Supporting = preventing from falling, sinking; lending strength to
 Wisdom = understanding of what is true, right, or lasting
 Knowledge = familiarity, awareness; specific information about something

Impacts upon:

Mentor
 Protege
 Varies

The Beginning Teacher Assistance Program---BTAP

Since July 1, 1985, beginning teachers in the state of Virginia have been required to successfully complete the Beginning Teacher Assistance Program in order to qualify for a five year renewable Collegiate Professional Certificate. Those who have not demonstrated sufficient abilities in the fourteen specified areas of competence are not employed after their second year of teaching in Virginia. BTAP was adopted in 1982 as part of the Virginia Department of Education requirements for certification throughout the state.

"BTAP is not designed to guarantee that a teacher will perform satisfactorily on the job but to establish, through observation, that the teacher possesses the professional knowledge needed to perform satisfactorily" (VA Dept. of Ed., 1986). The two stated goals of BTAP are: 1. "To provide assurance that every teacher who receives the Collegiate Professional Certificate possesses specified competencies; 2. To assist beginning teachers in developing these competencies" (VA Dept. of Ed., 1986). The competencies are fourteen in number.

They are specific in their description and in the manner in which they are to be assessed or measured. All of the competencies will be measured in terms of teacher behavior.

Beginning teachers who are preparing for BTAP are given an outline of each of the fourteen competencies. Each competency is named and a declarative statement relative to that competency follows. Examples of appropriate behaviors that the teacher should demonstrate are also listed for each competency. Summaries of each of the fourteen areas of competency as presented in the State Department of Education handbook are:

1. Academic Learning Time: The competent teacher knows that learning is directly related to the time students spend on learning activities. The beginning teacher should demonstrate awareness by:

- * keeping attention focused on the lesson.
- * planning initial learning activities.

2. Student Accountability: The competent teacher knows the importance of holding students responsible for completing assigned tasks. The teacher should demonstrate knowledge by:

- * making certain that students work on their

tasks.

- * making certain that assigned tasks are completed.

3. Clarity of Lesson Structure: The competent teacher knows that the lesson should be presented in a systematic manner consistent with the objectives of instruction. The teacher should demonstrate knowledge by:

- * beginning the lesson or unit with a statement of purpose.
- * ending the lesson with a summary or review.

4. Individual Differences: The competent teacher knows that learners progress at different speeds, and respond to different kinds of motivation. The beginning teacher demonstrate knowledge by:

- * defining different objectives for different students.
- * providing for learners with unusual talents or abilities.

5. Evaluation: The competent teacher knows that learning is facilitated when instructional objectives are communicated to students and when those objectives coincide with the objectives of evaluation. The

teacher should demonstrate knowledge by:

- * designing formal evaluation procedures.
- * informing students about how their performance will be evaluated.

6. Consistent Rules: The competent teacher knows that rules for classroom behavior must be clear and consistent. The beginning teacher should demonstrate knowledge by:

- * setting rules that are understood by students.
- * citing the rule when students disobey it.

7. Affective Climate: The competent teacher knows that learning occurs more readily in a classroom environment that is nonpunitive and reflects acceptance of students' behavior. The teacher should demonstrate knowledge by:

- * avoiding hostility and a punitive environment.
- * making the physical environment as attractive as possible.

8. Learner Self-Concept: The competent teacher knows that a student's achievement may be enhanced by improving his or her self-concept. The teacher should demonstrate knowledge by:

- * planning challenging lessons.
- * showing courtesy to students.

9. Meaningful Learning: The competent teacher knows that learning takes place when the material to be learned is related to material already learned. The teacher should demonstrate knowledge by:

- * planning ways of relating instruction to the interests and knowledge of students.
- * relating instruction to cultural backgrounds of students.

10. Planning: The competent teacher knows the importance of good planning. The teacher should demonstrate knowledge by:

- * defining objectives in measurable terms.
- * using information about test reliability and validity.

11. Questioning Skill: The competent teacher knows how to ask questions to develop students' knowledge, and recognizes that asking questions is a major professional teaching tool. The teacher should demonstrate knowledge by:

- * asking convergent questions.
- * asking divergent questions.

12. Reinforcement: The competent teacher demonstrates awareness that skillful use of reinforcement encourages

or discourages particular behaviors. The beginning teacher should demonstrate knowledge by:

- * giving positive feedback.

- * avoiding using punishment to motivate students.

13. Close Supervision: The competent teacher knows that students learn when activities are monitored and the teacher assists each student. The teacher should demonstrate knowledge by:

- * monitoring students' activities.

- * helping students who have problems.

14. Awareness: The competent teacher knows that effective classroom management requires that the teacher knows what is occurring in the classroom. The teacher should demonstrate knowledge by:

- * moving about the classroom or constantly scanning it.

- * constantly monitoring students' interest level.

The actual assessment of the new teacher's level of competency occurs during three classroom observations that take place within a two week period. All initial observations are completed by the end of the fourth month of the new teacher's first year of teaching. The new teacher is encouraged to invite

the BTAP evaluator to observe classes and lessons which will most effectively demonstrate knowledge and mastery of the teaching competencies. During the classroom assessment, the observer observes the teacher and records observations on an Opscan sheet, repeating this process until the conclusion of the class. There is no other communication between the teacher and the observer. Several weeks after the final observation, the teacher will be notified by mail of his/her success or failure. Those teachers who do not meet the required competencies are encouraged to attend BTAP workshops which are designed to show the teacher what must be done to be able to demonstrate the competency at a subsequent observation. Most new teachers pass BTAP by the end of their first year of teaching.

VITA

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From 1969 through 1974 she was a classroom English teacher at the high school level in the Montgomery County, Maryland public school system. In 1978 she started teaching English in the Loudoun County, Virginia public school system where she is presently employed.