Knowledge And Learning Strategies In Principal Mentoring Coaching Relationships

by

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KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING STRATEGIES IN PRINCIPAL MENTORING/COACHING RELATIONSHIPS
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Abstract

This qualitative study investigates the relationship between the principal MentorCoach and the principal Mentee in terms of the learning that is taking place between these two individuals. This study addresses a gap in the Mentoring/Coaching literature as little is known about how the professional knowledge of participants is influenced through participation in educational leadership Mentoring/Coaching programs. This study also links to current interest in knowledge mobilization and the interaction between research and practitioner knowledge. In broad terms, the research will investigate what kind of knowledge is being incorporated in principal MentorCoach relationships in the programs sampled. With its deeper analysis of the knowledge and learning strategies that are being used in the MentorCoach experience, this research is of particular interest to future participating administrators and school districts developing MentorCoach programs as a vehicle for supporting and enriching the experience of new principals as school leaders.
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Dedication

To my mother and father who were immigrants to Canada from Hungary and unable to attend university. Thank you for your love, encouragement and support.
Research shows that school leadership, especially by the principal, is the second most important factor (next to the teacher) when it comes to impact on student learning.¹

I believe the fundamental work of this time—work that requires the participation of all of us—is to discover new ways of being together. Our old ways of relating to each other don’t support us any longer, whether it’s at home, in community, at work, or as nation states (Wheatley, 1999, p. xi).

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CHAPTER 1: PURPOSE AND DESIGN OF STUDY

Introduction

Seems like everyone has a story to tell about being mentored and/or coached at some point in their lives. I am no exception. Over the course of my own working life, I have been indebted to several individuals who gave me encouragement, support and leadership when it mattered most to me. At every stage in my own career development as an educator, I can point to extraordinary individuals whose leadership made a huge impact on my life. In turn, I have tried to extend the same support to students and colleagues along the way.

Along with my own personal experience as a mentor, in 2007, I had the good fortune, during a funded leave, to be able to coordinate a pilot MentoringCoaching\(^2\) project for the Ontario Principals’ Council (OPC). Funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education, this project involved the implementation of a MentoringCoaching program for new administrators in six districts across the province. As the coordinator, I was able to support each district in terms of program implementation, coordinate the overall initiative and conduct qualitative research for OPC which became the basis for this organization’s recommendations to the Ministry regarding the continuation of the initiative. Indeed, that year, the Ministry funded numerous such pilot projects in a total of 20 districts.

Along with this experience, three years ago I became a secondary principal with the Peel District School Board. Interestingly, as a new principal, I was assigned a coach for two years in order to support my growth and development in this new leadership role. And this year, as a participating school in the Ministry’s Student Success School Support Initiative, I have been assigned a coach by the Ministry, as have all principals involved in this project.

\(^2\) MentoringCoaching is a term adopted for the pilot study in Ontario to represent bringing the framework and skills of coaching to that of mentoring because it expands what is possible within the relationship and emerging support network as the rigor and depth of the effective partnership develop (Nishimura & Sharpe, 2007, cited in Nanavati and Robinson, 2009).
All in all, I have developed a deep understanding of MentoringCoaching from the inside out, having been a recipient and the deliverer of such support both on a personal, one-on-one level and at the district program implementation level. Having received mentoring and coaching as a school administrator, been a mentor and having coordinated a formal MentoringCoaching pilot project for school leaders, I feel well equipped to focus a research investigation on MentoringCoaching for new principals in two districts.

**Identification of the Problem: The Challenges of School Leadership**

Without a doubt, leadership has a positive impact on schools and student outcomes. Ken Leithwood and his colleagues explain that leadership is second only to the in-school effects of classroom teachers in determining student outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2008; See also Wahlstrom et al., 2010). They explain:

> As far as we are aware, there is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership. One explanation for this is that leadership serves as a catalyst for unleashing the potential capacities that already exist in the organization. (Leithwood et al., 2008, p. 5)

The Ontario Ministry of Education’s (2005) recent discussion paper on supports for administrators reveals its strategy to strengthen school leadership and emphasizes the work of principals in “shaping teachers’ work and skills, and in affecting many of the practices and policies that, in turn, can help to improve student outcomes” (p. 3).

However, the context in which schooling and educational administration now occurs has changed and it is within this challenging context that new principals require even greater support than ever. Many writers (Belchetz, 2004; Hargreaves, 1994, 2003; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998; Levin & Riffel, 2000; Leithwood, 2001; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 2002; Reigeluth, 1994; Turner, 2003) detail these social, economic and political changes and their impact on education. Recent theoretical work in the application of complexity theory to management and organizational development (Kilburg, 2000; Shaw, 2002; Stacey, 2000, 2006; Wheatley, 1999) emphasizes the complexity of organizations and the pressure caused by the rapid pace of global change. These non-linear, chaotic situations,
have had a tremendous impact on leadership in all organizations, including educational administration.

In Ontario, the job of administration is increasingly difficult. Issues related to poverty, diversity, accountability, achievement gaps, workplace conflict and safety, program requirements and reduced support staff make it increasingly difficult for many districts to attract and retain administrators (Leithwood and Riehl, 2003, p. 2). The context of today’s schools includes increasing numbers of students with many educational problems. Lieberman (1992) explains, “Urban school populations have… students who, in ever larger numbers, are coming to school with many more physical, social, and emotional problems that make them far from ready to learn” (p. 3). Administrator shortages due to high retirement rates have also led to considerable turnover (Michael & Young, 2006, p. 2; Williams, 2001, p. i). A recent (2005) Ontario Ministry of Education discussion paper concludes, “The strain of the last decade has taken an unfortunate toll, however, which is reflected in record numbers of retirements leading to a high proportion of new and less experienced principals and vice-principals” (p. 2). At the school level, because principal stability is linked to successful school reform, districts need to focus on the stability of school leadership (Mayrowetz et al., 2007, p. 93). Michael and Young (2006) conclude, “Supporting aspiring and new administrators will then be more challenging than in the past, given their large numbers and the decreasing group of veterans able to mentor them into their respective roles” (p. 2). In fact, a recent study on leadership succession, identifies “developing leadership capacity” (Fink, 2010, p. xxi) as “one of education’s greatest challenges in the twenty-first century” (Fink, 2010, p. xxi).

Dean Fink (2010) provides an excellent summary of recent research on the global succession challenge which he argues is much more of an issue of inordinate demands placed on school leaders, rather than an issue of not enough qualified candidates to fill the necessary vacancies (p. 27-29). For example, an Ontario study by The Learning Partnership (2008) found that the number of members of the Ontario Teachers’ Council with principal qualifications has increased from 16,357 in 2003 to 17,335 in 2007 (The Learning Partnership, 2008, p. 63). Fink (2010) points out many reasons that potential
candidates are not motivated to apply for leadership positions, including salary differences between teachers and administrators as being inadequate relative to the increase in responsibilities and adverse working conditions (Fink, 2010, p. 30-31; See also The Learning Partnership, 2008, p. 86). Fink (2010) concludes: “It would appear then that in most educational jurisdictions there are sufficient qualified and capable people to assume future leadership jobs, but the demands placed on incumbent leaders have made the jobs so unattractive to future prospects that the pipeline has stopped flowing” (p. 32; See also Wallace Foundation, 2007, p. 6).

In my own district, for example, senior administration has emphasized the need for a reduction in the number of initiatives for the coming school year and a consolidation of focus in relation to school improvement. However, those of us in schools realize that while that rhetoric is positive, as is the renewed emphasis on instructional leadership across the province, the reality is that nothing has really been taken off the principal’s daily workload filled with an overwhelming amount of managerial issues. Within this challenging context, supports for new administrators, including MentoringCoaching, have become more important than ever.

**Research Design**

This study focuses on the kind of knowledge being incorporated in MentoringCoaching relationships and is based on taped interviews, each 30-40 minutes in length, with 4-5 principal MentorCoaches and 4-5 principal Mentees from each of two districts. Each district named a contact who assisted the researcher by generating a list of potential participants, principal MentorCoaches and principal Mentees during 2008-09 and 2009-10. MentorCoaches and Mentees were randomly selected to participate in this project from among those who responded positively to a recruitment letter (Appendix B) as no pairings were needed. The interviews focused on the relationship between the principal MentorCoach and the principal Mentee in terms of the learning taking place.

In broad terms, the research investigates the learning taking place in principal MentoringCoaching relationships in the programs sampled. Interviews were conducted
in April – June 2010 and took place over the phone at a time convenient to each participant.

**Research Questions**

This study focuses on the following research questions:

- To what extent is research based knowledge being incorporated in the principal Mentoring/Coaching relationship?
- To what extent is practitioner based knowledge being incorporated in the principal Mentoring/Coaching relationship?
- What new understandings for the participants are being created through this relationship?
- What learning strategies are enacted in principal Mentoring/Coaching relationships? Eg. dialogue, site visits, action research, etc.

**Purpose and Significance of the Study**

This study examines the learning taking place between the principal MentorCoach and the principal Mentee. This study contributes to the literature in this field by examining how the professional knowledge of participants is influenced through participation in educational leadership Mentoring/Coaching programs.

This study could positively affect participating MentorCoaches and Mentees, districts and the wider educational community. The following outlines key possible benefits of the research to MentorCoaches and Mentees:

- Reflection on the benefits of engaging in Mentoring/Coaching, including knowledge and learning strategies being incorporated in the relationship
- Motivation to reflect upon and improve current practice
- Catalyst for future discussion with other participants in the district in relation to the research topic, the benefits and challenges of the relationship and this form of professional learning

The following outlines possible research benefits to the district and the wider educational community:
• Improve understanding of the learning taking place through the MentoringCoaching relationship, specifically the knowledge and learning strategies being incorporated
• Improve understanding of MentoringCoaching as a form of professional learning for school leaders and thereby improve understanding of how best to provide such learning opportunities for new administrators
• Contribute to further development of the content and processes of MentoringCoaching programs
• Contribute to understanding of MentoringCoaching as a process of knowledge mobilization

**Organization of Thesis**

In this chapter, I have provided my own personal connections to MentoringCoaching and identified the current challenges of school leadership which serve as a context for much needed supports for new administrators. This chapter has also provided information regarding the design of the research, the research questions, the purpose and possible significance of the study.

Chapter Two provides a brief summary of research on professional development organized according to the following elements of design identified as key to effective learning: breadth and depth, contextualized learning, self knowledge, dialogue, inquiry, reflection, collaboration and community. This chapter then examines key literature on mentoring and coaching through the lens of these design elements of quality professional learning. The author then comments on the limitations of the existing literature on MentoringCoaching and briefly focuses on recent literature on knowledge mobilization and utilization and its help in framing the questions taken up by this study. This chapter then ends with discussion of a conceptual model that frames the remainder of this thesis.

While Chapter Three focuses on the methods used within the study, including its qualitative design, ethical considerations, processes for data collection and analysis, Chapter Four focuses on the MentoringCoaching relationship in each of the two districts
under study, including a background on the districts and participants, the district models and training provided.

Chapter Five examines evidence from the primary data collected on knowledge creation in Mentoring-Coaching relationships, focusing on answers to the research questions posed in this study. This section examines topics addressed in meetings between MentorCoaches and Mentees, craft and research knowledge, suggestions for supports for the further incorporation of research knowledge, new knowledge being generated for MentorCoaches and Mentees and the range of learning strategies used in the process.

The final section, Chapter Six, focuses on a broader synthesis and interpretation of the findings, including the benefits and challenges of Mentoring-Coaching, prevalent themes, implications for further research, policy and practice.
CHAPTER 2: RELATED LITERATURE

Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) point out, “Research has begun to create a consensus about the content, context, and design of high-quality professional development (Hawley & Valli, 1999)” (p. 46). The changing context of Ontario schooling requires that school leaders and teachers participate in quality learning experiences that will build their knowledge and skills on the job and support them in their work of improving student outcomes. This chapter provides a brief summary of research on professional development and then examines key literature on mentoring and coaching written primarily in the last ten years. One can conclude, based on reoccurring themes in the professional development literature and the writer’s own experiences as a classroom teacher, staff developer and school administrator, that certain elements of design are key to effective learning: breadth and depth, contextualized learning, self knowledge, dialogue, inquiry, reflection, collaboration and community. While much of this literature is written about professional learning for teachers, these same principles of learning can be generalized to the professional learning of principals. This chapter then discusses key literature on mentoring and coaching through the lens of these design elements of quality professional learning. This review concludes that MentoringCoaching, in terms of its design, is a powerful professional learning strategy to develop leadership within schools.

This review then comments on the limitations of the existing literature on MentoringCoaching, and briefly examines recent literature on knowledge mobilization and utilization and its help in framing the questions taken up by this study. This chapter then ends with discussion of a conceptual model that frames the remainder of this study.

Professional Development Research in Education

In this context of reform and accountability, school leaders need more powerful ways of professional learning in order to be able to meet the leadership challenges of the 21st century. LaPoint and Davis (2004) acknowledge that “traditional methods of preparing administrators fall short of providing the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to lead schools and advance student learning in an increasingly complex and diverse society (Elmore, 1999; NCATE, 2000; Dilworth and Thomas, 2001; Peterson, 2002). Moreover,
many of the methods used to prepare school leaders have surprisingly weak empirical
support” (p. 16).

Research on professional development (Bascia, 2000; Bredeson, 2003; Cochran-Smith &
Lytle, 2001; Guskey, 2000; Lambert, 2003; Lieberman & Miller, 1991) distinguishes
forms that yield acquisition of information and those that impact on practice due to
transfer. Sparks (2005) writes, “Methods such as classroom coaching, demonstration
lessons, lesson study, the examination of student work, and action research ground
professional learning in daily practice and its influence on student learning” (p. 92).
Effective staff development has greater breadth and depth and is job-embedded, context
specific, results-driven, “more constructivist than transmission-oriented” and sustained
over time (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001, p. 45; See also Lambert, 2003, p. 22). Staff
development that is effective is seen as immediately useful and relevant to the individual
or group.

Current thinking about staff development focuses on designs that have at their core
ongoing learning experiences that are linked not only to individual needs but also to
organizational improvement. Anderson (2006), in writing about practices in successful
districts, notes that professional development opportunities in these districts focus on
instructional improvement aligned with district goals. Many of these districts take
advantage of state mentoring programs for teachers and incorporate other forms of job-
embedded professional learning (p. 27). He explains:

    In these districts are passé one-shot workshops and talks by external experts…. The
    learning experiences…include such factors as teacher visitations; demonstration
    lessons; in-class coaching; and teams of teachers doing lesson study, curriculum and
    lesson planning, and analysis of student work and assessment data (p. 27).

The following eight design elements are key to providing school leaders effective
learning experiences that develop the knowledge and skills needed to support the
complexity of today’s schools.

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3 Bredeson (2003) includes fragmentation, lack of coherence, disconnection from daily work and poor
follow-up resources and support as limitations of much current professional development (p. 16).
**Breadth and Depth**

Quality professional learning experiences for leaders require greater breadth and depth drawn from principles of adult learning, including active involvement in the learning process, the accommodation of varied learning styles, time for reflection and discussion, time to try out new ideas, and support during implementation (Gordon, 2004, p. 20; See also Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987, p. 8; Snow-Renner and Lauer, 2005, p. 11). Knight (2007) points out that “traditional forms of professional development are not effective, usually getting no better than a 10% implementation rate (Bush, 1984)” (p. 1-2). Joyce and Showers (2002) remind us that time needed for practice depends on the complexity of the skill being implemented. They point out that “[to] bring a teaching model of medium complexity under control requires 20 or 25 trials in the classroom over a period of about 8-10 weeks” (p. 74). Their studies also indicate that “about 5% of teachers apply their learning from traditional forms of professional development to classroom practice but when coaching is added to these other forms of learning, the level of application increases to 90%” (p. 76-77; See also McNeil & Klink, 2004, p. 188-199).

Quality staff development that is broad and deep should be tailored to the needs of individuals in terms of where they are in the change process (Loucks-Horsley et al. 1987, p. 9) and “follow-up after training is even more crucial than the training activity itself” (p. 10).

In describing the breadth of powerful professional development, Sparks (2005) advocates for learning opportunities that include the intellectual and the practical such as “sustained study of research,…the analysis of school and classroom data,…and the exchange of professional judgments” (p. 90). New forms of professional development for administrators that focus on a bottom-up approach where topics and issues are generated by the members of the group contribute to educational sustainability as defined by Hargreaves and Fink (2006) who describe the value of learning that “is vital in creative, knowledge-driven organizations” (p. 43; See also Little, 2001, p. 33). Fullan (2005) includes “deep learning” (p. 22) as one of the key elements of sustainability, learning that

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4 DuFour (1991) provides an excellent overview of the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) of staff development which identifies the stages of concern teachers face as they gradually adopt a new practice (p. 65-69).
will involve “training and development [that is] sophisticated and intense” (p. 24). In describing successful school systems, Michael Barber concludes:

Where you really want to get to is…where professional learning is absolutely embedded in the practice of the school….There are teams of teachers working together, planning lessons, reviewing student work, comparing student work from different classes, and trying to understand why certain pedagogies seem to work more effectively than others….What you really want to achieve is to get that culture of professional learning in every school. That brings about consistent, continuous improvement. (Crow, 2009, p. 14).

**Contextualized Learning**

Quality professional learning also develops participants’ understanding of the importance of context, that school improvement practices can vary from setting to setting and that there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach (McLaughlin, 1991, p. 69-70; See also Guskey, 2000, p. 38; Timperley et al., 2008; Lieberman and Miller, 2008, p. 38). Fullan (2003) states that for educators “the tri-level contexts are school/community, district, and system” (Fullan, 2005, p. 16). Forms of professional learning such as mentoring, coaching, lesson study and action research require participants to be active in the learning process and focus on implementation (Showers, 1989, p. 192). Through exposure to what other leaders are doing in their schools that are having a positive impact on students and staff, professional learning gives administrators a greater understanding of the behaviours and practices that will “[change] context for the better” (Fullan, 2003, p. 1) and make a positive difference in their schools.

**Self Knowledge**

The exploration of self knowledge is a key element of quality professional learning. Conversation and reflection about what leaders actually do in schools have the power to

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5 In a recent national study of professional learning in the United States, Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) conclude that “while teachers typically need substantial professional development in a given area (close to 50 hours) to improve their skills and their students’ learning, most professional development opportunities in the U.S. are much shorter” (p. 5) compared to other nations that outperform the U.S. on international assessments and provide substantial time for professional development and collaboration during the work week (p. 6). While this study includes data from one unnamed Canadian province, this author would argue that certainly in Ontario, there is substantial room for improvement in aligning what we know about the need for depth and breadth in the design of professional learning and current levels of time for such learning in schools. (See Darling-Hammond et al., 2009, p. 7).
assist participants in furthering their understanding of themselves not only as administrators and teachers, but also as leaders and as people. Just as “[good] teaching requires self-knowledge” (Palmer, 1998, p. 3), so does good administration (See also Hodgkinson, 2001, p. 305; James, 1997, p. 4-5). Self knowledge includes relevant conversations not only about knowledge and skills related to daily leadership tasks, but also topics related to ethics and values, emotional and social intelligence (Greenfield, 1986, p. 69, 73; Hodgkinson, 1983, p. 26, 29). Quality professional learning that facilitates dialogue on the important big questions of leadership can help school leaders reclaim “their moral compass” (Fullan, 2003, p. 20; See also Leithwood et al., 2006, p. 81-82).

**Dialogue**

Through professional dialogue, as participants ask questions, probe responses and process information, they deepen their learning. Lambert (2003) explains, “The purpose of dialogue is understanding; when we truly listen and build on each other’s ideas, we construct meaning and knowledge together” (p. 23; See also Senge et al., 2000, p. 75; Lambert, 2005, p. 40; Sparks, 2005, p. 52; Wheatley, 2002, p. 4-5). Conversation in environments with high levels of trust allows for capturing and constructing knowledge and passing knowledge and skills from one leader to another. Cotton (2003) writes that in successful schools, principals are focused on improving student achievement and continually “facilitate discussion among staff about curriculum and instruction, and engage in these discussions themselves (p. 70; See also Nieto, 2003, p. 78). Professional learning experiences within schools and also across schools that build greater community among school leaders help bridge that sense of isolation one often experiences in leadership roles. New forms of professional learning can include conversations on controversial topics of critical importance to school leaders such as issues of values, race, class and equity (Collins, 2001, p. 12-13; Nieto, 2003, p. 79). Dialogue contributes to understanding, implementation and leads to greater clarity of thinking and decision-making (Wheatley, 2002, p. 9).
Inquiry

Inquiry is another important characteristic of quality professional learning; Senge et al., 2000, p. 76; Lambert, 1998, p. 16; Fullan, 2003, p. 45. Activities that involve inquiry include collecting evidence to address questions, positioning questions in study groups, coaching and action research (Lambert, 2003, p. 23; See also Lieberman and Miller, 1991, p. 107 and Lieberman and Miller, 2004, p. 29). Administrators can also move from studying the research of others to becoming researchers themselves and through such inquiry, ultimately improve their understanding and their work. These leaders use student data to plan for curricular and instructional improvement (Cotton, 2003, p. 71). In writing about a shifting conception of teacher leadership, Lieberman and Miller (2004) focus on teacher as both researcher and scholar. These authors explain:

Teacher scholars influence others by collaboratively studying practice, reading other researchers’ work, and making their own work available as a source of discussion and action by their colleagues. They promote learning-in-practice for others as they enact it for themselves (Lieberman & Miller, 2004, p. 29-30).

As administrators become researchers and scholars, they become what Michael Fullan (2005) calls “‘system thinkers in action’” (p. 50).

Inquiry includes “experimentation and risk taking” (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987, p. 2), as well as the development of critical thinking skills (Costa and Kallick, 2000, p. 57). Professional learning teams, study groups, action research teams, mentoring and coaching processes are settings for arriving at creative solutions to problems (See Palmer, 1998, p. 66). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2001) propose that the purpose of professional development is to develop “an inquiry stance on teaching” (p. 46) involving the co-construction of knowledge. They explain, “[Through] inquiry, teachers …make problematic their own knowledge and practice as well as the knowledge and practice of others and thus stand in a different relationship to knowledge” (p. 48-49; See also Darling-Hammond and Richardson, 2009, p. 50-51). For Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2001), there is an activist link to the work of inquiring professionals as “it involves making problematic the current arrangements of schooling” (p. 50; See also Lambert, 1995, p. 28).
**Reflection**

Through collaborative learning, dialogue about practice and inquiry, quality professional learning increases participants’ capacity for reflection. Reflective practice, explain Osterman and Kottkamp (2004), uses strategies that include the active involvement of the learner, the building on prior experience and knowledge and the construction of knowledge through experience (p. 16). Lambert (1998) includes “reflective practice/innovation” (p. 17) as one of the critical features of a high leadership capacity school. Osterman and Kottkamp (2004) conclude:

> Reflective practice is a professional development strategy; it is also a problem-solving strategy. It is about individuals working with others to critically examine their own practice to resolve important problems. (p. 20-21).

The goal of today’s professional learning is to develop reflective practitioners who are more resilient as individuals and as team members (Kilburg, 2000, p. 55-56).

**Collaboration**

Quality professional learning rests on collaboration. There are many forms of collaborative professional learning such as learning teams, study groups and networks. Mentoring/Coaching represent forms of professional learning that can become collaborative. The importance of collaboration has taken centre stage in school improvement literature (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987, p. 2-3; Lieberman and Miller, 1991; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Senge et al., 2000, p. 7; Joyce and Showers, 2002, p. 82-83; Cotton, 2003; Fullan, 2005; Hargreaves, 1994; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009, p. 5). Many writers discuss the benefits of collaboration which include capacity building, moral support, reduced overload, the development of collective understandings, increased confidence and capacity for learning (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 245-247; Costa and Kallick, 2000, p. 37; York-Barr and Duke, 2004, p. 288; Sawyer, 2007, p. 44-56; Lieberman and Miller, 2008, p. 18, 27-28). Collaboration is also key to improving school culture and student achievement (DuFour, Eaker & DuFour, 2005; 6

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In this postmodern era, there is a new emphasis on leadership skills that reside in the affective domain rather than the cognitive domain (Turner, 2003, p. 11). Collaborative approaches to professional learning develop positive relationships that rest on a foundation of emotional and social intelligence. Goleman (1995; 2002) concludes that relationship skills have nearly three times as much impact on organizational performance as analytical skills.\(^7\) Leithwood and Riehl (2003) identify “developing people” (p. 5) as one of the core leadership practices that are important for successful leadership.

**Community**

Quality professional learning includes critical conversation which is important to “sustain community in teaching” (Nieto, 2003, p. 90) and among administrators. Fullan (2005) describes such collaborative cultures as “high-trust yet demanding” (p. 72) and notes that “[effective,] highly interactive cultures incorporate high pressure and high support” (p. 72). Community-building is essential to improving student learning (Leithwood and Riehl, 2003, p. 9; Hargreaves, 2003, p. 3; Gardner, 2004, p. 187; Robbins, 2004, p. 167).

In such communities, leadership development moves beyond the individual and his/her role and is embedded in reciprocal relationships (Lambert, 2002, p. 39-40). Such effective professional learning contributes to leader self-efficacy and raises the quality of teaching and leading for teachers, school leaders and students (Leithwood et al., 2006, p. 74; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987, p. 8; Lieberman and Miller, 2004, p. 26).

**Mentoring and Coaching as Power Professional Learning**

The following section reviews key literature written primarily in the last ten years on mentoring and coaching through the lens of these eight design elements of quality professional learning, demonstrating that Mentoring-Coaching represents a potentially powerful vehicle for supporting new principals and creating meaningful professional learning for school leaders (See Figure 1). Mentoring and coaching have been applied to

\(^7\) This observation is noted by Reeves (2006) on p. 39. See also Lambert, 2003, p. 44.
teachers for several decades with administrators as the facilitators and supporters of implementing these strategies among teachers. An increasing number of researchers, however, are beginning to find that mentoring and coaching are potentially excellent strategies for leadership development in schools as well. Before examining this literature, however, it is important to begin by defining the terms ‘mentoring’ and ‘coaching’.

**Figure 1.** MentoringCoaching as Powerful Professional Learning by Design

**Defining Mentoring and Coaching**

Mentoring and coaching are two distinct practices. The word ‘mentor’ originates in Greek literature and refers to Odysseus who, upon leaving for the Trojan War, left his son, Telemachus, in the care of his friend, Mentor (Strong, 2009, p. 5). The term ‘mentor’ generally refers to “a trusted friend, counselor, or teacher…. The mentor
relationship required that the mentor provide copious amounts of wisdom, learning, and dedication, while the protégé, or mentee, was expected to honor the mentor’s greater experience, knowledge, and seniority” (Strong, 2009, p. 5). Zachary (2005) defines mentoring as “a reciprocal and collaborative learning relationship between two (or more) individuals who share mutual responsibility and accountability for helping a mentee work toward the achievement of clear and mutually defined learning goals. Learning is the fundamental process, purpose, and product of mentoring” (p. 3). Zachary (2000) describes a shift that has occurred in the thinking about mentoring, moving from a “mentor-driven paradigm” (p. 3) characterized by a traditional view of the mentor as a wise, authoritarian figure imparting knowledge to the mentee, to a “learner-centered mentoring paradigm which is grounded in knowledge about adult learning” (p. 3). The mentor has become a facilitator who develops a learning partnership with the mentee. Both gain from the relationship and both take responsibility for achieving the learning goals of the mentee (Zachary, 2000, p. 3). Mentoring has shifted from “a product oriented model, characterized by the transfer of knowledge, to a process-oriented relationship involving knowledge acquisition, application, and critical reflection” (Zachary, 2000, p. 4). Table 1 provides an excellent summary of this changing perspective on mentoring in the research literature.

Table 1

*Elements in the Learner-Centered Mentoring Paradigm*®

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentoring Element</th>
<th>Changing Paradigm</th>
<th>Adult Learning Principle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentee role</td>
<td>From: Passive receiver To: Active partner</td>
<td>Adults learn best when they are involved in diagnosing, planning, implementing, and evaluating their own learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor role</td>
<td>From: Authority To: Facilitator</td>
<td>The role of the facilitator is to create and maintain a supportive climate that promotes the conditions necessary for learning to take place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning process</td>
<td>From: Mentor directed and responsible for mentee learning To: Self-directed and mentee responsible for own learning</td>
<td>Adult learners have a need to be self-directing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

® Table 1 has been taken from Zachary, 2000, p. 6.
A coach, originally referring to a four-wheeled carriage and also to the work of a tutor who conveyed a student through his/her examinations, carries clients “from where they are to where they want to be” (Garmston & Wellman, 1997; See also Nanavati, 2006, p. 17-18). Robertson (2005) defines coaching as “a learning relationship” (p. 24) with both the coach and client committed to developing each other’s “leadership learning development and wellbeing (both cognitive and affective)” (p. 24) and thereby benefiting equally from the coaching relationship. In teaching, coaching is most often used to implement new instructional, assessment and classroom management strategies. A review of the literature reveals many forms of coaching, most notably executive, cognitive and peer coaching. Executive coaching refers to coaching in the business world while cognitive coaching focuses on changing the thinking processes of the client that underlie other behaviours the client wants to see changed. Peer coaching focuses on two or more colleagues working collaboratively (Nanavati, 2006, p. 18).^9

There are key differences between mentoring and coaching. Zachary (2000) writes:
“Coaching is always a part of mentoring, but coaching does not always involve mentoring.

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^9 For a review of coaching literature, including a summary of common characteristics of all forms of coaching, see Nanavati (2006). For a definition of mentoring and coaching used in Ontario’s mentoring strategy for new school leaders see Ontario Ministry of Education (2010), p. 9.
Coaching within the context of a mentoring relationship has to do with the skill of helping an individual fill a particular knowledge gap by learning how to do things more effectively” (p. 73-74). Bloom et al. (2005) note that “novice principals benefit from having both a mentor and a coach” (p.10). Table 2 summarizes some of the key differences between mentoring and coaching:

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distinguishing Between Mentoring and Coaching</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>● A self-directed learning relationship</td>
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<td>driven by the learning needs of the</td>
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<tr>
<td>mentee</td>
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<tr>
<td>● More process-oriented than service-</td>
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<tr>
<td>driven</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Focuses more on achievement of personal</td>
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<tr>
<td>or professional development goals; may</td>
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<tr>
<td>focus on broader, ‘softer,’ intangible</td>
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<tr>
<td>issues as learning goals eg. getting</td>
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<tr>
<td>to know the corporate culture, as well</td>
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<td>as more tangible, specific goals</td>
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<td>● Mentoring relationships are voluntary</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Mentoring lacks standardization and is</td>
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<tr>
<td>not a professional field of practice;</td>
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<tr>
<td>relationships evolve organically over</td>
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<td>time</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Mentors usually come from within the</td>
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<td>organization</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>● Usually one-to-one relationship but can</td>
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<td>include peer and group mentoring</td>
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</table>

In spite of these many differences, the distinction between mentoring and coaching has become increasingly blurred. In the research literature, for example, mentoring often includes coaching skills and strategies and peer coaching can support new administrators, thereby becoming “an extension of the mentoring process” (Robbins, 2004, p. 173). Zachary (2005) summarizes: “They are two distinct practices, but in process very much kindred spirits; ideally, they work together to support organizational learning” (p. 3).

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10 The author has summarized information from Zachary (2005) p. 3 in table format.
a result, Pask and Joy (2007) refer to a model of “mentoring-coaching” in which they integrate both practices. They conclude: “Mentoring and coaching belong together. To engage in one without the other is futile. Hence the hyphen!” (p. 246).

This study refers to MentoringCoaching as a process that combines both mentoring and coaching to support principals. The Ontario Principals’ Council has coined this term to refer to a process that combines these processes: “Bringing the framework and skills of Coaching to that of Mentoring expands what is possible within the relationship and emerging support network, as the rigour and depth of this effective partnership develops” (Nishimura, J. & Sharpe, K., 2007).

Breadth and Depth

In examining the literature on mentoring and coaching, both fields support professional learning that has greater breadth and depth. In the mentoring literature, writers point out that breadth and depth are provided by the mentor being aware of the mentee’s learning styles to better facilitate the relationship (Zachary, 2000, p. 23). The mentor provides not only support, but also challenge and feedback in the relationship (Lipton and Wellman, 2003, p. 3). Zachary (2000) explains that feedback “provides the means for engaging in discussion, setting up dichotomies, constructing hypotheses, and setting high standards (Daloz, 1986)” (Zachary, 2000, p. 25). Challenges that promote attention to professional practice include, for example, engaging in goal setting, examining student work, conducting action research projects and maintaining a focus on student learning (Lipton and Wellman, 2003, p. 3). Drawing on the work of Laurent Daloz (1998), Zachary (2000, 2005) and Lipton and Wellman (2003) believe that breadth and depth also come from the sense of “renewal and regeneration” (Zachary, 2000, p. 163) that come from critical reflection throughout the phases of a reciprocal learning relationship (Lipton and Wellman, 2003, p. xi; See also Reeves and Allison, 2009, p. 196).

Coaching can provide both novice and veteran school leaders with deep learning and support. For Joyce and Showers (2002), breadth and depth are reflected in the implementation of new knowledge and skills in the classroom as a result of coaching.

11 Retrieved from www.principals.on.ca
For Bloom et al. (2005), breadth and depth in coaching is achieved through their model of Blended Coaching, a framework that includes instructional coaching (providing information, advice and resources) and facilitative coaching strategies (providing feedback and reflective questioning techniques) and within these two broad categories, also consultative, collaborative and transformational approaches (p. 8, 51). For Reeves and Allison (2009), breadth and depth result from their Renewal Coaching framework that culminates in personal and organizational renewal. For Robertson (2005), depth is achieved through the selection of who is doing the coaching. In her research, “coaching is seen as a reciprocal process, conducted by partners who are from, or have been from, similar positions or roles, and who are, to all intents, equal in their relationship” (Robertson, 2005, p. 4).

Contextualized Learning

Mentoring and coaching support contextualized learning experiences that are embedded in the classroom and the school and involve both individual and team-oriented experiences. Zachary (2000) reminds us, “Effective mentors consciously develop context sensitivity” (p. 31). While there are many forms of mentoring including, for example, one-on-one, study groups, e-mentoring and cohort mentoring (Mullen, 2005, p. 91), context determines how individuals experience mentoring. Mentors can both support and challenge novice teachers (Lipton and Wellman, 2003, p. 3) while coaches “must be prepared to apply a variety of coaching strategies as appropriate to the context and needs of the coachee” (Bloom et al., 2005, p. 8).

Mentoring and coaching are based on active learning in context and focus on implementation. Educational leadership is influenced by the social and political contexts within which leaders work and leadership development needs to assist leaders in thinking about their roles within these contexts (Robertson, 2005, p. 189). Mullen (2005) explains, “Socio-cultural, policy, corporate, and economic climates shape the work of teaching and learning in schools as well as universities and businesses. Macro forces actively inform the ideologies and forms of mentoring” (p. 101). Working within their immediate contexts creates relevance for school leaders (Robertson, 2005, p. 26).
Robertson (2005) points out: “[Coaching] is effective here because it is not about one leader telling another leader how they should lead, but about one leader assisting another leader to think critically about their practice” (p. 67; See also Turner, 2003, p. 145; Wallace and Gravells, 2007, p. 19).

**Self Knowledge**

Both mentoring and coaching support the exploration of self knowledge as a key element of quality professional learning. Indeed, mentors and coaches need to understand their own learning journey as well as that of their clients. Turner (2003) notes that self-awareness is foundational to enabling the client to set professional goals (Turner, 2003, p. 139). Zachary (2000) points out that a mentor must grow to understand their mentee’s “personal ecology – a web of relationships (Helgeson, 1995)…. [Gaining] a good sense about who this person is and what he or she brings to the learning relationship will help the mentor connect and facilitate a more meaningful learning experience” (Zachary, 2000, p. 18-20). Mentors help mentees to develop their own sense of self awareness. As co-learners, both mentor and mentee benefit from the relationship. Self knowledge benefits not only the client, but also the client’s colleagues and his/her personal life (Turner, 2003, p. 139-140).

Self knowledge includes relevant conversations not only about knowledge and skills related to daily leadership tasks, but also topics related to ethics and values, emotional and social intelligence (Robertson, 2005, p. 51). Wallace and Gravells (2007) point out the important skills of relating to others, that is, empathy, that mentoring and coaching develop (p. 19). According to Pask and Joy (2007), “A mentor-coaching encounter in which the client is able to clarify and articulate his/her value set would count as a very significant interaction” (p. 143). Mentors and coaches can also help mentees to become more aware of their own learning style preferences and thereby help them become more aware of the learning needs of a wider variety of learners (Lipton and Wellman, 2003). Increasingly diverse student and staff populations also necessitate an awareness of cultural proficiency (Bloom et al., 2005, p. 22; Lindsey, Robins & Terrell, 2009).
Dialogue

Dialogue, “the essence of coaching” (Robertson, 2005, p. 24), contributes to understanding and implementation as leaders develop greater clarity of thinking and decision-making (Pask and Joy, 2007, p. 111). For Pask and Joy (2007), the mentor-coach, through questioning techniques, helps clients to think through their practices and situations. Turner (2003) explains further, “The coaching conversation is not a perfunctory chat….Rather, it is a dialogue through which individuals seek mutual understanding, respond with authenticity (Crane, 1999; Yankelovich, 1999), and improve performance (Rosenberg, 1992)” (p. 38). Lipton and Wellman (2003) describe a continuum of learning-focused interaction in which mentors “flex between consulting, collaborating and coaching stances to develop their proteges’ capacities to reflect upon practice, generate ideas and increase professional self-awareness” (p. 21). Mentoring and coaching conversations include building rapport, deep listening, questioning and feedback, by individuals and teams, through relationships in environments with high levels of trust (Wallace and Gravells, 2007, p. 33; Bloom et al., 2005, p. 25). Mentoring and coaching dyads and teams thereby construct knowledge and pass this knowledge and skills on to school leaders.

Inquiry

Inquiry is another important characteristic of mentoring and coaching (Odell and Huling, 2000, p. 18). Robertson (2005) explains a way of thinking about learning to improve leadership: “When educational leaders become involved in systematic inquiry about their practice, whether in coaching partnerships or in professional learning communities, they gain knowledge of practice that facilitates effective leadership” (p. 55). Lipton and Wellman (2003) note that mentoring develops higher level thinking (p. 69). Supportive mentoring deepens the understanding of the craft of teaching and metacognition helps novice teachers realize “the ways in which their patterns of attention and thought create the classroom environment around them. Over time, this awareness leads to increased confidence and a greater sense of efficacy – a belief that they can direct and control
positive outcomes for their students (Chester & Beaudin, 1996; Tschanne-Moran, Hoy & Hoy, 1998)” (Lipton and Wellman, 2003, p. 72; See also Turner, 2003, p. 50).

**Reflection**

Quality professional learning, including collaboration, dialogue about practice and inquiry, increases participants’ capacity for reflection. Feeney Jonson (2008) points out that “[reflecting] is at its most powerful when teachers collaborate in an active, honest search for answers. Perhaps the best way to reflect…is out loud, talking with a mentor or a peer” (p. 113). Boreen et al. note that mentoring provides an opportunity to cultivate in mentees “a critical disposition that will guide their reflective practices” (Boreen et al., 2000, p. 68-69). Zachary (2000) believes that “[mentors] who are able to reflect critically on their own experiences and learn from them are best able to model critical reflection in their mentoring interaction” (p. 16). Mentors are able to help mentees clarify their thinking concerning their practice. Indeed, reflection benefits both the mentor and the mentee. Zachary (2000) concludes: “Being comfortable with the process skill of reflection means being able to step back, evaluate, process, assess, and articulate learning and consider the implication of that learning for future action. Being skillful at reflecting on learning enables a mentor to model that skill for a mentee” (p. 75). Teachers and school leaders who reflect critically on their practice are able to make informed decisions about their practice (Robertson, 2005, p. 29). Coaching is also “organized around a cycle of reflective practice, a cycle which continuously flows from goal setting to action to reflection” (Bloom et al., 2005, p. 49). The coaching cycle that supports reflective practice includes listening, observing, questioning and feedback (Bloom et al., 2005, p. 49). Robertson (2005) outlines this process further:

If done properly, reflection in action becomes ‘knowing-in-action’, because it allows people to act with confidence on the basis of informed decisions arising out of reflection on their experiences. A professional partner (coach) assists leaders to be reflective in action, on action and for future action, which results in a knowledge of practice. This process moves leadership enquiry into a new paradigm, that of leadership as learning. (p. 54).
Collaboration

Both mentoring and coaching, whether in pairs or teams, support a collaborative approach to learning in which mentor-coach together explore solutions to problems of practice (Porter, 2008, p. 10; See also Boreen et al., 2000, p. 21, 28-30; Odell and Huling, 2000, p. 18-25; Robertson, 2005). Lipton and Wellman (2003) cite among the benefits of learning-focused mentoring the promotion of “norms of learning and collaboration” (p. xii) and they reveal that beginning teachers who are mentored benefit from increased efficacy, are more likely to remain in the profession and “[engage] in collaborative professional exchanges regarding improving practice” (p. 1; See also Feeney Jonson, 2008, p. 106). Zachary (2005) also points out that mentoring strengthens relationships; indeed, “people become more collaborative in their performance and learning, and individuals feel more prepared to offer themselves as mentors to others” (p. 9). Bloom et al. (2005), in describing the use of collaborative coaching strategies, point out that “[in] an effective collaborative project, the coach brings expertise, resources, and perspective, while the coachee brings intimate knowledge of the situation and the positional authority to implement actions” (p. 76). The outcome is far better than what could have been accomplished working in isolation.

Collaborative structures like mentoring and coaching may lead to school improvement in many areas (Robertson, 2005, p. 73). The research on mentoring and coaching links collaboration to a more positive school culture and a heightened sense of professionalism (Mullen, 2005, p. 86). The collaborative approach to learning is reciprocal and consequently becomes a leveling experience that can support a social justice agenda. Collaboration “challenges assumptions about hierarchy, rank, and status – and, consequently, who is ‘teaching’ and who is ‘learning’” (Mullen, 2005, p. 73). Bloom et al. (2005) conclude, “Our research indicates that school leaders who have the benefit of quality leadership coaching are more likely to have a positive impact on student achievement than school leaders lacking such support” (p. 117).
Community

Mentoring and coaching represent quality professional learning experiences that build positive, professional relationships and community which is essential to school improvement. Joyce and Showers (2002) conclude, “Faculties that are organized into study and coaching teams and that work together for the improvement of the school are more cohesive, have higher morale, and are more responsive to initiatives from one another and from administrative leadership than faculties whose members work in isolation (see Joyce & Calhoun, eds., 1996)” (p. 146). Zachary (2005) believes that a mentoring culture is foundational to supporting mentoring throughout organizations:

A mentoring culture…values and promotes individual and organizational learning….The relationship skills learned through mentoring strengthen relationships throughout the organization; as these relationships deepen, people feel more connected to the organization. Ultimately, a mentoring culture enriches the vibrancy and productivity of an organization and the people within it. (p. 4-5)

Lieberman and Miller (2008) notice “how building communities of practice and building competence in mentors can have a powerful impact on entire communities, from classrooms to schools. Through strong mentoring and coaching, educators can work more purposefully together on many levels to create and support communities of adult learners in schools” (p. 72). Deeper relationships are foundational to community building and changed culture. Robertson (2005) explains:

An underlying premise here is that education institutions that establish coaching relationships are more likely to form democratic communities of learners and therefore a special type of education culture that focuses on the continual improvement of learning. These ‘coaching organizations’ may thus be better suited for meeting the needs of students and leaders in this knowledge age…. (p. 41)

Pask and Joy (2007) point out that in many organizations, “mentoring-coaching is counter-cultural” (p. 167) in that it can generate a clash of cultures where collaborative community building runs into prevailing norms of individualism and isolation. As Margaret Wheatley (1999) so aptly points out, our profession requires new ways of

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12 See Zachary (2005) for an excellent summary of the reasons for embedding mentoring in the culture of an organization (p. 8-9).
relating and working together. Mentoring and coaching hold tremendous promise as quality professional development designs that renew participants and create collaborative professional communities. Pask and Joy (2007) aptly recommend “a structure of mentoring-coaching relationships across the organization” (p. 171), recognizing that “everyone needs a mentor-coach” (p. 172).

Limitations of Existing Literature

While there exists a considerable body of literature on both mentoring and coaching (See Appendix F), most of this research is based on reviews of existing research, authors’ personal experiences and self reports of practitioners’ experiences. This literature focuses on the implementation of programs, the intended skills and processes involved and the claimed benefits to Mentees, their supporters and organizations. The chart below synthesizes the 25 sources listed in Appendix F and clearly indicates that very few publications on mentoring and/or coaching actually contribute new empirical data to this field of study.

Table 3
Sources of Evidence: Summary of 25 Recent Studies on Mentoring and/or Coaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Review of Existing Research</th>
<th>Author Experience</th>
<th>New Qualitative Data</th>
<th>New Quantitative Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bloom et al. (2005)</td>
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<td>Boreen et al. (2000)</td>
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<td>Darling-Hammond et al. (2007)</td>
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<td>Feeney Jonson (2008)</td>
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<td>Gray et al. (June 2007)</td>
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<td>Lieberman &amp; Miller (2008)</td>
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<td>Mullen (2005)</td>
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Of the 25 sources examined, only nine contribute new empirical data and of these, only seven explicitly deal with the benefits of mentoring and/or coaching to Mentees and/or those providing these supports. In fact, these nine sources are not uniform in their conclusions about the impact of such programs. Wallace and Gravells (2007), for example, describe mentoring as reciprocal learning, effective in tapping into situated learning and drawing out tacit knowledge and self reflection. Zachary (2009) outlines various benefits of mentoring to Mentees including confidence, competence, expanded networks of contacts, exposure to new ideas and increased comfort with risk taking. Joyce and Showers (2002) conclude that peer coaching is key to transferring knowledge and skills to the classroom and contributes to individual competence and Robertson’s (2005) study documents coaching as a reciprocal learning process that benefits both coach and client (p. 4, 54). Turner (2003) also documents numerous benefits of executive coaching as a leadership strategy for clients.

Gray et al. (2007), however, conclude that while “[mentoring] is an integral component of principal preparation,” (p. 5) the current unsatisfactory condition of many mentoring programs leads them to also conclude, “Until we provide the resources and structures to

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<th>Source</th>
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</table>
ensure that every mentor has the ability and support to manage challenging experiences for interns in real-school situations, the value of the mentoring process to enhance leadership preparation – and ultimately to raise student achievement – is severely limited” (p. 12). The Wallace Foundation’s (2007) study also documents the uneven quality of existing mentoring programs in the U.S. and concludes that “mentoring should be seen as only one stage – albeit an important one – in a continuum of professional development of principals that begins with pre-service training and, ideally, continues throughout leaders’ careers” (p. 20). This is a similar conclusion to that of Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) who examine eight exemplary pre- and in-service principal development programs that include mentoring and peer coaching (p. 146). The authors conclude that a comprehensive program of leadership development is more important than any one feature: “The presence or absence of a single celebrated feature in a program design may be less important than how well the existing features are implemented, how well they reinforce and convey a consistent model of leadership, and whether the design provides important learning for program participants” (p. 150).

While one should therefore approach this body of literature with caution, knowing that further empirical study is needed to explicitly document the benefits and impact of MentoringCoaching, there is much promise in terms of positive results for school leaders new to the principalship.

There is also a lack of empirical research on the kind of knowledge that is being transferred and acquired in the MentoringCoaching experiences of principals. Little is known about how the professional knowledge of participants is influenced through participation in educational leadership MentoringCoaching programs and it is this gap in the Mentoring/Coaching literature that this study addresses. Writing that explores the links between research, policy and practice has implications for this particular study in its identification of the distinction between practitioner- and research-based knowledge as two valuable sources of information. This has led to this investigation of the kind of knowledge being shared through the MentoringCoaching process in the lives of principals interviewed in this study. Recent literature on knowledge mobilization and
utilization also provides insights that can deepen our understanding of the 
Mentoring Coaching process.

**Acquiring Knowledge Through Mentoring Coaching**

The connection between research, policy and practice has seen a dramatic surge in 
interest (Levin, 2008, p. 3; See also Nutley et al., 2007; Cooper, Levin and Campbell, 
2009; Cordingley, 2009; Stoll, 2009; Cooper 2010; Levin et al., 2010). Levin (2008) 
explains that most studies include “some kind of process-product model with three main 
elements – the input (evidence), the outcome (practices or decisions), and the process 
through which these are linked” (p. 9). Levin (2008) and a team of researchers at 
OISE/UT have adopted the term ‘mobilization’ because “it emphasizes the multi-
dimensional, longer-term and often political nature of the work in comparison to earlier 
terms that seem to imply a one directional and linear move from research to practice” (p. 
7). In their view, the term ‘knowledge mobilization’ represents “attempts to integrate 
research evidence into policy and practice. KM research, then, is about understanding 
how research makes its way into organizations in ways that result in changes in ideas, 
policies and practices. It is also about understanding the factors that encourage or inhibit 
research use” (Levin et al., 2010, p. 2). These researchers point out that there is scholarly 
debate about all of the terms involved, including what counts as knowledge and usage, 
and they note that “moving ideas into practice requires a rather different kind of 
knowledge, and a different way of using it. The knowledge of what to do is different 
from the knowledge of how to get it done, but both are critical to stronger research-
practice connections” (Cooper et al., 2009, p. 167). Since this literature is mostly 
written by academic researchers, the focus has been on knowledge creation and how 
research practices might be better disseminated. The authors acknowledge, “Much less 
work has been done on the ways in which educators find, share and use research (for 
some exceptions see Biddle and Saha 2002; DETY 2000)” (Cooper et al., 2009, p. 167)

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13 For example, Weiss (1979) identified seven different meanings associated with the concept of research 
utilization (p. 427).
14 For example, Nutley et al. (2007) write about a continuum of use moving from conceptual uses 
(awareness) to instrumental uses (practice and policy change). See p. 51.
and “we still understand very little about the ways in which knowledge penetrates organizational thinking and practice” (Cooper et al., 2009, p. 167).

This area of research considers different types of knowledge. Authors often distinguish between “research-based knowledge – knowledge which is generated exclusively through scientific inquiry – and craft knowledge, which is knowledge that is generated based on the experience of individuals who are engaged in practice” (Louis, 1981, p. 176-177; See also Cordingley, 2009 and Stoll, 2009). Levin et al. (2010) define 'research' as “the systematic gathering and use of data or other forms of empirical evidence to address a theoretical, practical, or policy problem” (p. 2). Craft knowledge can also be referred to as practitioner knowledge or tacit knowledge.15 Louis (1981) points out that “the source of the knowledge has considerable implications for the ways in which it may be effectively transmitted to the potential user and thus for the ways in which an external agent may function in the system” (p. 176-177). Biddle and Saha (2006) dispel many of the myths concerning school leaders and research and conclude that “[most] principals are regularly exposed to information sources that present knowledge from research” (p. 73-74), that most principals acquire research from secondary sources (p. 75; See also Levin et al., 2010) and that principals play a key role when it comes to the use of research by colleagues in their schools (p.229; See also Levin et al., 2010, p. 5). The first two research questions in this study attempt to deepen our understanding of what knowledge is actually being incorporated in the principal MentoringCoaching relationship: To what extent is research based knowledge being incorporated in the principal MentoringCoaching relationship? To what extent is practitioner based knowledge being incorporated in the principal MentoringCoaching relationship? To what extent is practitioner based knowledge being incorporated in the principal MentoringCoaching relationship?

Cordingley (2009) points out the challenges of reframing tacit knowledge in light of new research knowledge as “the pull of internalized knowledge and strongly held beliefs about learning act as brakes on translating this into walking the walk (Bell and

15 Tacit knowledge can be defined as “personal knowledge embedded in individual experience and involving such factors as beliefs and values.” www.nwlink.com/~donclark/knowledge/knowledge.html
In this investigation, practitioner, craft and tacit knowledge are used interchangeably.
Cordingly, 2007) (Cordingly, 2009, p. 8-9). While Cordingly’s discussion focuses on teachers, the same process dilemma can extend to a discussion of school leaders, including principals in particular. Cordingly (2009) asks, “How then do we operationalise the use of research as a lever for change in a way that helps teachers to integrate the various forms of knowledge?” (p. 11) Cordingly (2009) argues for “deep engagement with evidence from both the public knowledge base and from participants’ own practice (Cordingly et al., 2003)….It suggests, in particular, persistence and care in making existing beliefs and ideas explicit in order to review and refine them in the light of evidence – and an important and sustained role for coaches in securing this” (p. 11).

Stoll (2009) agrees with the direction taken by Cordingly (2009). Citing Timperley et al. (2008) and their “Best Evidence Synthesis of Professional Learning and Development,” Stoll (2009) concludes that a positive difference is from “surfacing tacit knowledge and challenging existing assumptions” (p. 2). She explains:

Evidence-based dialogue carried out in a spirit of inquiry seems to promote powerful professional learning...(Early and Timperley, 2008). So, dialogue or conversations that make presuppositions, ideas, beliefs and feelings explicit and available for exploration helps to promote knowledge creation. At an organisational level, when people in groups draw on evidence and outside explicit knowledge and combine it with their own tacit knowledge as they respond to authentic problems, they tend to come up with innovative solutions (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). (p. 2-3).

Stoll (2009) refers to this process of socially constructing new knowledge from public and practitioner knowledge as “knowledge animation” (p. 2). Stoll’s (2009) diagram below, taken from the National College for School Leadership’s (2006) diagram of three fields of knowledge used in its Networked Learning Communities initiative, shows the interaction between practitioner knowledge and public knowledge and the new knowledge that is created through dialogue and collaboration.

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16 Cordingly (2009) refers to the excitement around assessment for learning in the UK and cites Marshall and Drummond (2006) who note that while many teachers were able to dialogue about the research in this area, “only 20% were observed deploying the approaches in ways that were in keeping with the underpinning learning and rationale; i.e. were using the information from the assessment to plan the next steps in teaching and learning” (p. 8-9).
While Stoll (2009) notes that “[knowledge] animation strategies focus on finding ways that will enhance these learning connections for policy and practice” (p. 12), and acknowledges that “[there’s] still a long way to go to understand exactly how the process of knowledge animation works” (p. 12), she acknowledges that “the major role of social learning in this process is critical” (p. 12). Since the idea that “knowledge is socially constructed” (Levin, 2008, p. 4; Nutley et al., 2007, p. 158) is widely accepted, knowledge and use are interconnected. Levin (2008) concludes, “[Practice] affects research just as research affects practice” (p. 5; See also Nutley et al., 2007, p. 65) and, in fact, “[personal] contact and interaction remain the most powerful vehicle for moving evidence into practice” (p. 5). Fullan (1981) also echoes this view: “Direct personal intervention is by far the most potent technical support resource, and may be a necessary condition for many forms of utilization” (p. 218-219).  

Recent research on the role of third parties in knowledge mobilization, known as “knowledge brokers” (Mitton et al., 2007, p. 731; Cooper et al, 2009, p. 168; Cooper, 2010), explains that these facilitators “can be individuals or organizations that bridge the...”

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17 In his recent book on the instructional rounds process, Elmore and his colleagues turn to the medical profession in learning how to improve instructional practice and note that “how people talk to each other about what they are doing is an important determinant of whether they are able to learn from their practice” (City et al., 2009, p. 10).
evidence and policy/practice divide' (Sin 2008, p. 86). Knowledge brokers often connect educational stakeholders, such as researchers, policy-makers and practitioners” (Cooper et al., 2009, p. 168; See also Nutley et al., 2007, p. 63-65). As previously discussed, this study examines MentoringCoaching as a process that can facilitate learning for principals. In fact, MentorCoaches act as knowledge brokers, helping school leaders to access research and practitioner knowledge and create new knowledge in the process. The following diagram illustrates the process whereby MentoringCoaching has the potential to facilitate the creation of new knowledge by tapping into both practitioner and research knowledge. This diagram acts as a multi-dimensional conceptual framework for this study which sets out to deepen our understanding of the kind of knowledge being acquired in MentoringCoaching relationships and the possible creation of new knowledge through this form of professional learning. The final two research questions attempt to deepen our understanding of this MentoringCoaching process with principals: What new understandings for the participants are being created through this relationship? What learning strategies are enacted in principal MentoringCoaching relationships? MentoringCoaching is one bridge that connects principals with both research and practitioner knowledge. With so many more administrators entering school leadership with relatively little experience, there is a sense of urgency as these leaders must be supported in their new roles. MentoringCoaching can act as that support, developing the knowledge and skills of new administrators.
Figure 3. Conceptual Framework: Mentoring-Coaching Knowledge Sources and Creation\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{18} The idea for this diagram was taken from Stoll (2009), p. 5.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The focus of this study is an examination of the kind of knowledge being incorporated in principal Mentoring/Coaching relationships, focusing in particular on practitioner- and research-based knowledge, any new understandings that are being created through this type of learning experience for those interviewed and learning strategies that are included in this process. This chapter provides information on the methods used within the study, including the qualitative design study, ethical considerations, processes for data collection and analysis.

A Qualitative Approach

This study focuses on the relationship between the principal MentorCoach and the principal Mentee in terms of the learning that is taking place between these two individuals. Little is known about how the professional knowledge of participants is influenced through participation in educational leadership Mentoring/Coaching programs. A qualitative approach was chosen as the best way to access, from the participants, the learning that is taking place in this Mentoring/Coaching relationship, specifically, the kind of knowledge that is being incorporated and how. The perspectives of those who actually participate in these relationships are key to deepening our understanding of the needs of principals and the ways in which districts can better support the development of school leaders.

Participants

The researcher sought consent to participate in this research project by emailing a letter to each district (Appendix A). The researcher phoned each district office to inquire as to whom this letter should be sent. The letter was signed by this district representative who was asked to name a contact person for the researcher. Participants (4-5 principal MentorCoaches and 4-5 Mentees) in the study were recruited from each of two districts that participated in the original OPC pilot project. These districts combine Mentoring and Coaching for new principals. Each district was asked to name a contact who would assist the researcher by generating a list of potential participants, principal MentorCoaches and principal Mentees during 2008-09 and 2009-10. MentorCoaches and
Mentees were randomly selected to participate in this project from among those who responded positively to a recruitment letter (Appendix B). Signed consent was obtained from each participant. While the number of possible participants varied with each district, the researcher anticipated 20-50 possible MentorCoaches and 20-50 possible Mentees to be listed in each district. In District A, a total of 58 recruitment letters were sent and 10 people responded and agreed to take part. In District B, 63 letters were sent and 8 people responded and agreed to take part.

The following table provides a breakdown of the participants in this study, indicating the number of mentors and mentees interviewed in each district, their panel (elementary or secondary), gender and administrative position (principal or vice principal).

Table 4

Participants in the Study

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified As</th>
<th>Mentor Coach</th>
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<th>Sec.</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Vice Principal</th>
<th>Involvement in M/C</th>
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</table>

Note: Elem. = Elementary, Sec. = Secondary, Under Principal, the number denotes the number of years in this role. Under Vice Principal the number also represents the number of years in this role. Under Involvement in M/C (Mentoring/Coaching) the number represents the number of years serving in the role of Mentor or Mentee at the time of the interview.

**Ethical Considerations**

Prior to conducting this study, ethical protocols were submitted and approved by the University of Toronto Ethics Review Office (ERO). Informed consent procedures were followed as outlined in the protocol and as described in the invitation letter and informed consent form (Appendices B and C).

Participants were informed about the nature of the study and their participation, including the assurance that they may withdraw at any time or not answer any question they were not comfortable with. Participants were at no time judged or evaluated and at no time were they at risk of harm. Participants were informed that no value judgments would be placed on their responses. Their information would be retained in a secure location and kept confidential as their names would not be used in the study. There were no risks on a personal or public level as no district, school or individual would be named.
MentorCoaches and Mentees were interviewed separately and no participants were informed about the identity of who else was being interviewed. All interview transcriptions were confidential. Participants were assured that they would be anonymous within all research, writing and publication. Taped interviews were assigned identity codes and the researcher strictly maintained the confidentiality of all participants. The interview was entirely voluntary and lasted from 30-40 minutes. All interviews took place at a time convenient to each participant. A detailed summary of the interview was sent to participants and they had full discretion to make any changes to the record. Any changes made became the official version of the interview for research purposes and all other versions, including the original audiotapes, were destroyed immediately. This was to ensure accuracy of the interview recorded. All interview material was kept secure on the researcher's home computer and access to this computer and the revised interview records is limited to the researcher. In order to maintain confidentiality of each participant, each participant was given a case number and the interview data was numbered accordingly. If a participant named specific institutions or persons in the interview, these were given a fictitious title or name in the final transcription of the data and not mentioned by name or title in the dissertation. Data will be kept for three years after the completion of the project and then destroyed.

Informed Consent

Once district consent was obtained and a district representative named as a contact person for the researcher, this contact was given envelopes that include the same Recruitment Letter and he/she was asked to mail the letter one week later via board courier to this same list of possible participants. The second version of the recruitment letter was used which adds in parenthesis "(if you have not already responded)". The MentorCoaches and Mentees were randomly selected to participate from among those who responded to the Recruitment Letter. There was no reporting to participants of the identity of the other participants in this study, nor was the district administrator liaising with the researcher to be provided that information. MentorCoaches and Mentees were not recruited as partners. The number of possible participants varied with each district. All possible participants
were sent the Recruitment Letter. Because no district, school or individual were identified in this study, there were no risks on a personal or public level.

The only personal information collected was Question #1 (Appendix D and Appendix E) which asks how long each participant has been a principal and how long each has been involved with MentoringCoaching in the district. The Appendices include a recruitment letter (Appendix B), consent form (Appendix C) and the MentorCoach (Appendix D) and Mentee (Appendix E) interview questions. Interviews were conducted in April – June 2010.

Confidentiality.

The project carried low risk to the participants and there was low group vulnerability. The data collected was not sensitive and the participants were highly educated professionals who could make rational and informed decisions about participating. All interview transcriptions were confidential.

Data Collection and Procedures

The interviews were conducted by phone and digitally recorded at a time convenient to each participant. Both MentorCoaches and Mentees from both districts were asked the same questions to enable the researcher to determine similarities and differences in the responses (See Appendix D and E). In particular, I was looking for any patterns unique to Mentors versus Mentees and any similarities or differences by district. The questions asked in the interview align with the central research questions. The following chart demonstrates the link between the research and interview questions:

Table 5
Alignment of Research and Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extend is research based knowledge being incorporated in the principal MentoringCoaching relationship?</td>
<td>2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent is practitioner based knowledge being incorporated in the</td>
<td>2, 3, 5, 6, 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The interview questions asked participants to reflect on the topics being addressed in MentoringCoaching meetings and to discuss whether or not these had shifted in any way over the course of the school year or relationship. Interestingly, many participants commented on the impact of the rhythms of the school year and on how their deepening MentoringCoaching relationship influenced what was being discussed. Participants were then asked to reflect on whether these topics related to practitioner knowledge. Participants were asked to comment on what research knowledge was being used in their discussions and how this type of knowledge was being incorporated. Participants were then asked to reflect on what type of knowledge is most often addressed in their MentoringCoaching relationships and why. This latter question yields some insights into the type of knowledge most prevalent in MentoringCoaching relationships, and not only the reasons for this, but also how research knowledge might be further incorporated in the relationship. Questions 6 and 7 which focus on circumstances and supports needed for research knowledge, also provide insights into how research knowledge might be further supported in the MentoringCoaching process.

The focus on “new understandings” links to the conceptual framework and recent discussion on knowledge mobilization and utilization in that the MentoringCoaching relationship does support new learning for MentorCoaches and Mentees. It is interesting to hear from the participants how they conceptualize their new learning and whether or not that new learning can be considered a hybrid of both research and practitioner knowledge. The question on learning strategies provides insights into what is working or not working as a learning tool in this relationship. The final question on benefits and challenges also yields insights into further recommendations for deepening the
relationship for participants that are valuable for future MentorCoaches, Mentees and districts. This last question also takes us back to the design elements of effective professional learning as many of the comments related to benefits reinforce existing research on why MentoringCoaching is a powerful learning strategy for school leaders.

Data Analysis

Interviews were transcribed and all data was analyzed for overall patterns and prevalent themes relative to the research questions and conceptual framework. The interviews focused on the relationship between the principal MentorCoach and the principal Mentee in terms of the learning that is taking place. In broad terms, the research investigated what kind of knowledge is being incorporated in principal MentoringCoaching relationships in the sampled programs.

Coding

Research software NVivo 8.0 was used in the qualitative analysis of interview data. Initially, all interview data was organized by question. Eg. Interviews by Question – Mentors – Q2 (Question 2); Interviews by Question – Mentees – Q3 (Question 3) Interview transcripts organized by question were imported into NVivo 8.0 and then coded using an initial coding framework developed from the interview questions (see below). After the transcripts were coded, the nodes were copied into Microsoft Word and interview excerpts were reorganized based on patterns and findings. Throughout the process, notes were created based on findings and analysis of particular points of interest.
Figure 4. Coding Framework for Data Analysis: Parent Nodes
CHAPTER 4: THE MENTORINGCOACHING RELATIONSHIP

Background on the Districts and Participants

In May 2007, the Ministry of Education for Ontario invited proposals from school districts and professional associations to pilot MentoringCoaching programs for school leaders with less than three years of experience. The Ontario Principals’ Council (OPC) submitted a proposal for a partnership and study among six school districts across Ontario. Each district received common elements of support from the OPC and designed an implementation plan unique to the school board. The pilot funding was for one school year and required a reporting process defining the participants’ and associations’ recommendations for a provincial MentoringCoaching program. Within each school board, a steering committee of practicing principals and at least one supervisory officer was responsible for coordinating the initiative at the district level and working with the association coordinator and research team.

Each participating school district, with support from the OPC, determined the method for matching Mentors with Mentees, the expected frequency of meetings for Mentors and Mentees, and the expectations for reporting growth and experiences. The pilot MentoringCoaching programs were initiated during the 2007 – 2008 school year and the following districts participated in that study: Algoma, Avon Maitland, Limestone, Thames Valley Toronto District School Board and Upper Grand.

District Models

The current study focuses on two of the districts involved in the original OPC pilot. These two districts have continued to embrace MentoringCoaching as a key leadership support strategy. District A has tried to maximize support for its leaders by placing them in both group and individual support situations. The following represents data on the district supplied by the coordinating principal. One of his duties is to oversee MentoringCoaching in the district.

District A: Retirements

2006-7 - 5 elementary principals, 1 elementary VP and 2 secondary principals - total of 8
2007-8 - 5 elementary principals, 2 elementary VPs and 3 secondary VPs - total of 9

2008-9 - 7 elementary principals, 1 elementary VP, 1 secondary principal and 1 secondary VP - total of 10

2009-10 - 7 elementary principals, 1 elementary VP, 2 secondary principals - total of 10

**District A: Mentoring Numbers**

2007-8 - 9 mentors and 57 mentees (pilot - 3 years and less in the role)
2008-9 - 9 mentors and 49 mentees (2 years and less in the role)
2009-10 - 14 mentors and 44 mentees (2 years and less in the role)

This district currently has a total of 110 administrators (Principals, Vice Principals, Assistant Vice Principals [Secondary], Supervising Principals, and System Principals [Spec. Ed. and School Effectiveness]). As is evident, the Mentoring Coaching program is integral to helping the district cope with an overwhelming number of administrators new to their respective roles. District A relied on group mentoring. A Mentoring Coach trained in mentoring and coaching skills through OPC, was expected to meet with his/her group a minimum of eight times during the school year (once a month on average). Each Mentor Coach would have four to six Mentees in a group. Each group would focus on the needs of group members. Individual, one-on-one Mentoring Coaching was offered to the Mentees and some would take advantage of this opportunity. Some Mentor Coaches would offer to meet with each Mentee in his/her group during the school year, while other Mentor Coaches only met with those Mentees who requested such assistance. The frequency of contact between Mentor Coaches and Mentees involved in individual sessions varied with each pairing. Some met face-to-face every month, while others would communicate by phone and/or email and meet less often in person. Individual meetings were informal and conversations were based on the needs of each Mentee.

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19 Note that each principal retirement generates two Mentees, a new principal and a new vice principal. Each vice principal retirement would generate one new Mentee. Each district would also consider an experienced administrator hired from outside the district as someone needing mentorship. An administrator returning from a maternity leave could also be considered someone needing mentorship.
District B, since the pilot project in 2007, has continued to focus on the creation of Principal Learning Teams as a result of this district’s involvement in the Ministry’s Leading Student Achievement initiative. Each team chooses a focus for inquiry for the year that is related to school leadership and is expected to meet a minimum of three times during the school year. The coordinator of MentoringCoaching for the district mentioned that at least half of the groups would meet more often. The groups would choose a focus aligned with Ministry priorities as articulated through the Leading Student Achievement initiative. For example, school climate, literacy, numeracy and the instructional leadership of the principal were some topics adopted by groups. This district also formally matches Mentees with MentorCoaches. A MentorCoach would often be paired with a Mentee from his/her Principal Learning Team. Other Mentees would be emailed a list of possible MentorCoaches and be asked to prioritize their choices. The district coordinator for the program would then facilitate the individual pairings, trying to match people, for example, according to geographic location or within the same family of schools, in order to ease the ability to meet. Individual pairs are asked to meet at least once a term but most would meet more often. Communication would be by email, phone calls and face-to-face meetings. As in District A, the frequency of contact between MentorCoaches and Mentees involved in individual sessions in District B also varied with each pairing. While the groups had a focus for inquiry, the individual pairs would focus conversations on the needs of the Mentee.\footnote{Information about the organization of MentoringCoaching in each district was provided to the researcher in a series of phone conversations by the contact for MentoringCoaching in each district. Information was also confirmed at the end of this study (April 8, 2011). In District A, that person was a coordinating principal, while in District B, that person was a practicing principal who oversaw MentoringCoaching for the board.}

The following represents data on the district supplied by the coordinating principal. One of his duties is to oversee MentoringCoaching in this district.

**District B: Retirements**

2006-7 – 11 elementary principals – total of 11

2007-8 – 3 elementary principals, 2 elementary vice principals, 1 secondary principal, 1 secondary vice principal – total of 7
2008-9 – 3 elementary principals, 1 elementary vice principal, 2 secondary principals – total of 6
2009-10 – 4 elementary principals, 1 elementary vice principal, 1 secondary principal – total of 6

**District B: Mentoring Numbers**

- 2007-8 - 18 mentors and 50 mentees (pilot - 3 years and less in the role)
- 2008-9 - 18 mentors and 29 mentees
- 2009-10 – 33 mentors (and 24 more started to be trained) and 30 mentees

This district currently has a total of 120 administrators. District B has focused on building a culture of mentoring by training as many mentors as possible over the last two years. District B has also had mentor/mentee in-services focusing on the five core leadership capacities from the Ministry’s Leadership Framework.21

**Training Provided**

OPC provides MentoringCoaching training to the districts under study, along with other districts across the province. Training includes assistance to districts new to MentoringCoaching with resource staff assisting district leaders in setting up new programs. MentorCoaches have access to both Mentoring training through such skilled individuals as Lois Zachary, as well as Coaching training provided by professionally certified coaches. OPC also has a cadre of trained administrators, certified by Lois Zachary, who are able to deliver Mentoring training to potential district MentorCoaches across the province.

**Participant Background**

Using data from Table 1, the following chart summarizes the background of the participants in the current study:

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21 Ontario’s Leadership Strategy is supported by the Ontario Leadership Framework which identifies five core leadership capacities and effective practices. For information on Ontario’s Leadership Strategy, including the Leadership Framework, visit www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/IdeasIntoAction.html
Table 6  

*Summary of Participants (Background)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Mentor</th>
<th>Mentee</th>
<th>Panel</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mentors (4 Elem. And 1 Sec.) Mentees (5 Elem.)</td>
<td>Mentors (4 F, 1 M) Mentees (3 F, 2 M)</td>
<td>All Principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mentors (All Elem.) Mentees (All Elem.)</td>
<td>Mentors (2 F, 2M) Mentees (3 F, 1M)</td>
<td>Mentors (All Principals) Mentees (2 Principals and 2 VPs)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:  Elem. = Elementary, Sec. = Secondary, F = Female, M = Male

The participants in the study were mostly from the elementary panel and more women than men acted as both MentorCoaches and Mentees, likely reflecting the dominance of women in school administration. While all MentorCoaches were principals, two of the Mentees interviewed in District B were Vice Principals. In both districts, some group MentoringCoaching situations involved principals working with vice principals. On average, principals acting as MentorCoaches in District A had 5.3 years of experience in the role of principal, while those in District B had 7.6 years of experience in the role. Mentees involved in the study had, on average, 2.2 years of experience in the role of principal in District A, while in District B, the Mentees, on average, had 1.8 years of experience. Interestingly, in District A, three of the MentorCoaches have less than four years of experience as principals, while in District B, all MentorCoaches have four or more years of experience. Among the Mentees, while most have two years or less experience in their current roles in both districts, in District A, one Principal has three years of experience and another has four years of experience and in District B, one Vice Principal has three years of experience. Clearly in both districts, MentoringCoaching is
not seen as only a support for administrators in the very early years of the role, but as a support that can assist administrators with even three or four years on the job. Also, some districts rely on MentorCoaches with only three years in the role, reflecting the smaller pool of potentially experienced administrators in the district.

Time involved in MentoringCoaching varied among the participants. In District A, MentorCoaches had on average 1.4 years in this role and 2.5 years in this role in District B. Mentees in District A had on average 1.8 years of involvement in MentoringCoaching and 2.1 years in District B. In District A, four of the MentorCoaches were in their first year of involvement in this role while in District B, only one was in her first year of involvement and three administrators had been involved for three years as MentorCoaches. In speaking with the Coordinating Principal for this project in District A, he confirmed the high retirement levels in his district and the small pool of MentorCoaches from which to draw upon which became the rationale for resorting to a group MentoringCoaching support structure. Interestingly, in both districts, several MentorCoaches mentioned being Mentees before becoming MentorCoaches, and several Mentees also mentioned wanting to become MentorCoaches in the future, reflecting the desire of some administrators to eventually ‘give back’ to new colleagues coming into administration.
CHAPTER 5: KNOWLEDGE IN MENTORINGCOACHING RELATIONSHIPS

This chapter examines evidence from the primary data collected on knowledge creation in MentoringCoaching relationships, focusing on answers to the research questions posed in this study. Specifically, the chapter begins by examining the topics addressed in meetings between MentorCoaches and Mentees in both districts. This section includes a discussion on the impact of a deepening relationship between MentorCoaches and Mentees on the kind of learning taking place in these conversations. As per the conceptual framework discussed in Chapter 2, this chapter then examines the key areas of craft and research knowledge and suggestions for supports that need to be in place to assist with the further incorporation of research knowledge. The chapter then examines the new knowledge generated for MentorCoaches and Mentees and the range of learning strategies used in the process.

**Topics Addressed in Meetings**

The following chart reflects the wide range of topics mentioned as being addressed in meetings by both MentorCoaches and Mentees and their degree of ‘popularity’ within the relationships. The topics are grouped according to those representing craft knowledge and those that fall under the category of research knowledge. Note that the researcher used the definitions of ‘research’ and ‘craft knowledge’ referred to earlier in the study (See Chapter 2) when interviewing all participants, to ensure that they understood the meaning of these terms. Participants were asked to list topics addressed in meetings and to identify those related to craft knowledge (Interview Questions 2, 3). Participants were also asked to discuss what research knowledge is being used in their discussions (Interview Question 4). In reviewing the transcripts, the researcher has listed topics actually referred to by the participants as being related to either craft or research knowledge.
Table 7

Topics Addressed in Mentoring/Coaching Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District A and B - MentorCoaches</th>
<th>District A and B - Mentees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topics Related to Craft Knowledge</strong></td>
<td><strong>Topics Related to Craft Knowledge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Performance Appraisals ******</td>
<td>• Staffing ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staffing ***</td>
<td>• Technology **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time Management ***</td>
<td>• Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Balancing Work/Personal Life *</td>
<td>• Facilities Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Combining the VP role with a support teaching role*</td>
<td>• Legal Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facility Services *</td>
<td>• Performance Appraisals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• IPRCs and Developing IEPs *</td>
<td>• Time Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Budget</td>
<td>• Union Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Legal Issues</td>
<td>• Working with Secretaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New Policies and Procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School Opening</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Suspensions and Expulsions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Timetabling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Working with Secretaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topics Related to Research Knowledge</strong></td>
<td><strong>Topics Related to Research Knowledge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dealing with Difficult People/Conflict Resolution/Relationship Building *****</td>
<td>• Dealing with Difficult People/Conflict Resolution/Relationship Building *****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leadership Framework ***</td>
<td>• Data Use ****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Data Use *</td>
<td>• School Improvement Plan ****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing Teachers *</td>
<td>• Leadership Framework ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improving Student Achievement (Classroom Instruction) *</td>
<td>• Instructional Leadership **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School Improvement Plan</td>
<td>• Teaching and Learning Critical Pathway **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teaching and Learning Critical Pathway</td>
<td>• Improving Student Achievement (Classroom Instruction) *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Listing the topic with no * indicates that the topic was mentioned once only. Each * indicates that one additional person mentioned that same topic. Topics are listed in descending order of frequency. Where topics have the same frequency, the researcher has listed them in alphabetical order.

When examining the list of topics, one is struck by the wide array of subjects for conversations between MentorCoaches and Mentees. Interestingly, the only difference in topics mentioned by district is the unique situation of District A which has assistant vice
principals who combine teaching with administrative duties. One MentorCoach mentioned she had four assistant vice principals in her group and that this topic of tips on how to better combine these two roles had surfaced in her group MentorCoaching situation. Another MentorCoach in this same district mentioned that vice principalships are often combined with student support teacher roles involving resource work with students with special needs. This unique situation accounts for MentorCoaches in this district dealing with this topic of “combining the VP role with a support teaching role.” Otherwise, there are no real differences in topics mentioned by district.

The managerial demands on an administrator’s time is reflected in the longer list of topics related to craft knowledge for both MentorCoaches and Mentees. MentorCoaches do provide a more comprehensive list of craft related topics than do Mentees, perhaps reflecting their role as leaders within these relationships who are cognizant of the needs of their Mentees. When looking over the wide array of topics related to craft knowledge, one can see topics that reflect heightened responsibilities in moving from teacher to vice principal, and vice principal to principal. MentorCoaches mention performance appraisals as the most popular topic, reflecting the newness of this work for vice principals and the deepened responsibility of principals in coordinating this work in their schools. Staffing is a huge responsibility for new principals as reflected in its popularity as a topic mentioned by both MentorCoaches and Mentees. Other popular topics for new principals include, for example, facility management, coordinating IPRCs and developing IEPs and managing an office (“working with secretaries”). Interestingly, the use of technology is a concern for some Mentees, but is not even mentioned by MentorCoaches. One can only speculate that perhaps this was not a major focus in discussions, but that technology could still be a cause of anxiety for some Mentees around the need to become more familiar with district computer systems in their new administrative roles. Coping with workload is a concern as reflected in such topics as time management and balancing work and personal life.

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22 Note that staffing could mean different things to different participants as a consistent definition was not referred to in this study. However, based on the experience of the researcher, administrators generally refer to hiring and/or allocating a teaching assignment when referring to the term ‘staffing’.
We see a fairly consistent list of topics related to research knowledge mentioned by both MentorCoaches and Mentees. Within the topics related to research knowledge, the most popular topic mentioned by both MentorCoaches and Mentees is dealing with difficult people/conflict resolution/relationship building, reflecting the importance of this area for new principals dealing with increased responsibilities with staff, parents and students. A number of MentorCoaches and Mentees mentioned reading and discussing literature related to this topic in their group meetings. Other topics listed by both MentorCoaches and Mentees can be grouped into two other key areas for administrators, those related to school improvement (eg. school improvement plan, use of data, developing teachers, improving student achievement/classroom instruction, Teaching and Learning Critical Pathway) and those related to leadership (eg. Ontario Ministry’s leadership framework, instructional leadership), again reflecting the importance of these areas to new principals.

**The Impact of a Deepening Relationship**

The group and individual MentoringCoaching relationships in both districts, served a significant purpose in helping Mentees new to their roles survive those initial years by addressing the day-to-day managerial challenges and by building their confidence. In both districts, MentoringCoaching played a significant role in gradually shifting the discourse from craft knowledge to topics related to research knowledge such as leadership and school improvement.

In both districts, shifting the conversation from craft to research knowledge relied on a deepening relationship between MentorCoaches and Mentees as the latter gradually became more experienced in their roles. One MentorCoach commented, “Yes and it has shifted definitely. At the beginning it was a lot of what do you do questions or how do you do this. It turned into talk of feelings of being totally overwhelmed, being new to the job” (MentorCoach 1). One MentorCoach mentioned that “[in] the beginning there was a lot of relationship building and the type of topics were maybe…easier kind of getting to know you kind of topics” (MentorCoach 9). As the relationships deepened and “[as] trust grew” (Mentee 8), bigger issues were brought to the conversations and topics often coincided with the rhythm of the school year. A MentorCoach mentioned, “What I found
in the fall with the group is that it was survival. And now we’re moving away from that mode into more reflective” (MentorCoach 1). With experience, Mentees became “more comfortable in the role” (MentorCoach 1) and were able to develop their organizational skills, allowing them more time for aspects of the job that were beyond managerial tasks and more focused on deepening relationships and instructional improvement. According to this MentorCoach, these Mentees were “able to think more reflectively about what their job is, and probably dealing with more sort of relational issues. I am thinking suspension, angry parents, working with staff who may be ready to move on and that’s where the research base comes in to it in the readings” (MentorCoach 1). Another MentorCoach mentioned:

When we started with this group they were fairly…new vice principals. What we did was we asked the Mentees what topics they would like. Things that came up were the big items like staffing. We went through performance appraisals, facility services, bigger topics. Then at certain times of the year it shifted to when things were busier…or around report cards and IEPs, that kind of thing. It started to be more of a go around and somebody would have a problem and…everyone would talk about… ideas or strategies for that person. At certain times of the year, as we got to know each other more, things shifted slightly to more managing people sometimes and how we were problem solving that way. (MentorCoach 2)

With the deepening comfort level within the groups, some MentorCoaches were able to give Mentees a greater role in the group situations. One MentorCoach commented, “I would say that more responsibility for the direction of the conversation is going to the Mentees and the group rather than myself as the Mentor. I bring topics to the table just so that I have a back up and I always try to bring the conversations to a larger level” (MentorCoach 3). This same MentorCoach commented on the importance of building confidence among the Mentees, honouring their professionalism and being sure to celebrate things that are going well in their schools:

They are all very good, and obviously they are principals for a reason, so I always come from the position from their strengths and work on letting them make the decisions and helping them remember that they are in charge for a reason, and to continue to see themselves as effective leaders rather than from their deficits or things that they are not feeling necessarily good about. (MentorCoach 3)
This MentorCoach also spoke about the development of his Mentees over a two-year period. As they became more “seasoned principals” (MentorCoach 3), the Mentees were able to “elevate their own conversations…. First you are always asking what ‘should’ I be doing right now. Then you start asking the question what ‘could’ I be doing so you are starting to see that you have choices in various situations. Then as the school leader you start to ask yourself the question what do I ‘want’ to do. You start to be setting direction for your building and we talk about how we’re able to do that” (MentorCoach 3). This same MentorCoach has both first and second year principals in his group and as a result, conversations go back and forth between “those how to’s [and] what could I be doing. But then we also frequently have conversations about shaping directions of our schools, the vision, the academic agenda” (MentorCoach 3). Another MentorCoach mentioned moving conversations from the immediate concerns of the group to deeper topics focused on “being instructional leaders in the school” (MentorCoach 4).

While the relationships deepened within the group structures, gradually shifting to a focus on research knowledge, they also did so within the one-on-one MentoringCoaching situations. One is struck by how unique and personal each MentoringCoaching relationship truly is and that the pace of movement from craft to research knowledge would vary with each partnership. One MentorCoach mentioned that at the beginning, he would receive a lot of phone calls from his Mentee focused on “the operational issues, who is the custodian here, and who should I phone there, and how do I get this fixed” (MentorCoach 8). This MentorCoach valued this stage of the relationship and felt that “[you] build trust over those [conversations] because those are sort of ‘you know you know who does what in the board’ and you help them out that way” (MentorCoach 8). He described how the conversations then began to slowly shift, becoming more focused on deeper issues related to school improvement and leadership:

Then slowly it starts shifting over to well, you know maybe this isn’t going exactly how it should and how are you doing that. Conversations about instruction, about the leading schools framework for instance. How about how do [you do] your direction team or how you do ad hoc meetings, or ad hoc teams…. So it…changes from operational and I would say because the focus of our board has been the Ontario Leadership Framework, those five domains in there become much more significant and the conversations start changing towards those…. [We]
still have the walk around the building, and visit each other’s schools, and the put out the fire kind of issues, but we also have a lot more conversations about what is happening in the school and student achievement and those sorts of issues.

The conversations also included a focus on school improvement and sharing of best practices. MentorCoaches and Mentees even shared learning from professional development opportunities such as “conferences…or the OPC workshops” (MentorCoach 7). Another MentorCoach described how “we had to get the day to day stuff out of the way in order to manager her time more effectively so that she can be looking at best practices and working with teachers” (MentorCoach 7).Topics such as time management, budget and staffing were the initial focus. Then the conversations changed: “But then we always talked about moving her staff forward, because she had a staff very stuck in tradition and so over a course of two years we talked [about] what she could be doing in moving them forward in order to move students along the continuum” (MentorCoach 7). Another MentorCoach felt that her role was to offer “support” (MentorCoach 9) to her Mentee in his first year, responding to the daily issues on the job and to afterwards bring research into their conversations: “Perhaps in their second or third year, when somebody gets used to those demands of the job, the other could come in” (MentorCoach 9).

While some teams and one-on-one relationships began with conversations focused on craft knowledge and then progressed to more of a focus on topics related to research knowledge such as school improvement and leadership, not all MentoringCoaching situations made that transition. In District A, for example, some group MentoringCoaching situations remained loosely structured and focused on responding to the immediate needs of the Mentees and did not progress beyond that role. One can speculate that with MentorCoaches in this district having only 1.4 years in this role on average with four of the five MentorCoaches being in their first year of involvement, along with their relative lack of experience as principals compared to those in District B, that this overall lack of experience could account for some District A MentorCoaches sticking with an informal approach to group situations that relied on craft topics brought
forward by Mentees. For example, several MentorCoaches and Mentees in District A mentioned relying on the ‘Adobe’ method which focuses on “the burning issue of the moment” (MentorCoach 4). A MentorCoach described this process:

What it is, is that each individual brings a challenge to the table, presents their challenge, everyone goes around the table once and makes a comment or contribution to the challenge. There is no discussion from the person who brings the challenge in justifying what they have or haven’t done. It’s just a topic around the table that is discussed by everyone in turn to provide feedback to the other individual.

Another MentorCoach from this district talked about the beginning conversations being “a lot of what do you do questions, or how do you do this. It turned into talk of feelings of being totally overwhelmed, being new to the job” (MentorCoach 1). Another MentorCoach indicated that her group did not want “a formal agenda” but preferred the group meetings “to be a bit more responsive to their current concerns or issues….Sometimes it was around performance appraisals, difficult staff. Sometimes it was around legal implications with respect to difficult parents perhaps. Sometimes it was around just how to balance workload and personal life” (MentorCoach 5). A Mentee in this district mentioned that the team meetings are “more networking sessions that haven’t got a particular agenda” (Mentee 1). This Mentee mentioned having completed OPC’s MentoringCoaching training and expressed that she “was surprised because our groups are much more loosely organized. For instance, we don’t get back together and ‘oh did you try that and what happened.’ We only re-visit the situation if the principal is still struggling or if there has been a new development and they are back trying to problem solve as a group” (Mentee 1). However, this same Mentee appreciated the networking opportunities afforded by the team situations as she began to move beyond her MentorCoach and sometimes turn to her fellow Mentees for support:

But what is really wonderful is because of the networking aspect of the MentoringCoaching, I also turn to my fellow Mentees. So if I am dealing with an issue and just want a sounding board, I might call someone. Or if I am just trying to get a survey of what they might do, I might send an email to all my group members and they usually respond fairly quickly because sometimes they have questions too. Use each other as resources. (Mentee 1)
In District B, the Principal Learning Teams met with “very focused agendas that are based on school improvement and instructional leadership” (Mentee 6). One Mentee described his MentoringCoaching sessions as “pretty consistent” and found his MentorCoach to sometimes act as a counsellor who assisted him in “understanding the board as a whole, the big picture…. [It] was wise advice, guidance” (Mentee 7). However, even in this district with its more focused group situations and more experienced MentorCoaches, one MentorCoach working with a group of vice principals felt that conversations continued to focus on operational issues: “The shift really hasn’t changed all that much. It tends to be more what comes up, what to do, new policies and procedures” (MentorCoach 6).

The MentoringCoaching relationships, both group and individual, served a significant purpose in both districts, helping Mentees by addressing the daily operational challenges and by building their confidence. In both districts, relatively smaller boards outside the GTA, one can speculate that topics covered related to craft knowledge were those that might be in-serviced in larger boards with greater infrastructures at the district level through some other means such as resource teachers, superintendents or coordinators. Smaller districts may rely on MentoringCoaching structures to perform that role. It would be interesting in future to compare MentoringCoaching conversations in larger versus smaller districts to see if indeed that factor does have some bearing on the development of the MentoringCoaching relationship. However, in both districts, MentoringCoaching played a significant role in many relationships, through group and one-on-one situations, in raising the level of discourse from a focus on daily operational issues to that of topics related to research knowledge such as leadership and school improvement. The experience and skill of the MentorCoach, the experience level of the Mentee, the depth of their relationship, along with the organization of the group situation (more formal as opposed to loosely structured) seemed to impact on whether conversations remained focused on craft knowledge or moved on to focus more on deeper issues related to research knowledge.
While the participants did differentiate between topics related to craft and research knowledge, some had difficulty distinguishing between these two areas of their work based on ‘topics for discussion.’ One can apply research to the roots of every topic listed in Table 7 and also address improvement and leadership issues without any regard to research. The distinction between craft and research knowledge lies more in the kinds of evidence being used in discussions as per the definitions in Chapter 2. An emerging theme in this study is the meaning of research knowledge to the participants. Knowledge for administrators often combines research and practical experience and these two areas are often hard to separate in the daily work of administrators. Nevertheless, the MentoringCoaching relationship did clearly evolve over time, reflecting the changing needs of Mentees. With experience, Mentees were able to focus on aspects of administration beyond managerial tasks and more related to instructional improvement. An area of further research could be to examine in more depth how research evidence is explicitly brought to bear in group and individual MentoringCoaching situations in light of how the relationship unfolds over time.

**Craft Knowledge**

The majority of those interviewed in both districts, MentorCoaches and Mentees, felt that most of the topics discussed through the group and one-on-one MentoringCoaching relationships, particularly at the beginning of the relationship, focused on practitioner or ‘craft’ knowledge, that is, directly related to the daily performance of being a principal. Interestingly, however, in both districts, not all MentorCoaches and Mentees defined ‘craft’ knowledge as only being managerial in nature. Some strongly believed that instructional leadership and leadership related to school improvement was central to the role of the principal and that most conversations, at least eventually, focused on these types of topics. In District A, for example, of the five MentorCoaches, four focused their answers to Question 3 (Of these topics, which ones would you classify as being directly related to practitioner or ‘craft’ knowledge, that is, directly related to the daily performance of being a principal?) by commenting on most topics addressed as being related to craft knowledge. However, one MentorCoach in this district described the
importance of leading the conversation “onto the instructional leadership piece” (MentorCoach 4), pointing out that the leadership and beliefs of the MentorCoach made a significant difference in shaping MentoringCoaching conversations. She explains: “Unless I get them onto the instructional leadership piece, they want to talk about the managerial stuff and the safe school aspect of the job, because really that is their day to day in their job. So I have to guide the conversation more towards the instructional leadership piece and I thought the book would be a good vehicle to do that…. [There] is a whole other piece to the job. And it’s not that they are not doing it. It’s just that the other stuff seems more immediate” (MentorCoach 4).

In District B, three of the four MentorCoaches answered this same question by discussing topics related to research knowledge, perhaps reflecting their greater experience in the role as principals and as MentorCoaches. While one MentorCoach from this district summed up, “We don’t do a lot of the research-based material in Mentoring. It does tend to be…much on the practical side” (MentorCoach 6), another MentorCoach in this district commented on taking managerial issues and dealing with them in such a way as to get at research knowledge. For example, she focused on the importance of scheduling teachers in an elementary school so they would have planning time together and on how principals need “to make time in order to go into classrooms to see what is actually going on with teachers and students…. We talked about how to structure staff meetings so that it’s not business related, that it’s more capacity building and more professional development” (MentorCoach 7). Another MentorCoach in this district felt that while the group sessions focused on research-related topics, the one-on-one relationships were “much more related to the day to day survival kind of skills. I wish I had a Mentor when I became a vice principal because it’s just overwhelming. Maybe I am incorrectly not putting the focus on the research part here” (MentorCoach 9). Because she was mentoring a first year principal, this MentorCoach felt that “it would be overwhelming even to him if I started bringing in that kind of information now. What he really needs is support…. Perhaps in their 2nd or 3rd year, when somebody gets used to those demands of the job, the other could come in” (MentorCoach 9).
Most Mentees in both districts commented on aspects of research knowledge when answering Question 3. In District A, for example, each Mentee answered by commenting on some aspect of research knowledge in relation to instructional leadership, pointing out that even in this district with its more loosely structured group mentoring focus, being an instructional leader was seen as integral to the role of the principal. For example, one Mentee identified “instructional leadership” as “impacting daily on our performance” (Mentee 2). He also felt that “human relations” was also key to craft knowledge because “our relationships with people will make or break the success of the school I believe” (Mentee 2). One Mentee felt that conversations focused on both instructional leadership and management related topics: “I see sort of instructional leadership as more important than the management piece, personally. But I would say we certainly addressed both of those things. Any sort of conversations that we have are directly related to one of those two things” (Mentee 3). This same Mentee elaborated:

We’ve…talked about the organization as a whole, how to build learning cultures for schools. My school is a very strong PLC. I shared at one day how we created that. So I would say that…everything that comes up we take back to the leadership framework.

(Mentee 3)

In District A, groups used different approaches to discussing this type of knowledge. One group included a discussion item(s) at each monthly meeting “that was dedicated to the specific issues or questions related to the daily performance of being a principal. Each person in the group brought one or two topics for this discussion time” (Mentee 4). This Mentee felt that these discussions were valuable for two reasons:

[The] suggestions and advice from the Mentor and other Mentees in the group often helped to solve the question/issue/problem; and the format allowed for the development of professional relationships with colleagues who are in the same role that was collaborative and supportive. (Mentee 4)

In this same district, another Mentee felt that of the topics discussed at the group meetings, “almost all of it was related to craft [knowledge]. Because the discussions were generated within the group and were directly related to things we were dealing with at that time in our roles….Dealing with a particular parent, dealing with a staff issue,
dealing with staff issues at multiple levels” (Mentee 5). This same Mentee felt that “everything was practitioner based because a large portion of, at least half of each meeting, was talking about very specific examples brought to the table” (Mentee 5). The experience of the Mentee also helped to process information in the group as this same Mentee reflected, “I am a new principal, but I’m ten years now as an administrator, so I was able to bring certain experiences into the role and that’s sort of how the group works” (Mentee 5). Another Mentee from this same district felt that “instructional practices [and]…relationship building” (Mentee 1) were the two main areas of focus. One Mentee felt that research knowledge was being provided at other district meetings, but that the MentoringCoaching sessions were more of an opportunity to process that research information and focus on the practicalities of implementation:

At our bi-monthly District and Elementary Principals’ Meetings, we receive research-based information through presentations, resources and workshops. The Mentor/Mentee meetings allow us time to plan, reflect and commit to the implementation of the information, strategies and practices. (Mentee 4)

In District B, three of the four Mentees also mentioned topics related to research knowledge in classifying topics related to craft knowledge. The use of data, leadership values and courageous conversations were mentioned. One Mentee noted that “[all] of our meetings, both the one-on-one Mentoring meetings and PLT meetings, relate to craft knowledge and the daily performance of being a principal” (Mentee 6). One Mentee valued the discussions focused on ‘knowledge of the board,…knowledge of the personalities within the board, knowledge of the culture of the board….So I am interested, when you’re new and you want some insight into superintendents….How do I approach this person with this? That’s the kind of knowledge that I value” (Mentee 7). Another Mentee felt that with her MentorCoach she could phone or email and get “pointed in the right direction, right policy, right procedure that I need to refer to” (Mentee 9). With her MentorCoach, this Mentee could get “a quick answer…right away” (Mentee 9).

Interestingly, the concept of craft knowledge therefore came to mean different things to different people, reflecting the difficulty for participants of clearly distinguishing
between research and craft knowledge. Even though one could determine a research base to all topics mentioned, for some in both districts, craft knowledge clearly meant a focus on managerial/operational topics and that remained the focus for some relationships. Getting quick answers to daily issues was important, especially for those new to their roles. For these participants, as articulated by one MentorCoach, there was no substitute for experience in the role: “[What] if a teacher is dressed inappropriately? They might ask me scenario questions like that and my research base is experience. That’s how you answer that question, what do you do when a teacher is dressed inappropriately. That is just plain old experience. There is no research. It’s common sense” (MentorCoach 4). Participants were really focused on “[solving] different problems or difficulties that have come up” (MentorCoach 4). Another MentorCoach felt that Mentees were simply focused on “the day to day survival kind of skills. I wish I had a Mentor when I became a vice principal because it’s just overwhelming” (MentorCoach 9).

In both districts, however, many MentorCoaches and Mentees, focused on the role of the principal as instructional leader and those individuals gave the term ‘craft knowledge’ a broader interpretation. The leadership and beliefs of the MentorCoach also became apparent in that some clearly believed in the principal as instructional leader and felt obligated to move conversations in that direction. Perhaps this represents an issue to be addressed in the training of future MentorCoaches. If the level of discourse needs to move away from merely daily operational issues, MentorCoaches need to be explicitly trained in the skills to be able to accomplish this in both individual and group settings and expectations need to be made clear regarding the level of discourse expected after a certain period of time in the relationship.

**Research Knowledge**

Research seemed to play a variety of roles in both the group and individual MentoringCoaching sessions in both districts. When examining responses by role, two of the MentorCoaches in District A stayed with a focus on craft knowledge. One might speculate that these MentorCoaches felt that in doing so they were meeting the needs of
their group members who were new to their respective roles. One can also point to the relative lack of administrative experience of MentorCoaches in this district, as well as the lack of MentoringCoaching experience relative to District B. One MentorCoach with only 3.5 years of experience as a principal who was in her first year as a MentorCoach indicated, “We focus on the daily runnings of a school. What the job entails” (MentorCoach 2). This MentorCoach felt that once group members deepened their relationships over time and that “certain areas of interest and focus” (MentorCoach 2) emerged, research would play a greater role in the conversations. She concluded, “I think that was a natural progression for our group” (MentorCoach 2). Another MentorCoach with 3.5 years experience as a principal and one year as a MentorCoach felt that in the group, research was simply an occasional point of reference in a conversation. There might be “some references to perhaps a resource that was helpful or an article that was helpful” (MentorCoach 5) as a means of additional support for someone interested in pursuing the topic further. Interestingly, three of the MentorCoaches in this district, at least one of whom had less experience as a principal and who was in her first year as a MentorCoach, were clearly able to articulate ways in which research knowledge was being incorporated in group discussions. Therefore, experience as a principal and as a MentorCoach could be considered a factor in incorporating research knowledge for some MentorCoaches, but not consistently for all MentorCoaches.

Using professional readings as a springboard to discussion focused on a topic of interest to a group would be a tool for some MentorCoaches in this district, especially if the topic aligned with the district’s goals. For example, one MentorCoach mentioned, “Clock Watchers was a book that my superintendent of education recommended for sure and one of our strategic goals for the board is to reduce the achievement between academic and applied” (MentorCoach 4). The focus of the district and the schools around certain topics would also lend itself to discussions of research and, in the process, MentorCoaches would become co-learners with their Mentees. The most experienced MentorCoach in this district, with 8 years as a principal and 3 years as a MentorCoach, mentioned the role of research in discussing member involvement in Ministry projects as well as focusing on research related to school goals, particularly those focused on literacy and numeracy:
“So we may be using research information around our literacy agenda, or mathematics instruction….In those cases I am a learner as much as a mentor” (MentorCoach 3).

District B was much more formal in terms of the organization of its group MentoringCoaching sessions as the district continues to be involved with OPC’s Leading Student Achievement Project which is based on the use of Principal Learning Teams. In this district, each MentoringCoaching group would pick a theme/topic for inquiry for the school year which would necessitate some level of discussion of research knowledge. In District B, responses from MentorCoaches varied from “we don’t do a lot of the research based material in mentoring” (MentorCoach 6 – 9 years as a principal and 3 years as a MentorCoach) to three other MentorCoaches who felt that research did take an important role in MentoringCoaching conversations, both in group and in individual situations. The most experienced MentorCoach in this district, for example, mentioned having a facilitator for group discussions who is “quite knowledgeable in curriculum” (MentorCoach 7 – 13 years as a principal and 3 years as a MentorCoach) and who brought information to the group. This same MentorCoach mentioned discussing learning from professional development opportunities and from professional readings such as articles from Educational Leadership: “So there is some reading and it’s what we do professionally, going out to attend professional development outside our board and also…information we get from our consultants” (MentorCoach 7). This MentorCoach felt that “sharing of best practices” (MentorCoach 7) was key as contexts varied with each Mentee because “every school is different and every staff is different….So we look at all the different possibilities and best practices and which one did they think would fit for their school” (MentorCoach 7). This MentorCoach described how, over a two year period, she had also been working one-on-one with a principal whose staff did not have “any professional development discussions” (MentorCoach 7). Over the course of two years, she helped her Mentee with such areas as re-structuring her staff meetings and direction team, helping her teachers to engage in such practices as moderated marking and data-based discussions in order to help her move her staff forward. She concluded that the challenge with incorporating research was “[getting] people to value it” (MentorCoach 7) and understand its practical benefits to classroom teachers in light of
their teaching. She concluded, “[Principals] are caught up in the day-to-day stuff and they need to look at the bigger picture. So we have been slowly talking about that and talking about where they can get…information as in *Educational Leadership* and books” (MentorCoach 7).

Another MentorCoach described using the five domains in the Ontario Leadership Framework to organize discussions and to weave in the research within these areas (MentorCoach 8 – 4 years experience as a principal and 3 years as a MentorCoach). This MentorCoach described a process of co-learning: “You’re looking at professional learning together, and it’s always in the service of the Mentee and what they are looking for. Different experiences. You can bring what you know and then learn together” (MentorCoach 8). A principal in her first year as a MentorCoach articulated a bit of confusion as to what actually constituted research knowledge: “Certainly we talked about teaching and learning cycles and the collection of that data, but really… I can’t see that being based on research so much as good practice which I suppose is eventually based on research. But we didn’t pull professional articles. It was not a formal system as that” (MentorCoach 9 – 4.5 years as a principal and 1 year as a MentorCoach). This MentorCoach felt that research came from other sources in the district such as meetings and workshops, but that the one-on-one MentoringCoaching sessions, “because of the confidentiality piece,” (MentorCoach 9) could really focus on personal scenarios and feedback. She explained, “He could come and say ‘boy, did I ever blow this,’ and we could kind of look at a scenario and…try through questioning to see, to help him come up with a different solution, or maybe decide that that was the best that could have been done….But that to me has been the best benefit of having these meetings” (MentorCoach 9).

Mentees followed a similarly inconsistent pattern when it came to the use of research knowledge. In District A, Mentee responses ranged from the informal use of research in group discussions (eg. calling attention to a certain professional resource or professional development experience over the course of a conversation about a particular topic) to a more formal approach focused on the use of professional readings and the use of
provincial, district and school based data to inform discussions focused on school improvement. Relating research to the daily work of the principal was important to Mentees in general. One Mentee new to the role of principal felt that research would come out as an aside or a peripheral part of a conversation: “My gut feeling is thinking that any of the research knowledge that would have been done or read by our group members has sort of come out in those discussions, but maybe not consciously…. Rather than it sort of came out in anecdotal type of conversations” (Mentee 2 – 1.5 years as a principal and 1.5 years as a Mentee). Another Mentee felt that while group members read quite a bit of research, the approach was informal: “It sort of started in conversation and, from there, we took it where we wanted it to go…. [At] our site right now teachers are trying to incorporate more technology to interest kids. Smart Boards, learning through iPods. I talk about that kind of stuff. Not a lot of research based. Just more around what we do every day to hook kids to make them want to be successful” (Mentee 3 – 1.5 years as a principal and 1.5 years as a Mentee). Another Mentee felt that research was the job of the district, something to be delivered “through presentations, resources and workshops” (Mentee 4 – 1 year as a principal and 1 year as a Mentee), and that the MentoringCoaching sessions were more about “the implementation of the information, strategies and practices” (Mentee 4). There was an assumption that everyone in the group would have absorbed the research on their own in advance of the meetings. One Mentee mentioned that conversations were either about the practical issues that Mentees brought to the discussion “or it was discussing and bringing our experiences into the research from the article or book that we had read” (Mentee 5 – 3 years as a principal and 2 years as a Mentee).

Interestingly, while many groups seemed to move from the practitioner knowledge to more of a focus on research knowledge as Mentees became more experienced principals, at least one first year Mentee in District A described a reverse process, beginning with the research and then moving to practical discussions of implementation: “Over the course of the year, the topics have shifted from the research and working knowledge of the Framework to the practitioner ‘how’ aspect of [how] we are leading our staff, students and school community within the Framework” (Mentee 4). This Mentee felt that her
conversations really expressed a research to practice continuum: “A Mentee asks a question related to his/her site. Either our Mentor or another Mentee would provide a framework for the response based on research, and then follow up with what that looks like in practice from their own experience” (Mentee 4). This same Mentee “felt like our Mentoring group was a continuation of the PQP Part I and II courses – which was a good thing. There was opportunity for discussion, based on readings, which continued to develop and deepen our understanding of leadership in education, within a professional dialogue, guided by a mentor” (Mentee 4). While the PQP was quite formal, this Mentee felt that the MentoringCoaching was more focused on implementation and use of the ideas contained in the research. She elaborated:

For our group, the mentoring program was not in a ‘book club’ format….We did not discuss all of the readings with a focus on the content of the information and research in and of itself. We did this part on our own and the focus of our meeting time was how we are implementing these theories, ideas, and information in our practice. (Mentee 4)

This same Mentee talked about using the information from the MentoringCoaching sessions with her staff in order to lead them “on a journey together to improve student learning and achievement” (Mentee 4). The MentoringCoaching sessions offered an opportunity to share information about processes used in schools to implement research with a view to improving student outcomes. This Mentee explained: “It allows us to check in to say, ‘Does this make sense to you? Have you done this? Do you have suggestions for me?’ For us as administrators, it is learning to manage change and supporting each other in that process” (Mentee 4). This same Mentee described her group using Fullan’s *The Six Secrets of Change* and using each chapter as a catalyst for discussion about how key ideas were being used in schools with the MentoringCoaching group “[serving] as a ‘sounding board’ for how we are attempting to encourage change within our staff and how we are doing this with them, being at the table and being part of the process” (Mentee 4). This Mentee appreciated the network of support provided by the MentoringCoaching sessions. She concluded:

As Fullan states, ‘Good theories travel when their constituent parts are cohesive.’ The Mentoring program serves as an opportunity for new administrators to have support and feedback along the way as they take the good theories on a trip with their staff members to improve student achievement.
Another more experienced Mentee in District A talked about the focus on instructional leadership and the use of the Teaching and Learning Critical Pathway as a vehicle for improving classroom instruction. She also talked about alignment, starting with school data, then moving to a school improvement plan and then using the professional learning team process to target outcomes directly related to the classroom: “How does your school effectiveness framework inform your school improvement plan and how are they linked? How does the staff buy into that? What is the link to EQAO and how do you deepen that and understand what the other sources of data are and how they inform those decisions? How do you get into your classrooms often enough to know whether, in fact, what we said we were doing in the PLT was actually happening in the classroom?”

(Mentee 1 – 4 years experience as a principal and 3 years as a Mentee). Discussions moved from the research to the “nuts and bolts of how to get it done and what your folks are doing” (Mentee 1) and sharing the results and the challenges.

In the group mentoring situations in both districts, a professional reading was often the catalyst for the discussion of research knowledge. Books like *Crucial Conversations* (Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, Switzer), *Clock Watchers* (Quate, McDermott), *Visible Learning* (Hattie), *Great Ways to Differentiate Mathematics Instruction* (Small), *How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students* (Brookhart), *Leading in a Culture of Change* and *The Six Secrets of Change* (Fullan), *Leading Schools in a Data-Rich World* (Earl and Katz), *Ahead of the Curve* (Reeves) were mentioned as focusing the conversations at these types of meetings, allowing members to gradually move away from the managerial topics and on to questions of leadership, school improvement, data-based decision making and student outcomes. One more experienced Mentee in District A felt that while the research underpinned many of the conversations, administrators were expected to internalize the research and therefore the research base might not necessary come out in certain conversations which were more focused on application or implementation. She explained:

And we know for instance that there is an LNS monograph that has come out on TLCPs so we’re on the same page because we have read the same research. I think the board is fairly cohesive and when new practices are being introduced or this is being suggested as a high yield strategy, we are given the tools to
understand where it came from and why it has been identified as a high yield strategy. Now do we sit there in MentoringCoaching and say, oh yes, I was reading the LNS bulletin… Well in some cases you will because you want them to know where it came from, but in most cases you’re not going to do that. You are going to wade right in and start talking about Teaching and Learning Critical Pathways. (Mentee 1 – 4 years experience as a principal and 3 years as a Mentee)

This Mentee described the ‘trickle down effect’ of research to her school and classrooms:  

The other thing is we read fairly widely, not just as individuals but as a board, so our curriculum superintendent provides us with reading materials. For instance, on my desk right now I have *Great Ways to Differentiate Mathematics Instruction* by Marianne Small. Our school improvement plan focus for the year has been on problem solving in mathematics. So I purchased a number of extra copies so we had at least one probably two in each division, so our teachers could work together with the same research base. Next year we selected feedback as a main focus in terms of a strategy so the board had already purchased for the principals the book *How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students* by Susan Brookhart. And I will be using it with my staff next year. (Mentee 1)

In District B, Mentees mentioned the formal use of professional readings in group situations along with an examination of data. One Mentee discussed attending regional EQAO workshops and reviewing with her MentorCoach “the different reports that EQAO provides to elementary schools and how to use those reports effectively to inform change in teaching practice and to use it as a part of a school improvement plan” (Mentee 9 – 1 year experience as a principal and 1.5 years as a Mentee). This Mentee also echoed her thoughts on a research to practice continuum and the importance of context, moving from readings to “practitioner discussions because often people then related it back to their own circumstance, their own school and other people offer opinions or advice and a lot of times that’s based not necessarily on just what they read or researched, but based on their knowledge and their own experience in the role” (Mentee 9).

In conclusion, while research was something only referred to as a source of further knowledge acquisition and seen as playing a peripheral role in some relationships, second to what was viewed as the central discussions of the more practical realities of school administration, research took a more prominent role in other group and individual relationships in both districts. While one can point to experience as a principal and as a MentorCoach as being a factor in some relationships, experience as a variable was not
always consistent in terms of its impact on the role of research in these relationships. Some relatively inexperienced principals, MentorCoaches and Mentees were quite articulate about the important role of research. Professional readings were often prompts for going deeper in certain areas of leadership and school improvement, allowing MentorCoaches and Mentees to become co-learners in the process. The flow of discussions varied, with some moving from practical realities to deeper discussions based on research, and others beginning with a research-based focus and then moving to questions of context and implementation. The MentoringCoaching relationships, in some cases, helped to move research-based inquiry from the MentoringCoaching sessions to work happening in the Mentees’ schools. In these cases, the research helped to develop the knowledge and expertise of both the MentorCoaches and the Mentees.

However, the interviews do suggest that there was very little consistency in the MentoringCoaching experience for Mentees, in both the group and individual situations. Because participants often had difficulty distinguishing between craft and research knowledge, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which research actually penetrated discussions. For example, participants did not mention ever discussing the quality of empirical evidence reflected in any of their readings. How much research evidence was actually being discussed? What background experience did MentorCoaches have with research knowledge and did training take facilitating discussions related to research knowledge into consideration? While the former is unknown, the latter did not come into play in terms of the OPC training of MentorCoaches.

### Further Supports for Research Knowledge

In examining responses to the question, “What further supports need to be in place to assist with the further incorporation of research knowledge through the MentoringCoaching relationship?” the following table summarizes key suggestions by MentorCoaches and Mentees in each district.
Table 8

*Further Supports for Research Knowledge*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District A – MentorCoaches</th>
<th>District B - MentorCoaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Focus (topic) pre-arranged</td>
<td>• Getting people to value research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Readings</td>
<td>• Helping people understand how to use research in everyday teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District A – Mentees</th>
<th>District B – Mentees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Concrete direction</td>
<td>• Framework for a research-based approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resources (recommended readings) provided in advance to groups</td>
<td>• More formal structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Structured planning (eg. aligning research to topics discussed at certain times in the year)*</td>
<td>• Time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Note: Listing the topic with no * indicates that the topic was mentioned once only. Each * indicates that one additional person mentioned that same topic.

In District A, two MentorCoaches felt that no additional supports were needed as funding for resources was available and, in one case, the experience of the Mentees was seen as the key issue. With Mentees in this group being first year principals, research would play a greater role in the coming school year once these principals had finished their first year in the role. One MentorCoach talked about working conditions, that while time was provided by the board, group members were overwhelmed with the workload: “And that’s the trouble,…time, and that’s a cop out. There is no solution. I’m giving you a problem with no solution” (MentorCoach 4). In spite of the time crunch, this MentorCoach felt that without the MentoringCoaching meetings, certain readings would not have been read by the group members. She concluded, “So I think it’s a very good way of getting them into research” (MentorCoach 4). Another MentorCoach felt that the group MentoringCoaching process would need to have a certain level of organization to accommodate research examination: “I think we’d have to plan for it and have a purpose. Maybe a pre-arranged discussion with that focus and have shared the material prior to the meeting” (MentorCoach 5).

In District B, one MentorCoach also felt that no additional supports were needed as research would come into focus next year when the Mentee was in his second year as a
principal. For a first year principal, the board was providing research-based professional
development, but this MentorCoach felt that “it would be overwhelming…to him if I
started bringing in that kind of information now” (MentorCoach 9). One experienced
MentorCoach felt that getting “people to value research and to understand how they can
incorporate that into their everyday teaching” (MentorCoach 7) was a support that was
needed.

Interestingly, in District A with its more loosely structured group sessions, while some
Mentees welcomed a more structured approach they felt would be needed to further
incorporate research, others expressed concern about losing the strengths of the existing
model, including the focus on immediate individual needs and networking opportunities.
Two Mentees mentioned the need for greater structure and organization needed within
the groups to accommodate a greater focus on research. One mentioned that even though
she was enjoying the existing sessions in terms of networking, the content was becoming
somewhat repetitive with relying on member challenges:

I think that my particular mentorship group would have to be a little more
structured….Now that we have run for a couple of years with this program, it is
pretty easy to predict what the burning questions are going to be at any given
time….So the time to do the planning piece, to realize what pieces of research are
going to be critical for the discussions at different points of the year….I think the
planning piece is key. It has to coincide with what the Ministry initiatives are
going to be, what the board initiatives are going to be. It has to be intentional….I
think with intentional planning [these sessions] can be even richer in terms of
research and understanding what the research says. (Mentee 1)

Another Mentee felt that it would be a challenge to further incorporate research given that
“it may not fit the needs of particular groups, or I think even when people are at different
schools their needs are slightly different as well….So I think that maybe in a loose
way…having…a variety of articles to consider when you are with your mentoring group
and maybe a little bit more concrete direction I guess would be the way to go” (Mentee
2). At least one Mentee in this district, a new principal, however, was concerned about
the potential negative impact greater structure might have on a group: “I guess it depends
on how driven we want it to be if we tell everybody that they have to read the same
book….I don’t think people will be as engaged as they are when we have the opportunity
to talk…about something they would rather want to try….I mean in my VP group they were far more structured, and there were structured activities, but it didn’t always flow in a genuine fashion. It was very structured and I am not sure if it was any more successful” (Mentee 3).

In District B, one Mentee mentioned securing the research materials would be important, but appreciated that funding was available for these resources. This Mentee recommended “looking at a framework for a research-based approach and relationship,” but still favoured “the more practical approach based on experiences and [practical] knowledge” (Mentee 6) as “more beneficial” (Mentee 6). This Mentee felt that this latter approach would not “preclude us from examining articles in our professional magazines on specific topics that we are presented with. I find the OPC articles very helpful and short which is a great resource” (Mentee 6). Another Mentee felt that a further incorporation of research would require “a more formal structure” (Mentee 7) and he described the MentoringCoaching relationship as needing to become “a little bit more prescribed” (Mentee 7). Another Mentee felt that there would need to be “a certain level of interest” (Mentee 9) in adding a deeper researcher component to MentoringCoaching relationships. She felt that time was the issue. The district generously provided time for meetings, “[but] being a first year principal, the time that is offered I don’t always want to take….It’s just that you can’t take that time away from some of the other things you’re doing….Time is what’s needed; however, it’s just not available. There is just not enough hours in the day” (Mentee 9).

In both districts, therefore, some MentorCoaches and Mentees welcomed the further incorporation of research in the MentoringCoaching relationships, both group and individual, while others expressed concern regarding a perceived need for greater structure and organization, worrying that especially in District A, with its less formal group process and less experienced administrators, there would be a loss of ability to focus on the immediate needs of these new principals. A key to further incorporating research knowledge would therefore be coming up with ways to do that for first year administrators that do not negatively impact on the ability of MentorCoaches to also
address the immediate needs of their Mentees and differentiating that process for more experienced Mentees.

**New Understandings**

As well as focusing on both craft and research related topics, the MentorCoach-Mentee relationships generated new knowledge for both MentorCoaches and Mentees. Interestingly, the vast majority of the topics mentioned by MentorCoaches and Mentees focused on areas related to research knowledge. The following chart summarizes these topics mentioned as new knowledge by MentorCoaches and Mentees in both districts:

Table 9

*New Understandings as a Result of the MentoringCoaching Relationship*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District A – MentorCoaches</th>
<th>District B - MentorCoaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Knowledge</strong></td>
<td><strong>Research Knowledge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop listening skills</td>
<td>• Importance of critical dialogue, inquiry and reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use of the Leadership Framework</td>
<td>• Staff relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use of the Leadership Framework</td>
<td>• Use of organization in relation to instructional leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use of time in relation to instructional leadership</td>
<td>• Use of time in relation to instructional leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Craft Knowledge</strong></td>
<td><strong>Craft Knowledge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Performance appraisals</td>
<td>• Performance appraisals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “you’re not alone”</td>
<td>• “you’re not alone”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District A – Mentees</th>
<th>District B – Mentees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Knowledge</strong></td>
<td><strong>Research Knowledge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Change process in schools*</td>
<td>• Importance of having courageous conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Instructional leadership skills*</td>
<td>• Importance of reflecting on one’s own practice and helping others reflect on their practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Listening</td>
<td>• Knowing that Mentees have skill set to problem solve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Motivating staff</td>
<td>• Role of context in change processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Respecting the ability of people to problem solve</td>
<td>• Role of leadership styles in change processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Role of context in change processes</td>
<td>• Setting the vision for the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Role of leadership styles in change processes</td>
<td>• Strength of collaboration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In District A, one MentorCoach commented on helping Mentees “develop listening skills” within the group which would help new administrators in their relationships with teachers, students and parents. A MentorCoach mentioned key topics, especially performance appraisals and the use of the Leadership Framework, as areas of new knowledge for her Mentees (MentorCoach 2). Another MentorCoach felt that a key understanding for her Mentees was the idea that support was available through the MentoringCoaching relationships and the district, “the feeling that we are all in this together and that you’re not alone” (MentorCoach 4). Another MentorCoach could not articulate any significant new understandings as her group remained responsive to the daily craft knowledge topics brought to the table by its members. She explains:

> They were extremely grateful for the time to come together and talk about what was on their minds at the time. We did sometimes compare with the agendas of other groups….Some had book clubs, some were going on road trips to visit other sites or to visit schools with exemplary practice. Some groups did have a very specific agenda. They would decide on a very specific topic and they would read and then come back and discuss. Sometimes I would try to infuse those ideas into our group, but they did not bite. That was not what they wanted.

In District B, one MentorCoach felt that for new vice principals, staff relations was a key area of new understanding: “[When] you are a vice principal,…it’s harder now to be best buddies with staff members….[He] knows that…[he is] still…able to have a friendly relationship without losing the professional relationship” (MentorCoach 9). Another MentorCoach felt that new understandings would surface on a regular basis as a result of decisions made within the group to focus on a particular topic and the development of personal relationships among the Mentees. The decision to do that, engage in critical dialogue, inquiry and reflection would lead to new understandings for the MentorCoach and the Mentees. He explains:
As you discuss out loud, I think you’re always making discoveries. What it ends up doing is focusing time on an important topic…[You] always have time for reflection and reflective practices which, in turn, makes you think…cognitively about what you are doing…You start saying ‘oh,’ and that new learning comes out because the other person starts asking clarifying questions and things like that. And new understandings that come out is how this all relates to the big system.…[You] know you have one problem in a classroom or school or trying to get cycle data going for a reading focus for instance. And then how that is coming out in the school…and having the teachers needing to learn because the student data is generating some sort of different data than you would have expected. So all those understandings come out and it’s a clarification of where we are in the process and our own understanding of what we’re trying to do when we are leading in the school. (MentorCoach 8)

For another MentorCoach, use of time was a key area of new understanding for Mentees. She explains: “From my experience, they need to step away from the paperwork and get into classrooms and look at the bigger picture….So they need to know how to structure their time in order to focus on what they should be focusing on. I have been asking them questions, in order for them to be reflective of what’s standing in their way of doing what they should be doing and getting them to be self reflective, and reflecting back on what they need to change” (MentorCoach 7). Another MentorCoach felt that “organization” (MentorCoach 6) was a key area of new understanding for his Mentees, how to organize something as basic as a staff handbook. The choices made can have implications for the organization of professional development for staff over the course of the school year if, for example, you organize your handbook “according to the standards of teaching” (MentorCoach 6) rather than by a list of school procedures.

Mentees in District A articulated similar learnings. One Mentee mentioned “listening,…respecting the wholeness of each individual and trusting that they have the resources to problem solve if you let them do it…[and] the strength of collaboration. I have always been collaborative, but I’m absolutely convinced that having responsibility for what you do and working together with your colleagues is how to win, how to make the absolute best decisions” (Mentee 1). Another Mentee acknowledged his maturing as a Mentee and with experience, as a principal, moving away from “things that probably would have been quite important to me in the beginning of the process as far as the
urgency of [what] I needed to deal with” (Mentee 2). His new understandings included “developing more perspective…about change in schools and about the evolutionary process of it. I think as a new principal you’ve got a lot of new ideas and you want things to change and you want them to change pretty quickly, but you realize over time it’s a very challenging task and with a number of people involved it’s a daily incremental thing” (Mentee 2). Another Mentee articulated her acknowledgement of the role of context and leadership styles in effecting change: “[We] all do things differently and that doesn’t matter how we do it if it means students are successful” (Mentee 3). Another Mentee in this district listed a number of new understandings in relation to instructional leadership including “setting the vision for the school with a focus on student achievement and well being and working in partnership with the school community” (Mentee 4), the use of data and motivating staff. One Mentee did not include any topics, but felt that the MentoringCoaching relationship, by listening to how others were dealing with situations or strategies related to possible solutions, would cause him to reflect on his own practice, resulting in “a whole pile of personal self-reflection and growth in almost every discussion” (Mentee 5).

In District B, Mentees also focused on areas of new understanding related to research knowledge and personal skills including dialogue, problem solving and reflection. One Mentee mentioned appreciating her MentorCoach as a “critical friend” (Mentee 9) and developing confidence, “the insight…that sometimes we have the skill set within. It’s just a matter of exploring how to attack an issue or looking at things from a different framework” (Mentee 9). Another Mentee mentioned the importance of having “courageous conversations” (Mentee 6) with staff while another mentioned becoming familiar with the “board culture” (Mentee 7). Another Mentee mentioned the importance of learning to reflect on her own practice and, in turn, helping others to “reflect on their own practice by having conversations with them” (Mentee 9).

Most MentorCoaches and Mentees were therefore able to articulate key areas of new understanding which evolved as principals became more experienced administrators. The vast majority of topics mentioned fall under the category of research knowledge,
especially those related to school improvement and leadership skills. Some Mentees also articulated the important role that certain design elements of powerful professional learning incorporated through MentoringCoaching, such as critical dialogue, including listening skills, inquiry, reflection, context and collaboration, have on school improvement and on themselves as school leaders. The MentoringCoaching relationships developed new knowledge and participants in the process. Greater confidence, self knowledge, connections with other administrators, knowing that “you’re not alone,” were huge outcomes for new principals whose working conditions were often acknowledged as being challenging at best.

Learning Strategies Incorporated in MentoringCoaching Relationships

Besides the fundamental strategies of dialogue and reflecting on one’s own practice as part of the MentoringCoaching process which the group and one-on-one relationships relied upon, the following chart summarizes a range of other learning strategies listed by MentorCoaches and Mentees in both districts.

Table 10
Learning Strategies Incorporated in MentoringCoaching Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District A – MentorCoaches</th>
<th>District B – MentorCoaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Case studies brought by participants</td>
<td>• Conference*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conference*</td>
<td>• Dialogue*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dialogue**</td>
<td>• Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional readings (articles and/or books)**</td>
<td>• Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Workshop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District A – Mentees</th>
<th>District A – Mentees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Case studies brought by participants</td>
<td>• Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conference</td>
<td>• Dialogue*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dialogue*</td>
<td>• LNS (Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat) DVDs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional readings (articles and/or books)*</td>
<td>• Professional readings (articles and/or books)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School visits**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Listing the topic with no * indicates that the topic was mentioned once only. Each * indicates that one additional person mentioned that same topic.
Because District A relied on group MentoringCoaching situations, case studies brought by participants figured prominently in many group relationships. Conferences, workshops, readings and school visits were also popular in this district. One MentorCoach described going to a conference with her Mentees: “Three of the four could make it so it was lovely. And because they had that relationship they went to sessions and then followed up in the next Mentor group” (MentorCoach 1). Two MentorCoaches mentioned wanting to incorporate school visits for the following year by rotating meeting locations to various schools represented within the group and even “[going] to another city to visit a school together” (MentorCoach 2). A Mentee lamented hearing about a vice principal Mentor group that went to a conference together and visited three different schools as she would have enjoyed doing that. One Mentee felt that his group relied on two main strategies, the Adobe process which relies on challenges/case studies brought forward by group members, and professional readings. This Mentee described visiting schools on a few occasions, “[but] most of the time we were meeting off site just to allow some privacy to be able to do that and not be interrupted” (Mentee 5).

In District B, one MentorCoach felt that attending a workshop together on special education was not effective and instead valued time for dialogue as the most effective strategy: “[In] terms of value, that was good in terms of the value of the PD, but I didn’t see myself as being a mentor that day….There was a new document put out and we got what we got and we chatted and went home. I really do think the conversation has been the most valuable. There aren’t many times in a work day that someone in a position of being a principal or a vice principal can devote an hour…to just talking to someone who they know will listen, who has a similar job and who has had similar experiences, and be non-judgmental” (MentorCoach 6). Another MentorCoach, however, valued going to workshops and conferences together and makes a point of “[trying] to co-ordinate so that we go together. A lot of the good talking happens on the car rides on the way there and back. You sit at a workshop and on the way back you actually discuss how that has impacted you and how it feels and what you are going to actually do about it” (MentorCoach 8). Another MentorCoach has Mentees “put a plan into place”
(MentorCoach 7) to respond to a problem and at the next meeting, Mentees “talk about how did things go….So I basically get them to put a plan into place in order to move forward in order to go back to their schools and to do stuff. So at each meeting they are reflective of what they did, like their little mini assignment and what they need to do next” (MentorCoach 7).

The important role of dialogue in MentoringCoaching relationships was clearly articulated by MentorCoaches and Mentees in both districts. In District A which relied heavily on group processes, case studies or “challenges” brought by participants was an important strategy. Professional readings were used in many relationships in both districts, especially group situations. Attending professional development opportunities such as conferences and workshops with group members was popular in many group situations, but seen as a roadblock to MentoringCoaching conversations by one MentorCoach in District B. School visits occurred in some situations and was mentioned as a future strategy to be incorporated by some teams in both districts. Professional readings were used in many group situations in both districts to stimulate conversation or as recommended follow up for those wanting to go deeper in certain areas. Clearly, however, MentoringCoaching relies on dialogue as foundational to developing the skills of Mentees and relationships within pairs and group situations.

**Summary**

While MentorCoaches and Mentees engage in conversations that encompass a wide array of topics, craft knowledge becomes the focus, especially during an administrator’s first year as a principal, reflecting added managerial responsibilities in this new role and the need to build a sense of Mentee efficacy. Important topics related to research knowledge include relationship building/conflict resolution, school improvement and leadership development. As the relationship deepened between MentorCoaches and Mentees, however, many of the relationships in both groups and one-on-one partnerships in both districts, had a significant role in shifting the discourse to more of a focus on topics related to research knowledge. The experience and skill of the MentorCoach, the
experience of the Mentee, the depth of their relationship and the organization of the group, a more formal structure, seemed to impact on the movement of conversations towards a greater focus on topics related to research knowledge.

Interestingly, however, when asked to comment on craft knowledge specifically, some MentorCoaches and Mentees, especially in District B with its more experienced principals and MentorCoaches, defined ‘craft knowledge’ as including instructional leadership and leadership related to school improvement, reflecting their beliefs in the role of principal as encompassing more than simply a managerial function. This also reflected the general ‘blurring of the lines’ when it came to distinguishing between research and craft knowledge for participants. Experience had a varied impact on relationships as some fairly inexperienced principals were quite articulate about the role of research in their relationships. The flow of conversations varied from a focus on craft knowledge to a shift to research-based discussions, while others began with research and then moved to questions of context and implementation. Research topics discussed were often aligned with district foci and professional readings often became a springboard to discussion. In some cases, the MentoringCoaching relationships facilitated inquiry from research-based discussions to work happening in the Mentees’ schools. In some cases, these became settings of co-learning for both MentorCoaches and Mentees.

The MentoringCoaching relationships also seemed to develop new knowledge in the process, using dialogue as foundational to developing the skills of Mentees, along with other learning strategies such as the use of case studies, professional readings, attending conferences, workshops and school visits. Most MentorCoaches and Mentees were able to clearly express key new understandings, most of which fall under the area of research knowledge. Design elements of professional learning played an important role in some MentoringCoaching relationships while greater confidence and self knowledge, connections with fellow administrators, helped to support new principals during their first few years on the job.
CHAPTER 6: IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the kind of knowledge being incorporated in principal MentoringCoaching relationships. This chapter focuses on the broader synthesis and interpretation of the findings from the interviews with MentorCoaches and Mentees in the two districts involved in this study. The chapter begins with a summary of the benefits and challenges of MentoringCoaching relationships to Mentees, MentorCoaches and participating districts as reported by those interviewed in this study. Prevalent themes are highlighted, along with implications for further research, policy and practice.

The Benefits and Challenges of MentoringCoaching Relationships

MentorCoaches and Mentees in both districts were clearly able to articulate the benefits and challenges of the MentoringCoaching relationship to Mentees, MentorCoaches and districts involved in such programs to support new principals. The following chart summarizes the key comments articulated by MentorCoaches and Mentees in both District A and B:

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspectives:</th>
<th>Benefits To Mentees</th>
<th>Benefits To MentorCoaches</th>
<th>Benefits To Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| District A Mentees | • Increased knowledge and skills******
                      • Networking****
                      • Feel supported***
                      • Able to meet during the day**
                      • Opportunity to collaborate**
                      • Improved confidence*
                      • Research resources*
                      • Become future | • Increase knowledge and skills**
                      • Develop relationships with new principals*
                      • Provide leadership | • Increase knowledge and skills (capacity building)**
                      • Networking
                      • Develop consistency of practice among administrators
                      • Support for new administrators |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District B</th>
<th>MentorCoaches</th>
<th>Challenges To Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Increased support****</td>
<td>● Increase knowledge and skills**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Increased confidence***</td>
<td>● Improve support for Mentees*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Improved relationships (trust)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Improve knowledge and skills*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Overcome isolation*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Reflect on practice*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Networking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Research resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Improved leadership skills*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Increase knowledge and skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Opportunity to remain a teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentee</td>
<td>● Improved support for Mentee*</td>
<td>● Increase knowledge and skills**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Increase knowledge and skills*</td>
<td>● Development of leaders*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Networking*</td>
<td>● Increase knowledge and skills*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Common goal setting</td>
<td>● Networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Personal and professional growth</td>
<td>● Overcome isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Learning along with Mentees in the group**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Developing relationships with Mentees*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Improve own leadership skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Time to talk with colleagues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Improved relationships**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Keeping groups consistent in light of many new principals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Overcome isolation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● More new administrators stay in their roles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District A</th>
<th>MentorCoaches</th>
<th>Challenges To Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Increase knowledge and skills**</td>
<td>● Increase knowledge and skills**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Improved support for Mentee**</td>
<td>● Deepen relationships in the district*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Improved confidence*</td>
<td>● Improved confidence of new administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Become more reflective</td>
<td>● Improve succession planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Research resources</td>
<td>● More new administrators stay in their roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Research resources</td>
<td>● Overcome isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Increase knowledge and skills (learning)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Develop communication skills*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Overcome isolation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Relationship building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Keep groups structured but comfortable/need for more structure in groups*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Having enough time together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Need groups to include readings and site visits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Continue to provide funding for program and time for administrators to meet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspectives:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District A Mentees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Having enough time together*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Establishing rapport and trust with MentorCoach and group members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Group setting (one person can dominate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● To create a more formal group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Keeping groups structured but comfortable/need for more structure in groups*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Having enough time together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Need groups to include readings and site visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Continue to provide funding for program and time for administrators to meet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Keeping groups consistent in light of many new principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Making time to meet without funding after</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Benefits and Challenges to Mentees

MentorCoaches and Mentees in both districts were able to articulate many benefits of both the group and individual MentoringCoaching relationships to Mentees.

MentorCoaches in both districts mentioned the improved knowledge and skills of Mentees, the improved support and networking opportunities for these new principals resulting in their increased confidence and in their becoming increasingly reflective practitioners. A MentorCoach from District A summarized, "So definitely the network of colleagues, the friendships that have been built, just a general level of support is a huge benefit of being a Mentee and this whole process" (MentorCoach 2). A MentorCoach from District B concluded:

> [It's] important to intentionally develop relationships with each other in a professional way so that our web of influence and togetherness is really felt. You can really feel isolated in a school by yourself. It's really important to have your colleagues around and intentionally phone each other about issues and talk them through. Together we're always better, and I think that's one of the things that we want to try and highlight through mentoring. (MentorCoach 8)

This same MentorCoach commented on the personal growth of his Mentee who has become "more reflective...[and] not...caught up in being frantic from day to day" (MentorCoach 8). He also felt that his Mentee was able to focus more on research topics related to school improvement, "[looking] at the bigger picture, looking at student achievement" (MentorCoach 8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District B Mentees</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Two years as administrators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling isolated due to rural location</td>
<td>Being new to professional role</td>
<td>Continued funding of program and time for administrators to meet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District A MentorCoaches</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Two years as administrators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Allocating time to meet*</td>
<td>Building relationships</td>
<td>Commitment only for first two years for new administrators</td>
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<th>District B MentorCoaches</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Two years as administrators</th>
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<td>Challenging relationships as administrators</td>
<td>Time to meet*</td>
<td>Ensuring that people have the time to meet*</td>
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Note: Listing the topic with no * indicates that the topic was mentioned only once. Each * indicates that one additional person mentioned that same topic.
The Mentees in both districts were more detailed in their discussion of the benefits of the MentoringCoaching relationship to themselves and their fellow Mentees. Interestingly, in District A with its less experienced administrators, improved knowledge and skills were seen as important, along with networking and feeling supported. A Mentee concluded, "I feel supported….Being given research resources and opportunities to expand my own knowledge have given me the confidence and experience I need to be successful" (Mentee 1). This same Mentee felt that MentoringCoaching "is extremely effective in establishing lifelines and networks to young, less experienced principals" (Mentee 1). For the Mentees in District B, feeling supported, developing confidence and trusting relationships with their MentorCoaches was seen as important. One Mentee from this district summarized, "I think it is extremely important to be coached as a Mentee new to the role….I think it's beneficial for me in that as a new administrator there is so much information that comes out, and being able to ask the questions and question things when you are not sure about something….The relationship is based on…having those conversations to improve instructional leadership and improve student achievement which is really the foundation point" (Mentee 6). Another Mentee appreciated "[having] someone who has experience to 'go to'….I was very lucky as I had a principal with 12 years experience. It lowered my stress level knowing that there was someone there to help me" (Mentee 8). Another Mentee from this district felt relieved to know "there are no dumb questions and you don't feel like you are out there on your own….It's…helped me become a more reflective practitioner" (Mentee 9).

In terms of challenges, very few were articulated as, generally speaking, Mentees in both districts felt very positive about the MentoringCoaching experience. In District B, a more rural setting, one Mentee did not feel as connected with her MentorCoach as she would like to be. In District A which relied heavily on group MentoringCoaching, having enough time together was an issue for two Mentees who felt that meeting once a month was not enough. Several Mentees also felt that the group MentoringCoaching presented a challenge in that one person could dominate a group situation and it was harder to develop trust and rapport within a group. One Mentee argued in favour of creating a more formal structure with a more focused agenda that would include more
research content and site visits: "I think…that if we're talking about data and assessment or pathways that we are reading something around that together so it can bring more professional conversation….I'd like to see…a structure around maybe ensuring a number of those things take place….I don't think it would be wrong to follow an agenda so that there is a little bit more in the way of accountability as a group" (Mentee 3).

**Benefits and Challenges to MentorCoaches**

MentorCoaches and Mentees from both districts could articulate many benefits to MentorCoaches in the MentoringCoaching relationship. MentorCoaches in both districts felt that the learning was reciprocal, that they were able to gain as much from the relationship as their Mentees. MentorCoaches in District A appreciated developing close relationships with their Mentees and improving their own leadership skills in the process. A MentorCoach appreciated moving from being a Mentee to "co-mentoring" a group with a colleague (MentorCoach 2). Another MentorCoach from this district concluded, "[You] get a lot back when you are giving and being supportive of others….I really respected the people that I was Mentoring. I felt that it was a reciprocal relationship….I felt that I was a member of the team. I didn't feel like I was a Mentor" (MentorCoach 5). MentorCoaches in District B felt that they improved their communication skills through the group and individual MentoringCoaching processes. They appreciated the coaching training provided through OPC, particularly the emphasis on listening and questioning skills. A MentorCoach noted, "Rather than telling them what to do, they have an agenda, they have a plan, they know what they want to do and it’s all based on their knowledge, their expertise, where their staff is and how they can move their staff forward….For me it's getting them to come to that realization. It's what they can do and how they can help their staff without somebody telling them what to do" (MentorCoach 7). This same MentorCoach appreciated the depth of the MentorCoach-Mentee relationship: "The relationship is probably the key thing….When] you have that relationship it continues on for years and years" (MentorCoach 7). Those in isolated rural schools appreciated the connection to their Mentees and the reciprocal nature of these relationships. One MentorCoach from this district acknowledged:

I think the whole MentoringCoaching relationship is reciprocal. At the beginning,
you're sort of helping them. They are listening for your answers, but in the end, because they are new, they are bringing in so many new skills and fresh ideas it gives you a different perspective. So I am sitting here, a single administrator in a country school, in the middle of the farm field...,[Having] this connection and having this intentional relationship with somebody in a professional level, brings up conversations that maybe I wouldn't think of in my office in the middle of the farm field. It's very helpful for me too because it gives me a different perspective. (MentorCoach 8)

Mentees in both districts echoed the reciprocal nature of the MentoringCoaching relationship, feeling that MentorCoaches developed their knowledge and skills in the process of supporting their novice counterparts. A Mentee from District A summarized her views on the benefits to MentorCoaches: "Opportunity to guide the learning of new administrators; share knowledge and skills from the field based on experience; provide leadership in terms of research-based resources for the group" (Mentee 4). Another Mentee from this district felt that "because...our MentorCoaches would only have been a few years into their roles as principals" (Mentee 5) they were "getting as much from the discussions as we were" (Mentee 5). A Mentee from District B felt that for MentorCoaches, "it's an opportunity to remain a teacher....[They] can certainly help somebody get their sea legs as they start their career in administration" (Mentee 7).

In terms of challenges to MentorCoaches, those in District A articulated no challenges while two in District B felt that making the time to meet was a challenge. This issue of time was echoed by at least one Mentee from this same district who was saddened that after two years, her one-on-one MentoringCoaching was ending as this part of the program was only funded for administrators in their first two years as principals. However, she was looking forward to their continuation of the Principal Learning Team meetings as an opportunity to see her MentorCoach (Mentee 6). One Mentee from this district was sympathetic to her MentorCoach who was also new to her role as the principal of a new program, feeling that "for her again time is the biggest challenge" (Mentee 9). Several Mentees in District A felt that a challenge for MentorCoaches, besides the need to meet more often, was the need to balance greater structure within group settings and include such dimensions as readings and site visits, while still keeping the groups relaxed and comfortable for members. One Mentee concluded, "Keeping it
structured, comfortable, but collaborative and people thinking that it has been worthwhile" (Mentee 3) was a challenge to MentorCoaches in her district.

**Benefits and Challenges to Districts**

MentorCoaches and Mentees from both districts were able to recognize several benefits to their districts in maintaining a MentoringCoaching program to support new principals. MentorCoaches in both districts felt that their districts benefited by improving the knowledge and skills of new administrators who learned from more experienced colleagues. MentorCoaches in District A also emphasized the benefit to the district of facilitating relationships among new and more experienced administrators and thereby overcoming the isolation experienced in the principal role. A MentorCoach, noted, "It's developing those relationships between colleagues which will serve them for the rest of their careers" (MentorCoach 1). Another MentorCoach commented on the "the networking that happens and the opportunity to really expand our knowledge base…whether we are talking about research and that knowledge, or whether we are talking about the day-to-day functioning, it's just been really so beneficial and that seems to be what I hear amongst my colleagues as well….Working at a small board,…it just gives us an additional chance to develop relationships with great people" (MentorCoach 2). Another MentorCoach in District A felt that "the district gets simply better leaders out of the program" (MentorCoach 4), leaders with "greater depth and grasp of knowledge based on…their conversations with their colleagues, their conversations with a principal" (MentorCoach 4).

In District B, one MentorCoach felt that the process developed greater confidence in new administrators and reflected, "I would hope it means that more new administrators are going to stick with it" (MentorCoach 9). Another MentorCoach felt that as a result of deepening relationships among novice and experienced administrators, people began to appreciate each other's skill sets: "All of a sudden we see each other in an appreciative framework" (MentorCoach 8). Another MentorCoach concluded, "So we've really seen how we can work together as a whole board and system in order to provide the best for our kids….It's building capacity. They are going to have really good principals and vice
principals in the system" (MentorCoach 7). Another MentorCoach concluded, "For the district…it's important for succession planning. In terms of having people learn the system, learn to apply new knowledge…and our particular school district is very concerned with succession planning" (MentorCoach 6).

Mentees echoed many of these same sentiments. In District B, a Mentee commented on the district "getting wise decisions, the best decisions in difficult situations" (Mentee 7). In District A, Mentees felt the district benefited from developing support and networking opportunities for new administrators that would lead to improved knowledge and skills and greater consistency of practice. A Mentee felt that the process built "common knowledge, understanding and language among administrators based on research and the board's strategic goals and improvement plans [and] consistency in practice among administrators" (Mentee 4). Another Mentee commented on not only the district "ending up with better trained or better prepared administrators to handle most situations," but also commented on the process of breaking down barriers among administrators and creating a culture in which "administrators [are] working amongst each other for support even when you are not in the mentor group…. [It] almost perpetuates that within the board" (Mentee 5). This Mentee enjoyed the process so much he commented on having "gone ahead and gotten trained to be able to step back up into the role as a Mentor. I think it's a great program and I wish I had it all along" (Mentee 5).

In terms of challenges to the district, MentorCoaches in District B commented on the pressures of administration and the district ensuring that people continue to have and make the time for the process. In District A, one MentorCoach lamented the process ending for Mentees after two years while another wanted the district to simply continue to provide this support to new administrators.

Mentees in both districts were sensitive to the funding issues faced by their districts and the sustainability of the MentoringCoaching program. Mentees in District A felt that the challenge for its district was to accommodate the large number of new administrators needing support. One Mentee commented, "[We] have lots of change, so our Mentor
group has changed a couple of times and that was difficult for us, because each time we changed, the look of things changed,…having to build that trust and comfort zone again a couple of times over” (Mentee 3). Another Mentee felt that having no funds to support releasing administrators wanting to continue in the program after two years was a challenge. In District B, Mentees also felt that the district's challenge was to continue to make the time for the program and "the continual funding of the Mentor/Mentee program" (Mentee 9).

**Conclusion: Findings and Prevalent Themes**

The following is a synthesis of key findings and prevalent themes from the data examined in this study.

1. Mentoring and Coaching Belong Together and MentoringCoaching Represents a Promising Form of Professional Learning for School Leaders

OPC's model of blending Mentoring and Coaching as part of the training of MentorCoaches in both districts was considered positive by participants. New administrators appreciated the mentorship provided by their more experienced colleagues. MentorCoaches appreciated the mentoring and coaching training, the latter which enabled them to engage in conversations based on deep listening and questioning techniques to help Mentees reflect on their practice with greater confidence. MentorCoaches moved from being dispensers of wisdom to being skilled at helping Mentees solve their own problems and become reflective practitioners in the process.

The recent Learning From Leadership Project (Wahlstrom et al., 2010) found "principals' sense of collective efficacy as a key to leadership influence on teaching and learning" (p. 15) and that districts had the greatest impact on principals' collective efficacy when they "focused on developing the professional capacity of principals and teachers, and on creating supportive organizational conditions" (p. 16). By utilizing individual and group MentoringCoaching processes, both districts in this study were likely more able to develop not only individual, but the collective efficacy of their Mentees. This study also found that coaching added breadth and depth to the MentoringCoaching relationship as it led to implementation as emphasized by such writers as Joyce and Showers (2002),
Robertson (2005), Pask and Joy (2007). As reflected in the most recent literature in this area, Mentoring and Coaching belong together, an important consideration for districts wanting to develop a formal support system for new administrators.

A number of current provincial initiatives also have a mentoring and/or coaching component such as "mentoring for literacy coaches, mentoring for Student Success Leaders, the mentoring component of the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP)" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 8) and mentoring and coaching for some new principals through the Student Success/Learning to 18 Strategy (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 8). In Ontario, funding for the mentoring of new school leaders began in 2008-09 and continued in 2009-10. Support has continued in 2010-11 as part of the Ministry's Board Leadership Development Strategy. In the Ontario Ministry's Mentoring for Newly Appointed School Leaders: Requirements Manual (2010), the section on "Mentor Training" refers to a number of possible components including "mentoring and coaching skills (Boards may provide more in-depth mentor training and/or have mentors participate in programs offered by OPC, CPCO, and/or ADFO)" (p. 19). Robinson (2010) concludes, "The model of MentoringCoaching in Ontario is a program for leadership development that districts throughout North America can adapt. The concept of experienced leaders interacting with inexperienced leaders through focused conversations on student learning and instructional leadership is powerful" (p. cii).

As a form of professional learning, MentoringCoaching incorporates the elements of design identified at the beginning of this study as being foundational to quality professional learning experiences (Bredeson, 2003; Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2001; Guskey, 2000; Joyce and Showers, 2002; Lambert, 1998, 2003; Lieberman and Miller, 1991, 2004, 2008; Nieto, 2003; Sparks, 2005). Those interviewed commented on the experience as offering breadth and depth to their professional learning, helping Mentees

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not only with the daily 'tacit' needs of new principals, but also the important questions of school improvement as leaders charged with the significant and often daunting task of improving outcomes for Ontario's students. The process helped Mentees move the conversations into their own particular contexts as they developed their own knowledge of themselves as school leaders. The Mentoring-Coaching process relies on dialogue, and many MentorCoaches from both districts appreciated OPC's coaching training which helped develop their listening skills and their abilities, through inquiry and effective questioning techniques, to move Mentees into becoming more reflective about their own contexts and develop the thinking processes to solve their own problems rather than relying on someone else to do this for them. Developing the processes and skills of collaboration and community building were also key to school improvement. Indeed, the transferability of these Mentoring-Coaching skills and processes were acknowledged as MentorCoaches and Mentees could take them from the district level into their schools and even into their personal relationships. In these districts, professional learning became closer to that envisioned by Barber in his description of a "culture of professional learning" (Crow, 2009, p. 14).

2. Mentoring-Coaching Relationships Have a Positive Impact on Mentees, MentorCoaches and Participating Districts – We Hope

The findings of this study support the Mentoring-Coaching literature reviewed at the beginning which documents the possible benefits of this process to Mentees, MentorCoaches and districts. As outlined in Chapter 2, much of the existing research on Mentoring-Coaching represents advocacy for supports for new administrators and rests on relatively little empirical evidence regarding the impact of such programs. However, participants in this study indicated that these relationships, both group and individual, served a significant purpose in both districts, helping Mentees new to school leadership acquire not only the tacit knowledge needed in the principalship and building their confidence in the role, but also in raising the level of discourse to include at least some research knowledge related to leadership and school improvement. The learning was clearly reciprocal, with MentorCoaches and Mentees becoming co-learners. Indeed, the MentorCoach-Mentee relationships generated some new knowledge for both participants,
mostly related to research connected to leadership and school improvement. Mentees felt supported as new principals and the MentoringCoaching experience enabled them to become more reflective practitioners. Veteran administrators were valued for their experience and they developed this sense of "renewal and regeneration" (Zachary, 2000, p. 163) described by writers like Zachary (2000, 2005), Lipton and Wellman (2003) and Reeves and Allison (2009). Districts were able to produce more confident, knowledgeable leaders, creating a supportive culture in which succession planning became a more organized and supportive process. Districts were able to renew their leadership. MentorCoaches mentioned being Mentees earlier in their careers and Mentees often talked about eventually becoming MentorCoaches themselves, thereby continuing the renewal of leadership and a supportive culture within their districts. Given the acute shortage of administrators in many parts of Ontario and the volume of new administrators in such districts as the ones under study, MentoringCoaching helped accelerate the process of professional learning and 'acclimatization' for administrators charged with the important task of leading their schools.

The findings in this study also support similar findings reflected in the Ontario Ministry of Education's *Mentoring for Newly Appointed School Leaders: Requirements Manual (2010)* which reminds us that "[most] importantly, students benefit from strong and effective school leaders" (p. 6). This document quotes Steve Munby, Chief Executive of the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services in the United Kingdom who believes that "30 per cent of leadership development should be done through course work and 70 per cent through learning on the job….In order to learn on the job and be exposed to outstanding practice, 'access to coaching and mentoring from credible peers' is needed" (p. 6). This manual concludes: "In the face of multiple demands and priorities, mentoring can accelerate learning, reduce isolation, and increase the confidence and skill of newly appointed school leaders" (p. 7).
3. MentoringCoaching Relationships Evolve Over Time, Reflecting the Changing Needs of Mentees

While topics related to craft knowledge dominated most conversations at the beginning of a relationship, the needs of many Mentees in both districts evolved to more of a focus on research knowledge related to topics such as leadership and school improvement. With experience, Mentees were able to better organize their time to allow for additional focus on aspects of the job that were beyond managerial tasks and more related to instructional improvement. Building confidence among the Mentees and honouring their professionalism was mentioned as important by many MentorCoaches. While many groups seemed to move from practitioner to research knowledge as Mentees became more experienced principals, at least one Mentee in District A described a reverse process, moving from research to issues of implementation, reflecting a research to practice continuum. While the relationships deepened within the groups, they also developed within the individual pairings, but at a pace that was unique and personal to each partnership.

MentoringCoaching relationships were therefore not static and did evolve over time. The needs of a first year principal would not be the same as those of a principal in his/her second or third year in the role and MentoringCoaching structures and processes in districts need to take into account the changing needs of Mentees and the individual rate at which Mentees’ needs develop as new principals. Training for MentorCoaches, those engaged in individual and group relationships, must differentiate the learning needs of new principals. Applying what we know about good instruction for students needs to extend to adult learning models in school districts and across the province.

4. District MentoringCoaching Structures and Processes Need to Accommodate the Varying Needs of Mentees

District B, with its more formalized one-on-one process and more formal group structure as a result of the district's connection with Ontario's Leading Student Achievement project involving Principal Learning Teams, by design, led to more groups and partnerships getting to the bigger issues of school leadership and improvement quicker
and in a more organized fashion. In terms of the elements of design, the MentoringCoaching process in District B thereby created greater depth and breadth for Mentees, allowing them to explore issues of context, collaboration and community development through reflection, dialogue and, ultimately, self knowledge linked to their own realities within their schools.

District A, with its looser structure and more ad-hoc process of one-on-one MentoringCoaching, while meeting the immediate needs of new principals focused on craft knowledge, did not provide a common understanding among MentorCoaches that the dialogue needed to evolve with the changing needs of Mentees and, ultimately, the need of the district and the province that school leaders must focus on the bigger issues of school leadership as reflected in the province's Leadership Framework. Some MentorCoaches were able to progress to those bigger issues. However, some participants, while appreciating the networking and the relationship building that occurred in their groups, identified the Adobe method relying on 'challenges' as being great at first, but eventually inhibiting deeper conversations that needed to occur. The organization of MentoringCoaching in District A therefore did not allow for an experience for all participants that maximized the design potential of MentoringCoaching, especially in the 'higher order thinking' areas of breadth and depth, inquiry, reflection, collaboration and community. The difficulty for District A posed by the constant influx of new principals into the groups meant that the design of the experience had to change to accommodate this challenging reality. One way would have been to provide a tiered group approach based on the experience level of the Mentees (first year versus second year principal groupings), or to formalize the one-on-one relationships which could focus on the immediate and evolving needs of the Mentees, including context-specific questions of implementation and, like District B, keep the groups more focused on topics related to research knowledge. OPC's coaching training would also be maximized to a greater extent with more formalized individual MentoringCoaching experiences for Mentees.
To create more one-on-one pairings, District A, like District B, would need to train additional MentorCoaches to provide more support to the large number of Mentees. After two years of individual pairings, participants could, as in District B, continue to receive support through the learning teams, acknowledging that even in their third year, some principals would still appreciate some level of assistance. District structures can therefore enable or inhibit MentoringCoaching relationships and enable or inhibit the dissemination and use of research knowledge as part of this powerful learning process. Districts need to become more familiar with the design potential of MentoringCoaching when setting up their models in order to maximize the learning potential for all participants.

5. District Supports are Needed to Further Incorporate Research Knowledge Into MentoringCoaching Relationships

Professional readings, professional development opportunities, case studies, school visits and critical dialogue represent learning strategies identified by participants that allow for deeper conversations related to research knowledge, supporting recent studies which confirm that most school administrators get their research knowledge not from reading original studies, but from these other 'second-hand,' but nevertheless important sources of information (Biddle and Saha, 2006; Cooper et al., 2009). Participants appreciated these opportunities and the time to meet during the work day. Coverage for administrators, especially in single-administrator settings, was seen as an important support provided by the district through the MentoringCoaching initiative. This study confirms that most principals are, indeed, familiar with a wide range of research topics and believe that research plays an important role in their work in schools, improving instructional practice and, in general, making their schools better places of learning for students (Biddle and Saha, 2006, p. 73-75; Biddle and Saha, 2002, p. 223-229; Fullan, 1981). Questions of

25 One of the recommendations of the Wallace Foundation's (2007) study on principal mentoring was that "mentoring should be provided for at least a year, and ideally for two or more years" (p. 4). In Ontario, funding currently supports new principals in their first two years only (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). Therefore, districts interested in planning for supports for new principals beyond their first two years on the job, will need to allocate funds for such supports from existing funds used for professional development. District B, involved in the Ministry's Leading Student Achievement Project, would have had access to additional Ministry resources provided through this project.
context and implementation move research-based conversations to realistic settings based on the school realities of participants. Some individuals and groups made excellent use of the province's Leadership Framework as a guide that enabled their conversations to progress to deeper questions of school leadership aligned with district and system priorities.

Interestingly, this study also points out the problematic nature of what counts as research knowledge from the perspective of school administrators. Ultimately, the roots of most topics raised by participants can be traced to some form of empirical research. As a result, some participants had difficulty articulating the difference between craft and research knowledge. It was also difficult to determine the extent to which research penetrated discussions in any critical way. As Levin (2008) points out, "It is often very hard to know what role a body of research or evidence has had on practice, since the sources of practices and decisions are usually multiple and hard to define with precision" (p. 5; See also Nutley et al., 2007, p. 24). As a principal myself, and knowing my own principal colleagues, many school leaders really do not define the work of principaling in terms of craft versus research knowledge. The lines between these two sources of knowledge are blurred in the principal's daily work in schools. Knowledge for administrators can therefore be seen as a hybrid that combines research and practical on-the-job experience. In this study, however, many principals did clearly articulate examples of research knowledge congruent with the definition by Levin et al. (2010) referred to earlier in this study. Principals, in fact, do recognize and appreciate their immediate 'managerial' needs as being different from the bigger issues of school improvement and they do appreciate the contribution of research knowledge to their field of work and these larger questions of improving student outcomes which become the important focus of principals who have gotten their 'sea legs' in school administration.

This study also points out that improving the knowledge and skills of school leaders is not merely a question of providing more research knowledge, but rather a question of usage, an area that this study did not touch on in any depth. As Levin (2008) reminds us, most districts have weak mechanisms for sharing research and "KM is not only a matter
of producing more knowledge, but also of improving both the desire and capacity for its use as well as the mediating processes" (p. 5; See also Graham et al., 2006, p. 21).

Principals influence research usage in their schools, both directly and indirectly (Biddle and Saha, 2006, p. 76). However, MentoringCoach processes, as discussed, represent a powerful point of leverage for districts and systems intending to deepen not only the dissemination of research knowledge related to school improvement, but also its usage which requires precisely the design elements that MentoringCoach encompasses, including inquiry, reflection, dialogue and collaboration. Usage is a social process and yet, as demonstrated by District B, effort and direction is possible, supporting the concept of knowledge mobilization (Levin, 2008; Cooper et al., 2009) and Stoll's (2009) notion of knowledge animation discussed at the beginning of this study. Bennet and Bennet (2007) point out the significance of knowledge mobilization: "[Knowledge] mobilization is on the cutting edge of knowledge management, moving new ideas and shared understanding into the hands of the people at the point of action. This is where the day-to-day decisions are made that will improve our communities, our businesses, and our nations" (p. xiii). And I would add, our schools. Joyce and Showers (2002) point out that implementation requires a coaching level of support in classrooms; the MentoringCoach literature, and this study, suggest that the implementation of school improvement practices requires that same level of support. Our school leaders and our schools deserve nothing less.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited in terms of its scope, relying on a relatively small number of interviews in two Ontario school districts. Future analysis could include a wider range of districts both in terms of size and geographic location. Future research could compare MentoringCoach conversations in larger versus smaller districts to see how the various infrastructures impact on these processes and relationships. Interviews could include not only MentorCoaches and Mentees, but also senior district leadership involved with implementing such initiatives. Greater attention could be paid to other variables such as gender and culture and their impact on the MentoringCoach relationship. Future research could include not only interview data, but also focus group and survey information as well, along with participant observations. As Cooper et al. (2009) remind
us, "so little is known about what happens when research is...discussed by learning
groups. All of these areas need more research, using more sophisticated methods than
simply asking people" (p. 168). For example, audio or video taping MentoringCoaching
sessions could be one way to determine the depth of discussion on research topics. As
Graham et al. (2006) point out, more needs to be known about how individuals and
groups adapt research knowledge to their local contexts and what impact research
knowledge has had in a given situation (p. 20-26). While new administrators
participating as Mentees in MentoringCoaching are not expected to produce significant
gains in student outcomes during their first few years in the principalship, it is still
important to link these two areas and, in fact, recent researchers articulate that leaders
benefiting from MentoringCoaching experiences are much more likely to have a positive
impact on student achievement (Bloom et al., 2005, p. 117; Zachary, 2000). However,
can we link MentoringCoaching more directly to improved outcomes for students? If so,
how can we measure such results? The Wallace Foundation's (2007) study notes that
"despite the critical need for more and better data, it will likely be difficult to isolate the
impact of mentoring, in and of itself, on the eventual ability of principals to contribute
successfully to the ultimate objectives of improving instruction and student performance
in a given school" (p. 20).

Implications for Theory
This study began by discussing the challenges faced by school districts in attracting
leaders into school administration. The promise of MentoringCoaching as a vehicle for
providing new and experienced administrators a culture of support for novices and
appreciation for the experience of other administrators needs to be measured. The
Wallace Foundation (2007) study comments on the scarcity of data on the impact of
mentoring on new principal retention and student learning: "Much of the existing
information gathered by states or districts has tended to be subjective and anecdotal,
aimed primarily at gauging satisfaction levels of mentors and mentees and whether or not
they felt particular development goals were met. Such information is not without value.
But for the most part, it doesn't specifically address whether mentoring is promoting the
retention of promising new leaders or the specific behaviours that signal a willingness
and ability to lead instructional improvement" (p. 5). To what extent does a MentoringCoaching program attract leaders into administration and improve the retention rate of those in these positions? Are districts with certain MentoringCoaching processes and structures in place experiencing greater success in attracting leaders into school administration? To what extent has the research knowledge created through MentoringCoaching relationships penetrated the thinking and practices of Mentees and MentorCoaches? What does this look like in a school? How do we measure that research-practice connection? These are only some of the questions that further research in this area could pursue. This study has also shown that MentoringCoaching is a dynamic process that evolves over time, reflecting the changing needs of Mentees. This represents another promising area for further research.

**Implications for Policy**

*Reach Every Student: Energizing Ontario Education* (2008) identifies school leadership as key to meeting the Ontario government's three core priorities: high levels of student achievement; reduced gaps in student achievement; and increased public confidence in publicly funded education (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 4). Since the pilot year (2007) of MentoringCoaching across the province, the Ontario Ministry has provided funding to all districts, enabling them to implement some sort of MentoringCoaching process beginning in the Fall of 2008. MentoringCoaching is part of the Ontario government's overall leadership development strategy launched in 2008-09.

Mentoring for new school leaders supports the following two goals of Ontario's leadership strategy: "to attract the right people to the principalship" and "to help principals and vice-principals develop into the best possible instructional leaders" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 5).26 Three years later, we have an opportunity to 'take stock' and review the effectiveness of this work across the province. We have an opportunity to make recommendations regarding structures and processes that are known to be more effective and to align this work more explicitly to the province's Leadership Framework, thereby reinforcing the expectation that MentoringCoaching relationships

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26 A recent study by the Wallace Foundation (2007) noted that in the United States, approximately "half of the nation's states have now adopted mentoring requirements for new principals – a striking turnabout considering how rare acceptance of or funding for such mentoring was prior to 2000" (p. 3).
need to not only support the craft knowledge needs of new administrators, but ultimately support the principal's focus on topics related to research knowledge. Continued funding of MentoringCoaching is a key component commented on by participants who appreciated the resources, coverage, training and time to meet during the work day.

Levin (2008b) reminds us: "Improving capacity requires sustained effort – not just professional development days but various forms of coaching and mentoring, effective use of staff meetings and other in-school time, and support through related practices such as supervision and evaluation. This means that there are policy, leadership, and system-procedure implications to capacity-building" (p. 235). At the system level, we have an opportunity to create a framework for MentoringCoaching that includes the important place of research knowledge in professional learning. In examining the Ontario Ministry's *Mentoring for Newly Appointed School Leaders: Requirements Manual (2010)*, for example, there is no mention of facilitating research use in the requirements for mentors or in the section on mentor training. In examining Ontario's Leadership Framework, there is mention of data use, but no mention of a leader's response to research in general. England, however, has moved forward in this area. Cordingley (2009) highlights England's National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching, developed in 2003, as an excellent example of knowledge transformation. This framework includes a set of core principles of effective mentoring and coaching, a summary of the key skills of coaches, mentors, co-coaches and professional learners and a summary of the core concepts that shape effective mentoring, specialist coaching and collaborative co-coaching – all in four pages. Cordingley (2009) notes that "the framework places considerable emphasis on the skills of coaches in brokering access to the specialist and public knowledge base and in supporting teachers beginning coaching in and using evidence about the impact of their learning on their pupils. Similarly it emphasizes the skills of professional learners being coached in drawing on, collecting and interpreting such evidence" (p. 12). Cordingley (2009) points out that the framework is actively used across England and has extended to the National College for School Leadership (p. 13). The framework makes explicit what we know about the design of professional learning.

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27 The framework is available at: [http://www.teacherlearningacademy.org.uk](http://www.teacherlearningacademy.org.uk)
and the connection to research as, for example, mentors "relate guidance to evidence from practice and research" and specialist coaches "facilitate access to research and evidence to support the development of pedagogic practice" and co-coaches "draw on evidence from research and practice to shape development." Professional learners "respond proactively to modelled expertise to acquire and adapt new knowledge" from their mentors and "respond proactively to specialist expertise to acquire and adapt new knowledge." The framework is supported by extensive resources available to teachers and leaders, demonstrating that there is "a substantial, specialist, multi level approach to transforming knowledge and well-informed strategies for supporting the professional learning that is required when practitioners interpret and use evidence from research" (Cordingley, 2009, p. 13).

Ontario would benefit from such a framework that defines MentoringCoaching, makes explicit our understanding of quality professional learning and the important role of research in this process. Cordingley (2009) concludes that "change strategies are more likely to be lasting and effective if they take account of research evidence….But using research evidence about effective professional development does bring discipline. It puts professional learning at the heart of educational improvement strategies as, increasingly, we recognize that better outcomes for students are synonymous with paying careful attention to the evidence both about changing teachers' practice and about the specific aspects of the teaching and learning practice being explored" (p. 14). If we are to support the development of a new breed of school leaders, what Fullan (2005) refers to as "system thinkers in action" (p. x), we need to ensure the place of research in this process. Fullan (2005) describes, "They are theoreticians, but they are practitioners whose theories are lived in action every day. In fact, that is what makes their impact so powerful. Their ideas are woven into daily interactions that make a difference" (p. x).

MentoringCoaching represents an opportunity to support and direct these types of leaders needed to address the complexity of Ontario's 21st century schools.
Implications for Practice

The experience and skill of the MentorCoach seemed to impact on the progression of the MentoringCoaching dialogue onto more research related topics, as did the organization of the group situations when comparing District A to District B. The training of future MentorCoaches needs to include not only mentorship and coaching, but also training related to research dissemination and implementation. There needs to be a clear expectation that MentorCoaches move conversations to areas such as instructional leadership and others reflected in the Leadership Framework. MentorCoaches need the skills to be able to move MentoringCoaching conversations on to topics related to such areas as leadership and school improvement in both one-on-one relationships and group settings. MentorCoaches need to be able to align research foci to Ministry, district and school goals.

In every district, MentoringCoaching needs to be part of a comprehensive support system for school leaders. The Wallace Foundation's (2007) study recommends that mentoring not be "a brief or isolated 'add-on'" (p. 20), but rather "an integral part of a continuum of professional development" (p. 20) for new principals. The Ontario government also notes that "[mentoring] is enhanced by a menu of other professional learning opportunities on topics of need and interest that can be experienced by mentees either on their own or with their mentors. Mutual learning opportunities for mentors and mentees help to provide focus for the mentoring process" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010).

Final Comments

A tension throughout the study was the notion of principal working conditions. Being overwhelmed as new administrators, being supported with the time to meet with one's MentorCoach, both individually and in group settings, but often fighting to find the time to follow through on such opportunities, revealed the harsh realities of school administration. Biddle and Saha (2006) also point out in their own study when comparing principals in the U.S. with those in Australia, that the latter "were more thoughtful about applying that [research] knowledge in their schools (perhaps because
their average work week was 10 hours shorter than that of U.S. principals, giving them more time for such reflection)" (p. 77). These researchers argue in favour of "simplifying and reducing the professional demands that U.S. school principals typically face" (p. 77) and thereby "strengthening the research literacy" (p. 77) of principals and teachers.

While MentoringCoaching in Ontario represents a promising vehicle of support for new administrators, it cannot replace the need for effective working conditions for school leadership, especially if we are to attract and retain good people into these important positions. A solid body of research demonstrates that principals are key to school improvement (Biddle and Saha, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2008; Wahlstrom et al., 2010). As Margaret Wheatley (1999) recognizes, new ways of relating and working together are needed to support 21st century school leaders. MentoringCoaching holds tremendous promise as a high quality professional learning experience that develops the knowledge and skills of beginning principals charged with the important task of improving the learning outcomes for all students in Ontario's schools.
Appendix A – Letter to District Authorities (to be placed on OISE/UT letterhead)

March 1, 2010

______District School Board

______Ontario

Attention: ______________

Dear ___________

I am a graduate student in the Theory and Policy Studies Education Department at OISE/UT working under the supervision of Dr. Stephen Anderson and am currently planning a research project that will involve the principals of your school district and one other district in Ontario. In order to begin the project, I require your written consent.

The research study is to support a Master's thesis: *Knowledge and Learning Strategies in Principal Mentoring/Coaching Relationships*. The main purpose of this paper is to gather participant perceptions of the kinds of knowledge (research or practitioner) and learning strategies that are being incorporated in the Mentoring/Coaching relationship. It is hoped that the results of this research will deepen our understanding of the MentorCoach-Mentee relationship and better inform districts planning to implement such programs to support new principals.

This paper will be based on qualitative data gathered from interviews of 4-5 MentorCoaches and 4-5 Mentees from each of two districts. Each interview will last 30-40 minutes and participation is voluntary. Subjects will be well informed about the nature of the study and their participation, including the assurance that they may withdraw at any time. In addition, they may request that any information be eliminated from the project. Participants will at no time be judged or evaluated, and will at no time be at risk of harm. Your school district will not be identified; schools or individual people will also not be identified specifically. There will be no disclosure of participants in the study to peers or supervisors. Individual comments may be anonymously quoted in a Master’s thesis for OISE/UT or in a follow-up article(s) for publication or presentation(s) based on the research findings. This research has been approved by Dr. Stephen Anderson and Dr. Ben Levin, thesis advisors. Interested participants will be able to read the final thesis which will be available in the library at OISE/UT and I will email all interested participants a copy of any article(s) that may result from this research at their request. Participating districts will also be able to access a presentation by the researcher about the overall findings.
The information gathered from the interviews will be kept in strict confidence and stored at a secure location, on my own home computer to which I only have access. I will be the only person who will have access to the interview data from this study. All information will be reported in such a way that individual persons, schools, school districts, and communities cannot be identified. All data will be used for the purposes of a Master's thesis and for subsequent research articles and presentations. All raw data will be destroyed within three years of the completion of the study.

As well as permission to proceed with this study, I will need a contact person in the district to direct any questions and to liaise with in regard to this project. Please indicate the name of this contact, along with his/her telephone number and email address at the bottom of this letter. Attached you will find a recruitment letter and an informed consent letter which will be used with potential participants. If permission is granted to proceed with this study, I will be asking the district representative working with me to generate a list of possible participants, those who have been MenterCoaches and Mentees during the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years. I will also be asking the district representative working with me to email a recruitment letter to all possible participants and then, one week later, to mail, through board courier, this same recruitment letter to all possible participants "(if you have not already responded)". I will provide the district contact with the recruitment letter electronically and also with hard copies in envelopes. I will also ask the district contact for permission to use a room at the district office to conduct any interviews after work hours in cases in which the participants prefer to do the interview face-to-face as opposed to by telephone.

If you agree, please sign the letter below and return it to me in the envelope provided or fax it back to me. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (905) 495-2675 ext. 406 or at my email address: mary.nanavati@peelsb.com. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Stephen Anderson, at 416-978-1156 or at his email address: sanderson@oise.utoronto.ca. Finally, you may also contact the U of T Office of Research Ethics for questions about your rights as a research participant at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273.

Thank you for your assistance and support.

Sincerely

Mary Nanavati
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March 2010

To the potential participants in this study

I am a graduate student in the Theory and Policy Studies in Education Department at OISE/UT working under the supervision of Dr. Stephen Anderson and am currently planning a research project that will involve principals from your school district and one other district in Ontario. I have been given permission by your district to conduct this study.

This letter serves as a formal invitation to you to participate voluntarily in an interview to support an OISE/UT Master’s thesis: *Knowledge and Learning Strategies in Principal Mentoring/Coaching Relationships*. The main purpose of this paper is to gather participant perceptions of the kinds of knowledge (research or practitioner) and learning strategies that are being incorporated in the principal Mentoring/Coaching relationship. It is hoped that the results of this research will deepen our understanding of the principal MentorCoach-Mentee relationship and better inform districts planning to implement such programs to support new principals. The 4-5 principal MentorCoaches and 4-5 Mentees participating in this study will be randomly selected from a list of potential participants in Mentoring/Coaching in your district in last two school years, 2008-09 and 2009-10. MentorCoaches and Mentees will not be recruited as partners. There is no intention to
match MentorCoaches and Mentees and the researcher will not disclose to anyone who else is participating in the district.

You have been approached as you have been identified by your district as participating in the MentoringCoaching program as either a new principal (Mentee) or an experienced principal (MentorCoach) during the last two school years. The interview is entirely voluntary. The interview will last from 30-40 minutes and you will have the choice of being interviewed by telephone or in person at a convenient location in the district after work hours and at a time that is convenient to you. The interview will be recorded using a digital recording device. A detailed summary of your interview will be sent to you and you will have full discretion to make any changes to the record. Any changes you do make will become the official version of the interview for research purposes and all other versions, including the original interview, will be destroyed immediately. This is to ensure that the record of the interview is one that you believe accurately reflects your views and ideas. All interview material will be kept secure by me as the researcher on my home computer. When emailed a copy of the transcript of their interview, participants can indicate that they withdraw their data in full or in part by contacting the researcher. Access to the revised interview records will be limited to me as the researcher. Three years after the project is completed, all interview data will be deleted.

Your school district will not be identified; schools or individual people will also not be identified specifically. There will be no disclosure of participants in the study to peers or supervisors. Individual comments may be anonymously quoted in a Master’s thesis for OISE/UT or in a follow-up article(s) for publication or presentation(s) based on the research findings.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please contact me at the phone number or email address below and I will arrange time for an interview at a location and time convenient to you. At the interview, you will be provided with an Informed Consent letter that again describes the project and asks for your permission to be interviewed and for the interview to be recorded using a digital recording device. If the interview is in person, I will bring copies of the Informed Consent. If you prefer the interview to be by telephone, I will email you the letter and ask that you fax it back to me with your signature indicating consent prior to the start of our recorded conversation.

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. At no time be judged or evaluated and at no time will be at risk of harm. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. This research has been approved by Dr. Stephen Anderson and Dr. Ben Levin, thesis advisors. Those interested will be able to read a copy of the thesis which will be kept in the library at OISE/UT and I will email all interested participants a copy of any article(s) that may result from this research. Please contact me by phone or by email if you have any questions. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Stephen Anderson at 416-978-1156 or at his email address: sanderson@oise.utoronto.ca. Finally, you may also contact the U of T Office of
Research Ethics for questions about your rights as a research participant at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273.

Thank you for considering your participation in this project.

Sincerely

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Recruitment Letter (to be placed on OISE/UT letterhead and mailed to all possible participants one week after the letter has been emailed to all possible participants)

March 2010

To the potential participants in this study (if you have not already responded)

I am a graduate student in the Theory and Policy Studies in Education Department at OISE/UT working under the supervision of Dr. Stephen Anderson and am currently planning a research project that will involve principals from your school district and one other district in Ontario. I have been given permission by your district to conduct this study.

This letter serves as a formal invitation to you to participate voluntarily in an interview to support an OISE/UT Master’s thesis: Knowledge and Learning Strategies in Principal Mentoring Coaching Relationships. The main purpose of this paper is to gather participant perceptions of the kinds of knowledge (research or practitioner) and learning strategies that are being incorporated in the principal Mentoring Coaching relationship. It is hoped that the results of this research will deepen our understanding of the principal
MentorCoach-Mentee relationship and better inform districts planning to implement such programs to support new principals. The 4-5 principal MentorCoaches and 4-5 Mentees participating in this study will be randomly selected from a list of potential participants in MentoringCoaching in your district in last two school years, 2008-09 and 2009-10. MentorCoaches and Mentees will not be recruited as partners. There is no intention to match MentorCoaches and Mentees and the researcher will not disclose to anyone who else is participating in the district.

You have been approached as you have been identified by your district as participating in the MentoringCoaching program as either a new principal (Mentee) or an experienced principal (MentorCoach) during the last two school years. The interview is entirely voluntary. The interview will last from 30-40 minutes and you will have the choice of being interviewed by telephone or in person at a convenient location in the district after work hours and at a time that is convenient to you. The interview will be recorded using a digital recording device. A detailed summary of your interview will be sent to you and you will have full discretion to make any changes to the record. Any changes you do make will become the official version of the interview for research purposes and all other versions, including the original interview, will be destroyed immediately. This is to ensure that the record of the interview is one that you believe accurately reflects your views and ideas. All interview material will be kept secure by me as the researcher on my home computer. When emailed a copy of the transcript of their interview, participants can indicate that they withdraw their data in full or in part by contacting the researcher. Access to the revised interview records will be limited to me as the researcher. Three years after the project is completed, all interview data will be deleted.

Your school district will not be identified; schools or individual people will also not be identified specifically. There will be no disclosure of participants in the study to peers or supervisors. Individual comments may be anonymously quoted in a Master’s thesis for OISE/UT or in a follow-up article(s) for publication or presentation(s) based on the research findings.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please contact me at the phone number or email address below and I will arrange time for an interview at a location and time convenient to you. At the interview, you will be provided with an Informed Consent letter that again describes the project and asks for your permission to be interviewed and for the interview to be recorded using a digital recording device. If the interview is in person, I will bring copies of the Informed Consent. If you prefer the interview to be by telephone, I will email you the letter and ask that you fax it back to me with your signature indicating consent prior to the start of our recorded conversation.

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. At no time be judged or evaluated and at no time will be at risk of harm. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. This research has been approved by Dr. Stephen Anderson and Dr. Ben Levin, thesis advisors. Those interested will be able to
read a copy of the thesis which will be kept in the library at OISE/UT and I will email all interested participants a copy of any article(s) that may result from this research. Please contact me by phone or by email if you have any questions. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Stephen Anderson at 416-978-1156 or at his email address: sanderson@oise.utoronto.ca. Finally, you may also contact the U of T Office of Research Ethics for questions about your rights as a research participant at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273.

Thank you for considering your participation in this project.

Sincerely

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Appendix C – Informed Consent (to be placed on OISE/UT letterhead)

March 2010

To the participants in this study

This letter serves as a formal invitation to you to participate voluntarily in an interview to support an OISE/UT Master’s thesis: *Knowledge and Learning Strategies in Principal MentoringCoaching Relationships* under the supervision of Dr. Stephen Anderson, Professor, Theory and Policy Studies in Education, OISE/UT. The main purpose of this paper is to gather participant perceptions of the kinds of knowledge (research or practitioner) and learning strategies that are being incorporated in the principal MentoringCoaching relationship. It is hoped that the results of this research will deepen our understanding of the principal MentorCoach-Mentee relationship and better inform districts planning to implement such programs to support new principals.

I have been given permission by your district to conduct this study. The district has assigned a contact person to assist me with this project. This individual identified a list of potential participants, principals involved in MentoringCoaching as MentorCoaches and as Mentees during the last two school years, 2008-09 and 2009-10. All potential participants were sent a recruitment letter, inviting them to voluntarily indicate their willingness to participate in this study. The 4-5 principal MentorCoaches and 4-5 Mentees participating in this study have been randomly selected from those who responded positively to the recruitment letter. Your district and one other district that participated in the original OPC (Ontario Principals’ Council) pilot project on MentoringCoaching are involved in this study. The same recruitment process has been followed with the second district involved in the study. MentorCoaches and Mentees have not been recruited as partners. There has been no intention to match MentorCoaches and Mentees and as the researcher, I will not disclose to anyone who else is participating in the district.

You have been approached as you have been identified by your district as participating in the MentoringCoaching program as either a new principal (Mentee) or an experienced principal (MentorCoach) during the last two school years. You were randomly selected from among those who responded positively to the recruitment letter. The interview is entirely voluntary. The interview will last from 30-40 minutes and you have been given the choice of being interviewed by telephone or in person at a convenient location in the district after work hours and at a time convenient to you. During the interview you will be asked questions about your MentoringCoaching relationship, the topics addressed during meetings, the use of practitioner knowledge and research knowledge in your relationship, new understandings that are surfacing as a result of your relationship, learning strategies that are being incorporated, the benefits and challenges of your relationship. As the interview proceeds, I may ask questions for clarification or further understanding, but my part will be mainly to listen to you speak about your views and experiences in your MentoringCoaching relationship.
With your permission, the interview will be recorded using a digital recording device and later transcribed to paper. All participants need to consent to interviews being recorded and transcribed. The interview will only be audio recorded with your permission. You will be assigned a number that will correspond to your interview and transcription. Your transcript will be sent to you by me via email approximately one month from now and you will have full discretion to make any changes to the record. You will have one week to add any further information or correct any misinterpretations that could result. Any changes you do make will become the official version of the interview for research purposes and all other versions, including the original interview, will be destroyed immediately. This is to ensure that the record of the interview is one that you believe accurately reflects your views and ideas. All interview material will be kept in strict confidence and will be stored at a secure location, on my own home computer to which only I have access. Participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time and/or refrain from answering any questions they prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. When emailed a copy of the transcript of their interview, participants can indicate that they withdraw their data in full or in part by contacting me as the researcher. Access to the revised interview records will be limited to me as the researcher. Three years after the project is completed, all interview data will be deleted.

All information will be reported in such a way that individual persons, schools, school districts, and communities cannot be identified. There will be no disclosure of participants in the study to peers or supervisors. Your identity as a participant will remain confidential. Individual comments may be anonymously quoted in a Master’s thesis for OISE/UT or in a follow-up article(s) for publication or presentation(s) based on the findings from this research.

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. You may request that any information, whether in written form or digital audio tape, be eliminated from the project. At no time will value judgments be placed on your responses. Participants will at no time be judged or evaluated and at no time will they be at risk of harm. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. You are free to ask any questions about the research and your involvement in it. This research has been approved by Dr. Stephen Anderson and Dr. Ben Levin, thesis advisors. Those interested will be able to read a copy of the thesis upon completion of the study which will be kept in the library at OISE/UT and I will email all interested participants a copy of any article(s) that may result from this research. Please contact me by phone or by email if you have any questions. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Stephen Anderson at 416-978-1156 or at his email address: sanderson@oise.utoronto.ca. Finally, you may also contact the U of T Office of Research Ethics for questions about your rights as a research participant at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273. The study has been approved by the Research Ethics Boards of the University of Toronto. If you have any questions related to your rights as a participant in this study or if you have any complaints or concerns about how you have been treated as a research participant, please contact the Office of Research Ethics, ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273.
Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in this research interview and agree to participate as a subject. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

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Fax: (416) 926-4741  
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By signing below, you are indicating that you are willing to participate in the study, you have received a copy of this letter, and you are fully aware of the conditions above.

____________________________________  
Participant’s Name

____________________________________  __________________________  
Participant’s Signature  Date

Please initial if you would like a copy of any ensuing article based on the research emailed to you by the researcher. _____  
Please initial if you agree to have your interview audio taped using a digital recorder and transcribed. _____  
Please keep a copy of this letter for your records.
Appendix D – MentorCoach Interview Questions

1. How long have you been a principal? How long have you been involved with MentoringCoaching in your district?

2. With regard to the MentoringCoaching relationship, what topics do you address in your meetings? How have the topics addressed shifted over the course of the year (over the course of your relationship)?

3. Of these topics, which ones would you classify as being directly related to practitioner or ‘craft’ knowledge, that is, directly related to the daily performance of being a principal?

4. What research knowledge are you using in your discussions? How is this type of knowledge used in your MentoringCoaching relationship? Give specific examples.

5. What type of knowledge, practitioner or research knowledge, is most often addressed through the MentoringCoaching relationship? Why?

6. What are the circumstances under which practitioner or research knowledge come into play? Please provide an example.

7. What further supports need to be in place to assist with the further incorporation of research knowledge through the MentoringCoaching relationship?

8. What new understandings are surfacing as a result of this relationship? How?

9. What learning strategies do you incorporate in your relationship with your Mentee? Eg. Action research, dialogue, workshop, readings etc.

10. In your opinion, what are the benefits and challenges of this relationship to (a) the Mentee, (b) yourself as the MentorCoach and (c) the district?
Appendix E – Mentee Interview Questions

1. How long have you been a principal? How long have you been involved with MentoringCoaching in your district?

2. With regard to the MentoringCoaching relationship, what topics do you address in your meetings? How have the topics addressed shifted over the course of the year (over the course of your relationship)?

3. Of these topics, which ones would you classify as being directly related to practitioner or ‘craft’ knowledge, that is, directly related to the daily performance of being a principal?

4. What research knowledge are you using in your discussions? How is this type of knowledge used in your MentoringCoaching relationship? Give specific examples.

5. What type of knowledge, practitioner or research knowledge, is most often addressed through the MentoringCoaching relationship? Why?

6. What are the circumstances under which practitioner or research knowledge come into play? Please provide an example.

7. What further supports need to be in place to assist with the further incorporation of research knowledge through the MentoringCoaching relationship?

8. What new understandings are surfacing as a result of this relationship? How?

9. What learning strategies do you incorporate in your relationship with your Mentee? Eg. Action research, dialogue, workshop, readings etc.

10. In your opinion, what are the benefits of this relationship to (a) yourself as the Mentee, (b) the MentorCoach and (c) the district?
### Appendix F – Description of Key Mentoring and Coaching Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title and Publisher</th>
<th>Source of Evidence</th>
<th>General Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| G. Bloom et al. (2005) | *Blended Coaching: Skills and Strategies to Support Principal Development* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press | • Based on authors’ research and fieldwork over 15 years at the New Teacher Center, University of California, Santa Cruz, mentoring teachers and principals in many school districts across the U.S.  
• Authors build on work of Costa and Garmston (2002) (cognitive coaching)  
• Includes reflective prompts, tools and exercises | • Model for novice and experienced principals that relies on principles of adult learning  
• Blended coaching a framework that includes instructional coaching and facilitative coaching strategies and within these two broad categories, authors include consultative, collaborative and transformational approaches  
• Authors build on cognitive coaching model of Costa and Garmston (2002)  
• Includes discussion of emotional intelligence and cultural proficiency |
| J. Boreen et al. (2000) | *Mentoring Beginning Teachers: Guiding, Reflecting, Coaching* York, MA: Stenhouse Publishers | • Based on authors’ own mentoring experiences and teaching philosophy  
• Model includes references to coaching and authors provide strategies for working with new teachers  
• Includes teacher anecdotes, reflective writings and illustrations, questions to open conversations and prompts for teacher reflection | • Authors provide a view of mentoring that is based on reflective thinking practices; a mentor’s support is key to a beginning teacher’s professional development and commitment to ongoing improvement in curriculum and instruction |
• “[We] interviewed program faculty and administrators, participants and graduates, district personnel and other stakeholders; reviewed program documents; and observed meetings, courses, and workshops. | • In-service for principals offered a comprehensive approach that included a wide range of professional learning opportunities; exemplary programs were aligned with state and professional standards  
• In addition to offering extensive, high-quality learning opportunities focused on curriculum and instruction, the programs typically offered |
We surveyed program participants and graduates about their preparation, practices, and attitudes, comparing their responses to those of a national random sample of principals. In addition, for each program, we observed program graduates in their jobs as principals, interviewing and surveying the teachers with whom they work, and examining data on school practices and achievement trends to understand the strategies and outcomes of their work. We conducted policy case studies in the states represented by the program sample” (p. 3).

• Book discusses the need for mentoring programs and includes strategies for mentors in assisting beginning teachers  
• Includes practical templates for use by mentors/mentees and those implementing mentoring programs | • Cites qualitative research and survey data on benefits of mentoring for mentors  
• Includes references to coaching practices as part of mentoring  
• Discusses the benefits of reflection and the need to work on the skills of reflecting  
• Reviews several models of mentoring; as the relationship develops, it becomes more facilitative and collaborative  
• Describes the development of a culture in which teachers take responsibility for themselves and their colleagues |

| C. Gray, B. Fry, G. Bottoms, K. O’Neill (2007, June) | Good Principals Aren’t Born – They’re Mentored: Are We Investing Enough to Get the School Leaders We Need? Southern Regional | • Study “draws on survey data from a sample of seasoned principal mentors who have guided interns in university-based principal preparation programs in the SREB region” (p. 5)  
• “Mentoring is an integral component of principal preparation” (p. 5).  
• Describes the unsatisfactory condition of many mentoring programs and suggests a course of action for policy-makers, university and district |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Draws on existing research in education, including that of other researchers and their own approach to mentoring to an evolutionary model of teaching, what they refer to as “the four ages of professionalism” (p. 5) and extends this analysis to key areas of change that lead us to see mentoring differently in the new millennium.</th>
<th>Article links approaches to mentoring to an evolutionary model of teaching, what they refer to as “the four ages of professionalism” (p. 5) and extends this analysis to key areas of change that lead us to see mentoring differently in the new millennium.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Hargreaves and M. Fullan (2000)</td>
<td>“Mentoring in the New Millennium”</td>
<td><em>Theory into Practice</em>; Winter 2000, 39, (1), 50-56.</td>
<td>Article links approaches to mentoring to an evolutionary model of teaching, what they refer to as “the four ages of professionalism” (p. 5) and extends this analysis to key areas of change that lead us to see mentoring differently in the new millennium.</td>
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B. Joyce and B. Showers (2002) | *Student Achievement Through Staff Development* | Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 3rd Ed. | Based on case studies of successful programs and districts, evidence from formal research and concept illustrations |

A. Teachers in Findings from current professional development efforts |

B. Joyce and B. Showers (2002) | *Student Achievement Through Staff Development* | Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 3rd Ed. | Articles make the case that staff development and student achievement are causally linked, that staff development can be designed to affect student learning |

B. Joyce and B. Showers (2002) | *Student Achievement Through Staff Development* | Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 3rd Ed. | Such staff development is embedded within the development of learning communities |

B. Joyce and B. Showers (2002) | *Student Achievement Through Staff Development* | Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 3rd Ed. | Peer coaching key to transfer of knowledge and skills to the classroom |

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
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<th>Summary</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lieberman &amp; L. Miller (2008)</td>
<td>Professional Communities: Improving Teaching and Learning New York, NY: Teachers College Press</td>
<td>Research about professional learning communities; examines eight studies conducted between 1998 and 2007 • Includes recent case studies written by educators who lead in the creation of such communities • Communities as “ongoing groups of teachers who meet regularly for the purpose of increasing their own learning and that of their students” (p. 2) • Emphasizes the importance of context in influencing how communities emerge and develop, build capacity, and deal with content and process • Distinguishes between congeniality and collegiality, the latter characterized by a culture of collaboration and reflective practice • Describes professional learning communities and the conditions that allow them to develop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Lipton and B. Wellman with C. Humbard (2003)</td>
<td>Mentoring Matters: A Practical Guide to Learning-Focused Relationships Sherman, CT: Mira Via, 2nd Ed.</td>
<td>Draws on research on teacher induction and authors’ experiences • Book combines discussion with practical tips and strategies to develop mentoring skills • Mentoring as reciprocal learning relationship and support for novice teachers • Mentoring as supporting continual improvement in teaching practice • Mentor as someone who is consulting, collaborating and coaching; makes reference to a mentor/coach • Draws on cognitive coaching model of Costa and Garmston (2002); mentor as facilitator of critical thinking as foundational to expert teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. A. Mullen (2005)</td>
<td>Mentorschip Primer New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.</td>
<td>Review of education and business literature • Review included over 600 sources from the 1970s to 2004 • Themes emerging from the literature included foundations of mentoring (philosophical, historical and epistemological) and frameworks of mentoring (technical and alternative mentoring) • Explores the impact of accountability and reform contexts within schools and their impact on mentoring • Describes co-mentoring or collaborative mentoring and the movement of mentoring within learning communities</td>
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<td>M. Nanavati (2006)</td>
<td>“The Promise of Coaching: Professional Development for a New Age of Administrators” The Register, Ontario Principals’ Council, June 2006, 16-20, 40</td>
<td>• Analysis based on key existing research on coaching • Article includes an analysis of the characteristics of coaching, types of coaching, general differences between mentoring and coaching, the coaching cycle and ways in which coaching can benefit administrators • Coaching supports research on the design of quality staff development and the development of a collaborative school culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Odell and L. Huling (2000)</td>
<td>Quality Mentoring for Novice Teachers: Indianapolis, IN: Kappa Delta Pi</td>
<td>• Resource includes the Mentoring Framework created by the National Commission on Professional Support and Development for Novice Teachers (1996), a project of the Association of Teacher Educators in collaboration with Kappa Delta Pi, and helpful strategies for enhancing mentoring for new teachers; includes discussion questions and helpful vignettes to assist mentors in their work with novice teachers • Core values for mentoring have been derived from existing research on mentoring and the experience of the members of the Commission • Includes an annotated bibliography • The Commission’s Mentoring Framework is meant to influence the improvement of teacher-preparation programs by providing indicators of quality mentoring practice • Several dimensions of the framework support design elements mentioned in this paper including, for example, reflection, inquiry, collaboration and a supportive culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Pask and B. Joy (2007)</td>
<td>Mentoring-coaching: A Guide for Education Professionals Berkshire, England: Open University Press</td>
<td>• Draws on existing research in the field especially that of David Kolb, Chris Watkins, Michael Fullan, Carl Rogers and Gerard Egan, David McClelland and Daniel Goleman, Umberto Maturana, Francisco Varela and Antonio • Links mentoring and coaching into a single process • Learning is reciprocal for client and mentor-coach • Uses an appreciative inquiry model which draws on the client’s strengths and successes rather than their weaknesses in the mentor-coaching process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author</td>
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- Serves as a workbook for prospective mentors  
- Focuses on four mentoring functions (relating, assessing, coaching and guiding) and includes exercises to help the reader develop mentoring behaviours  
- Includes an annotated bibliography of selected books and articles on induction and mentoring written over the last 25 years  
- Effective mentoring includes preparing new teachers to take responsibility for their own career-long professional growth  
- Guiding behaviors stimulate the mentees’ creative and critical thinking while coaching skills include questions that encourage the mentee to reflect on his or her decisions  
- Sees mentoring as a serving relationship between equals and one which evolves with the experience of the mentee from mentor-mentee to peer-peer, a partnership in which each function as a mentor for the other |
| D. B. Reeves and E. Allison (2009) | *Renewal Coaching: Sustainable Change for Individuals and Organizations* | - Based on existing research and authors’ own experiences with individual and organizational improvement  
- Presents a framework with seven elements to guide individuals and teams to renewal  
- Each part of the framework includes a personalized assessment to elicit reflection and introspection  
- The Renewal Coaching framework, “a framework for helping people and organizations achieve sustainable change in pursuit of the greater good” (p. 7), has seven elements: recognition (finding patterns of toxicity and renewal); reality (confronting change killers in work and life); reciprocity (coaching in harmony); resilience (coaching through pain); resonance (coaching with emotional intelligence); relationship (nurturing the personal elements of coaching); renewal (creating energy, meaning and freedom to sustain the journey) (p. xi)  
- Ultimate goal of coaching is... |
| **J. Robertson (2005)** | Coaching Leadership: Building Educational Leadership Capacity Through Coaching Partnerships  
Wellington, NZ: NZCER Press | - Draws on findings from three research studies, the first being a qualitative study involving school leaders during the first year of the Tomorrow School’s reforms to education administration in New Zealand (p. 31); second involved 44 school leaders and used interviews, observations and surveys (p. 33); third study was qualitative and involved an action-researching community of 12 leaders over a three-year period (p. 34); also uses case studies; while the qualitative data is from New Zealand, the model draws on research with leaders in many educational contexts, cultures and sectors  
- Coaching as a reciprocal process conducted by partners from similar positions or roles committed to each other’s leadership learning development  
- Focus on helping leaders to inquire, reflect on and think critically about their leadership practice within their social and political contexts  
- Leadership as being about learning together and co-constructing knowledge collaboratively | renewal for the client, “the transformation of adversity into opportunity” (p. 196) |

- Also refers to feedback from a group of principals at a leadership academy in Providence, R.I. (personal communication to the author)  
- Several of the studies cited link peer coaching to gains in student achievement  
- Concludes that “[peer] coaching allows teachers to develop, refine, and share craft knowledge. The benefactors are staff members, students, and the school culture” (p. 174). |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
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<th>Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M. Strong (2009)</td>
<td><em>Effective Teacher Induction and Mentoring: Assessing the Evidence</em> New York, NY: Teachers College Press</td>
<td>- Examines existing research on mentoring and teacher induction conducted within the last ten years in his position as Director of Research at the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz - Discusses career-specific and psychosocial functions of mentoring - Lack of empirical evidence on impact of induction and mentoring programs on teaching practice of new teachers - Examines various studies of how mentors work with beginning teachers - Research indicates that induction support is positively correlated with teacher retention but little evidence to support a link between induction and student achievement, induction and teaching practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Turner (2003)</td>
<td><em>Executive Coaching as a Leadership Development Strategy</em> Doctoral Thesis, OISE/UT</td>
<td>- Study of executive coaching using grounded theory, a qualitative research methodology; study examines executive coaching from the perspective of coaches and clients using in-depth interviews of nine coaches and nine clients at different stages of the coaching process; captures the voices of the clients which are missing in books about executive coaching - Literature review examines books and articles published between 1987 and 2001 - Skilled coaches facilitate reflection and deep learning - Clients appreciate a coach’s skilled listening, challenging and breaking through traditional patterns of thinking - A trend toward using executive coaching as a leadership development strategy - The main objectives of clients include acquiring leadership skills, authenticity and self-awareness - Identifies coaching as a voluntary undertaking typically directed toward goals in the affective domain - Benefits of coaching include the client, the organization, its employees and the client’s personal life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Wallace and J. Gravells (2007)</td>
<td><em>Professional Development in the Lifelong Learning Sector: Mentoring</em> Exeter, UK: Learning Matters</td>
<td>- Draws on existing research on mentoring, case studies and fictional scenarios - Provides information on the skills needed for Mentoring as reciprocal learning which includes the use of coaching skills - Mentions mentoring as being effective in tapping into situated learning and drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author, April 2003</td>
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<td>who talked about the benefits of peer coaching</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wallace Foundation (2007)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Getting Principal Mentoring Right: Lessons From the Field.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Study reviews existing literature on mentoring both in education and in other professions; interviews with leading experts on mentoring and site visits in 2006 to New York City (focus on NYC Leadership Academy) and Jefferson County, KY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C. J. Weingartner (2009)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Principal Mentoring: A Safe, Simple, and Supportive Approach</strong></td>
<td><strong>Based on the author’s own experiences as a coordinator for a principal mentoring program in Albuquerque Public Schools, this resource shows school and district leaders how to design a principal mentoring program aimed at supporting new principals; topics including recruiting,</strong></td>
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successful mentoring and examines how a system of mentoring can be implemented in a college of Further Education

- Includes exercises and questions for discussion

out tacit knowledge

- Devotes a chapter to reflection which is key to self-awareness and an important aspect of professionalism

- Mentoring supports the development of a learning organization

-Ltd., 2nd Ed.

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-Wallace Foundation (2007)

- Study reviews existing literature on mentoring both in education and in other professions; interviews with leading experts on mentoring and site visits in 2006 to New York City (focus on NYC Leadership Academy) and Jefferson County, KY

- “Our research also led us to conclude, however, that many if not most existing mentoring programs are falling well short of their potential” (p. 3); as a result, study proposes a number of guidelines around the quality of mentoring programs

- “If anything stands out, however, it is that mentoring should be seen as only one stage—albeit an important one—in a continuum of professional development of principals that begins with pre-service training and, ideally, continues throughout leaders’ careers….And…despite the critical need for more and better data, it will likely be difficult to isolate the impact of mentoring, in and of itself, on the eventual ability of principals to contribute successfully to the ultimate objectives of improving instruction and student performance in a given school‖ (p. 20).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Supporting and retaining effective principals and methods for supporting new principals in such areas as curriculum and student achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass | • Author relies on her own experiences in a variety of situations and background as a consultant and adult learning specialist  
• Draws on Larry Daroz’s *Effective Teaching and Mentoring* (1986) recently in a second edition as *Mentor: Guiding the Journey of Adult Learners* (1999)  
• Book combines discussion with workbook-like resources and exercises  
• Describes learner-centered approach to mentoring and paradigm shifts with regard to the role of the mentor and the mentor-mentee relationship that are consistent with principles of adult learning  
• Briefly discusses topics related to the context of mentoring relationships including long distance, cross-cultural, cross-gender, and cross-generational mentoring  
• Mentor and mentee as co-learners who benefit equally from the mentoring relationship  
• Constant reflection key to learning for mentor and mentee |
| **L. J. Zachary** (2005) | *Creating a Mentoring Culture: The Organization’s Guide*  
San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass | • Author relies on her own experiences and background as a consultant and adult learning specialist  
• Applies adult learning theory to mentoring process  
• Book combines discussion with workbook-like resources and exercises  
• Explores building blocks (cultural congruence and learning, infrastructure) and hallmarks of a mentoring culture (practices that relate to alignment, accountability, communication, value and visibility, demand, multiple mentoring opportunities, education and training and safety nets) needed to sustain a mentoring program  
• Mentoring as a reciprocal learning process  
• Distinguishes between mentoring and coaching as distinct practices but which work together to support organizational learning |
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. | • Book is a practical guide to helping Mentees make the most of their mentoring relationship  
• Book based on  
• Book provides an overview of the mentoring process and includes a chapter on making the transition from Mentee to Mentor |
| | experiences of the authors in their work with “thousands of individuals engaged in mentoring” (p. xii) and on interviews with “over thirty people of different ages from an array of settings – corporate, educational, nonprofit, and small business” (p. xiii) | • Concludes that mentoring can benefit Mentees in various ways including helping them learn about the organizational culture, build their confidence and competence, expand networks of contacts and exposure to new ideas and increase comfort with risk taking (p. 4-6)  
• Includes a helpful annotated bibliography of resources organized by the chapter titles in the book  
• Goal of the book is “to help you make excellence in your mentoring relationship a personal priority and be more reflective about your own role in that relationship” (p. xiii) |
Bibliography


