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in New Teacher Induction

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Cynthia Louise Carver

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**PRINCIPALS' SUPPORTING ROLE
IN NEW TEACHER INDUCTION**

By

Cynthia Louise Carver

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

PRINCIPALS' SUPPORTING ROLE IN NEW TEACHER INDUCTION

By

Cynthia Louise Carver

Little attention has been paid to understanding the principal's role in new teacher induction. Recommendations are limited to the support of mentors and beginning of the year orientations (Brock & Grady, 2001). Existing studies are small in scope, limited to implementation, and there is little mention of principals' role (Brock & Grady, 1996; Caruso, 1990; Cole, 1993; Ganser, Feiberg & Zbikowski, 1993). Although the literature encourages principal support of new teachers, it similarly paints a portrait of induction as happening "around" the principal (Scott, 2001). This should not surprise us, given that principals have not traditionally been considered part of the induction process (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). Even if they were, few principals would have a clear image of how to promote novice development (Leithwood, 1992). This study asks: *In the presence of well-trained mentors, what role should principals play in new teacher induction?*

Using an instrumental case study design (Stake, 1995), this study examines the thinking of four elementary principals in one California district long associated with a well-regarded Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) project. Notably, this study explores what is possible once thoughtful and ambitious induction programs take hold in ordinary settings. Using intentional sampling, the four participants were selected to represent difference in gender, ethnicity and years of experience. Primary data collection comes from a series of interviews conducted over three years. Secondary data sources include interviews with mentor/novice pairs, including novice evaluation records.

Data was analyzed using techniques of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), drawing heavily on the theoretical frames of distributed leadership (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001) and professional theories of practice (Argyris & Schon, 1974).

Study findings suggest that principals' attentiveness to new teachers' learning is significantly shaped by their knowledge and skill. Principals who have a sustained experience with mentoring can draw on this knowledge-base to more effectively support novice teachers. Importantly, the presence of a well-defined instructional mission and stable school context makes it more likely that principals will be able to focus their fullest attention on issues of teacher development.

The study also found that principals and mentors are willing to break the "*rule of confidence*" (Shulman, 1987) to better support new teachers when three guiding principles are met: 1) a trustworthy and professional relationship between mentor and principal is established; 2) both share an understanding of good teaching; 3) both are committed to combining assistance with assessment. This suggests that principals and mentors, under the right set of circumstances, can complement and enhance one another's responsibility for new teacher support, development and assessment.

Ultimately, the presence of well-supported and trained mentors helps to focus principals' attention on new teachers and their learning needs in a meaningful way. However, if induction programs wish to actively engage principals in new teacher support and development, they will need to articulate clear understandings about principal and mentor roles and assist both as they learn new skills, adopt new perspectives, and negotiate new roles.

You climb a long ladder until you can see over the roof, or over the clouds. You are writing a book. You watch your shod feet step on each round rung, one at a time; you do not hurry and do not rest. Your feet feel the steep ladder's balance; the long muscles in your thighs check its sway. You climb steadily, doing your job in the dark. When you reach the end, there is nothing more to climb. The sun hits you. The bright wideness surprises you; you had forgotten there was an end. You look back at the ladder's two feet on the distant grass, astonished.

Annie Dillard
The Writing Life, 1989

For Keith.

You encouraged me to dream and
then stood by as the dream unfolded,
always supporting my best effort.

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Chapter 1: Introducing the Research Problem

If new teachers only knew how much hope and how much responsibility that administrators invest in them, they would be even more overwhelmed by their first year experiences.

~ Middle School Principal (*Donaldson & Poon, 1999 p. 68*)

Chapter Overview

In this chapter I introduce the question at the heart of this study: *What role should principals play in new teacher induction?* In addition to presenting my research questions and a rationale for this study, I outline the key argument with support from the literature, arguing that this study has both practical and theoretical implications. In closing, I explain my conception of a principal/novice/mentor “support triad” – the set of essential relationships around which this study is organized. But first, I begin with my own interest in the topic.

Why Principals? My Personal Journey

Like all qualitative researchers, my assumptions and beliefs are grounded in personal experience. Over the years my professional background has been marked by a series of boundary crossings: classroom teaching to program administration; full-time teacher to short-term substitute; paid employee to school volunteer; school to university; rural America to the developing world. How have these experiences shaped my understanding of principals’ role and work?

As a beginning teacher I looked to my principal as an ally and colleague. In three placements over seven years my principals provided support and reassurance, as well as tangible help. They oriented me to the position, directed me toward helpful resources,

explained things I didn't understand, defended my actions in front of parents, and answered endless questions. I needed all the advice, wisdom and guidance my principals could offer. As a new teacher with no formal mentor, I came to appreciate my principals' small, but genuine efforts.

Years later, in the roles of student teacher supervisor and new teacher mentor coordinator, I had the opportunity to see things from a different side of the desk. Not every novice I worked with had an easy time of it. Kyle was an elementary physical education candidate who failed to understand the developmental needs of his five-year olds and thought it acceptable to miss a day of school if his car needed the oil changed. Krista came to teaching with high academic honors and majors in history, economics and religion. Unfortunately, Krista lacked an understanding of adolescent needs and interests. It took only three weeks of student teaching for the phone calls to come rolling into the principal's office. Kevin graduated with a teaching credential, but weak recommendations. A middle school picked him up as having potential; plus, he could coach swimming. For an entire year Kevin had a well-trained and supported mentor working with him and still, he was never able to control the thirty sixth graders under his care. In each of these cases, as an off-site supervisor, I leaned heavily on principals' observation and insight for guidance. In the end, I learned from principals what it would mean to have student learning and teacher professionalism as the bottom line.

For the year I spent working toward an administrative credential, I studied the qualities and traits of effective school leaders. I debated the merits of various approaches to leadership: instructional, servant, transformational. In the end, I concluded that the

enormous task of school-site leadership was more than I was willing to assume. My admiration for effective leaders grew.

How do these disjointed experiences, accumulated over a career, add up? Why do I continue to be drawn to the principalship? In my mind, it is rather simple. When it comes to supporting teachers, the principal matters. Ineffective principals make the job of teaching harder than it needs to be. Effective principals remove what can otherwise be stumbling blocks: they reduce paperwork and increase the utility of meetings; they make decisions consistent with a shared vision; they facilitate a shared language that values teaching and learning; they turn routine processes, like teacher evaluation, into learning opportunities; and they facilitate the work of skillful mentors. I have been fortunate to work with a number of highly skilled school administrators. I know many of my peers have not. Through their action and inaction, many principals are guilty of not caring enough, knowing enough, influencing enough. While still acknowledging the problem that exists, this dissertation seeks to highlight the positive and effective actions exerted by principals on behalf of new teachers and their mentors. What is it that thoughtful principals do to support, develop and assess new teachers, and what can we learn from those who are trying?

The timing for this study is right. New teacher mentoring practices are growing in sophistication (Schwille & Wolf, 1995; Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2002; Yusko, 2001) and still, little is known about the principal's role in new teacher induction (Scott, Hendrick, Mitchell, & Mitchell, 1999; Scott, 2001). At the same time, today's induction programs, most of which rely on mentoring as a central strategy of support, are more formal and structured, and more likely to be integrated into the larger educational system

(Portner, 2001). Ganser (2001) speaks of this as the “second generation” of mentoring, characterized by required novice participation, often extending into the second or third year of teaching; the matching of novices with multiple mentors; and greater attention to the systemic issues that influence new teacher effectiveness, such as clearly written agreements. In this new era, I ask: *Given the presence of strong mentors, what role should principals play in beginning teacher induction?*

Matching Research Questions with a Setting

For two years I collected data in a large rural California district as part of a national study of new teacher induction policies, programs and practices¹. During this time I shadowed and interviewed mentor teachers, observed and interviewed new teachers, attended new teacher seminars and weekly mentor meetings, as well as interviewed principals about their work with new teachers and mentors. What did I learn from these various groups about principal support of beginning teachers in the presence of mentors?

New teachers spoke of their principal with a combination of fear and respect.

Because site administrators were responsible for evaluating their overall performance, meeting principal expectation was a legitimate concern. Mostly, though, new teachers were deeply appreciative of any support they received – even when it came from the principal.

Mentor teachers spoke of the principal as an important player in the induction process – someone who could make their job as a support provider a little bit easier or a lot more difficult. Mentors wanted principals who understood that their

work with beginning teachers was confidential. Principals who acknowledged and respected this unwritten rule were seen as trusted allies.

Principals spoke unanimously about the need to support new teachers. At the same time, they lamented not having enough time to do so adequately. Principals' own self-reported efforts to be supportive varied from one to another. All agreed that mentors provided an invaluable service and that information about mentors' work with novices was strictly off-limits. Most, but not all, reported being able to enact this belief in practice.

From these encounters, I surmised that all three players had a fairly clear sense of what they wanted from one another. Less certain was how they communicated their expectations to one another and the ways in which they did or did not work together. Over time I began to wonder: Were roles and responsibilities clearly articulated and understood among the three players? Was there guidance for how each was to work with the other? To what extent did they share a common purpose or vision for the work?

To investigate these broad questions I needed to make some critical early decisions. First, I decided to focus my fullest attention on principals, aware that principals are only one piece of a three-part equation. I based this decision on the fact that very little attention has been accorded to principals in the mentoring and induction literature (Scott, 2001). Early in this project it seemed to me that a better understanding of principals' role in new teacher support and development needed to precede any inquiry into how the triad of principal/mentor/novice works. Thus, the study I designed must address both facets of

¹ The study, *Beginning Teacher Induction: Promising Policies, Programs and Practices*, was funded by the National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching (NPEAT) and the Walter F. Johnson Foundation. Dr. Sharon Feiman-Nemser served as principal investigator.

the problem. How do principals support, develop and assess new teachers and what does that mean for their work with mentors? Moreover, what are the implications for principals' role in induction more broadly? Ideally, future research would amplify the voices of mentor and beginning teachers.

Second, the notion of a principal/mentor/novice triad is new. Previous research has tended to focus exclusively on principals and new teachers with little regard for their mentors. To investigate the nature of this set of relationships I would need to find sites where induction and mentoring were an accepted part of the educational landscape. Moreover, it would be preferable to find sites where induction was not only well-established, but equally well-regarded. If the practice of induction continues to grow in popularity and sophistication, careful descriptions of "cutting edge" practice are needed if we are to anticipate pitfalls, recognize tensions, and see possibilities inherent to this work.

Both considerations brought me back to California where the questions first presented themselves. Here was an opportunity to deepen tentative understandings that had emerged from the larger study I was involved in. At this point a third criteria emerged, that of sample size. I was most interested in knowing more about how the principals I had spoken with earlier understood these issues. Perhaps because the few studies available on this issue were conducted during the early years of program implementation, they tended to identify, rather than explore underlying problems and tensions (Brock & Grady, 1996; Brock & Grady, 1998; Caruso, 1990; Cole, 1993; Ganser, Feiberg, & Zbikowski, 1993; Scott, 2001). I wanted this study to make an important conceptual and empirical contribution to the field. My opinion was that a

smaller, fine-grained study would be of greater value than a global survey. Long missing in the literature are reports of *how* and *why* principals act as they do. The qualitative nature of the questions posed, coupled with the natural fit of case study methodology, guided the final design of this study.

In the end, I extended an invitation to four elementary principals in California to participate in the study. All four accepted and so the journey began. Over the next two school years I made three trips to California to interview these principals, as well as a select mentor/novice pair for each. In addition, phone calls and e-mails kept the lines of communication open as data collection ended and analysis began. What follows are their stories as told by me, an outsider looking in. Five research questions guided this work:

GUIDING RESEARCH QUESTIONS...

1. *How do principals understand and enact their roles and responsibilities with respect to new teacher support, development and assessment?*
2. *What underlying assumptions about beginning teaching guide and shape principals' work with new teachers and their mentors?*
3. *Where do the ideas and beliefs that underlie and shape principal thinking and reported practice vis a vis new teachers come from?*
4. *What contextual factors enable or constrain the work of new teacher support, development and assessment?*
5. *Does principals' work with new teachers and their mentors change or alter how they understand and enact their work with teachers more broadly?*

The premise of my argument is simple. While I support induction and mentoring as a critical intervention during the early years of teaching, I also believe that new teacher support, broadly construed to include new teacher development and assessment, deserves

attention by all school personnel in order to realize its fullest potential. I fear that in our haste to shift novice support from principals to mentors, and from the school site to formal induction programs, we fail to recognize the key role principals and schools will always play in new teacher support and development. By uniquely highlighting principals' role, this study aims to accomplish just that.

Grounding the Research Problem

Although well-meaning advice abounds in policy documents and practitioner-focused guidebooks, there is little evidence to guide beginning teacher induction and mentoring program design and implementation. The lack of empirical warrant has long been noted in the field (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999; Little, 1990; Zeichner, 1982). Researchers concerned about the current state of affairs direct their critique in multiple directions. Increasingly, concern is being voiced about the need to better understand the link between efforts to improve teacher quality and their resulting affect on student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Scholars also question the conceptual grounds on which many new teacher induction programs currently rest. Mentoring is often limited to emotional support as too few programs see induction as part of an ongoing teacher development continuum that supports a rigorous view of teacher learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2000). Finally, we are periodically reminded that no amount of good mentoring can counteract the influence of schools that are not organized in support of teacher learning and working conditions that challenge even the most expert teacher (Huling-Austin, 1990; Schlechy & Whitford, 1989; Zeichner, 1982; Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman & Liu, 2001).

Even less attention has been paid to understanding the principal's role in induction and mentoring. Although policy reports and advice columns have routinely encouraged principal support through the years, these same reports paint a portrait of induction as happening "around" the principal as opposed to having the principal as the focal point (Scott, 2001). Rather than active participants, principals are expected to act as advocates, facilitators, cheerleaders and the like. Durbin's (1991) review of induction programs acknowledges that the principal plays a small but important role in novice development. Still, the same review concludes that mentors are consistently viewed by new teachers as the most positive aspect of induction – while principals do not fare nearly as well. This should not surprise us, given that principals have not traditionally been considered part of the induction process (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). Even if they did, it is argued that few principals would have a clear image of how to encourage and promote new teacher development (Leithwood, 1992).

There are encouraging exceptions. Policy documents, like the California Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program standards, are becoming more explicit about the role they wish principals to play. One of thirteen BTSA program standards is devoted exclusively to the roles and responsibilities of site administrators. All principals are encouraged to attend the state-sponsored "BTSA Training for School Principals and Site Administrators". The program's philosophy toward principal involvement is clearly articulated:

The knowledge, attitudes and actions of site administrators are critical in setting the stage for beginning teacher success. Site administrators are instrumental in providing the structure for intensive support and assessment activities, and in creating a positive climate for these activities (CTC/CDE, 1997b, p. 11).

In addition, publishing houses are responding with an increasing number of titles devoted to new teacher induction and mentoring. Among these are publications specifically targeting an administrator audience. Brock and Grady's (2001) popular book, *From First-Year to First-Rate: Principals Guiding Beginning Teachers*, is now in second edition. Others, like Hal Portners's (2001) *Training Mentors is Not Enough: Everything Else Schools and Districts Need To Do*, reminds principals that exemplary mentoring programs are thoughtfully integrated into the school system. While these documents do not carve new roles for principals, they do illuminate the importance of site administrators to the success of new teacher induction and mentoring – a necessary first step.²

Still, too many of these publications are guided more by good ideas than empirical understanding. For example, a recent article in *Principal Magazine* states: “*Knowing the principal's expectations for instructional practices, grading, and student achievement seem to be more important to novice teachers than any advice given by a mentor teacher*” (Colley, 2002). While this article offers helpful tips for principals' role in stemming new teacher attrition (e.g. focus new teacher observations on a limited number of skills), this particular comment, favoring principal expectations over mentor advice, represents a dangerous overgeneralization based on nothing more than the author's own observation. Lack of understanding can mistakenly lead well-intended program developers down a path toward unanticipated results. Money, material resources and even more importantly, time may be lost in search of a better beginning for new teachers.

² I find it disheartening to note that the vast majority of induction and mentoring promotional literature fails to address the principal role. For example, Susan Villani's (2002) recent book, *Mentoring Programs for New Teachers: Models of Induction and Support*, devotes only 3 paragraphs to the role of administrators.

Weak conceptions of the work will never lead to a solid foundation from which a program might build.

This dissertation explores an increasingly talked about but largely unexamined issue: principals' role in formal induction and mentoring programming. The premise of this study is that principals' will create a role for themselves in the absence of a formally defined one (Carver, 2001). Therefore induction programs would be wise to define the territory, even boundaries, however permeable, of principal's work in new teacher support, development and evaluation. This issue is equally important at the program and individual levels.

Recent scholarship suggests that clearer role definition is good for programs, principals and the mentors they work with, as well as the new teachers they serve. For example, in her literature review of principal's role in new teacher induction, Scott (2001) notes that while recent reports suggest a more defined role for the principal, these references continue to be limited and scattered across the literature. When principals are mentioned, it is typically in reference to new teacher evaluation, mentor selection or program advocacy. She concludes that insulating principals from the induction process can only impair a program's success. Her recommendation is for greater – not less – principal cooperation and participation in induction programming.

A truly successful program requires close cooperation and mutual understanding of all those at the school site – the principal and other administrators, the mentors, the more experienced faculty members, the support staff and the new teachers (p. 25).

Scott goes on to assert that principals want to be involved as they have a stake in new teacher success. She encourages principals to use standards of professional practice to guide this increased involvement, arguing further that site administrators receive

training in order to a) uphold an expanded responsibility for program advocacy and b) facilitate the establishment of school sites that are nurturing and supportive of the new teacher.

Novices and their mentors also have a stake, albeit a different one, vis a vis principals' role. New teachers consistently report wanting to know how they are being perceived by the administrator in charge. Many novices feel a strong need for administrator acknowledgement and approval before year-end evaluations are completed (Peterson, 1990; Chester, 1992). Early in the year they want to know what the principal's vision is for the school, as well as standard operating policies and procedures, like grading (Brock & Grady, 1996). Analysis of data from the federal Schools and Staffing Survey suggests that among teachers who leave their jobs, one fifth do so because of "*lackluster administrative support*" (Ingersoll, 2001b). Given this need, it makes sense for principals to be connected to induction as both a sign of support and as a conduit of critical information about the school context. Similarly, mentors need administrator support in order to accomplish their work with and on behalf of new teachers. Principal leadership has been shown to be a factor in influencing mentor's work, along with other organizational conditions, such as the role of teacher unions (Youngs, 2001).

Theoretical Frame: New Paths to Intuition

The task of supporting, developing and assessing new teachers is too big to fall on the shoulders of a single mentor; yet, that is precisely what we do when we equate mentoring with induction. This research argues in favor of a broader, system-wide perspective on induction, one that includes the principal. But in doing so, we need an

answer to the question: *What role should the principal play in supporting, developing and assessing new teachers?*

The notion of distributing leadership for instruction across relevant stakeholders is gaining currency among researchers and practitioners (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001; Gronn, 2000; Neuman & Simmons, 2000; Elmore, 2000). Still, we know next to nothing about how distributed forms of instructional leadership play out in real settings. As Spillane and colleagues (2001) note,

*While there is an expansive literature about what school structures, programs, and processes are necessary for instructional change, we know less about how these changes are undertaken or enacted by school leaders in their daily work... An in-depth analysis of the practice of school leaders is necessary to render an account of **how** school leadership works (p 23).*

In response, this study – through the lens of new teacher support and development – looks intentionally at how building principals, as school leaders, foster improved instruction. Several assumptions guide this work. First, principals' understandings of new teacher support are likely to be intuitive or tacit (Polanyi, 1969). While a typical administrative credential program will cover many things, from budgets and policy to teacher supervision, few principals are ever asked to reflect on the special learning needs of new teachers. This was certainly true of the principals in this study. Moreover, the actions of competent professionals to everyday encounters with practice are often cumulative and unformulated rather than explicit and known (Argyris & Schon, 1974). That principals' need help thinking about *what* they do on behalf of new teachers and their mentors, and *why* they do it, is not surprising. Additionally, if our goal is to promote effective models of teacher support, then we must understand *how* it is that principals

come to do this important work. As much as we need to uncover reasons for action, we need to make known beliefs and values, motivations and commitments.

Drawing on the work of Argyris and Schon (Argyris & Schon, 1974) and Schon (Schon, 1983; Schon, 1987), I explore in this study four principals' espoused beliefs about new teacher support, development and assessment. In other words, I describe what these principals say they believe and do vis a vis new teachers and their mentors. In addition, I speculate on their theory in use by offering an explanation for why these four individuals believe and report acting as they do. In concluding, I look across the reported action of all four principals' for common themes in order to outline a tentative theory of action or professional practice for the support of new teachers and their mentors by all principals. Quoting Spillane, Halverson & Diamond (2001),

To gain insight on leadership practice, we need to understand a task as it unfolds from the perspective and through the 'theories in use' of the practitioner. And we need to understand the knowledge, expertise, and skills that the leaders bring to the execution of the task (p. 25).

Explicating principals' theory of action vis a vis new teachers and their mentors provides a lens for understanding and recording the values and commitments, strategies and insights of principals who take new teachers seriously as learners, a necessary first step toward enabling effective principal support more broadly. A theory of action can also help us to identify where principals may encounter difficulty. This is important if we want to predict where problems may arise and (un)learning may be needed.

This research has a secondary purpose: to inform the ongoing professional preparation of school leaders. As Argyris and Schon (1974) claim, a central task of professional education is *"to formulate what we already know, that is, to capture in explicit form the insights, values and strategies of action that competent practitioners*

bring to situations they encounter in practice (p. xix).” By making the work of principals engaged in new teacher support known and visible, we are adding to the cumulative knowledge base upon which sound instructional leadership ultimately rests. Professions without a dynamic theory of professional practice are more likely to stagnate as they become rule-bound, uniform and standardized, with sharp and inflexible role definitions (Argyris & Schon, 1974).

Ultimately, it is hoped that this exploratory work can stimulate more and better thinking about the inner work or “*sensemaking*” of school leaders as they strive to improve teaching and learning (Weick, 1995). By giving voice to tacit understandings, and meaning to routine leadership tasks, we are able to see the problem of beginning teacher support in new light. As Polanyi (1969) suggests, “*The formalization of tacit knowing immensely expands the powers of the mind, by creating a machinery of precise thought, but it also opens up new paths to intuition (p. 156).*”

Assumptions Underlying this Research

The premise of my overall argument – that principals’ can play a significant role in supporting new teachers and their mentors – rests on four propositions. New teachers need support, and induction that includes mentoring holds promise as a support strategy. However, new teacher support is not multi-dimensional. In other words, mentors are not the only means through which new teachers receive encouragement and guidance as they develop their practice. Lest we forget, principals also play a key support role.

Moreover, beginning teachers need focused and intensive support if they are to develop as thoughtful and effective educators. No matter how good one’s preservice training and experience is, there is no substitute for the kinds of professional learning that

will and need to occur on the spot, in the moment – only possible once a position has been secured and a classroom prepared (Bartell, 1995). Finally, repeated studies have shown that teaching is hard, complex work and that the process of learning to teach is ongoing (Feiman-Nemser, 1983; Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996). New teachers benefit from guidance and assistance that go beyond emotional support if they are to effectively teach diverse students according to established standards (AFT, 2001; Odell & Huling, 2000).

Faced with an impending teacher shortage, high rates of attrition, and demands for professional accountability, new teacher induction programs are viewed by educational policymakers and school leaders as a promising approach to beginning teacher support (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999; NCTAF, 1996; Villani, 2002). Increasingly delivered via a “program of support”, often featuring the one-to-one tutelage of a trained mentor, induction offers a set of specialized support practices that have previously been unavailable within the field. Over time, the age-old “sink or swim” approach to learning to teach is being replaced by a more gradual and guided entry to the profession. While evidence of impact is limited to anecdotal self-report and a growing body of retention studies (see CTC/CDE, 1992; Strong & St. John, 2001), policymakers operate today from an intuitive belief that induction and mentoring are worthwhile practices.

But while induction programming, typically demonstrated through a one-to-one mentoring relationship, is growing – there is reason to pause. *New teachers do not teach in controlled settings, but in real schools.* Common sense reminds us that support does not have to come in only one form. Over-reliance on mentored support is likely to leave unnecessary gaps in the beginning teachers’ experience. Other facets of the new teachers’

experience are also important, including the nature of their classroom and student placements, the availability of adequate instructional resources, and assistance from grade/department level colleagues in co-planning around a set of designated curricular standards (see Grossman, Thompson, & Valencia, 2001; Johnson & Kardos, 2002; Rosenholtz, 1989). These aspects of the new teachers' experience lay outside the realm of most mentoring relationships.

As the designated school head, principals are responsible for factors that directly and indirectly influence the new teachers' experience (Brock & Grady, 2001). Although not capable of the types of intensive support mentors offer due to limits in time and expertise, as well as role expectations, principals do play an important peripheral role in novice support, particularly when induction programming is external to the school site. In this case, principals play an especially pivotal role as they help to integrate the work of induction with the school site (Portner, 2001). Furthermore, principals are experiencing new working relationships with veteran teachers – now placed in the role of new teacher mentors – which in turn creates new opportunities for novice support.

Ultimately, the emergence of well-trained mentors prompts questions about the possibilities and limits of principal instructional leadership in new teacher support. When should principals lead, and when should they follow? And under what conditions, or by what principles, are such decisions made? By examining what they “*do*” we are better poised to normatively judge what they “*should do*.” By examining the practice of four elementary principals, in a site where new teachers are taken seriously and where mentors are well-trained and well-supported, this study contributes to a greater understanding of

principals' work in relationship to new teachers and their mentors. In addition, this study seeks to identify the various factors that support their learning to do such work.

Introducing the Support Triad

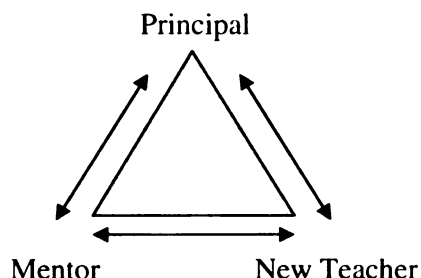
To quote the school administrator cited at the beginning of the chapter, "*If new teachers only knew....*" Beginning teachers are watched closely by principals, fellow teachers and staff, including mentors, parents and students, each with their own set of expectations, hopes and dreams for what the novice will know and be able to do. Within this larger framework, two individuals emerge as key figures in the new teacher's eventual success or failure: the principal and mentor. In a traditional system, the principal has control over classroom placements, access to needed resources, professional culture and the final decision as to whether or not the novice receives a continuing contract. The new teacher mentor – should they be lucky enough to have one – is there to encourage, guide, and teach the novice in the ways of the school, district and profession. In the midst of all this, new teachers are typically on their own to figure out what is expected of them and by whom.

Because of the centrality of both the principal and mentor to the new teacher's experience, I look to the *principal/mentor/novice* relationship as the unit of analysis in this study. I refer to this mini social system as the support triad.³ Whereas in the early stages of this work I tended to focus on the *principal/mentor* or *principal/novice* relationship as separate entities, it has become increasingly clear to me that the relationship among all three was the enduring element upon which all else hinged. I have

³ Throughout the text I will use the term "support" generically to encompass the work principals' do on behalf of new teachers, including efforts to assist, guide, teach, develop and evaluate novices. I do so for the sake of simplicity. It is not meant to detract from my belief that we must go "beyond support" to also develop and assess beginning teachers (Feiman-Nemser, Carver, Schwille, & Yusko, 1999).

since come to see the support triad as an essential piece of understanding in examining principals' supporting role in new teacher induction.

Figure 1:
THE SUPPORT TRIAD



This research is premised on the belief that there is potential within the support triad for coordinating, thereby enhancing the work of new teacher support, development and assessment. In the words of one of the principals in this study, *“What we’ve tried to do is set up sort of a triad between myself, the advisor and the new teacher, so that the work that I do with evaluation and the work they do with new teacher support are coordinated”* (James, 3/99). As we see in this statement, the term triad evokes a set of roles within a larger and encompassing system, where coordination is the key to linking various functions within the system.

Telling the Story, Question by Question

This dissertation tells the story of new teacher support in South Country School District as reported by four elementary principals: Maria, James, Karen and Ramon. Although the perspectives of new teachers and mentors were gathered to lend support to study findings, this is really an account of four individuals. Using the research questions listed above as my guide, I unfold their stories one chapter at a time, believing that each

step provides a foundational clue for sustaining aspects of this work across broader segments of the population.

Chapter 2: Research Design and Methodology elaborates on the research questions and subsequent design. In addition, the site and participants are introduced in this chapter.

Chapter 3: Principal Beliefs about New Teacher Support, Development and Evaluation uncovers the underlying assumptions that fuel principals' work in new teacher support, development and assessment.

Chapter 5: Principals Supporting New Teachers describes the big and small, visible and invisible things principals do to support their new teachers.

Chapter 6: Principals Working with Mentors describes the ways in which principals and mentors work cooperatively and collaboratively to meet the individual needs of new teachers.

Chapter 7: Bringing the Support Triad Together, reflects on the various legs of the triad in order to speculate on the meaning of effective professional practice by principals on behalf of new teachers and their mentors. The chapter concludes with summary findings and implications.

In addition, a select literature review, found in Appendix A, lays a conceptual foundation for this study by reviewing literature across three stands of thought: new teacher learning, mentoring/induction and principal leadership. Earlier studies of principals' role in induction are also reviewed.

Chapter 2: Research Design and Methodology

The worst thing that contemporary qualitative research can imply is that, in this post-modern age, anything goes. The trick is to produce intelligent, disciplined work on the very edge of the abyss (Silverman, 1993, p. 211).

Chapter Overview

In this chapter I highlight findings from an earlier pilot study that informed this work, elaborate on my research questions as they will be presented in later chapters and then outline the research design and methodology – including limitations – around which this study is based. In doing so, I argue for the significance of this work, as well as my choice of design and method. I conclude by introducing the site and participants.

Pilot Study Leads to New Questions, One Site

As part of the larger study from which this work is based, three years ago I had the opportunity to interview a cohort of K-12 principals affiliated with Cincinnati's Peer Assistance and Evaluation Program and the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project regarding their understandings of new teacher induction (Carver, 2001). Because these two sites represented well-regarded and long-established induction programs, I believed they would offer a glimpse at how principals' see their role with new teachers in the context of induction. In both cases, the sample of ten to twelve principals was equally divided between those nominated by program directors and those randomly selected. Using a semi-structured interview protocol, adjusted to fit the unique features of each site, I asked principals to describe their role vis a vis new teacher and their mentors. Analysis of these responses within and across sites led to two key findings: principals in both sites embrace their responsibility for new teacher support; however, while their reported practice is

quite similar, they differ by site in their stated preference regarding new teacher support and evaluation.

Importantly, Cincinnati and Santa Cruz area principals embrace their responsibility for new teacher support. They do so in absence of a formally defined role, knowing that qualified mentors are actively engaged with novice support in their building. This is significant, as the presence of mentors could easily legitimate principals' attention on other pressing matters. However, this is not the case in these two sites. In Cincinnati, where building administrators are not responsible for conducting the new teacher evaluation process, principals describe themselves as coaches to the beginning teachers. Although the amount of time spent in formal observation varies from building to building, principals are continually watchful of the novice's progress, which in turn shapes the types of support they give, e.g. assigning buddy teachers, releasing teachers to attend a workshop, sharing teaching tips. Further, by establishing a professional culture that values instructional improvement and collegiality, principals believe they are ensuring that needed support structures are in place for all teachers.

In contrast, Santa Cruz area principals play a traditional role in teacher evaluation. Fear of breaking confidentiality between the mentor and novice, compounded by their conflicting role as assessor, limits the depth and range of their reported involvement with new teachers. However, when asked what they do as building administrators to support novices, principals describe a variety of direct and indirect efforts, e.g. reducing committee assignments, accessing needed resources, asking teachers to "watch out for the novice". Like Cincinnati principals, establishing school contexts where collaborative inquiry and reflection is valued work for all faculty, new and veteran, is a top priority.

Nonetheless, principals in each site differed in their thoughts on the need to separate support from evaluation. In Cincinnati, principals see their role as supporting new teachers and their mentors. They become a second set of eyes and ears that confirm or question the mentor's assessment. Neither mentors nor principals reported conflict with sharing critical information about the novice with one another, justifying this on the grounds of improved student learning and commitment to professional practice. In Santa Cruz, however, principals were vocal about the need to separate mentor support from principal assessment. Shared conversations between the mentor and principal were considered suspect. Still, their self-reported practice hinted at something more complex. When student learning and professional practice were at stake, they each found ways to talk across this self-imposed boundary.

Based on this preliminary work, a logical next step was to get a clearer picture of principals' beliefs about new teachers and mentors, where these ideas come from and what implications they may have for novice development – answers missing from the existing literature.⁴ I was particularly drawn to the California site where reported beliefs and practices seemed to be in conflict with one another. What was the source of this tension and how can that understanding inform the work of new teacher support? Given this narrowing of interests, my preference for working on a small scale with a few participants in one site, rather than surveying responses from a large sample, crystalized. In the text that follows I elaborate on my research questions, as well as outline the research design and methodology that shape this work.

⁴ For a more elaborate treatment of the literature, including a summary of related studies, the reader is referred to Appendix I: A Select Review of the Literature.

Research Questions: Answering the “What”, “Why” and “How”

Given the need for practical guidance on this issue, the opportunity presented by the California site, plus the nature of existing research, five core research questions were developed. These questions have guided the study throughout its entirety and can be found in chapter one. However, to aid the reader as data is reported in subsequent chapters, I have deliberately re-ordered the research questions to reflect my own deepened understanding of how they influence and shape one another. Re-worked and elaborated slightly to represent a shift in order and emphasis, they are as follows.

How do principals understand their roles and responsibilities with respect to new teacher support, development and evaluation?

- ✓ *What underlying assumptions about beginning teaching guide and shape principals' work with new teachers?*
- ✓ *Where do the ideas and beliefs that underlie and shape principal thinking and reported practice vis a vis new teachers come from?*
- ✓ *What contextual factors shape principals' reported understandings?*
- ✓ *What are the implications for new teacher learning, induction programming and principal practice?*

How do principals report enacting their roles and responsibilities vis a vis new teachers?

- ✓ *What do principals report doing with and on behalf of new teachers?*
- ✓ *What personal and contextual factors enable and/or constrain this work?*
- ✓ *What are the implications for new teacher learning, induction programming and principals' practice?*

How do principals report enacting their roles and responsibilities vis a vis new teacher mentors?

- ✓ *What do principals report doing with and on behalf of new teacher mentors?*

- ✓ *What personal and contextual factors enable and/or constrain this work?*
- ✓ *What are the implications for new teacher learning, induction programming and principal practice?*

Together, these research questions help to illuminate what effective principals do vis a vis new teachers and their mentors, as well as the factors and conditions that enable such efforts. While the principal literature is full of prescriptive notions of best practice, much less attention has been given to how principals come to think and act as they do (Spillane et al., 2001). These questions integrate the “what” with the “why” and “how” of principal leadership in the context of new teacher support, development and evaluation.

I conclude the study by reflecting on a final overarching question: Does principals’ work with new teachers and their mentors change or alter how they understand and enact their work with teachers more broadly? In other words, does the experience of working with new teachers and their mentors create learning opportunities for principals that force the re-examination of their beliefs and expectations for all teachers as learners? If a ripple effect of this sort is possible, it has relevant policy implications when we view induction as a deliberate reform strategy.

Definitions

For definitional clarification, in this study *beginning teachers* are defined as those new to teaching. While this may include new or beginning teachers who enter on emergency or provisional permits, the vast majority of these novices continue to be certified graduates of teacher preparation programs. I acknowledge this difference where necessary. *Mentors* are experienced teachers who are formally assigned responsibility for working with novices over time. In this site, new teacher mentors – also called support

providers or advisors – are released full-time from the classroom for two or more years. As a mentor, these former teachers receive ongoing training and support relevant to their new tasks. I use the term *principal* inclusively to include any site administrators who have formal responsibility for the well-being of beginning teachers in a school building. The term *support* also deserves mention, as it reoccurs frequently in this text. I use this term broadly to encompass the interdependent functions of new teacher assistance, development and assessment – all of which are critical to new teacher learning and development (Feiman-Nemser et al, 1999).

Research Design: Using a Case Study Approach

Case studies permit us to look closely at naturally occurring phenomenon; to explore why and how people act as they do. As authentic but abstracted examples of real life – case studies permit us access to settings that we are not likely to encounter on our own (Yin, 1994). Moreover, reading and studying others' reports help us to expand our repertoire of possible interpretations for what we can see from our own limited perspectives (Donmoyer, 1990). With the potential to go beyond description, case studies give us grounds for highlighting complexity, refining theory, and testing the limits of generalizability (Stake, 1995).

Using a case study approach (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994), this inquiry explores up-close how four elementary principals' in one California district – Maria, James, Karen and Ramon – think about and puzzle over their work with new teachers and their mentors. As a case study researcher, I am looking for the extraordinary within the ordinary. What is unique, special, interesting about the work of these individuals? My first goal is to uncover the storied lives of these four individuals (Clandinin & Connelly,

2000), then explain what accounts for this. In doing so, I catch a glimpse of the things effective principals do in service of new teachers and the conditions that enable and/or constrain this support. Thus, these four self-reports of practice become a means for thinking harder about the phenomenon of new teacher support, development and assessment by principals. As an “*instrumental case*”, the actual site and participants become secondary to what they can teach us about the principal’s role in supporting new teachers and their mentors (Stake, 1995).⁵

Although I begin by exploring principals’ relationship with new teachers and mentors separately, I intentionally bring them back together in the final analysis, using the “*support triad*” of principal/novice/mentor as the penultimate unit of analysis. Because I expose multiple layers of the system, including program, district, and mentor/novice pairs, for four distinct individuals, in one context, this study follows an embedded case design. I do so convinced that “*multiple cases offer the researcher a deeper understanding of the processes and outcomes of cases, the chance to test (not just develop) hypotheses, and a good picture of locally grounded causality*” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 26).

Limitations

As in all approaches to doing research, there are limitations to the inquiry conducted here. Obviously, the small sample size prevents generalizing to a larger principal population. Four principals can hardly be considered representative. Further, because I am arguing for a case study within what might be considered an exemplary site, I further limit my ability to describe and explain typical practices. Few sites offer the

⁵ Yin (1994) would likely categorize this study as an “exploratory case” where the emphasis is on *exploring* a poorly understood phenomenon.

degree of sophistication in mentor practices as this one. However, by focusing on that which is particular to one site, I hope to open the “black box” that has come to typify induction policy and practice. My goal is to first identify ordinary and extraordinary practices, then to understand what promotes and sustains them over time. Beginning with the careful study of four principals in one district, I am confident that this study can lay the groundwork for further testing and theory-building across a larger section of individual and sites. As an instrumental (Stake, 1995) or exploratory (Yin, 1994) case, this sampling is justified.

I am equally cautious in believing that through a set of five or six focused interviews I will know my subjects’ commitments, beliefs and motivations toward new teachers in their full complexity. Interviews are not only situated accounts (Mischler, 1991) reflecting the time and place in which they occur, they are also censored accounts (Silverman, 1993) where participants control what gets shared and when. As the researcher, my job is to listen carefully and record wisely that which I see and hear. It is also my job to make my thinking and struggles with the data as apparent as possible.

Furthermore, because my access to observational data is limited in this study, principal self-report – verified to the extent possible through select new teacher and mentor accounts -- will have to suffice. Again, as a researcher, my task is to make clear what is reported from what is real; what is observed from what is inferred. Two analytic strategies enhance the internal validity of my data: triangulation of principal self-report with mentor and novice accounts, plus member-checking through principal review of early case drafts (Denzin, 1984).

Finally, I am limited in the data I can collect given my distance from the site and participants. Previous work in the district and the choice to conduct an interview-based study that makes use of existing data are ways I am able to compensate for this constraint. The addition of novice and mentor interviews, select artifacts of practice and use of phone and email communication are other ways I have reduced this problem of distance. Certainly there are other exemplary sites in which I might locate this study; however, my solid working understanding of the district, developed over the past three years, enables me to successfully complete the study outlined here.

Selecting a Site and Participants

Believing case studies are less a methodology than a choice of what one studies (Stake, 1995), I looked first to a site where induction programming was well established and mentoring practice well developed. I then sought participants similar enough to address the topic; yet diverse enough to show an interesting range of responses. The four principals for this study were selected from a California district long-associated with the area Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) project. To reduce the number of variables possible, I intentionally limited my focus to one district, South County.

California makes a good context for this study because it has aggressively sought to support and guide new teacher development around a set of ambitious content and teaching standards. The BTSA program of this study has long been recognized as a leader in the practice of new teacher support. From the district perspective, South County is typical of California schools in many respects, e.g. demographics, including numbers of English Language Learners and students living in poverty, a high percentage of teachers without a teaching credential, and limited financial resources.

South County also stands out as unique in three important ways. First, the district was an early participant in the local BTSA program, thus principals have had extensive experience in/with a highly regarded induction program. Secondly, the district is committed to an innovative growth-oriented teacher evaluation process that encourages dialogue between principals and new teachers around learning goals identified at the onset of each school year. Finally, the district encourages the use of the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* in guiding both new teacher assistance and assessment – a stance supported by the local BTSA program.

As an original BTSA pilot site that has a long tradition of taking new teachers and their learning seriously, the South County School District makes for a good case study. Because principals in this district are actively immersed in doing what induction advocates propose, it is worthwhile to learn what we can from their work with new teachers and mentors. I elaborate on the site and participants at the conclusion of this chapter.

Data Collection

While this study draws primarily on principal interview data, three additional sources of supplementary or secondary data were collected: interviews with select mentor/novice pairs, interviews with program personnel, and relevant artifacts of practice.

Principal Interviews

The primary data on which this study rests is a series of three semi-structured interviews conducted with the four principals in the study.⁶ These interviews – roughly based on Seidman's (1991) approach to phenomenological interviewing – were designed

to capture personal background, biography and context, as well as understandings about new teachers and their mentors, the processes of beginning teaching and mentoring, and the functions of new teacher support and evaluation. All interviews were conducted on separate occasions over a four-month period of time. Two of the interviews were on-site and one was by phone, all averaging an hour in length. Periodic e-mail correspondence was also used as an ongoing data source over the course of study; however, this form of communication did not work very well. Participant replies were short and often delayed and in some cases my questions went unanswered.

In addition to this highly focused set of three interviews conducted during spring and summer 2001, I presented descriptive mini-cases to each principal during spring 2002 to read, after which we talked on-site about their impressions. Less structured than the other interviews, I used this occasion to fill in gaps, confirm hunches, test hypotheses. Over all, participants agreed with my portrayal of them. Although they were not always comfortable with my account of their actions, they were unanimous in feeling that the written case was accurate and true to their experience. Additional data included introductory interviews (1-2 per participant) collected prior to the initiation of this project, as part of the larger induction study from which this research evolved. As a result, interviews were collected across three separate school years, unintentionally yielding a data set with longitudinal characteristics. The interview schedule is summarized in Table 1.

⁶ Interview protocols are included in Appendix B.

Table 1:
Principal Interview Schedule

| <i>Event</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Purpose of the Interview</i> |
|------------------------------------|----------------|--|
| Program Study Interview #1 | March, 1999 | Exploratory interview with select group of principals for purpose of understanding principal role in induction program. |
| Program Study Interviews #1 and #2 | December, 1999 | Program-based interview (based on earlier version) with random group of principals. Follow-up interviews with earlier respondents for the purpose of filling in gaps and clarifying emerging issues. |
| Dissertation Interview #1 | April, 2001 | This interview focused on principal's professional background and experience as teachers and administrators. |
| Dissertation Interview #2 | May, 2001 | This interview targeted principal's beliefs and reported practice with new teachers and their mentors. |
| Dissertation Interview #3 | June, 2001 | This interview asked principal's to reflect on their beliefs about school culture and leadership. Vignettes were used to prompt principal thinking on the tension between assistance and assessment. |
| Case-based Interview | May, 2002 | Principals were given a descriptive mini-case to read and respond to. This interview was less structured than earlier ones. The purpose was to fill in gaps, confirm hunches, test hypotheses. |

During data analyses I drew equally on all interviews and in fact, found the contrast across three school years to provide an interesting perspective on what it means to learn how to support new teachers, particularly when you are a new principal, as two were. The primary advantage of using a semi-structured protocol was that the questions asked were consistent across the participants and fit the conceptual framework and research questions guiding the study. A distinct disadvantage, however, was that my questions at times put boundaries around the conversation. The formality of being in the “principal’s office,” under time restraints, during the workday made this even more pronounced.

Mentor and Novice Interviews, including Evaluation Records

Separate semi-structured interviews were also conducted with a mentor and novice for each participating principal. In three instances the mentors and novices were participants in the larger study as part of a longitudinal look at new teacher development. In the fourth case, previous data has been collected for the mentor, but not the new teacher. Additionally, each novice provided two years of evaluation records completed by the principal and on file in the district office. These data points were used as supplementary data sources to confirm/disconfirm preliminary findings and extend understandings of principals’ work.

District and Program Personnel Interviews

To better understand the shaping influence of the district and program on these principals, short focused interviews were conducted with key informants. These included the induction program director and associate director, and a personnel director at the district office. Each of these interviews was designed to serve a dual purpose. One, to

address the issues raised in this study and two, to provide background information for the larger program study.

Select Artifacts of Practice

Finally, a variety of print documents and artifacts were collected to add color and context to the stories told. Principals were asked to provide print materials that helped put their work in context. Documents provided included parent newsletters and staff handbooks, as well as copies of grant proposals and performance appraisals.

Transforming the Data: Description, Analysis and Interpretation

My approach to working with the data mirrors the three interrelated tasks proposed by Wolcott (1995) when transforming data: description, analysis and interpretation. Initial attempts to work with the data were heavily weighted toward description and beginning analysis. As much as possible, efforts to interpret the data were held at bay until analysis was nearing completion. Throughout, I relied on the techniques of grounded theory to identify, develop and test study findings (Strauss & Corbin, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Although my early conceptual work (see Carver, 2000) provided a needed framework, I was equally mindful of stepping back from the data periodically to see new insights emerge. Over time, the iterative process of going back and forth between the literature and the data helped to strengthen descriptions, as well as surface surprises and tensions between the literature and the data. While this process was far from neat and tidy, my journey followed a predictable path.

In early analysis my goal was to describe, with sufficient detail, what I knew about each principal, including background, training, and experience. The principal interview protocols served as outlines for these initial data reports. I used these early

reports to develop and refine questions for each successive round of interviews. In addition to developing descriptive accounts of each individual, I used early cuts through the data to identify broad patterns and themes that cut across the four cases. For example, after each set of interviews the audiotapes were summarized and themes identified both within and across individual cases. Most of the time these matched with my original framing of the research problem, e.g. the reported tension between assistance and assessment. Occasionally they did not, so new categories were added, e.g. when mentor experience emerged as a relevant aspect of one's professional background. Sometimes emergent themes resulted from a pattern; other times from a break in the pattern. From the beginning, I was writing memos to myself about what I saw in the data, thoughts on the strength of the evidence, findings to test.

As time passed and the interviews were completed and transcribed, my efforts to understand the data became less descriptive and more analytic, as well as more focused. Using my research questions as a rough guide, I wrote memos to myself which highlighted emergent ideas and questions, e.g. the different ways that principals talked with mentors about the novice; the role of teaching experience and personal commitments in principal thinking about new teacher support. At the same time, I examined the new teacher and mentor interviews and evaluation records for confirming and disconfirming evidence, always looking for patterns. Although this collection of memos varied in length, quality and ultimate utility, collectively they helped me to identify the ways in which the four principals were similar and different from one another. To push my thinking even further, graphic displays of the data were created to accompany these

memos (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This strategy was particularly helpful in allowing me to see connections between otherwise distinct ideas.

Notably, it was in this phase of mid-analysis that I decided to separate principals' work with new teachers from their work with mentors. My original research question looked at these two tasks as one, yet as the analyses unfolded it became clear that principals' work with new teachers was very different from their work with mentors, both in nature and intent. As a result, different analytic frameworks were needed for each question. This prompted me to go back to the literature, reading and re-reading on emergent themes. Gradually, the memos began to integrate literature and data.

As I entered final data analysis, a more systematic approach to data reduction was needed. Drawing on the literature, interview protocols and growing list of emergent themes, I identified eight categories of data that were critical to answering my research questions. They included 1) leadership background; 2) teaching background; 3) school description; 4) new teacher support tasks; 5) other considerations related to new teacher support; 6) working with mentors; 7) understanding of new teacher learning needs; 8) underlying conceptions. Using techniques of grounded theory, I coded each principal interview, one line at a time, according to these eight categories, further sub-dividing text as needed (see Appendix C). New descriptors were added as they emerged, e.g. separating school mission from principal vision. The coded data was then transferred into NUD*IST, a qualitative data management software program that enabled me to easily compare and contrast codes within and across individual data sets – a significant advantage given the quantity of data in my care.

I was now ready to draft text for each principal that would be both descriptive and analytic in nature. Using my newly revised and expanded research questions as an outline, I wrote mini-cases for each principal that drew upon the newly coded data. For example, to address the question of principals' efforts to support new teachers through recruitment, hiring and placement, I was able to draw on just the data addressing that issue. This systematic process allowed me to be comprehensive in my description and more analytic in my explanation, as it helped me to compare and contrast the data within and across cases. In addition, it helped to illuminate areas of strength, as well as notable gaps in the evidence. I presented these cases to the principals in May, 2002.

In final analysis I looked across these separate analyses to test findings and see relationships in new ways. Always, attempts at answering the "*so what*" question were bold and yet tentative in my work. Is this really what I am seeing? What are the theoretical implications of this work? Like Wolcott (1994), my goal was to "*open things up*" rather than "*seal them off*."

Site and Participants: Typical/Ordinary or Atypical/Extraordinary?

Case study design allows us to examine a phenomenon in its natural setting – phenomenon that can range from the typical and ordinary to that which lies at the "*leading edge of change*" (Schofield, 1990). Notably, this case study explores what is possible once thoughtful, serious and ambitious induction and mentoring programs take hold in ordinary settings. Though at times these four principals appear exceptional, within their home settings they are acting as expected. One goal of this analysis is to make visible and explicit the typical/atypical; ordinary/extraordinary things these four principals' do on behalf of beginning teachers and their mentors. In the section that

follows I highlight key aspects of induction policy in California and in the South County School District – home to the four elementary principals of this study. I conclude by introducing each of these principals and identifying some interesting commonalities among them.

Induction Policy in California

California has long been looked to for its efforts to craft policy that support teacher learning and development.⁷ Through the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program, “*an intensive induction experience consisting of formative assessment, individual support, advanced study, and frequent reflection on the practice of teaching*” (CTC/CDE, 1998, p. 3), all new teachers in the state are guaranteed two years of mentored support.⁸ As stated in the original legislation,

Teaching is a complex, demanding profession that is learned over the course of several years of study, consultation and reflective practice... the Legislature finds and declares that the performance of students and beginning teachers improves substantially as a result of training that is appropriate for novices, intensive assistance by mentors who are carefully selected and trained, and accurate assessments of new teachers' professional practices (Chapter 1245, Statutes of 1992, Section 15b, reprinted in Bartell & Ownby, 1994, p. 1).

From the beginning, emphasis was placed on developing a standards-based program to complement the teacher credential system, thereby joining the functions of new teacher support and assessment. To this end, the *Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Programs* (CTC/CDE, 1997b), a set of thirteen program standards, were developed alongside the *California*

⁷ Efforts in addition to BTSA include the California Mentor Teacher Project, more recently replaced by the Peer Assistance and Review program, legislation mandating class-size reduction in the primary grades, as well as ongoing efforts to implement an accountability system based on standards for both student academic achievement and teacher performance.

⁸ BTSA legislation grew out of the successful pilot work of the California New Teacher Project, first authorized in 1988. Through the years the BTSA program has gradually expended to reach greater numbers

Standards for the Teaching Profession (CTC/CDE, 1997a). The latter is to be used in conjunction with new teacher formative assessment, a required component of BTSA programs. Both were written to provide local districts with a common vision and language for induction.

More recently, the state adopted a two-tier credential system that requires teacher candidates to earn a baccalaureate degree, demonstrate competence in subject matter knowledge and basic skills, and complete an approved professional preparation program before receiving a preliminary certificate. Following employment, new teachers are then required to participate in an induction program, be formally assessed and develop an individual growth plan before a “clear” or continuing professional credential is granted. Technically, all new teachers in California who participate in BTSA meet these requirements.

California’s proactive stance toward new teacher support and development is critical. In the last decade California schools have legitimately earned their reputation as being resource poor. Due to a rapidly growing student population, coupled with the after effects of class size reduction, the state now employs 40% more teachers than it did just ten years ago. This trend is expected to continue as roughly half of the state’s teachers are 45 years or older (Shields, Esch, Humphrey, Young, Gaston & Hunt, 1999). California schools now hire close to 30,000 teachers annually, a figure that is expected to increase to 36,000 for the year 2007 (Shields et al., 1999). Given these numbers, should it be surprising to find that 10% of California’s new hires work on emergency permit? Add to this an attrition rate of 30-50% during the early years and the magnitude of the problem

of districts and thus new teachers. In 1990, newly elected Governor Gray Davis sponsored landmark legislation making BTSA available to all new teachers in California by 2002.

becomes clear. California schools are forced to absorb an overwhelming number of new teachers each year, of which many are under-qualified.

Unique Features of the Local BTSA Program

The local BTSA collaborative referenced in this study dates back to 1988 as an original pilot site with the California New Teacher Project.⁹ In the years since it has become a state and national leader in the research and development of induction programming. Arguably, their success and longevity are changing how local teachers and administrators think about teaching and learning (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2000). Funded through a combination of state and local contributions, the program operates on a budget of \$5,300 per new teacher.¹⁰ This allows for mentors to be full-time released from classroom duties for two or more years; it also supports an administrative staff devoted to the development of mentor training, mentoring strategies, new teacher seminars, and overall program development. At the heart of their efforts lies an elaborate set of formative assessment strategies for use by mentors with novices that address state and district content standards, as well as the California teaching standards (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Although state guidelines prevent mentors from engaging in summative evaluation, they are expected to conduct ongoing formative assessment with the novice.

Because the local BTSA operates independent of the state and participating districts, it has a good deal of autonomy in its work. Ultimately, this arrangement allows the program to sidestep other pressing matters in order to concentrate solely on promoting new teacher development appropriate to local needs (Carver & Feiman-

⁹ In order to better protect the identity of these principals, I intentionally avoid disclosing information that might identify the local BTSA program. I do so believing that this study is less about the local BTSA, as it is the possibilities open to all BTSA programs given the nature of state policy as it pertains to induction and mentoring.

Nemser, 2000). However, this may also explain the lack of attention given to the role of the site administrator, for principals' fall within district domain. Although principals are expected to support the program and be available for periodic conferencing with the mentor, including articulate school goals, mission and needs, the program literature does not spell out a formal role for principals' efforts vis a vis new teachers and their mentors.

It is also important to note that the local BTSA has strong ties to the nearby University of California campus. Although the local BTSA was from the beginning a collaborative venture connecting area districts with the university and county office of education, the leadership driving its early development came directly from the local UC system. As a result, there is a seamless quality between preservice education and induction in many area schools. This is particularly true of the South County Schools.

South County School District

South County District is a large, sprawling rural district on the edge of California's central valley. The challenges faced by South County mirror those around the state. The district enrolls 19,902 students, divided among 1,079 teachers and 29 schools.¹¹ Within the four schools of this study, 88% of students are Hispanic/Latino, 76% have limited English proficiency, 78% qualify for free or reduced lunch rates, and 40% are classified as migrant. The two schools in this sample with the highest numbers of non-English speaking children are struggling to meet state targets on the Academic Performance Index (API), which is based on standardized test scores in English. To meet these challenges, South County – with the help of the area University of California campus – has made a long-standing commitment to teacher professional development.

¹⁰ This amount is based on 2000/01 figures.

¹¹ Figures are based on the 1999/2000 school year.

We see this in their commitment to new teacher support, their use of professional teaching standards, and their development of a growth-oriented teacher evaluation process.

Commitment to New Teacher Induction

South County is an original partner in the local Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) consortium, now in its fourteenth year. All new teachers in the district receive two years of integrated support and formative assessment from support providers or mentors who are full-time released. These mentors receive rigorous training and ongoing support while in the mentor role. Key to their work is a series of formative assessment tasks, guided by Individual Learning Plans designed around the California teaching standards. Much of the pilot work around formative assessment took place in the South County schools with the assistance of district teachers released to work as BTSA mentors.

Growth-Oriented Teacher Evaluation

Nearly a decade ago, South County revamped its teacher evaluation process to promote ongoing inquiry, data gathering and reflection among all teachers. New teachers are required to complete three formal principal observations with pre and post conferencing. These observations are assessed according to learning goals developed jointly between the novice and principal using the California teaching standards. Each fall, BTSA mentors play a central role in helping their novices develop these standards-based Individual Learning Plans, which in turn form the basis of their principal observations during the year. As the year proceeds, mentors are expected to review

progress toward stated goals with the novice. Notably, these “internal reviews” are timed to coincide with the dates of principals’ formal evaluation cycle.

Use of Professional Teaching Standards

Linking the functions of new teacher support and evaluation are the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession*. These six standards, based on the effective teaching literature, include: 1) engaging and supporting all students in learning; 2) creating and maintaining effective environments for student learning; 3) understanding and organizing subject matter for student learning; 4) planning instruction and designing learning experiences for all students; 5) assessing student learning; 6) developing as a professional educator. Viewed collectively, the standards provide a common language for discussions about good teaching. As mentioned previously, these standards are central to the ongoing work of BTSA mentors in this district, as well as guide the principal evaluation process.

South County has been innovative, responsive, and visionary in their district level response to the need for beginning teacher support. Although funds are tight, they willingly contribute \$2,100 per new teacher, straight from district coffers.¹² When it comes time to release bright veteran teachers to assume the role of mentor, district administrators do so willingly. Equally important, South County shares with the local BTSA program a commitment to new teacher development through intensive mentoring and growth-oriented evaluation. Additionally, they share a common set of professional teaching standards, used to guide and inform ongoing formative and summative assessments.

¹² Figures are based on the 2000/01 school year.

As for the four elementary schools in this study – Shining Star, Unity, Arts and Valley – each is quite similar to the other. The student populations are roughly equal in size and demographics. In addition to the principal, each school has an assistant principal whose duties vary according to school need. In two schools the assistant principal doubles as an instructional specialist. However, in all four schools the principal is presumed the school head and considered responsible for issues of new teacher support and evaluation. In addition, all four schools are connected to one or more local teacher preparation institutions, thus host preservice candidates at various stages of readiness. Finally, all schools are involved in at least one district-based initiative that focuses the school mission. Valley Elementary is working with the state and district on an under-performing schools grant. Arts Elementary is a district pilot school for the Baldrige model, a client-centered school improvement strategy adopted from the business world. Unity Elementary is a dual-immersion charter school through the district. Shining Star partnered with the local university to become a professional development school site with a socio-cultural focus.

Introducing the Principals

The study was intentionally limited to a small cohort of elementary principals in one district. I proposed looking at elementary only, as the demands of the job are arguably different at the secondary level and likely to influence how roles are understood. My goal was to keep the sample as homogenous as possible without losing perspective on the relevant variation among participants. Gender, ethnicity and years of experience in administration were distinguishing characteristics used to narrow the list of possible participants, as was their reputation with the local induction program. Early in the study, I

assumed that experience working with new teachers, involvement with the local BTSA collaborative, and teaching experience would all emerge as important variables. Because I was already studying the site and had established a relationship with a small cohort of principals, it made sense to begin looking there. Using intentional sampling, I selected four individuals from an original pool of eleven. I was particularly careful to select participants that varied in terms of teaching and administrative background, experience working with new teachers, knowledge of the local BTSA program, as well as gender and ethnicity. Without hesitation, all four principals agreed to participate. Each was offered a two hundred dollar stipend as an incentive for participating.

As for the principals in this study, each would appear to an outsider as quite ordinary. They arrive early, leave late, give their best, care deeply and still have some time left over to enjoy grandkids, surfing, camping, traveling. Still, because these principals a) pay attention to their new teachers, b) work with skilled and knowledgeable mentors, and c) operate within a supportive state and district context, they stand out as atypical, even extraordinary. Collectively, they defy the stereotypical image of an unhelpful, uncaring, unknowing principal. While we know principals like Maria, James, Karen and Ramon exist in large and small, elementary and secondary schools around the country, we have little understanding of what atypical, extraordinary principals do vis a vis new teachers and their mentors.

Among the four participants, two are female (Maria, Karen) and two are male (James, Ramon), two are Latino (Maria, Ramon) and two are White (James, Karen), two are experienced (Maria, James) and two are new to the job (Karen, Ramon). All four graduated from a state teacher preparation programs during the late 1970's or early 1980's,

each with bilingual certification. All four have at least seven years of classroom experience in the district. Each has been a mentor to new teachers and now is a strong advocate for mentoring. All, motivated by the desire to make a difference in the lives of Latino kids, made a gradual transition from teacher to teacher leader to principal. Notably, not one of these principals began their career thinking they might “grow up” to be building administrators. Each actively promotes teacher collaboration in their building and has a bottom line of improving student achievement. I introduce each briefly in the text that follows (see also Table 2).

Maria

At the time the study began, Maria was in her fifth year as principal of Shining Star Elementary, a Professional Development School associated with a local University of California campus. She considers herself both an instructional leader and a “*teacher’s principal*.” She was a bilingual classroom teacher in the district for eleven years and also worked extensively as a university-based teacher educator prior to joining Shining Star. She frequently travels the state to make presentations on behalf of the school, particularly around issues of diversity and equity. By the time the study was completed, Maria had earned her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership. Maria is a former BTSA mentor.

James

James was finishing his eleventh year as principal of Unity Elementary School when the study began. Unlike other elementary schools in the district, Unity is under a charter agreement to better meet the curricular needs of its large Spanish-speaking population. James was a classroom teacher in the district for seven years, as well as a combined resource/head teacher before assuming administrator status. James received his

administrative credential and served briefly as an assistant principal in one of the district middle schools prior to joining Unity. James provided leadership to the development of the new teacher evaluation process for the district and has been a long-standing supporter of the local BTSA program.

Karen

Karen, beginning her first year as principal at Arts Elementary when the study began, spent four years as a BTSA mentor prior to assuming administrative work. Of the four principals, Karen taught the longest, having logged sixteen years in the classroom. As a first year principal, Karen received one-to-one coaching from a veteran administrator in the area. At that time, she shared that one of the most difficult aspects of being an administrator was learning to be more direct with teachers about their performance. According to Karen, her principal mentor saw her as too much of a “coach”, a role she attributed learning from her experience with BTSA.

Ramon

Ramon, also new to administration, has deep roots in the community. He attended Valley Elementary – the school he now leads – as a child. After receiving his teacher certification he returned as an upper grades teacher. For the next ten years he was actively involved with migrant children and their families as a classroom teacher. Ramon was ending his first year as principal at Valley Elementary when the study began. Notably, he was replacing a principal who was widely regarded as a strong instructional leader, at a time when the school was under fire from the state and district to raise student test scores. Further complicating matters, he inherited a staff where one-third were new to teaching. Like many novices, he was admittedly overwhelmed by the job. He credits BTSA

mentors for providing critical assistance to the ten beginning teachers in his building and for giving him valuable feedback on their experiences in the school.

Table 2:
Principal Profiles (for 2001/2002)

| <i>Principal</i> | <i>School Mission</i> | <i>Administrative Background</i> | <i>Teaching Background</i> | <i>Mentoring Experience</i> |
|------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Maria | Shining Star Elementary, a Professional Development School with the local U of CA campus | 6 years, all at Shining Star. Former teacher/ staff development coordinator at Shining Star. | 11 years in Kinder and 1 st grades, all in district. | 1 year as BTSA mentor, 3 years as teacher educator at local U of CA campus. |
| James | Unity Elementary, a dual immersion charter school | 13 years total in the district, 11 at Unity. | 7 years in 4 th and 5 th grades, 3 years as resource/head teacher, all in district. | Former CMTP mentor. |
| Karen | Arts Elementary | 3 years total in the district, 2 years at Arts. | 16 years total, 14 in district. | 4 years as part-time BTSA mentor. Host to student teachers. |
| Ramon | Valley Elementary | 4 years total in the district, 2 years at Valley. | 10 years in 4 th and 5 th grades, all in district. | Former CMTP mentor. Host to student teachers. |

ABBREVIATION NOTES:

BTSA: Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program

CMTP: California Mentor Teacher Project

Shared Commitments

Although noticeably different from one another in gender, ethnicity and years of administrative experience, each of these principals share some important things in common: the desire to make a difference in the lives of “these” kids; a commitment to classroom teaching; a gradual transition to formal leadership; and the experience of being a new teacher mentor -- aspects that will be explored more completely in subsequent chapters.

Career Choice: Motivated to Make a Difference

Each of these principals was motivated by a desire to make a difference early in their career. All four speak Spanish fluently and are driven by a desire to promote social justice through academic learning for bilingual children. Although each has taken a unique path toward the principalship, there are remarkable similarities in their choices. First, all four principals -- roughly the same age, each a baby boomer -- are products of an era. Each grew up during a turbulent and political time in our nation's history. As a Latina woman, Maria was active in organizing central coast migrant farm workers along side Cesar Chavez. James was encouraged by a high school teacher to make a difference in his life by serving others -- a call to service he took to heart. Ramon began his professional career assisting school children of migrant farm workers in the area. Karen, a European immigrant, knew first hand what it was like to move to a place where the language and culture were different.

Second, their degree and subsequent career choices reflect a commitment to service and education. This was not a time of known teacher shortage in California, although the need for bilingual teachers in rural districts like South County was presumably strong. All graduated from the university with teaching credentials in the late 70's or early 80's: two with degrees in education, the other two with degrees in sociology to which they quickly added teaching credentials. Three received teaching credentials from the local University of California campus known for its liberal-leaning teacher preparation program.

Extended Teaching Experience

A second commonality among the principals was their long commitment to classroom teaching. The least amount of accrued time goes to James, who taught fourth and fifth grade for seven years, then spent three more years as a combined bilingual resource teacher and head teacher – a total of ten years closely connected to the classroom. Next in line is Maria, who accumulated eleven years of classroom time. She also taught for a number of years in an early childhood program before completing her teaching credential and moving in to the K-12 system. Her classroom experience was in Kindergarten and first grade. Similarly, Ramon totals eleven classroom years in a series of district schools, all in the fourth and fifth grades. In these positions he took an active interest in advocating for the needs of migrant children and their families. Finally, Karen stands out for a grand total of sixteen years, including one year as a resource teacher.

Together, these principals accrued forty-seven years of teaching wisdom, for an average of nearly twelve years each. This long-standing commitment to the practice of teaching is particularly important given that these are a) experienced bilingual teachers; b) who showed a commitment to teaching in an under-served region. As important, these principals are “home grown” products of the system that first socialized them into the teaching profession.

Gradual Transition from Teaching to Leading

None of these four individuals began teaching with the dream that they would one day become principals. Gradually, each assumed greater leadership responsibility. Over time this led to others encouragement to pursue administrative work and a personal

acknowledgement that being a principal was another way of enacting their “teaching” commitment to Spanish-speaking kids.

After only seven years in the classroom, James was selected to serve as a combined bilingual resource and head teacher – a position that he looks back on now as a cheap version of a principal. It was during these years that he pursued an administrative credential. Maria left teaching initially to work with teacher candidates at the local University of California campus. Through this connection she became part of a collaborative working group that designed a Professional Development School between South County and the university. After a short stint as teacher and professional development coordinator at this site, she assumed full-time duties as principal – a position she holds today. Ramon also comes to administration in a gradual way. It took the encouragement of peers and a successful seven-year run as head teacher of a migrant summer school program for him to seriously consider an administrative position. In fact, after his first assistant principal position, which he held for only one year, he actually returned to the classroom, only to find he missed administrative work. Karen, who taught the longest, also took the most gradual entry to administration. It wasn't until four years of involvement with the local BTSA program – during which she opted to maintain part-time teaching responsibilities – that she even considered the possibility of the principalship.

Interestingly, these four individuals differ in their approach to formal education. Ramon has a master's degree above and beyond coursework leading to an administrative credential and Maria was working on a doctorate in educational leadership and administration at the time of data collection. That said, all four attended different

institutions to get their administrative credential. The motivation for their respective choices seemed to be largely convenience. Who was offering extended campus, on-site certification programs at the times they needed them? Whose program was the most affordable? Whose expectations seemed most reasonable? In each case, principals reported coursework toward the administrative credential as more perfunctory than meaningful.

Experience as Former Mentors

Most surprising in the profile was the revelation that each of these principals assumed the formal role of mentor as some prior date. James and Ramon were both mentors under the original California Mentor Teacher Project, which has now been replaced by BTSA. In addition, Ramon has supervised student teachers for two local colleges. Maria and Karen had more recent appointments in the local BTSA program where both served as new teacher mentors. At the same time she served as a mentor, Maria worked as a clinical instructor in the local University of California teacher preparation program. The experience of being a new teacher mentor is likely to have drawn their attention to the developmental needs of new teachers and given them a sense of perspective and respect for the work of mentors. Even without formal training or compensation, like Ramon and James, this experience conceivably shaped the lens through which they think about and practice new teacher support and evaluation.

In addition, Karen and Ramon, as new principals, are being mentored through the administrative mentoring program offered by the local BTSA program to all new principals. Each meets regularly with their new principal mentor to discuss ongoing

problems, concerns and issues. The experience of being mentored likely adds new depth to their framing of the issue.

In the pages that follow, I trace for the reader my thinking and understanding as it evolved during the course of this study. I do so intentionally. Presenting the data in a logical and orderly fashion aids the reader, and it gives natural structure to a complex set of story lines. Perhaps more importantly, it allows the story to tell itself. The data reported here challenges conventional wisdom and stated policy. Rather than keeping their distance, these four principals find ways of working with new teachers and their mentors, arguing that it is good for the novice and imperative for students.

Although the sample size is too small for generalizing to larger populations, and the data is naturally limited by what can be learned through self-report, there is still much we can learn about the nature of this work from the thinking of four principals who take the task of new teacher support seriously.

Chapter 3:

Beliefs about New Teacher Support, Development and Evaluation

When a practitioner reflects in and on his practice, the possible objects of his reflection are as varied as the kinds of phenomena before him and the systems of knowing-in-practice which he brings to them. He may reflect on the tacit norms and appreciations which underlie a judgment, or on the strategies and theories implicit in a pattern of behavior. He may reflect on the feeling for a situation which has led him to adopt a particular course of action, on the way in which he has framed the problem he is trying to solve, or on the role he has constructed for himself within a larger institutional context (Schon, 1983, p. 62).

Chapter Overview

This chapter is framed by two questions: 1) What underlying assumptions about beginning teaching, mentoring and instructional leadership guide and shape principals' work with new teachers? 2) Where do the ideas and beliefs that underlie and shape principal thinking and reported practice vis a vis new teachers come from? Proceeding one case at a time, I examine the underlying assumptions, ideas and beliefs about beginning teaching, mentoring and instructional leadership that guide and shape how Maria and James, Karen and Ramon work with new teachers and their mentors. A summary of each individual's background, including teaching experience and administrative preparation, reveals the similar commitments and motivations each brings to the work. Nonetheless, three significant differences emerge from the data: the role played by school context, principals' understanding of new teacher learning needs, and principals' preferences and skill as instructional leaders.

The Role of Belief in Guiding Principals' Work

How do principals make decisions in the fast-paced world of school administration? On what basis do they make judgements regarding the use of time,

money and personnel, particularly as it impacts new teachers? This chapter presumes that what principals do is influenced and shaped by their beliefs and assumptions, motivations and commitments. To that end, this chapter has two goals. First, to make explicit the underlying conceptions of beginning teaching, mentoring and school leadership that guide the work Maria and James, Karen and Ramon describe engaging in with new teachers and their mentors. Second, to explore where the ideas and beliefs that undergird and shape principal thinking and reported practice vis a vis new teachers come from.

The terms *assumption*, *conception* and *belief* are used interchangeably to describe the set of ideas, many of which are tacit, that give warrant for concrete behavior. While participant responses are essentially descriptive, by comparing and contrasting study data to the relevant literature I am able to make normative claims that are suggestive of more or less effective practices. For example, we may find that a principal who sees her new teachers as beginners, distinct from more experienced staff, also adjusts her performance expectations accordingly during the evaluation process. This same principal may also express a desire to use evaluation as a growth tool as opposed to a gate-keeping mechanism. Since we can reasonably argue that performance evaluation oriented toward learning and developmentally appropriate in expectation is more likely to promote improved practice, it then suggests that an understanding of new teachers as learners and beginners is foundational to effective principal practice.

One benefit of a belief framework is that it allows us to map both forward and backward, from belief to action and from action to belief. So while understanding that new teachers are learners and beginners is likely to lead to more effective responses, what we consider to be best practice is just as likely to be influenced and/or shaped by

corresponding beliefs about beginning teaching and mentoring. In this chapter I draw almost entirely upon principal interviews. When possible, I will look to observation and print artifacts, as well as mentor and novice interviews, for instantiation of these beliefs in the principal's described practice.

Theoretically, this research draws on the work of Schon (1983; 1990) and (Argyris & Schon, 1974) to explicate a tentative theory of professional practice with respect to new teacher support, development and assessment by principals. To that end, this chapter specifically probes the values and insights, beliefs and commitments of four individuals who aspire to take new teachers seriously.

Proposed Framework of Beliefs

For this analysis I have grouped principal beliefs into three categories, which corresponds with the three strands of literature upon which this study is based. These include: 1) beliefs about new teachers; including new teachers as learners, beginners and members of a faculty; 2) beliefs about mentoring; including mentoring as a practice and the tension between assistance and assessment; and 3) beliefs about school leadership, including principals' understanding of instructional leadership and teacher professional community.

Beliefs about New Teachers

The first category of belief looks at the perceptions principals have of new teachers as beginners, learners and members of a faculty. It begins by examining what principals expect new teachers to know and be able to do. From there it explores what principals believe new teachers most need to learn, including how they best learn that and who they consider most responsible for facilitating that learning.

Although novices are new to the profession they are frequently expected to assume full membership at the site level. For example, new teachers are often tapped to be committee members, to advise grade level groups, or to coach an athletic team – assignments that are frequently made in the principal's office. These out-of-the-classroom responsibilities serve as a means of professional socialization. This section of the belief framework looks specifically at the working and learning conditions that principals consider necessary for new teachers to be successful and to what extent they see themselves responsible for this. It asks: What working (or learning) conditions do principals feel are necessary for new teachers to be successful? And, in what ways do principals see their work with new teachers as similar to and/or different from that of veteran teachers?

Beliefs about New Teachers

As Members of a Faculty...

- ✓ What do principals expect new teachers to know and be able to do?

As Learners...

- ✓ What do principals believe new teachers most need to learn?
- ✓ How do principals believe new teachers learn that?
- ✓ Who do principals consider responsible for facilitating that learning?

As Beginners...

- ✓ What working (or learning) conditions do principals feel are necessary for new teachers to be successful?
- ✓ In what ways do principals see their work with new teachers as similar to and/or different from that of veteran teachers?

Beliefs about Induction and Mentoring

Similar to their work with new teachers, principals approach their work with mentors based on a set of guiding assumptions. Broadly speaking, this category uncovers

the conceptions principals have about mentors' work with new teachers and school leaders. Included is how principals think about induction. Is it a formal program, a phase in a teacher's career, and/or a process of socialization? Further, what role do principals see themselves playing in induction?

This section of the framework also examines principals' understanding of the tension between offering assistance to their newest recruits and holding them accountable for good work – an area of potential conflict between mentors who traditionally assist and principals who traditionally assess. One of the most commonly recognized tensions in the mentoring literature and, to a somewhat lesser extent the teacher evaluation literature, it is commonly thought that principals who consider themselves instructional leaders are particularly prone to feeling this tension when fulfilling their role as an evaluator. This inquiry tests this assumption. How do principals manage the role conflict between being an instructional leader and a formal assessor?

Beliefs about Induction and Mentoring

Perspectives on Induction...

- ✓ How do principals understand and define induction, e.g. as a formal program, phase of time in a teacher's career, process of socialization?
- ✓ What do principals see as their role in induction?

Understandings of Mentors' Work...

- ✓ How do principals understand mentors' work with new teachers?
- ✓ How do principals understand mentors' work with principals?

Balancing between Assistance and Assessment...

- ✓ How do principals manage the tension between being an instructional leader and a formal assessor?

Beliefs about School Leadership

Finally, principals' work is likely shaped by how they see themselves as school-based leaders. For example, do they see themselves as instructional leaders and if so, what kind of instructional leader? The literature has long promoted instructional leadership as an ideal, yet one study after another has found this notion to be flawed. Presumably, principals who show an interest in the needs of beginning teachers are likely to take their role in teacher instructional development seriously. Does this assumption hold true with these data? Additionally, this section explores principals' beliefs about teacher community and school culture. It asks: What beliefs about school and faculty community/culture do principals hold?

Beliefs about School Leadership

Beliefs about Instructional Leadership...

- ✓ How do principals see themselves as school leaders?
- ✓ How do principals see themselves as instructional leaders?

Beliefs about Professional Community and Culture...

- ✓ What beliefs about school and faculty community/culture do principals hold?

Framework Summary

In summary, this chapter seeks to understand the complexity of principal thinking around three categories of belief that are foundational to the work of new teacher support, development and assessment. Because of the prominence of the principal role in schools and the rise of formal induction programming with mentoring as a core component, it is important that we begin to sort through this maze. Although the study is small in scope, it

provides a unique opportunity to probe principal thinking in ways that have not previously been explored empirically.

Each case begins with a summary of the individual's background, including teaching experience and administrative preparation, relevant details about their school context and their relationship to the district and induction program. A reporting of beliefs about beginning teaching, mentoring and school leadership follows. Finally, the individual cases conclude with reflective comments on what each considers good or effective teaching, as well as the importance of mentored support for new teachers.

The Case of Maria: Protecting New Teachers as Learners

Maria came to Shining Star Elementary from the local University of California campus where she had been supervising student teachers as a member of the clinical faculty. When plans were drawn to make Shining Star a professional development school site, Maria knew she wanted to be part of it. In the fall of 1997, just five years into her tenure at Shining Star, Maria assumed the role of principal. As she tells the story,

I had been working on my administrative credential and after the third principal left [in three or four years], I felt, all of us felt that this school needed some stability. I knew that I could step in and do it. So I kind of stepped in. We had done so much good work. I knew that if we went through another principal and had to start over again the work would just be ground zero. So at that point I made the decision to step into the position. I applied and I got the job (3/01).

Maria's first assignment at Shining Star was as a first grade teacher. In this role she worked side by side with a number of her former university students. Three years later she became the school's Professional Development Coordinator where she again supervised local student teachers and served as a new teacher mentor for the local Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program. Maria continues to guard and protect this non-classroom position, now held by Kathryn, convinced that on-site

professional development and mentoring for all teachers is critical to the school's success.

I wish every school could have an on-site support office. I mean, it's a teaching support office for anyone, whether you're one or you're twenty [years experience] And it's that informal support. I also say it's that "got a minute" of informal support that can push your practice (4/99).

As a school leader, Maria's mission is to focus the school around socio-cultural theory and culturally responsive pedagogy. In her words, "*We're trying to build a model professional development school around socio-cultural theory... You know, anti-bias, anti-racist issues in education.*" Maria takes this task of creating a school based on principles of equity seriously and it permeates all aspects of her work, from her conversations with new teachers about maintaining high student expectations, to negotiating work time so the custodian can play basketball after school with certified staff.

Maria's deep commitment to social justice and equal educational opportunity is rooted in her own history as a Latina woman. She describes looking at the faces of her students and thinking, "*they're like my nieces and nephews... And when the parents walk in, I see my brothers and my family.*" She continues,

As a member of the community these kids come from, I can't let it go. It is my obligation to give them the best teachers. Maybe it's an issue of my background, my race and culture. I know the urgency and I won't compromise my kids. They are too far behind (6/01).

Although Maria's preference is to teach at the university, until recently she did

not feel that was a viable option for her, a former classroom teacher.¹³ Maria deliberately chose administrative work because it provided her with an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of more students.

The principalship is an opportunity to have more influence. The sphere of influence is widened rather than just one classroom. At the university I felt that working with preservice was very rewarding, but you don't have the same impact as you do on a school site, where you impact thirty teachers and all the kids in each classroom. I felt that it was, and I don't mean that in a grandiose way, I mean that in an opportunity to... directly impact the classroom and the kids (3/01).

Maria received her administrative credential prior to assuming the principalship. When asked about her formal preparation as an administrator, Maria's response is typical: *"I don't think it was that great. But, I don't know that any are."* Rather, Maria credits her doctoral work in organizational and educational leadership, which was highly situated in her work as principal, for influencing her practice as an administrator. *"All of the work that I've had there, every semester has been very applicable."* Formal preparation aside, Maria considers her many years in the classroom as the best preparation of all for administrative work.

In five years, Maria has gained a reputation for her leadership skill and collaborative spirit. We might credit some of this to her stance as a leader/learner. *"One of our beliefs is that we are a community of learners and leaders. So everyone is a leader and everyone is a learner and I try to model that."*

Beliefs about Beginning Teaching

In the section that follows, we look specifically at Maria's beliefs about beginning teaching. Here we get a glimpse of how Maria sees her new teachers as beginners and

¹³ Maria received her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership spring of 2002. Soon thereafter she was recruited by a local university for a faculty position in educational administration. She resigned as principal of Shining

learners. Although Maria expects them to come as well-started novices, she also understands that much of their learning is only just beginning. To optimize that learning she is a champion of on-site, “*got a minute*” support. She relies heavily on Kathryn, Shining Star’s staff developer, to provide that kind of assistance. Maria’s primary role, as principal, is to ensure that new teachers’ time and attention are protected so that they can truly learn and grow as a teacher.

Expectations of New Teachers

In the hiring process, Maria looks for newcomers who know and understand basic instructional strategies appropriate for culturally and linguistically diverse students. This is on top of having a teaching credential and a congenial personality. She also looks for new hires who will be committed to learning and practicing culturally relevant pedagogy. Still, Maria does not view her newest teachers as finished products, ready to practice on their own. “*No matter how good preservice is, [beginning teachers] need a second set of eyes and ears that first year to help them see what they see.*”

New Teacher Learning Needs

When asked what new teachers most need to learn, Maria’s three-part response reflects the depth of her thinking. She begins by suggesting that beginners’ need to literally break down and dissect discrete teaching skills,

Sometimes they have a global picture of teaching, but they don’t have the micro skills. So, for instance, we’ve been working a lot with them on classroom management...they have a kind of global feeling about how to organize a classroom for learning, both physically and socially... But they won’t have the little nitty-gritty things like transition and momentum... It’s breaking down teaching skills that are so important...so we fill in the gaps here with them (3/99).

Star as the 2001-2002 school year closed.

She later adds the importance of situating this learning in real classrooms, with real children. Maria understands that even when preservice candidates come well-prepared, they are not able to “optimize” student learning until they have more experience. She observes, “A veteran teacher doesn’t lose time. A veteran knows how to take advantage of every second in that classroom.”

Maria’s purpose for helping new teachers “articulate good teaching and articulate what is happening at that precise moment that they are imparting knowledge” is to ensure that they develop good habits. “I think it is critical that we help them before their habits are entrenched and they revert back to the way they were taught.” When she is not able to do this herself, she looks to Kathryn, Shining Star’s on-site staff developer and new teacher mentor, for help.

Instructional skill is not all that Maria wants her new teachers to learn. She is also expecting emotional maturity to develop, although she is not certain she can accelerate that process. She leans toward believing that one’s ability to roll with the punches and put things into bigger perspective develops over time on its own accord.

I’m wondering if that is just developmental, the maturity. Sometimes I feel like I’ve got this little elite group of prima donnas who can really teach. And they should be cocky. You know, good teachers are cocky, I think. But I wonder if we can’t push that maturity level. I’m not sure we can (3/99).

A third area of development, leadership capacity, puzzles Maria. While she very much wants to plant seeds of leadership in the beginning years, she does not want to compromise novices’ learning. We see just how seriously she takes new teachers and their development in the following excerpt:

This past year I’ve kind of thought privately about leadership capacity-building. Is it appropriate? I’m thinking, we have all these beginning teachers that we are building leadership with. Which is fine and well, but shouldn’t our priority be to

build up their subject matter knowledge? To build up their teaching repertoire? When do we do that? The same time we build leadership? Part of me thinks, sometimes, yes. Part of me thinks, no! I want you to be the best classroom teacher and really show me that you know how to teach children at grade level. Then we'll work on leadership. But I don't know. It's still not resolved (5/02).

Clearly, Maria does not leave new teacher learning to chance. As will be illustrated more fully in the next chapter, she and Kathryn take an active role in supporting and developing their new teachers. Guiding this work are two core beliefs. First, that learning has to be situated in context, “*in individual teachers' classrooms.*” Second, that responsive support meets the varied needs of each individual. “*So the mentor may support one teacher one way, and another teacher another way.*”

New Teachers as Beginners

Maria understands that her new teachers are very much learners. Though they may be excellent beginning teachers, “*there are still missed teaching and learning opportunities.*” They have learning needs that are different from their more experienced peers; they need help to “*see what they see.*” When asked how long she thinks it takes for someone to become a master teacher, Maria responds, “*a minimum of four to five years, and that's with strong support... [without strong support] I would say five to seven.*” She then adds,

That's a lot of years when you've got kids. I mean, how many teachers is that? How many kids does that teacher see in seven years that it is not optimum teaching? I don't think we can afford that anymore (5/01).

Maria sees her newest recruits as beginners and learners. As newcomers they are very much a part of the existing faculty. As novices, they still have much to learn, as no amount of preservice training can fully prepare them for the classroom. Once on the job, what they need to learn is threefold: 1) culturally relevant pedagogy, appropriate for

second language learners; 2) emotional maturity; and 3) leadership skill. Of these three, developing instructional skill is perhaps the easiest to support, as well as the most pressing. Maria is grateful that Kathryn, through an on-site support office, is available to assist as problems arise. Maria trusts that, given the right combination of mentored support and experience, new teacher maturity and leadership skill will develop over time.

Beliefs about Induction and Mentoring

This next section looks specifically at Maria's understandings of induction and mentoring. Again, we see the importance Maria places on mentored support. We also begin to appreciate her role in making sure the program is accountable to the novice, and the novice is accountable to the students.

Perspectives on Induction

For Maria, induction means doing whatever it takes to accelerate new teacher development. This can mean accessing more resources for the classroom, ensuring that the novice gets more of Kathryn's time, protecting new teachers' time, even investing her own time to assist. That she puts herself in this position is not surprising given her commitment to teacher learning and development. Ultimately, Maria sees herself as bearing primary responsibility for ensuring that new teachers at Shining Star are properly socialized into the profession. Why? Because she is the one held accountable for results, not the mentor.

Understanding of Mentors' Work

Maria is adamant about the need to provide new teachers with mentored support. Notably, her concern goes beyond the novice to the students in the classroom.

We had to provide support for these teachers. There was no way we could responsibly educate children and not offer those teachers support if we were going to accept that large number of beginning teachers (3/99).

Maria credits the strength of mentoring offered to the fact that Shining Star has an on-site support office, where you can get “*informal, got a minute support*” without having to wait until your mentor comes at 3:00 on Wednesday. “*We can't optimize teacher development if they are only going to be there once a week for an hour and a half.*” A related benefit comes in Kathryn's ability to tie the work of mentoring to ongoing professional development at the site. The results, according to Maria, are new teachers whose development is markedly accelerated and students whose academic achievement is raised. Reflecting on the most recent group of teachers she recommended for tenure, she says,

They understand what the zone of proximal development is. They know how to move those kids. They know how to assess. They know that teaching is assessing, assisting, assessing, assisting. I think that happens because of the opportunities that they have here... I think having the on-site support, the ongoing professional development and the reflection on practice results in outstanding teachers, which results in stronger academic achievement among kids (3/99).

Maria's understanding of mentors' work is surprisingly sophisticated, a likely result of her training and experience as a mentor. She knows mentors are regularly in classrooms, modeling lessons and demonstrating strategies. Mentors also spend time weekly with the beginning teacher, planning for instruction and reflecting on lessons taught: What about this? How do you think it went? Have you tried this? Maria considers the mentor like a counselor, available and supportive at all times, engaged in work that goes “*deeper*” than what she has time for. Her own role, as principal, is more assessment-driven. The two roles complement one another, much like a marriage.

It is a nice match. It is a nice marriage in that I can depend on them to do what they need to do, what they do with the teachers to get them up to speed. If I need to do something else to fill in the gap, I know that I can do that. They are a tremendous help to me. I couldn't do the work that I do if I didn't have them because they deal with the day to day, the nitty-gritty details of teaching. I don't have time to do that (3/99).

Maria is quick to note that not every master teacher ought to be a mentor. In addition to a strong understanding of teaching and learning, mentors need to know when to nurture the novice and when to push their practice forward. In her words, “*nurturing needs to be thought out. It can't be just nurturing without moving teachers along.*” Maria equally understands that a fine line exists between advocacy for the beginning teacher and advocacy for the students. She adds,

My bottom line is different in that my bottom line has to do with kids...I have teacher development and I have student achievement. But I think for the mentors, their bottom line is teacher development (5/01).

Notably, Maria is the only principal in the group that had spent time shadowing a mentor. Curious about Kathryn's reported skill in mentoring¹⁴, Maria scheduled several times where she could observe Kathryn at work during the first year of this study. Maria's opinion of what she saw? “*It was amazing. You could actually see teacher development moving before your very eyes by watching this teacher... It was just elegant.*”

Balancing Assistance and Assessment

Implicit in Maria's comments is an understanding of induction that combines support and accountability. She pulls no stops in helping a new teacher develop. At the same time, she is not afraid to speak up when superior performance has not been met.

It is our responsibility to set up the most optimal conditions for them so they can be successful in their first year. That means resources, supporting them with

¹⁴ Kathryn is one of the BTSA mentors we followed in the larger study.

resources, with our own nurturing. But having high expectations of them and holding them to high standards. Not letting it go just because they're first year (6/01).

Consistent with this stance, Maria believes there are limits to the traditional coaching model advocated by the local BTSA program. In fact, she admits to having “heavy disagreements” over this point with program leaders. Her own stance is unwaivering. When a teacher fails to perform effectively, nurturing and support are not what the teacher needs most. What they need is more direct help. Her rationale? “*This is not about making people feel good... This is about kids.*”

Beliefs about Leadership

In this final section we focus on Maria’s beliefs about leadership and teacher community. Here we see how Maria’s firm commitment to protecting new teachers as learners corresponds with her preferred leadership style. We also see how it aligns with her view of teaching as intellectually challenging work.

Instructional Leadership

Maria describes her leadership style in a variety of terms. To the extent that she is there to serve students, families and teachers, she is a servant leader. To the extent that she supports good teaching, she is an instructional leader. Maria also sees herself as a shared leader.

I do a lot of building leaders. I want them to be leaders. I want them to understand, to see the school through my eyes, as though it is not just their twenty children and their classroom, and that we are here to work together as a community to educate all of the kids in the school (6/01).

However, not just anything goes. Maria will delegate tasks to her teachers, secretaries and custodians, but she still expects results that are consonant with the school vision. To the

extent it is needed, Maria will “walk” people through a task until they are able to lead effectively on their own.

I am happy to empower and do shared leadership, but I will only do that when I'm assured that you will make decisions the way that I make them... I will help you make the decisions and I'll help you make them through my lens... until I am assured that you know what my thinking is like (3/01).

As an instructional leader, Maria is confident that she knows instruction as well as any member of the staff and is eager to share what she knows with them. She explains,

My background knowledge [as a teacher educator] is my fund of knowledge. I understand teaching. That is what I have done. It would be silly of me not to pass that on to teachers (5/02).

Maria's confidence gives her license to empower teachers as leaders around matters of teaching and learning; it also ensures that she keeps sharpening the vision. She explains, as “*leader of the school and keeper of the vision, I kind of have to bring the vision back into the spotlight periodically.*” But, controlling the vision is a delicate thing, as sharing leadership for an ambitious mission is a complicated task. We see her give voice to this struggle as she ponders her role.

I am the instructional leader of this whole school and I don't want to give that up. I don't mind sharing it and I should share it, but I also feel a responsibility, a large part of my job is to understand teaching. It's not my job to only be the business manager or to be the physical plant manager. I won't give up the quality for teaching. Is that too controlling (12/99)?

Importantly, Maria continues to identify herself as a teacher. She is simply a different kind of teacher, with a different kind of student. “*I am always teaching in this job.*”

Professional Community

Maria expects all teachers to work together around a shared mission: equitable pedagogy for English language learners, and she expects teachers to maintain an open

door policy toward fellow colleagues as well as parents and members of the community. At Shining Star, teaching is public work. As a professional development school, they utilize a grade level teaming structure where inquiry into student learning plays a central role in curriculum development and instructional planning. Maria's involvement in these professional development activities, which span from preservice to novice and veteran, is not immediately noticeable. Much of the work is done by Kathryn or other teacher leaders in the building. Still, Maria's presence is very much felt. As "*keeper of the vision*," she is always guiding, directing, influencing from behind the scenes.

In closing, it is insightful to hear Maria describe the professional community she is hoping to create at Shining Star. She begins,

You start with social capital. You start with making teachers feel good about themselves and what they are doing, and making them safe, making them feel that this is a safe, risk-free environment for teaching and learning. If you set that up and do it consciously, they are going to do the work that they are about, which is intellectual knowledge (3/99).

In a later interview she elaborates on this idea, explaining the significance of building from a strong intellectual base.

My number one criteria was a teacher community that was highly intellectual. I think that the better, the smarter the teacher, the smarter the teaching. I wanted to develop a cadre of teachers that valued intellectual capital and saw that as their number one resource (6/01).

Repeating her earlier stance, Maria concludes,

...we invest heavily in building a community of learners and leaders and I do a lot of relation building with teachers. I try, I work very hard on establishing a relationship with them and having them establish relationships with each other so that we can develop an environment of trust. Then we can tackle the hard issues (6/01).

Summary Thoughts on Maria

Maria's background as a teacher educator and mentor serve her well as a principal. She has a well-articulated understanding of what good teaching is and she is skilled in knowing how to move people toward that goal. For Maria, good teaching equates with instructional skill appropriate for second language learners, emotional maturity and leadership skill. Because preservice cannot by itself adequately prepare a teacher, mentored support is needed so the novice is able *"to see what [they] see."* As principal, it is her job to create the conditions necessary for novice teacher development and to ensure that students' instructional needs are being met.

The Case of James: Building Support Structures around the Novice

When Proposition 227 passed, essentially eliminating bilingual education in California, James and his staff fought back for the sake of all kids, brown and white. Now a charter school with the district, Unity remains steadfast in its commitment to a dual language immersion model of education. Leading them forward is James, who was beginning his eleventh year as principal when the study began. Considered by his staff to be a highly effective leader, but sometimes distant in his manner, James demands nothing but the best from his staff. Slowly rising test scores suggest that he gets it.

James began his teaching career as a combined fourth and fifth grade bilingual teacher in the South County Schools. The year was 1979. A product of the nearby University of California campus, James saw teaching as a mechanism for social change. A young man bent on a vision, James' decision to become a teacher came early in his life, thanks to an influential high school teacher who believed *"one's role within the world was to create positive and good change."*

Although James did not begin teaching with thoughts of administrative work, he gradually assumed greater leadership responsibilities, first as a bilingual resource teacher, then as a head teacher. Wanting new kinds of challenges and intrigued by school-site management, James began to pursue an administrative credential.

I made a transition [when] I went from being a classroom teacher after six years to becoming a bilingual resource teacher and a head teacher... That experience got me interested in the way that the school as a whole functions... [After enrolling in an administrative credential program] I began my orientation thinking that I'd been a teacher and my interest had shifted to more of a macro level in a school and that a principal would be the kind of challenge that I was looking for (3/01).

The sense of power he feels for bringing about meaningful change at the school level keeps him coming back each year. *"It is really here at the school site where one can affect the most change and that's why the role of principal is so unique."*

In reflecting on his beginning years as principal, we see that James early on approached his work as a manager dedicated to the primacy of teaching and learning. This is illustrated in his response to the question: What did you need to learn in your first years at Unity? He replies *"budget and finance,"* then explains how important careful accounting is for accomplishing instructional goals.

It's sort of dry and not very interesting, but it's budget and finance. If you don't have a handle on your money and where it's going, number one, you can get in a lot of trouble and number two, you can create a whole lot of distractors that pull you away from what you are trying to accomplish. If you don't understand budget and finance to the extent that it supports what you're doing rather than stymies what you're trying to do (3/01).

Looking back, James wishes his leadership training had better prepared him as an instructional leader; someone skilled at leading a staff in the use of standards-based instructional strategies, consonant with the school mission, so that student learning

improved. Now a veteran administrator, he continues to struggle with this aspect of his work:

... how you translate the mission of the school in terms of the goals you've established for the students, to the curriculum on a large level, and instructional practice in terms of the strategies teachers are expected to be doing. Then, the way you provide guidance to people saying, "This is the curriculum or the standards or... the content of the different subject matters that you're teaching that they are responsible to impart and these instructional strategies are the way they are expected to do that..." (3/01).

A decade plus of experience has raised his consciousness of just how complicated and difficult the work of good instructional leadership can be. To illustrate, he shares how challenging it has been to provide leadership to a Title VII grant program, aimed at grade level teams, to articulate and coordinate the school's curricular and instructional programs through improved assessment – an effort they began more than five years ago.

Even though I think we've developed a really neat model structure for doing it, it still doesn't work anyway near as well as it should... It amazes me sometimes how long it takes to build the kind of structure that connects people's creativity and their professional ability within a structure that you design or you that try to put together that works... [But] I continue to be optimistic and hopeful that the approach we're taking, that allows for and supports a teacher's own creativity and professional ability, will yield superior results to something that looks more like a factory model with stop watches and corrections (3/01).

In this quote we can see something else worth noting. James believes in his teachers and sees them as knowledgeable and capable professionals.

Beliefs about Beginning Teaching

In the section that follows, we examine James' beliefs about beginning teaching. Consistent with Maria's self-report, we see an experienced principal who has high expectations for all teachers on staff, including his newest recruits. At the same time, like Maria, he is committed to creating a school environment where teachers are fully supported as learners. His own role in that process is more indirect. Rather than engage

personally in the messy work of curriculum and instruction, he spends the bulk of his time deliberately creating and maintaining organizational structures that support such work.

Expectations of New Teachers

Like Maria, James' expectations for the new teacher are predictable: a teaching credential, basic repertoire of instructional strategies, Spanish language skill, commitment to the mission, willingness to work collaboratively, flexibility and a sense of humor. He states, *"If you have those elements, I think we have the resources in place to support people and carry them along and continue their development so that they can be effective."* His job is to ensure that they are.

I think a new teacher coming in has to be able to perform their job. My job, number one, is to make sure they can do it. And number two, to support them in growing and developing as an educator. But they do have to be able to do the job and be effective at it. Nobody belongs in a classroom, given the needs of these students, if they can't meet the learning needs of these students (8/01).

New Teacher Learning Needs

What do novices need to learn as they *"grow and develop as an educator?"* For teachers new to Unity, understanding how the grade level team structure works is critical, as is a willingness to connect with families through home visits and parent participation in the curriculum. For James, understanding Unity's mission as a dual-immersion program and its site-specific approach to grade level teaming is an important (and time-consuming) learning need.

James also hopes that his novices will adopt and demonstrate professional habits of mind. He fears that without mentored support novices will retreat into survival mode. Mentors are a way out of that predicament.

My fear is that as an individual thrown into a classroom with a bunch of kids and having all these expectations piled on top of them that they are going to put into place habits or systems to just survive. [That] would be counterproductive.... Being in the classroom by yourself and surviving can hurt some kids...it sends you off in the wrong direction (4/99).

Recognizing the limits of preservice training and challenges of beginning teaching, James explains why mentored support is so important.

The reality is that nothing yet has made us prepare a student effectively for what they find when they land in the classroom. Preparation is important, but equally important is that support once they're in their classroom. Once they are faced with the realities and once all those very complex dynamics are experienced. Having someone that can help orient them to develop as an educator is crucial (4/99).

New Teachers as Beginners

James expects new teachers to perform effectively from the very start. “*My expectation of a rookie teacher is that they’ve received effective training at the university and that they’ve had a set of experiences that are going to allow them to be successful and effective in the classroom.*” At the same time, he knows they have much yet to learn. “*Preparation is important, but equally important is that support once they are in the classroom.*” Note the assumption of support in this statement. As beginners, James fully expects that mentors and grade level colleagues will guide them in what they need to know, namely Unity’s unique curriculum and philosophy behind it. Without it, he fears that beginning teachers will fall into survival mode rather than develop the professional habits of mind he is looking for.

Moreover, James tries to be sensitive to the needs of new teachers, understanding “*that they have tremendous challenges in front of them.*” When he gives feedback, his aim is to be positive. “*When I see something happening in [a positive] direction, I’ll underline it, I’ll be appreciative or supportive or congratulatory about whatever it*

happened to be and give positive reinforcement to it.” He does this believing that when new teachers are feeling overwhelmed and challenged, the last thing they want to hear is harsh feedback of their work.

Beliefs about Induction and Mentoring

In this section, beliefs about induction and mentoring, we see James’ respect for the work of mentors. He recognizes that, despite the new teacher’s preparation, there is much to learn during the early years. He credits mentors with helping his newest staff members learn and grow within the unique context of Unity Elementary. His own role is more evaluative.

Perspectives on Induction

For James, the process of induction is a natural step on the teacher learning continuum. Regardless of one’s preparation, *“nothing yet has made us prepare a student effectively for what they find when they land in the classroom.”* He continues, *“preparation is important, but equally important is that support once they’re in the classroom.”* How does James understand support?

First, he acknowledges that not all kinds of support are equal; simply helping the novice survive is not sufficient. Rather, effective new teacher support reinforces skillful practices and professional habits of mind that enhance student learning. Secondly, James’ understanding of new teacher support is rooted in context. Finding and keeping certified teachers, fluent in both English and Spanish, is an ongoing challenge, as is teaching a dual immersion curriculum that places high value on family involvement. James understands that if new teachers at Unity are to be successful they will need active

assistance from grade level colleagues, in-building staff developers, BTSA mentors, as well as the principal.

James recognizes new teacher support as encompassing both induction to the profession and to the site. Key to accomplishing both tasks is a team-based approach toward offering support. *“It is not just me that’s responsible for inducting the teacher, but that there is a system in place that is working to support that teacher.”*

Understanding of Mentors’ Work

Unity has enjoyed a strong and enduring relationship with both the local University of California campus and BTSA project. The school regularly hosts preservice students and has served as a pilot site for various BTSA initiatives through the years. As a result, there is considerable continuity between the various programs, despite institutional differences. According to James, things “*work in sync*” and people “*talk the same language*.” This context has unique advantages for the mentor who becomes quickly absorbed into a collaborative environment.

James’ fairly sophisticated understanding of mentors’ work comes from a combination of experience and watchfulness. More than just good teachers, James sees good mentors as being skilled in explicating instructional practices for the novice.

There are good teachers who never get beyond the ability to sort of just embrace what is going on in their classroom and the nature of the job. Other people that are good teachers achieve a certain degree of mastery which allows them not only to continue to be an effective teacher in the classroom but to be able to stand back and look at what is going on and determine why it works and to be able to articulate that and be able to share that with somebody else (4/99).

Additionally, good mentors are able to advocate for the novice, while at the same time uphold professional standards. In contrast with the principal, a traditionally powerful authority figure, mentors are more likely to serve as unconditional advocates and allies to

the novice, as *“someone to learn from, to support them and to guide them.”* Although James hopes that mentors in his building will feel comfortable sharing critical information about the novice with him, he does not expect that this will happen. Rather, he respects and honors the code of confidentiality that exists between the mentor and novice. As a result, any conversations that he has with the mentor about the novice are conducted in a sensitive and professional manner behind closed doors.

Balancing Assistance and Assessment

Balancing between offers of assistance and assessment for the beginning teacher is *“one of the challenges of being a good administrator”*, says James. Two things appear to make the task more manageable: a district evaluation system that facilitates all principals’ ability to manage both tasks and James own skill at managing the two tasks when the novice struggles.

The district’s intent, describes James, an ongoing member of the district evaluation team, is for the process to be a mechanism for teacher development. James takes this responsibility seriously, telling teachers up-front, *“the purpose of this instrument is to help you grow professionally.”* His role, as administrator, is to be *“another set of eyes in the classroom to gather information that can be shared back”* with the novice. Still, James admits that there are lots of things that can get in the way of this happening. Key is *“the principal’s ability to form a working relationship, and a sense of trust and confidence, with the teacher.”*

In the event that a novice struggles to teach well, James is careful to delineate between the two tasks. He describes this through the metaphor of wearing two hats.

I try to be as explicit as possible [with the new teacher]. As an administrator I get to wear two hats. The only hat I really want to wear is the one where I am a

professional resource to you in the development of your skills and ability. But I also have responsibility to make sure that the best teachers are in the classroom and the most competent teachers in the classroom. At such a point that I become concerned, then I switch hats and I put on a different hat and I make that very explicit. I will tell you that and I will document... I will remove myself from that other role (12/99).

Reflected in this self-report is the seriousness with which James approaches his responsibility for students, teachers and the profession broadly.

Beliefs about School Leadership

In this final section, we see James as a self-described “hands-off” instructional leader who places a high value on professional community at Unity.

Instructional Leadership

James’ commitment as a school leader is “*to realize the dream of a school that succeeds in creating children that are bilingual and biliterate.*” His role in that process is complicated, a combination of accountability agent and resource gatherer. A confident leader, he alternates between working collaboratively with teachers and community members, encouraging participation in the decision-making process, and asserting a strong leadership presence, single-handedly guiding the school in the direction of the school mission.

As an instructional leader, James holds teachers accountable to standards-based practice. Further, he expects them to work hard at achieving school goals. His role is to ensure that happens – not to teach a novice the ropes. “*Their [the new teacher] professional responsibility is to make sure instruction is taking place. It is not my job to come in and show them how to teach*” (8/01). Although at first this appears to be a contradiction (e.g. how can one claim to be an instructional leader without taking responsibility for the work of instruction?), James thinks otherwise, explaining,

I see myself as an instructional leader, but I don't see myself as a master teacher. The people I hire, I hire to be master teachers. I think I can judge good teaching and evaluate it, but I don't see myself as a better teacher necessarily. The people I have here, many of them are exceptional teachers that I couldn't hold a candle to in terms of my own practice as a classroom teacher. That is what I see my job as being: getting [and keeping] that kind of person in the classroom (5/02).

Reflecting a shift of sorts in his thinking, James' stated goal for the upcoming school year is to more skillfully and regularly engage in critical dialogue with teachers around instructional issues.

Professional Community

New teachers at Unity become socialized into a professional culture that views teaching as intellectually challenging public work. His goal is to “*go away from the isolation of the teacher,*” to “*open those doors up and have people be responsible for more than their twenty or their thirty kids.*” Moreover, teachers at Unity -- new and veteran -- are expected to continually work toward improving student achievement. His goal is to get teachers to think aloud about what they are doing, within and across grade levels.

We need to get people into their zone of proximal development and push gently, but push to constantly move them forward. The best way to do that is through critical friends, who are using critical eyes to feed the conversation and ask critical questions, so that people are thinking about what they are doing (5/02).

James credits the “*almost seamless*” way that preservice, induction and staff development activities facilitate this work around a shared standards-driven language.

James believes everyone in the building plays a unique and needed role in accomplishing the school mission. In corresponding fashion, he is at ease with redirecting and divesting leadership to others. Looking back, he notes the many ways in which staff have helped him to learn and grow as the school head.

It is the synergy that has developed among staff, especially the staff that have sort of stuck with the program over the years, learning from each other and bringing our strengths together in such a way that allows us all to grow individually but [also] collectively, since we are linked and zeroed in on what we are trying to accomplish, that gives it a common direction for us all to be headed in. It is interesting, but I'd say more than anything, it is the relationships I have had with my colleagues here at the school site... It is really what happens here, with the folks that I get to work with, [that has] moved my abilities and thinking forward (3/01).

Summary Thoughts on James

For James, good teaching equates with social change.

If you have good teaching that works, the result is social change. By having kids that are well-educated, that are able to access opportunities in their society, regardless of their background or the challenges they have in front of themselves, then education is working and doing what it is supposed to be doing... (5/02).

Because teacher development is an ongoing process, mentored support is necessary so that what gets learned is what ought to get learned during the often tumultuous early years. To that end, everyone has an important role to play. James' role as principal is to a) establish and get teachers the resources they need to grow; and b) hold teachers accountable for that growth.

The Case of Karen: Caring with a Purpose

Karen began her elementary teaching career twenty years ago in the South County School District. Despite three leaves of absence – one to work in a neighboring district, another to teach overseas and a third to pursue other interests – Karen considers the valley her home. Fluent in three languages and a product of bilingual schools, Karen knew from an early age that her passion was teaching second language children. With its large Spanish-speaking population, the South County Schools were a perfect match. Her greatest joy, first as a fourth grade teacher and now as principal, is working with kids.

Karen would likely have remained in the classroom had it not been for her four-year stint as a BTSA mentor. Her experience as a mentor drew her to staff development, which segued into administration. Although she did not consciously set out to earn an administrative credential, Karen – motivated by younger teachers who had already completed master’s degrees – was enrolled in a graduate program at the time she was working with the BTSA program. Conveniently, it was a master’s degree with the option of an administrative credential. Her positive experience as a mentor helped her to see how her instructional skills could be utilized in an administrative role. As principal, Karen’s commitment is to nurturing teacher development.

While I was a mentor with the program there was a lot of staff development, a lot of presentation skills and giving information to different groups of people. Lots of time to actually spend on new research and readings... All of a sudden, I was really interested in working at a professional development school... Administration really wasn’t what I wanted to do, but I’ve learned that there are a lot of things that I can do in this position that deal with instruction. I have some real ideas about what it takes to move people forward and how to set up an environment that is conducive to learning for both the staff and children (3/01).

When this study began, Karen was in her second year as principal at Arts Elementary.¹⁵ Located in an established rural quadrant of the district, the school has a worn look to it. Many of the students who attend Arts have parents who also attended the school as children. Parent participation in school events and decision making is strong. Recent corporate sponsorship has been used to develop a “literacy through the arts” emphasis. These funds have made it possible for the school to hire a full-time music and art teacher, as well as build a separate art center. *“There is really a focus on integrating the arts, whether it is movement, drama or music, into our literacy program, into reading and writing and expressing ourselves.”*

In spite of these initiatives, Arts was without a clear mission statement at the time this data was collected. Although Karen saw this as a useful next step, she had not yet found the time for doing so. Her main priority is protecting faculty time for curricular and instructional work. Helping her is the assistant principal/literacy specialist, also a former BTSA mentor and friend. Together they are working to gradually rebuild a collaborative culture after four years of inconsistent and shifting leadership.

If we were to look for a common theme in Karen's talk, it would be her continual focus on student learning. An insistence on putting students at the center pervades her work.

Throughout the year, with everyone in all my communications, whether it is in the weekly bulletins, or in the way we open up staff meetings, or the note that I put on the white board, it is always about kids. I think people really know that here. It's about kids and about learning (5/01).

As Karen reflects on the past four years, she admits that being the principal is taxing, what she calls a 'burn out job.' At the same time, she is hopeful that – like beginning teaching – it will get easier as she learns the ropes. Believing that she can impact larger numbers of staff and students, she stays on the job despite unending challenges and demands. When she gets down, she looks to the children and their teachers for encouragement. *"It's really the growth in children, and the dialogue that we have with staff about the good things that are happening at our school. That's the part I really like."*

Beliefs about Beginning Teaching

In the section that follows, we examine Karen's beliefs about beginning teaching. Quickly we get a glimpse of her as both a principal and mentor to new teachers.

¹⁵ Prior to joining Arts, Karen served for one year as assistant principal at a neighboring school where her

Consistent with Maria and James, Karen expects her new teachers to be skilled novices, but also willing learners. Although her own time is limited in terms of the support she can offer, Karen does what she can to directly assist in their growth and development.

Expectations of New Teachers

Karen's expectations for new teachers are consistent with Maria and James. She is looking for accomplished beginning teachers who sees themselves as team players and learners.

I expect them to know teaching strategies and techniques to support our second language learners and know something about differentiated instruction. I expect them to have a philosophy of collaboration and call on help when needed. I don't want somebody who is self-contained, who says I don't need anything. We all need lots of help. So that's really what I'm looking for. Somebody that can get along with others and have some basic methods and knows where to go for resources (Principal, 5/01).

An experienced former teacher, Karen knows new teachers have much to learn. The transition from theory to practice is not easily or quickly made. *"No matter how good a teacher preparation program is, the reality of the classroom is always a little different."*

New Teacher Learning Needs

What does Karen thinks new teachers still need to learn? As a former mentor, Karen understands the importance of helping new teachers learn basic procedures and policies.

You know, basic expectations. How we communicate with parents and what kinds of records you need to keep, where to get materials, and how to set up your schedule so everything fits (5/02).

New teachers need to learn other things as well. In addition to the basics, Karen knows that new teachers will struggle with classroom management and long-term

primary duties were staff development.

planning, at least through the first year and sometimes longer. As a former mentor, she recognizes the need for focused attention in these areas. In addition, Karen wants her beginning teachers to act in a manner that demonstrates understanding and respect for students and their families. This requires getting to know parents and their needs. *“I want them not to blame families and say parents don’t care, because parents do care.”*

New Teachers as Beginners

Karen is quick to note that she sees beginning teachers as different from their more seasoned peers. Because of their experience, she expects them to *“have some things down that a new teacher does not.”* For example, when a new teacher has a difficulty time getting students to line up quietly, Karen will offer suggestions or model more effective strategies. When a veteran teacher has a similar problem, Karen is more direct.

I do more coaching with new people than with veteran teachers. I think they need more support and I’d like to be able to draw it out from them when they don’t know something. Whereas, with an experienced teacher, I figure they need to know so I just tell them (6/01).

Asked how long it takes someone to become a master teacher, Karen responds four or five years, providing you stay at the same grade level. One of the benefits she sees from early mentored support is the desire to continue working collaboratively with peers. *“They are used to that collaborative interaction with others and their reflective conversations so they seek that out and they create their own circles of support. They set up their own network of support.”*

Beliefs about Induction and Mentoring

This next section highlights Karen’s beliefs about induction and mentoring. As one might guess of a former mentor, Karen’s understanding of mentors’ work is well-

defined. Her stated preference is to oversee the induction process and, to the extent possible, coordinate offers of assistance with the new teacher mentor.

Perspectives on Induction

Karen's understanding of new teacher support is influenced by her experience as a BTSA mentor which made visible the predictable struggles of the beginning teacher. Also influencing her understanding is the observation that teaching is becoming increasingly more complex as public expectations grow. In Karen's mind, mentors are key to helping the novice make sense of multiple demands. *"There are great expectations of the work they do that they really need to have somebody who helps them along and coaches them to be able to make sense of some of those expectations."*

With regard to her place in the induction process, Karen quickly acknowledges the centrality of mentors' work with the novice. Her role is not to supplant that relationship, but to oversee it so that *"the new teacher is willing to participate and really gets the most benefits out of the program."*

Understanding of Mentors' Work

Not surprising, Karen has an intimate understanding of mentors' work. As a former BTSA mentor, she is as capable of advising the novice as is the mentor. What she lacks is not experience, but time. Reflecting on how her support efforts differ from those of the mentor, she says,

They spend much more time. They go in much more in-depth. I wish I could do that with every teacher, but the reality is that I don't. I think it is great... to let teachers know about assessment and about ranking kids according to where they are with the standards and I don't do any of that. I really don't. My thirty minutes in the classroom is much more superficial (5/01).

However, Karen will make the time when needed or asked. She particularly welcomes the opportunity to work with the mentor in providing coordinated support, especially when the new teacher struggles. For example, she appreciates an invitation to drop in the classroom and look for a specific problem or challenge. Likewise, she wants to be alerted when a new teacher does not appear to be well-suited for teaching. If so, her hope is that mentor and principal will work together to develop a pre-assistance plan which may even move toward counseling the novice into another profession. At the same time, she is aware that these are highly sensitive issues that require case by case problem-solving.

Balancing Assistance and Assessment

As a new principal, one of Karen's greatest challenges is in knowing how to balance offers of assistance with honest feedback about performance. In our first interview she talks about what makes this difficult, some of which can be traced back to her experience as a mentor where she learned the importance of trusting relationships, thoughtful support and patience.

The concerns that I have, it is a real struggle for me to think about how to phrase that so as not to turn them away and really my goal is to work with them. I know that some of the things that they have is typically new teacher stuff. With enough support and with time, they will develop those management skills and they will develop their presence with the students, but it is not something that is going to happen overnight (12/99).

With practice and the help of her principal mentor, Karen is learning how to be more assertive in her evaluations. Putting kids first makes this easier.

I definitely am more comfortable because you can't dance around it. I don't have the time to dance around it and my goal is to make sure that students are receiving instruction (3/01).

Beliefs about School Leadership

In this final section, we look at Karen's beliefs about school leadership. Here we see how Karen's commitment to new teacher development parallels that of all teachers. Her goal is to create an environment where not only children learn, but teachers as well.

Beliefs about Instructional Leadership

Karen sees herself as a collaborative leader. At the same time, *"not everything goes."* Her intent is to work with teachers to craft a shared vision, asserting her authority as needed to stay the course. *"I think of myself as gathering all the input and doing research and allowing staff to kind of go the course that we've agreed on, with some parameters that I've put along the way, so we don't deviate from the course."*

Guiding her work is an abiding concern for students and what best serves their needs. When asked where this commitment comes from, Karen consistently replies, *"I am a teacher."* Notably, she considers herself one of a *"new generation"* of principals; one where *"we are more data driven and know instruction because we all taught."* We see how the combination of teaching knowledge and skill come together as Karen reflects on her style as an instructional leader.

I feel like I really know teaching and I know strategies. So when we talk about how do you move the school forward... you have got to see what is in the classroom and you have got to look for people who are doing effective instruction. Then you have got to open those classrooms so that other people can see effective instruction (5/01).

As Karen looks back over the past three years, she notes her growing confidence with letting others take on greater leadership responsibility. Whereas in her first year she needed to know every detail of every activity, she now realizes

I can't fix it all, so why even try? It is totally okay to let somebody else do it, but to be supportive... it feels like there has been growth in me. I do not have to have my hands in all of it (5/02).

Professional Community

Karen wants to be viewed by her staff as an equal partner in the education of young people. Moreover, she wants Arts to be a collaborative community, “*one that understands research-based instruction and knows that using data is the best way to increase student achievement.*” She stresses,

I'd love there to be just a collegiality between all of us. It doesn't matter what hat you wear, who you are. We are all here for the same reasons. It is really to provide quality instruction to our students (12/99).

To this end, Karen works hard to facilitate sharing among staff about what is happening in the building. The bottom line is always the same: improving student learning. She encourages teachers to visit each other's classrooms, sometimes reading to children so teachers are free to move about the building. She posts notes in the faculty room that highlight the good things she observes others doing. She incorporates discussions about curriculum into staff meetings, as well as the examination of test score data. A future goal is to sanction time for more grade level teaming around test results.

Our staff meetings are structured around looking at data and analyzing data, having conversations about what needs to happen, identifying areas where students are not strong, planning activities and strategies that will support them learning and gaining skills in the areas that they are the weakest in (6/01).

Summary Thoughts on Karen

For Karen, good teaching is data-driven. She continually asks, “*Have our students moved? If they haven't moved, what do we need to put in place so that we move them?*” As principal and school head, Karen moves this agenda forward via the tone she sets and the professional culture she is striving for. As a former teacher/mentor, Karen recognizes

the need for new teachers to have mentored support, particularly to overcome over the hurdles they will likely face.

The Case of Ramon: Learning to Support New Teachers

Ramon began his education as a young boy at Valley Elementary, the same school he now leads. A long-standing member of the Latino community and product of the South County Schools, Ramon is respected by parents and peers for what he has accomplished and for the example he sets. According to a mentor who works in the school,

He has a tremendous amount to offer that school. He grew up in that community. He went to that school in its former building. The parents are his peers, his relatives. He's a really strong role model for the kids (5/01).

In his own words, *"I just wanted to be a teacher, a good teacher, and come back to my community where I grew up and work with the kids in my neighborhood."* Initially, Ramon had no interest in administrative work. It was the repeated urging of colleagues, as well as the positive experiences he had each year as a summer school head teacher, that eventually changed his mind.

It was very exciting to work with new teachers [to the program] and every year we had a focus. It could be setting kids up to go to the university, or a focus on literacy, or focusing on culture. I like those themes, so it motivated me to apply every year to be a summer school principal (3/01).

Ramon graduated from the local University of California campus with a sociology degree. Soon after he began earning credits toward a teaching credential while also working with migrant children and their families through a local school-based program. He assumed his first full-time teaching position in 1986; six years later he was honored by the district for excellence in developing and implementing a students-at-risk program. Through the years, Ramon has served South County as a fourth and fifth grade teacher,

bilingual resource teacher, student teacher supervisor, summer school head teacher and assistant principal. He was beginning his second year as principal at Valley Elementary when the study began.

As Ramon reflects on the past three years, he is quick to note the difficulties and challenges he has faced: repeated low scores on state achievement tests; district demands for improvement with minimal support; a disproportionate number of new teachers on staff; faculty who resist collaborative work; state mandates that fly in the face of sound educational practice for non-English speaking students. The principalship at Valley would be a challenge for even the most skilled administrator. It has been especially hard on Ramon. There are many days when he feels overwhelmed as a school leader.

Ramon took over Valley Elementary at a time when student scores in English on state achievement tests were significantly below state and district targets. At the same time, he replaced a well-liked principal who was known for her strong instructional leadership. Ramon's own reputation comes largely from his work with at-risk students and their families; arguably, an area of expertise needed for this struggling school. The expectation is that Ramon will raise test scores and unify his staff around that mission. Two years ago the school began intensive work with outside consultants in order to improve its academic program. Ramon hopes that through collaborative work, careful data analysis, and some restructuring they will be able to reach their goals. At the time data collection ended, faculty morale was better but student scores had failed to improve. The good news was that they did not get worse.

Although Ramon has completed coursework for an administrative credential, he credits much of what he needed to learn to experience and coaching. Like Karen, he has

been fortunate to be assigned an administrative coach. He looks to this mentor for answers to routine questions, insight on dilemmas, and general counsel. Ramon also appreciates the professional development offered to new administrators by the district. For example, after a recent workshop on the evaluation process, Ramon invited the district facilitator to sit in on one of his post-observation conferences so that she could offer feedback on his communication skills. Because his administrative coach and the evaluation trainer work closely with the local BTSA project, Ramon hears a consistent message from not only his coach and the trainer, but also new teacher mentors. He comments,

The [local BTSA program] has made me think about teaching supervision; the supervision of teachers, not as an administrator, but as a coach. That is what I've learned the most. Not to go into a classroom with my administrator's hat on and look at all the wrong things. But going into the class and looking at things and working with teachers to improve, not to evaluate. If you're going to be a team, you have to be a coach. So, yes, it has taught me how to see things differently as an administrator. Not to give negative judgements about what is being taught, but to help the teacher and I work together towards the common cause (6/01).

At the same time, Ramon is quick to acknowledge that putting one's beliefs into practice is not as easy. The many other responsibilities he has as site administrator for fifty staff members, six hundred and fifty kids, and many more parents tend to get in the way. Identifying, understanding and addressing facility needs (e.g. new storage containers for playground equipment) consumes much of his time as a new principal. When "you're put in a principal position, you find out that you've learned only twenty percent about what being a principal is about." As a teacher, these were things he rarely needed to pay attention to; as principal, he can ill afford not to pay attention.

When asked what challenges him the most as an administrator, Ramon shares his struggle with interpersonal communication skills.

The most challenging for me, something that I was not prepared for was working with people. I read a lot about what to expect, but once the person is in front of you, then you can't take out your book and say, "I read about you"... One of [the things I need to learn] is how to be a good communicator. How to express myself clearly... It's really important for me to work on those skills (3/01).

Ramon returned to the classroom for a year after his first job as an assistant principal because he missed teaching. He found his way back, but the journey has not been without challenges and struggles. For Ramon, the principalship can be a daunting proposition. *"You're expected to be perfect. You're expected to know everything."*

Beliefs about Beginning Teaching

In this section we trace Ramon's professed beliefs about beginning teaching. Although he comes to the principalship with ten years of teaching experience, he is less able than the other three to articulate his understanding of new teacher learning needs. As the following discussion will illustrate, Ramon knows what he wants from his new teachers, but is less clear about what it will take to realize such expectations. Wisely, he looks to his new teacher mentors for insight and guidance.

Expectations of New Teachers

When asked what he expects beginning teachers to know and be able to do, Ramon nominates *"good teaching."* He explains,

Good teaching is good teaching. I mean, if you have a good teacher you can have the lousiest curriculum; but still the kids will learn because it is all about teaching. That's what we want to focus on (5/01).

I probe further, asking what this means. His reply hints at more than pedagogical expertise and skill. At its core, *"good teaching"* implies a rapport with children coupled with high academic expectations.

Good teaching is not only curriculum, good teaching is having a rapport with students, having a vision about where you want the kids to be as far as academics,

socially, and preparing them for life. Have a dream for them and cultivate a dream in them. That's good teaching... You can have the best curriculum, but if you don't know how to teach and how to relate to kids, they won't do anything. They won't communicate with you (5/02).

For Ramon, good teaching is fundamentally linked with skill in relating to students.

New Teacher Learning Needs

When asked what beginning teachers need to learn, Ramon highlights the personal characteristics he hopes to see develop in new teachers, specifically a willingness to take risks and learn from mistakes. He sees new teachers as well-prepared in theory, but lacking in practical experience. Adopting the stance of a learner better enables the novice to bridge that gap.

They come well-prepared...they come with all the tools. They know how to use them. But this is reality... how to be risk takers at times and not take the job so personal that if one lesson doesn't go well, that it's not the end of the world. You move on and you learn by it (12/99).

To be successful at Valley Elementary, Ramon believes beginning teachers need to understand students and hold high expectations for them. This is a priority for all teachers, but especially those who are not familiar with the Spanish language and Latino culture.

For a teacher to come to our site they need to come to know our culture, the language, the people. To understand them; not feel sorry for them... When I grew up, back then, in the early 60's, I was treated as the poor little Mexican. El pobrecito. He's in poverty. He has all these needs, so we'll just pass him along. What happens is that years pass and kids don't benefit from school because they were treated as not being able to succeed. So teachers who come to our school have to think of another culture, another language and treat the kids like they are able to succeed in whatever comes their way (5/02).

New Teachers as Beginners

When asked how long it takes a novice to become a master teacher, Ramon is quiet for a time, then responds:

It's an individual kind of thing. A fast paced teacher will be about her third year. But to be a real master teacher, you have at least ten years (5/01).

Reflecting on his own teaching experience, Ramon is quick to note that he falls short of master status. He always felt there was more he could learn to better reach his students. One difference between then and now, however, is the presence of trained mentors. Remembering his own early years, Ramon deeply appreciates what mentors can offer new teachers in his building.

Beliefs about Induction and Mentoring

This section looks at Ramon's beliefs about induction and mentoring. Here we see a new principal with limited knowledge about local mentoring practices and little time for learning more.

Perspectives on Induction

Given the turnover in staff Valley has experienced in recent years, Ramon recognizes the need for new teacher support. He also acknowledges his role in making sure that such support is provided. At the same time, he considers the induction of newcomers as a task the entire staff is responsible for. This fits with his preferred image of a collaborative, team-based school where he is part of a larger school-wide process. Asked to define induction, his explanation lacks the detail common to the other study participants. *"It means not only having a classroom and students and books, but also learning about colleagues and resources that we have and collaboration and that kind of thing."* He freely admits that his own offers of support are limited: *"I ask how it is going, let me know if you need anything, going into their classroom and just being there for the teacher."* Support that goes beyond these initial gestures, e.g. curriculum development, are left to grade level colleagues and BTSA mentors.

Understanding of Mentors' Work

Although Ramon is a former mentor under the California Mentor Teacher Project, he has never had the opportunity to observe a BTSA mentor at work, nor has he attended BTSA-sponsored functions specially designed for principals. We might attribute some of this to his inexperience as a principal. Skill in supporting, developing and assessing new teachers is not an expectation placed on many new principals, Ramon included.

When asked what he thinks mentors do, Ramon has an idea based on what he has heard from others. In contrast with Maria, James and Karen, his description favors logistical and emotional support over ongoing instructional development.

BTSA provides a lot of, not only training, but in-class visitation, feedback on lessons. [Mentors] are experienced teachers going into the classroom of beginning teachers and... their experience is shared with the new teachers. For example, they share about their first year of teaching and how it was back then and just letting the teachers know that what they are going through is normal for getting a new job, working with kids and being in control of thirty students. Being in control of how the lesson plan looks, what the objectives are and the responsibility of the academic growth of the individuals. All of that they share with the mentors. The mentors guide them and make suggestions (12/99).

Balancing Assistance and Assessment

Ramon never directly addresses the divide between assistance and assessment in our interviews. That there might be a conflict of interest never occurs to him; at least not during our conversations about it. Perhaps this should not surprise us. Ramon's failure to see a tension between assistance and assessment seems to be symptomatic of his practice more generally with respect to new teachers and their mentors. His efforts to support new teachers are largely symbolic and his evaluation practice routine. During the years of this study, Ramon was admittedly overwhelmed. Targeting the needs of new teachers was not something he had the time or eagerness to do; not because it was unimportant, but

because of the many other things that needed attending to. Rallying the entire staff to raise test scores was a more pressing and immediate need. In fact, their survival as a school rested on that.

Beliefs about School Leadership

In this final section we examine Ramon's beliefs about school leadership. Like James, Ramon reports taking a more indirect, hands-off approach to instructional leadership. Nonetheless, he advocates for a strong and collaborative professional community at Valley.

Instructional Leadership

As a leader, Ramon wants to actively involve others in the decision-making process. Having worked under principals who adopted a more authoritarian stance, he is convinced that cooperation and collaboration are key to raising scores and improving the climate at Valley. He did not anticipate, however, the resistance he would face when he joined the staff three years ago. Rather than working together to determine next steps, he found teachers asking him to make decisions on their behalf. Three years later, things seem to be better. With time, Ramon is refining his leadership style and together, he and his staff are adjusting their expectations of one another.

Ramon is admittedly frustrated as an instructional leader. While he wants to have a stronger instructional presence in the school, he lacks the time needed to work in-depth with his teachers on curricular issues. This is compounded by his belief that instructional leaders are also instructional experts. If one is not actively teaching, then one must be well read, and if one is neither, then instructional leadership comes up short. *"How can*

you be a curriculum leader if all your experience is what you read in a book without really practicing it?" He continues,

When I get together with teachers and talk about curriculum...I feel kind of like, why should I put my two cents into something that they are into already? They know the kids, they know the curriculum, and so I kind of feel left out (3/01).

That Ramon should feel this way prevents him from taking an active and more importantly, a confident role in instructional leadership.

Professional Community

As stated above, Ramon is working hard to institute a collaborative professional culture at Valley where teaming is an expected part of the culture. With the help of an under-performing schools grant, groups of teachers are being trained to work in teams and structures are being put into place for horizontal and vertical teaming. Staff meetings are regularly scheduled to look at student work with the purpose of identifying instructional strategies that will raise student achievement. Ample opportunities for professional learning are being provided to teachers.

To date, their success is mixed. The good news is that morale is reportedly on the rise. It seems that Ramon and his staff are learning how to co-exist and work together. That test scores have remained stable is a welcome sign. Ramon remains hopeful this will unlock the school's potential. He looks to the past year's success in planning meaningful staff meetings as a good omen.

The principal is not the only person who is speaking. It is colleagues presenting, looking at student achievement through the eyes and voices of teachers – not necessarily somebody else. That is new, their own voice speaking (5/02).

Summary Thoughts on Ramon

For Ramon, good teaching is dependent on building rapport with kids, teaching skillfully with heart, and incorporating theory into practice. Like many principals, Ramon looks to his new teacher mentors to help novices become good teachers, link theory with practice and learn from experience. Curiously, his work with mentors seems to trigger an interest in and responsiveness to new teacher needs.

Cross-Case Discussion: What Stands Out?

The four elementary principals in this study differ from one another in terms of personal background, professional experience, culture, gender; differences that mirror the administrative population at large. At the same time, these four principals share similar professional experiences and professional commitments in a setting that cares about new teacher growth and development. What does the data teach us about effective principal support of new teachers? Additionally, what does the data tell us about the factors that enable and constrain principal support of new teachers? In the section that follows I reflect on these questions in light of the data shared thus far.

Common Background, Shared Commitments

The four individuals in this study share a common background and bring similar commitments to their work as principals. Three patterns are particularly strong: 1) teaching and mentoring as valued work; 2) professional motivation and commitment to “these” kids; and 3) stance as a learner.

Teaching and Mentoring as Valued Work

All four principals are former teachers. James had the least amount of classroom experience with seven years, while Maria and Karen spent nearly two decades in the classroom prior to becoming principals. Each was accomplished in his or her own setting:

James for his work as a bilingual resource in his building; Maria and Karen for their work in literacy; Ramon for his work with at-risk students and their families. In addition, all four served as mentors to new teachers during their tenure as classroom teachers: James and Ramon through the California Mentor Teacher Project, Maria and Karen through BTSA.

Presumably, these experiences have helped to cultivate among the four a deep respect for the work of teachers, an understanding of how difficult good teaching is, and an acknowledgement of the critical role mentors can play in promoting new teacher development. There is little doubt that these four individuals value the work of teaching and mentoring.

Professional Motivation and Commitment

Furthermore, each principal entered teaching with a passion for working with non-English speaking children in school settings. Becoming a teacher was a career move, not merely a job. For Maria and Ramon, Latino members of the community, it was about serving their people. Similarly, Karen was drawn to teaching through her experience with being a bilingual student in an unfamiliar cultural setting. James was fulfilling a call to serve, first given by a ninth grade teacher who challenged him to make a difference in the world.

Notably, none of these four individuals began teaching with the dream of being a principal. Rather, each gradually assumed more responsibility, first as teachers, then as teacher leaders. Becoming a principal was a likely next step, one that was encouraged by their peers. As principals, each has adopted a style of leadership that is part managerial and part instructional, depending on what needs are most pressing at any given time.

James and Maria describe their work as leaders with confidence and ease; experience seems to have served them well. Karen and Ramon are more tentative in their responses. As new principals, they are still finding their way. Regardless, each uses their role as principal and school head to enact a personal and professional commitment to serving this student population well.

Stance as a Learner

Finally, each describes him or herself as a combined leader, teacher and learner. Notably, all four are quick to recall their first identity as teacher. Moreover, they each express a desire to keep learning and growing in ways that will improve teaching and learning in their building. Maria is eager to attend workshops with her teachers so she stays current. Maria and James regularly poll their staff for insight into their performance as administrators. Karen and Ramon look to their administrative coach for help through their turbulent early years. Ramon even looks to the new teacher mentors in the building for guidance. Although Ramon is perhaps the least clear about what he needs to get better at, each of these individuals acknowledges his or her weak areas and works to improve them.

In addition, each understands and values teamwork. This helps to explain why James and Maria are working to sustain collaborative professional cultures in their respective buildings, and why Karen and Ramon are striving to create such an environment for their staff. Of critical importance, all four consider teacher development a necessary first step toward improving student achievement. These are not principals who eagerly adopt professional development packages. Rather, they are actively – if not

always effectively – working with the teachers in their building to create situated learning opportunities for teachers that will enhance learning opportunities for kids.

That fact that these four individuals share a common background and similar commitments is important. Always learning, these former teachers have logged forty-eight years of classroom time. Each has served as a new teacher mentor, suggesting that they not only took an interest in new teachers, but were trusted by their peers to serve in such a role. All four entered the education field with the hope of making a difference, one Spanish-speaking child after another.

Explaining Principal Action or Inaction

Nonetheless, as the mini-cases begin to illustrate, the four principals in this study conceive of and report enacting their responsibility for new teacher support in differing ways. What explains their action, and in some cases, their inaction? Moreover, what contributes to their desire (or hesitancy) to support new teachers? Three factors are considered in this section: 1) the role of school context; 2) principal understanding of new teacher learning needs; 3) leadership preference and skill.

Role of School Context

School context likely plays a key role in shaping how these four principals think about new teacher support.¹⁶ All four see teaching as professional work that demands inquiry and reflection around shared expectations. All four talk at length about wanting to create a professional culture that values ongoing learning and teamwork in their building. Translating such beliefs into practice, however, is more difficult. All four schools have large numbers of students who have limited English skills. Human and material resources

¹⁶ My understanding of school context is based on multiple data sources, including on-site interviews with new teachers, mentors, district and program officials over three years.

are limited. In a state where bilingual education has been virtually eliminated, the added pressure of meeting state mandates is at times overwhelming.

James and Maria, as experienced principals, have been able to create and sustain professional cultures in their buildings that value learning. It helps that both Unity and Shining Star are led by a clearly defined and shared mission. Although Unity continues to struggle in its efforts to raise student test scores, staff are encouraged by their progress. There is sense that everyone is in it together.

Karen and Ramon, as new principals, are each working toward the same end, but under different circumstances. Karen is slowly bringing her teachers together, although they remain without a clearly articulated vision. That they were without a principal for the four years prior to her appointment contributes to why she is moving slowly, but deliberately toward change. Solid scores on recent state tests bolster the sense of positive forward energy that Karen is hoping to build on. Ramon, on the other hand, is clearly faced with the most challenges of all four administrators. Not only has his school failed to meet district and state testing targets in recent years, there has been an exodus of veteran teachers from the building. Building a collaborative culture with a large numbers of new teachers while under the threat of district takeover would be challenging for any new administrator. Ramon is struggling for good reason. That his new teachers feel a lack of principal support should not surprise us.

Moreover, the principals in this study were equally influenced by their immediate context. Although all four principals worked in the same state and district, under the same set of guidelines, expectations and mandates, each building takes on a flavor of its own. When general building needs (e.g. curriculum alignment, discipline, testing) were

pressing, new teacher needs took a backseat. We see this to some extent in the Karen case, but especially in the case of Ramon. However, when building needs are being met, new teacher growth and development can rise as a priority. This explains Maria's commitment to keeping new teachers efforts focused on the classroom. In the case of James, we see how the special needs of the building require the full participation of new teachers, but in a supportive setting that recognizes and affirms their needs as beginners. Although we might reasonably argue that school leaders can rise above a range of difficult circumstances, the weight of pressing demands likely restrains principals' ability to attend to the needs of new teachers in their building.

Understanding of New Teacher Needs

What do principals believe new teachers most need to learn and how do they best learn that? Principal perceptions of new teacher learning needs likely shape their response to the new teacher. The four principals in this study agree that new teachers are learners and beginners. None of them expect the new teacher to have achieved excellence prior to their appointment as full-time teachers; rather, all four acknowledge the situated nature of learning to teach while on the job.

Interestingly, all four principals embrace South County's growth-oriented evaluation process. James, a member of the committee that developed the process, is the most articulate about the principal's role in evaluation. Rather than place himself immediately in the role of evaluator, he opts instead to be "*an extra set of eyes and ears,*" gathering information according to the beginner's individual learning plan. Even Ramon is learning to recognize the learning opportunities implicit in the district evaluation process.

But while all four talk about new teachers as learners and beginners, and the situated nature of learning through experience, Maria and Karen are the best prepared at identifying novice learning needs. They are quick to see when a novice is struggling, as well as pinpoint the cause of the problem. As former BTSA mentors, both women are attuned to what is likely to be difficult and when, for whom. In contrast, James defers to his veteran teachers – whom he considers more expert than himself – to compensate for his lack of recent classroom experience. He intentionally builds support structures around his teachers so that their needs are met. Of the four, Ramon is the least likely to see new teacher needs without prompting. The sheer busyness of being the principal in a challenging environment robs his attention. So he looks to his mentors to coach him; to tell him what the novice needs and how he can meet that need. Although Ramon is learning, he has not yet positioned himself or his staff to see and react to new teacher learning needs as they emerge.

It is interesting to note, when asked who is most responsible for providing new teacher induction, each of these principals nominated themselves. Even though they respect and value the work of mentors, they take their role as school head seriously. Something as important as new teacher support can not be left to one person alone. New teacher support needs everyone's involvement – principals included.

Leadership Preference and Skill

Leadership preference and skill is a third factor that may influence how these four principals conceive of and report enacting new teacher support. James and Ramon, the two men in this study, are not considered especially warm and nurturing by their respective staffs. Maria and Karen, on the other hand, are seen by their staff to be

congenial and supportive. It follows that James and Ramon adopt a more hands-off style of instructional leadership, as contrasted with the hands-on approach favored by Maria and Karen. Their respective understanding of new teacher learning needs, as well as their confidence as instructional leaders, further explains the differences among their preferred styles.

We might also attribute their leadership preference to experience and setting. James and Maria are veteran administrators who have found their niche and are widely regarded as effective leaders. It would not be fair to expect the same of Karen or Ramon at this point in their careers, as both are still figuring out how to assert their authority and power. For Karen, this becomes an issue in the context of evaluation as she learns to be more assertive in the evaluation process. For Ramon, it becomes an issue as he strives to coalesce his staff around a shared mission.

Regardless, common to all four individuals is a commitment to serving bilingual students and their families. Administrative work was a natural next-step for these skilled and knowledgeable former teachers, and instructional leadership an obvious means for accomplishing their goals. But as illustrated in the individual cases, their administrative training lacked clear descriptions of what effective instructional leadership looks like and how it might be attained. As a result, each principal was on his or her own to carve their path through the territory. Maria and Karen do so in an abridged mentor version. James does it around the edges, establishing support structures that others will enact. Ramon does it in fits and starts, often in response to the urging of in-building mentors.

Closing Thoughts

This chapter highlights principal beliefs vis a vis new teacher support, development and evaluation. In addition to examining underlying assumptions, attempts were made to explain the personal and contextual factors that are likely to influence principal ideas and actions. While all four principals share a similar background, including a) well-established teaching careers and experience in mentoring new teachers, b) a commitment to second language learners, and c) a natural willingness to keep learning on the job; three distinct observations emerge from this analysis. Collectively, they raise questions about principals' willingness and ability to effectively enact new teacher support.

First, we see the important role the context and setting played. New teacher support is difficult to enact in the face of other more pressing demands. We see this most clearly with Ramon. Even then, a principal needs a clear sense of what it is that new teachers most need to learn and how they might best learn that. Without this understanding, new teacher needs are likely to go unnoticed. For Maria and Karen, extended experiences with mentoring seem to serve as the background for this understanding. Finally, to effectively enact new teacher support, a principal must possess the requisite skills in promoting and developing novice teacher development. If not, as we see in the case of James, they might best acknowledge their limitation by getting out of the way so that more skilled others (e.g. mentors) can do the job.

Lurking in the shadows of this analysis are two unanswered questions: To what extent is principals' reported practice consistent or congruent with these espoused beliefs? And, to what extent do principal beliefs guide and predict effective support of new teachers? Although the data is limited by self-report, the next two chapters begin to

address these questions by focusing on principals' reported practice, first with new teachers, then with their mentors.

Chapter 4:

Principals Supporting New Teachers

The most difficult part of the first year was in understanding the expectations of the principal. I didn't know what to expect. What was the role of the principal and how was I to relate? At the beginning all I saw the principal do was act as a welcomer. Here's the school. Good luck. I didn't know what his role was, his expectations for me, and how I could expect him to react. I wanted to know his philosophy, expectations for me, his values for education, students, and expectations for quality teaching. I was left on my own to develop a style of teaching and classroom management. I hoped that it was one that he approved of.

~ New Teacher (Brock & Grady, 2001, p. 6)

Chapter Overview

This second data chapter explores the question: *How do principals report enacting their roles and responsibilities vis a vis new teachers?* In other words, what do principals report doing on behalf of new teachers? Moreover, what factors enable this work? The chapter is organized into three main sections. The first introduces a conceptual framework for thinking about principals' work with new teachers that includes recruitment, hiring and placement; managing the environment and resource assistance; instructional development and evaluation; and building a professional culture. This framework becomes the basis for the mini-cases that follow. In conclusion, four summary findings are offered: a) although principal involvement varies, the little things add up; b) supportive principals attend to individual needs and are careful to lay the foundation for a working relationship with the novice; c) supportive principals structure the evaluation process to be a learning opportunity; and d) new teacher support can come through the direct, hands-on involvement of principals, as well as via a more indirect, hands-off approach; more important, however, is that principals' know when to get out of mentors' way.

Introducing a Principal Support Framework

I recently asked a group of professional educators, many of whom were staff developers, what they most wanted from their principals as new teachers.¹⁷ Their responses were predictable. These no-longer-new teachers remembered wanting an orientation that included a clear explanation of their role and responsibilities, as well as that of the principal. They wanted recognition, praise, and constructive feedback. They wanted principals to listen to their needs and concerns, to set a tone in the building that indicated it was okay to ask questions and take risks, and they wanted to be treated as adults, even peers. These former new teachers wanted time to meet and work with other colleagues. They especially wanted to be treated like beginners, with reasonable expectations, plus time to grow and develop as a teacher. Most striking to me about this exchange is the significance of seemingly small gestures that collectively invoke a culture of professional work.

I focus this chapter around the question of what principals *do*, believing that before we can appropriately prescribe changes to practice (should we want to do so) we must first understand principal support of beginning teachers as it naturally occurs. As every new teacher soon learns, effective principals help to make the tasks of beginning teaching easier. But, what characterizes the work of principals who are recognized for their efforts with and on behalf of new teachers? The principal support framework that follows outlines a range of tasks principals might engage in to support new teachers. These tasks are drawn from the literature on induction and mentoring, new teacher policy

¹⁷ Interactive Session, "Principals Supporting Role in New Teacher Induction", at the annual meeting of the National Staff Development Council, December 5, 2001 in Denver, Colorado.

and principal leadership, and are enhanced by study data.¹⁸ They include: recruitment, hiring and placement; site orientation and resource assistance; managing the environment; relationship building; instructional development; new teacher evaluation; and facilitating supportive school contexts.

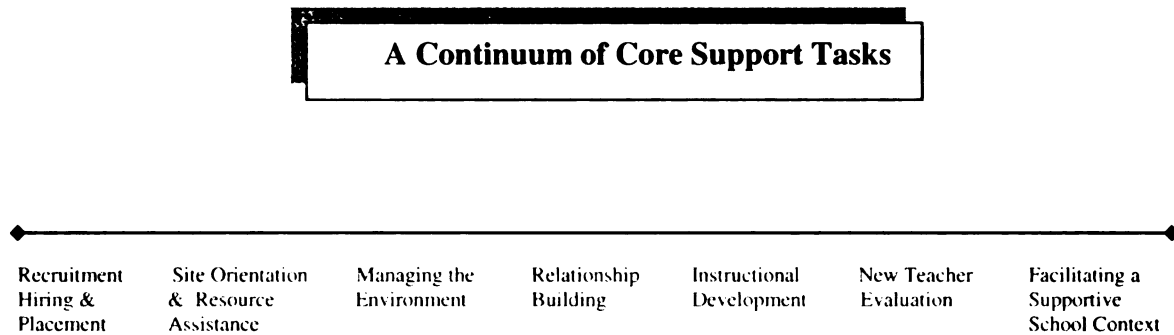
My purpose in introducing this framework and accompanying continuum, illustrated below in Figure 2, is to identify the range of activities principals might engage in to support new teacher and their mentors.¹⁹ I say might because the four principals in this study were selective about what they did, and in some cases, did not do. I would assume this to be true of most principals. Arguably, principal effectiveness is due in part to the choices one makes. Building on preliminary findings identified in the previous chapter, we will soon discover that the principals in this study weighed alternatives, selecting the option most suited to a) their understanding of the school context, including resources available; b) their perceptions of new teacher learning needs; and c) their preferred leadership style.

¹⁸ Note, many of the recommendations drawn from the literature are written from an advocacy position and not based on empirical evidence. Also, because a limited amount of data was reviewed and only four principals sampled this should not be considered an exhaustive list.

¹⁹ The continuum might alternately be cast as a wheel since there is no chronological basis for this ordering, except that hiring comes first and evaluation last. Also, this continuum is meant only as a generic listing of activities or strategies principals might engage in. As a result, elementary and secondary, urban and rural, public and non-public principals are considered as equals, as well as those who may play different roles within a building, e.g. principal and assistant principal.

Figure 2:

**PRINCIPALS SUPPORTING NEW TEACHERS:
*A CONTINUUM OF CORE SUPPORT TASKS***



In the text that follows, I outline these tasks or strategies, highlighting their importance for new teacher support and development. Keep in mind, the four principals in this study did not do, nor advocate all of these strategies. Instead, they did what they could, when they could. More important, none of these principals considered new teacher support an added aspect of their work. Rather, they incorporated these strategies willingly and naturally into their daily routines. For these four individuals, supporting new teachers was part of the job. At the same time, as will become increasingly clear, not all four principals were equally effective in their efforts.

New Teacher Recruitment, Hiring and Placement

The first step or link in the continuum highlights decisions made regarding a new teacher's placement at a grade level and/or in a department, their physical classroom space and/or students; extra assignments, such as coaching or committee work; and when

applicable, the formal assignment of a mentor teacher. These responsibilities are traditionally assumed (or at least coordinated) by a site administrator.

A great deal has been said in recent years about the need for change in the area of new teacher recruitment, hiring and placement, and yet there is little evidence that the recommended changes are being implemented (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999). The argument holds that new teachers should be recruited aggressively and the hiring process streamlined so that novices have a chance to settle in long before the school year begins (Brock & Grady, 2001; Darling-Hammond, Berry, Haselkorn, & Fideler, 1999; NCTAF, 1996; Villani, 2002). Once hired, it is critical that they be placed in their area of expertise and licensure (Darling-Hammond et al., 1999; Odell & Huling, 2000); that they be provided adequate resources to meet their needs; and that extra duties and responsibilities be limited (Bloom & Davis, 2001; Brock & Grady, 2001). In a nutshell, administrators should see that new teachers are given assignments that optimize their chance of success, e.g. their own classroom; single grade classes; limited preparations, limited extra curricular responsibilities, smaller class sizes (CTC/CDE, 1997b). Finally, it is critical that challenging students be distributed equally among all sections, rather than “dumped” in the beginner’s classroom (DePaul, 2000).

Site Orientation and Resource Assistance

Once hired and placed, all new teachers need to become acquainted with the rules, procedures and policies of a building and access needed resources, both material and human. Examples of support that address this need include a building-level orientation at the opening of the school year as well as efforts to assist the novice in acquiring needed

resources. Such responsibilities are often ascribed to principals in collaboration with other staff.

Of all the recommendations found in the literature, the one most commonly cited is that of a principal-arranged orientation which overview policies, procedures and resources available at the site (Bloom & Davis, 2001; Brock & Grady, 2001; CTC/CDE, 1997b; DePaul, 2000; NCTAF, 1996; Portner, 2001; Villani, 2002). Orientations may also be the recommendation most likely to be implemented, as few can argue with the logic. Arranging an orientation for new employees not only makes good sense, it is fairly easy to accomplish. Additional recommendations include assigning in-building mentors (Darling-Hammond, 1999; NCTAF, 1996); helping to establish an informal support network for the novice and providing adequate and needed resources and supplies, especially when the novice is in a challenging setting (CTC/CDE, 1997b; DePaul, 2000).

Managing the Environment

This category may be easily overlooked, as the responsibility for managing the environment is typically left to the classroom teacher. However, providing support is inclusive of more than pointing someone in the direction of the teacher lounge. For many newcomers, trusting that the school context will be physically maintained and that students are expected to behave in an orderly fashion can be very reassuring. As the pseudo-plant manager, principals are the ones to provide such oversight.

It is widely believed that the first and biggest problem of beginning teaching is classroom organization and management (see Veenman, 1984; Wong, 1998). Therefore, it is not surprising that principals are encouraged to facilitate a disciplined school

environment so that the novice can concentrate on teaching students, as opposed to simply managing them (DePaul, 2000).

Relationship-Building

Although principals are busy people, it is important that they – as school heads – take the time to get to know the new teachers in their building. If their offers of support are to be received as genuine and trust worthy, they will need to first establish some sort of professional working relationship with the novice.

References to relationship-building in the literature are subtle. Recommendations suggest that principals welcome the new teacher and help facilitate their introduction to the site (Brock & Grady, 2001; CTC/CDE, 1997b; NCTAF, 1996). Others are more explicit about what this means in terms of principals' obligations: be in frequent personal communication (Brock & Grady, 2001); be available for individual conferencing (DePaul, 2000); be attentive, listen more, be a role model and seek help in determining what the beginner needs and wants, e.g. ask the new teacher what you can do for them (Donaldson & Poon, 1999); maintain an open door policy (Brock & Grady, 2001); and treat the teacher as a whole person (Leithwood, 1990). The point of these recommendations is to build a professional working relationship with the novice, and to help the novice build professional working relationships with peers throughout the system.

Instructional Development and Supervision

Instructional leadership has long been considered the work of effective principals. But what does this look like with respect to beginning teachers? I propose this category as a ways of capturing the careful work some principals do with beginning teachers to

advance their practice. This includes activities like developing the novice's instructional repertoire; assistance in creating effective classroom environments and managing student behavior; and the use of data to assess student learning. Although we rarely speak of administrators engaged in this level of work with their novices, there are examples of principals who are actively involved in developing the knowledge and skill of their newest teachers.

Recommendations that fit the category of instructional development and supervision can be divided into two groups: a) the things principals do directly for the novice and b) the things principals do indirectly on behalf of all new teachers. Among the first set are the following: regularly visit classrooms, review lesson plans and provide immediate feedback (Brock & Grady, 2001; Colley, 2002; DePaul, 2000); be clear about performance expectations (Colley, 2002); use formative assessment strategies and help the novice set reasonable goals (Brock & Grady, 2001); making professional dialogue part of the new teacher's experience (Donaldson & Poon, 1999); provide new teachers with curricular and instructional guidance and support (Bloom & Davis, 2001; Brock & Grady, 2001); be available and give the novice your time, acting as a mentor if necessary (Brock & Grady, 2001; Colley, 2002).

Among the second set of recommendations – indirect ways principals support instructional development – are the following: give novices time to work with other teachers to develop their teaching through co-planning, co-teaching, etc. (Brock & Grady, 2001; DePaul, 2000; Odell & Huling, 2000) and provide incentives for such work (Darling-Hammond et al., 1999); protect new teachers planning time (DePaul, 2000); facilitate observations of other teachers by beginning teachers (Brock & Grady, 2001);

arrange for new teacher gatherings and meetings (DePaul, 2000); and facilitate beginning teacher participation in professional development opportunities (Brock & Grady, 2001; DePaul, 2000; Odell & Huling, 2000).

New Teacher Evaluation

The continuum comes full circle with the formal assessment process. It is in this cycle that new teachers are either fully assimilated into the existing culture or guided out of the profession. The traditional evaluation process consists of several classroom observations, complete with pre and post conferencing – all directed by the site administrator in charge. More recently, performance-based teacher evaluation programs have been adopted that put greater ownership in the hands of new teachers and in some cases, share the responsibility for evaluation among a team of skilled professionals. In addition to summative assessment strategies, the emergence of induction and mentoring programs has brought about increased emphasis on formative assessment practices. The primary advantage of formative assessment is its emphasis on promoting growth over accountability. Formative assessment is more likely to be utilized by mentors, in part because of the tremendous amount of time it requires.

Of all the categories, this is the only one that does not appear in the literature on new teacher support. The assumption has always been that summative evaluation is not part of the new teacher induction process. However, when evaluation is considered a means for promoting teacher development and growth, it seems reasonable to consider principals' efforts as serving a support function. When this is the case, the following recommendations are relevant. First, be clear with the novice about what is expected (Bloom & Davis, 2001). Second, structure the process around the explicit needs of the

new teacher, e.g. focus observations and feedback on a limited number of critical skills (Colley, 2002). Third, shift the emphasis from an outsider looking in, to a colleague discussing performance as it pertains to teaching and learning (Donaldson & Poon, 1999). Finally, coordinate evaluation activities with the induction/mentoring program to prevent unnecessary overlap (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

Facilitate and Sustain a Supportive School Context

Finally, principals interested in supporting their newest teachers must attend to the distinct needs and interests of new and experienced members of staff, while at the same time find ways to bring the two groups into closer communion. In addition, principals are the ones most responsible for consciously shaping the school culture in particular ways, often around a shared mission, as well as responsible for establishing desired working or learning conditions.

Of all the things principals do to support new teachers, building and sustaining a supportive school culture may be the most pervasive, as well as most elusive. Pleasant, collegial work environments, guided by professional standards, are good for all teachers. Among this set of recommendations we find things like foster a pleasant, supportive and collegial work/learning environment and establish a common, shared language among the faculty (Leithwood, 1990; Odell & Huling, 2000; Brock & Grady, 2001; Bloom & Davis, 2001; Colley, 2002). Other recommendations are more explicit, suggesting that professional standards be used to structure individual and site-level learning opportunities (CTC/CDE, 1997b; Odell & Huling, 2000), and expectations for teaching and learning are clear (Brock & Grady, 2001; Bloom & Davis, 2001). Above all, there need to be high expectations for student and teacher learning (NCTAF, 1996).

Table 3: Principals Supporting New Teacher Development

Recruitment, Selection and Placement

- ✓ Recruit aggressively; streamline and facilitate the hiring process.
- ✓ Assign novices to subject area and grade level they are qualified for.
- ✓ Distribute challenging students among sections.
- ✓ Provide adequate resources to meet needs and expectations.
- ✓ Protect novice time by limiting extra duties and responsibilities.

Site Orientation and Resource Assistance

- ✓ Facilitate introduction and welcome to the site.
- ✓ Offer site orientation to highlight available resources, procedures and policies.
- ✓ Assign in-building mentors (if not already provided).
- ✓ Provide needed resources and supplies.

Managing the Environment

- ✓ Clearly articulate teacher expectations.
- ✓ Streamline state and district paperwork.
- ✓ Protect novices from the competing demands of state and district mandates.
- ✓ Maintain a disciplined school environment.

Relationship-building

- ✓ Be in regular personal communication with the novice.
- ✓ Acknowledge and reward performance, as appropriate.
- ✓ Maintain an open door policy; ask how you can be helpful.

Instructional Development and Supervision

- ✓ Facilitate novice participation in professional development opportunities.
- ✓ Provide opportunities and incentives for all teachers to work together.
- ✓ Protect novices' planning time.
- ✓ Visit novice classrooms and provide feedback; help novice set reasonable goals.
- ✓ Review novice lesson plans; offer instruction in teaching strategies.
- ✓ Facilitate observation of other teachers by novice.
- ✓ Engage in ongoing professional dialogue with the novice.

New Teacher Evaluation

- ✓ Explain expectations and procedures at the beginning of the year.
- ✓ Schedule observations in advance; provide novice with copies of evaluation records.
- ✓ Use standards to guide your assessment.
- ✓ Be positive but honest in your feedback; recognize the novice as a beginner.
- ✓ Help the novice set reasonable goals for their learning and development.
- ✓ Balance formal observations/conferencing with informal observations/feedback.
- ✓ Coordinate evaluation activities with induction and mentoring program.

Build and Sustain a Supportive School Context

- ✓ Develop and foster a welcoming, nurturing and collegial work environment that values critical inquiry, reflection and risk-taking.
- ✓ Help teachers on staff acknowledge and understand novice development and needs.
- ✓ Set high expectations for teaching and learning and make them clear to all.
- ✓ Use teaching standards to structure professional development opportunities.
- ✓ Model collaborative working behavior.

Additional Considerations

In addition to these more direct support tasks, principals can demonstrate their support for new teachers in less obvious, yet critically important ways. Although administrative leadership and professional development are not included on the support continuum, they both represent commitments considered necessary for principals who want to effectively support new teachers.

Providing Administrative Leadership for Induction and Mentoring

There are numerous ways a principal can show support for his or her new teachers through administrative leadership. First and foremost, principals must articulate public support for the program, including visible support of program work and activities on site (Brock & Grady, 2001; CTC/CDE, 1997b; Odell & Huling, 2000; Portner, 2001; Villani, 2002). They should participate in overall program development and evaluation (CTC/CDE, 1997b; Odell & Huling, 2000). More specifically, they should participate in mentor selection, coordinate mentors as needed (Odell & Huling, 2000; Colley, 2002) and attend training sessions designed for principals (CTC/CDE, 1997b). They should strive to coordinate new teacher support with mentors in order to present a unified effort (Brock & Grady, 1997). And they should advocate for new teachers, especially with difficult parents and/or students (DePaul, 2000).

Principal Professional Development

Little is said about principal professional development vis a vis new teacher support, with one exception: the need to gain knowledge to insure program effectiveness. Among the recommendations for principal learning and professional development are: becoming knowledgeable about program goals and activities (CTC/CDE, 1997b; Odell &

Huling, 2000); understanding the mentor's role and respecting the mentor's need for confidentiality (CTC/CDE, 1997b) and becoming knowledgeable about new teacher development and learning needs (CTC/CDE, 1997b). It is also suggested that principals try to remember what it was like to be a new teacher and to improve their observation and communication skills related to supervision (Bloom & Davis, 2001).

In the descriptive cases that follow, I detail the varied ways in which Maria, James, Karen and Ramon describe supporting their beginning teachers. To the extent possible I have used their words, drawn from taped interviews, to summarize reported action. To make the telling more cogent, I have grouped support strategies into four broad categories: a) recruitment, hiring and placement; b) managing the environment and resource assistance; c) instructional development and evaluation; and d) building relationships and a supportive professional culture.

While self-reports are critiqued for not being objective or reliable, what I report here is supported by what I have observed and what has been described to me by mentors and novices in their buildings. Nonetheless, Maria, James, Karen and Ramon all made decisions about what they would (and would not) share in response to a question. I view these self-reports as a medium for telling stories about their work, what they value, and what is a priority. I am convinced that what they shared is important enough to retell here.

The Case of Maria: A Teacher's Principal

When you have admiration and respect for your principal... it's part of why I love Shining Star and it's partly why I wanted to be a teacher here. Because I feel like she's a teacher's principal, in that she's an advocate for the same thing I'm an advocate for, which is advancing student achievement for English Language Learners specifically (Sharon, New Teacher, 5/01).

As the above quote suggests, Maria is looked to as a “teacher’s principal”. An active instructional leader, Maria is the resident expert on issues of teaching and learning in the building. Recall, Maria came to Shining Star Elementary from the local University of California campus where had been supervising student teachers as a member of the clinical faculty. When plans were drawn to make Shining Star a professional development school site, Maria knew she wanted to be part of it. Five years into her tenure at Shining Star, Maria assumed the role of principal – a role she has held for the past six years. Using the tenets of socio-cultural theory as her guide, Maria is striving to create a just, learning-rich environment for students and teachers alike. Her strong reputation, both in and outside the district, are proof positive that Maria has been widely successful in her efforts. Her aim in working with new teachers:

I want to assure myself that I will have a beginning teacher inducted into the field with good teaching habits, a strong knowledge of curriculum, everything that the teacher has to have [as measured by the California teaching standards] and I also want to make sure they are going to be effective with diverse students (3/01).

The text that follows looks at Maria’s approach to new teacher support, development and evaluation through the lens of a) new teacher recruitment, hiring and placement; b) managing the environment and resource assistance; c) instructional development and evaluation; d) building relationships and a supportive professional culture.

New Teacher Recruitment, Hiring and Placement

Since Maria has taken over as principal, the need to hire new teachers has dropped dramatically, signaling stability among staff for the first time since becoming a PDS. Given the appeal of their multicultural mission, close relationship with area teacher

preparation programs, and reputation for on-site staff development and mentoring, Shining Star does not have to look long for new candidates.

Hiring at Shining Star is done by a committee that includes resource teachers, paraprofessionals and parents, as well as relevant grade level teachers and representatives from the administrative team. For Maria, hiring always hinges on an individual's commitment to teaching for social justice. *"It's not every school site that's going to take on and put issues of race on the table. If you as a teacher are not willing to discuss those things, then this is not the right school, because we are not going to back down."* In this regard, Maria plays an instrumental role in shaping who the committee will consider. In her words,

My role is to assess the staff in terms of who I think is the leader we need. What types of teachers [do we need] to move the school forward? I do that as an initial pre-assessment. Then I tell the committee, this is what I think (5/01).

For example, she recently guided a search committee toward two goals she had identified for the school: more experienced teachers and greater diversity among staff. She explains, *"I'm looking at kids, what do the kids need? What kind of teachers do they need and that is how I guide committees."*

Perhaps Maria's most significant efforts toward new teacher support come via her careful approach to teacher placement. At Shining Star, new teachers are "protected" so they can focus their energy on developing as teachers.

I really want them to focus on their teaching the first year. I really don't want to distract them from that because they form their habits so early in their careers. I want them to only concentrate on improving the quality of their teaching (6/01).

Maria ensures this through two specific strategies. First, she is watchful of their assignment. *"In terms of kids, I will protect them [new teachers] as much as I can with*

children that either have reputations, behavior problems, so forth. I'll try to match the kids to the teacher." In an interesting twist, Maria also protects her students from too many new teachers. *"For instance, if I have a third grade student and he's had a beginning teacher for two years, then I would assign him to the more experienced teacher next year."* Secondly, she is careful to not overload beginning teachers with committee work.

For instance, beginning teachers... are not asked to serve on heavy-duty committees. They get like the Sunshine committee. The way we have it set up is we have committees that have a light commitment, a medium commitment and a heavy commitment. I'll ask the beginning teacher to sign up for one light, one medium (3/99).

Notably, Maria understands that she attracts young teachers who will eventually leave for other parts of the state or country. From this perspective, Shining Star operates like a teacher training site. *"I know that whatever teacher I have here, for as many years as they are here, they are going to have this pedagogy and they are going to move into other school sites and they are going to take that with them... I don't mind that they leave. I'll train more!"*

Resource Assistance and Managing the Environment

Maria relies on Kathryn, the on-site mentor, to orient new teachers to the building and to address their resource needs. However, assigning this set of tasks to Kathryn should not imply that Maria is neglecting her own role in this arena. Maria understands that the responsibility for orientation and resource assistance ultimately falls on her shoulders. As principal, her aim is to oversee and supplement Kathryn's efforts.

We're here to support them. We want them to succeed. And it's my job to support them and provide optimum conditions for them in teaching, and that includes materials, resources, and if there are any conferences they need to go to or they want to go to, I would support that as well (5/01).

But not everything Maria does to protect the new teacher is visible. Behind the scenes she is busy doing the small things that only she, as principal, has the authority to do. Administrative streamlining is one example of this.

Concretely I do a lot of making the teachers life easier... If I get a mandate from the district or a report, I often times will redistribute the work in the office with my support staff and give very little to the teachers. I only give them as much as they need, when they absolutely have information that I don't have... I try to make the teacher's life as optimal as possible because that's my bottom line. My vested interest is that they do their job with as little disruption and as little confusion as possible. So that's where I direct my energy, a lot of my energy (6/01).

Instructional Development and Evaluation

With respect to instructional development, Maria takes a more hands-on approach than many principals might. As a self-proclaimed “*instructional leader*” who “*knows teaching as well as anyone else in this building*”, Maria is not afraid to praise good performance, ask hard questions, raise concerns. To understand what that means to Maria, we look to her reported practice.

One of the most visible ways Maria asserts herself is by maintaining an active presence in the building. “*I try to be in classrooms daily, but I won't be every classroom.*” Recently she was trained in doing three-minute “walk-throughs” which have helped maximize her efforts and meet teacher expectations. “*It gives me permission, not that I need it, to give in for three minutes, assess and come out. And teachers actually like it. They like to see principals in classrooms.*” When she does enter a classroom, she expects that the teacher will have their planning book open. She reminds teachers at the beginning of every year: “*I will go into your classroom from time to time. I will expect to see your lesson plans. Your lesson plans must always be there and I will spot check your plans.*” How they prepare these lesson plans is not important to her. That they do so, is

very important. When there is a discrepancy between what is written and what is happening at the moment, she will ask why. She shares the following story to illustrate her point.

One day I went in and I saw a teacher. It was ten o'clock and he was doing class meeting. Then I looked over and I didn't see his lesson plans, so I left a little note and I said, "Come in and see me during recess or when you get a chance." And I said, "This is the second time I've been in and you've been doing class meeting with the kids. Is there something happening because morning is prime time for language arts. When do you do your language arts? He actually had a good reason. Something had been going on so he did it and he said, "Honest, Maria, It's doesn't always happen this way" ... He's an excellent teacher, but sometimes he just needs a little kind of push. He's young, so I have to remind him that yes, he does have to do lesson plans and they have to be there so that I can walk in and see them, because I'm always keeping the kids on my bottom line (3/01).

Maria supports instruction in other less obtrusive, yet still powerful ways. For example, after returning from a principal institute one summer she hosted a series of "Principal Breakfasts." Attendance was not required and yet close to two-thirds of the staff attended. The focus of conversation was a book that highlighted effective teaching behaviors. Each week the group would discuss a different chapter. According to Maria, veteran teachers benefited the most from these conversations, as *"it gave them a language that they didn't have before."* Today she uses these same concepts, together with the California teaching standards, to frame her feedback in the evaluation process. In fact, she routinely copies readings from this text to distribute to teacher candidates and beginning teachers, even veteran teachers when she feels it is warranted.

In a separate instance, Maria stepped in to help a group of beginning teachers plan art centers. In a casual conversation she learned that this group of teachers was interested in adding an art center during language arts time, but didn't know where to begin.

Because this is a strong interest of Maria's, she volunteered to get them started. To be equitable, she has made a similar offer to the rest of the staff.

Additionally, during any communication with staff, verbal or otherwise, Maria tries to focus the conversation around instruction and students. Although we may never know how successful she is in accomplishing this, as a goal, it clearly guides her intentions.

All of the staff development that we do, the collaboration time, the professional development, any time I have an opportunity to speak to them [staff] my comments are always around instruction. Any staff meeting, any sort of content, any memo, I really try and make sure instruction is at the core of what they are doing. I always try to refocus them to their teaching and to their instruction of children (6/01).

Maria is convinced that a sustained emphasis on development of sound professional habits is critical to new teachers' development. In the following statement we see the importance of lesson plans surface again. This story is significant in that Maria not only has a vision, but also a set of strategies for realizing the dream. In this excerpt we are also reminded of how involved Maria is willing to get. It comes as no surprise that Sharon, one of the new teachers in the building, describes her as a "teacher's principal".

Because of what we know about how beginning teachers develop their habits in the first few years, I think it's critical that we help them before their habits are entrenched and they revert back to the way they were taught. For instance, I'll ask to see my beginning teachers lesson plans and I'll ask for them the Monday before the week begins...because I want to push them to plan a week in advance so they're not planning day to day... I don't want them to get into the habit of planning day to day, so I've put that structure in place. I'll only ask until I am reassured that they are doing okay... So things like that. I think I have a picture of what a good teacher should be so I help them. I help them get that way (3/01).

Later in the interview Maria adds,

I understand instruction better than a lot of people at this school site and my teachers know that. I think that a principal has to be an instructional leader. You have to know teaching and learning in order for the school to run. I have to understand reading and math and all the other content areas as well as the teachers in the classroom; well enough to be able to present it in staff development (3/01).

These excerpts portray Maria as a strong, dynamic instructional leader; a “teacher’s principal.” Can she maintain this stance during the formal evaluation process?

The Evaluation Process

Maria approaches the evaluation process matter-of-factly. Early in the year, Kathryn, the on-site mentor, takes responsibility for orienting new teachers to the process and assists them in writing Individual Learning Plans. When it comes time, Maria schedules an observation based on the stated learning plan goal. A pre-observation conference is held, but this can as easily take the form of a casual conversation next to the copy machine as a formal meeting in her office. Observations are always scheduled to last a full class period. Sometimes Maria will take a running record on her laptop; other times she will be more informal about collecting evidence. Within a couple of days, Maria will meet with the new teacher to review the observation and set new goals. This is where the process becomes something more than routine practice.

Maria approaches teacher evaluation as a learning opportunity – for herself and for the novice. Through a series of three formal observations she is able to learn more about their beliefs, knowledge, skill. It also becomes an opportunity for her to impart what she knows about good teaching. During the post-observation conference Maria steps back from the principal role to become a teacher again. *“The first few years when I observe them, I’ll be very explicit in my observations.”* In the passage below, Maria talks

about how she approaches these conversations. What emerges is a principal who takes her calling as an instructional leader seriously.

So for instance, Sharon could have come in and said, "I want you to look at classroom management." Well, I want to deconstruct that part. I want her to know that classroom management includes momentum, what they could call attention rules and this is what they are... You can look at [my evaluations] from a few years ago, and they would say "recognizes the school environment". Well, that doesn't give enough information to a teacher. You have to say what is in the physical environment that is making this an effective environment... in my particular case I'd like it to go a little further and I have the tools and the knowledge to do that. If it benefits teachers and benefits kids, I'm going to do it.... When they get explicit feedback like this, their faces light up. And they say to me, "This is so great, you have no idea! I know I'm a good teacher but I can't always say why!" (12/99).

Still, we need to keep in mind that these conversations are short, rarely lasting more than twenty minutes, and only occur three times a year. Maria and Sharon readily admit that the real work of instructional development happens with Kathryn, the on-site mentor.

When asked what she looks for as evidence of growth during the evaluation process, Maria talks about changes in the novice from the beginning of the year to the end. She uses the California teaching standards and accompanying developmental continuum, as well her own expertise, to ground her impressions. Additionally, she draws heavily on what Kathryn shares with her about the new teachers' performance and what she herself observes more informally. Moreover, when Maria feels the novice should be focusing their development in a particular area, she doesn't hesitate to tell them so.

If I feel that they are not stressing something that I think they need to address then I'll address it through the observation. I'll observe this and say, "Oh, I also noticed this, this and this, so for our next observation..." Or I'll throw in a fourth observation. I have done that, saying: "I really didn't see this. I saw this that you wanted, but then I saw this, so I want to come back in two weeks, and then I want to come back in a month and do this (5/01).

Maria's responses highlight the obvious: principals are always evaluating their teachers. Important to note, however, is that Maria is equally devoted to helping her teachers grow and develop. Assessment cannot be separated from assistance.

The picture painted thus far is rather rosy. In reality, the process is not always so smooth. For example, Sharon is a very accomplished and skilled 4th grade teacher, now in her second year at Shining Star. Maria is thrilled to have her on staff and sees her as a star teacher in the making. Still, during a recent observation conference, Maria was very direct about her discomfort with the noise level in the classroom the day she observed. When she raised this during the conference, Sharon began to cry. Maria adds, *"I wasn't meaning it as a criticism, it was an observation that I made. I felt so bad... I hurt her feelings somehow. It might have been the way I said it. I don't know, but the next thing I knew she was right there and I just saw the tears come."* Maria could tell Sharon disagreed with her perceptions of what had happened. Still, Maria knew what she saw, so she worked hard to make her observations explicit. *"Yes, but I was at one table where the two girls were supposed to be reading with each other. I said, 'Sharon, they were reading across the table. As a teacher you can eliminate some of that noise by having them sit next to each other.' Basically I was fine-tuning for her."*

One explanation for what happened in the above case reflects the relatively small and unpredictable amount of time Maria spends in instructional development, be it in or outside the evaluation process. Without a trusting relationship, developed over time, Maria's good intentions and smart advice will always run the risk of being misunderstood. A second explanation might be attributed to personal beliefs. In Maria's mind, being observed regularly is part of being a responsible professional. *"I also think*

that as a teacher, as a responsible teacher, I would want to be observed every few years. When I was a teacher I didn't mind being observed every three years." Unfortunately, not all teachers come to the classroom with this assumption internalized.

Building Relationships and a Supportive Professional Culture

Shining Star is a welcoming place. Strangers are greeted by students, staff and parent volunteers with a friendly smile. The office staff is quick to respond and be of assistance. There is a steady stream of parents coming and going. In the background you see teachers busy gathering materials and asking questions of one another. The tempo is quick and focused; the mood is positive and supportive. On one of my visits, Maria was out photographing a proud group of grandfathers who were sitting on the courtyard benches, waiting to walk their grandchildren home from school. Nurturing relationships seems to come naturally to Maria and her staff at Shining Star.

Developing a good working relationship with each individual teacher is very important to Maria. This is especially true of her work with newer staff members. As we can see in the quote below, she approaches this proactively. Rather than wait for a request to come to her, she seeks opportunities to be supportive. She does so knowing that beginning teachers are shy and often don't know what it is they need.

I really work hard at building a relationship with them. I think a relationship goes a long way, so I really make sure they know who I am and that I'm there to support them. I make sure they have all the materials that they need, because often times I find teachers are hesitant, especially beginning teachers, they are shy about asking the principal (5/01).

Maria anticipates and responds to the needs of new teachers in a variety of ways. She takes on a "parent role" by asking about their family and their children and "making sure they take care of themselves." She maintains an "open door policy", hoping they

will feel free to ask questions and raise concerns. She rewards good work with teacher books and resources. Last year she offered teachers a coupon to leave early on a Wednesday when children are released early. Her goal is to communicate that she cares. Her hope is that by expressing this care, teachers will feel more comfortable taking risks to develop their instructional practice.

I develop a relationship with them. I'll ask them about their families. I'll ask them about their kids. I develop a strong relationship with them. They know that I care about them as a person. That relationship takes it a long way. It really opens the doors for me to talk to them about superior performance (12/99).

Although Maria clearly cares for all her teachers, this interest takes on a special, protective quality with new teachers. In her words,

It is different in that I am their evaluator for the first few years, but I can tell you... it's almost like I have a special relationship with my new teachers. It's probably more nurturing than it is with my veteran teachers. With my veteran teachers I have more of a collegial relationship, I guess; whereas with my beginning teachers, I nurture them. They are very close to me in that they come and share. They cry in my office and they feel very open... I have an open door policy with everyone, but I look out for them. I protect them. I'm protective of my beginning teachers. Again, because I want them to develop their skills (6/01).

Nurturing a Professional Culture

Maria does a variety of things to build community at Shining Star. Grade level meetings occur weekly, often on Tuesday afternoons since children are released early. Occasionally Maria will assign a task that needs to be done, e.g. revising the retention policy to reflect changes in state legislation, or implementation of the bilingual model. Most of the time, however, this time is reserved for co-planning at the grade level. Kathryn, as on-site staff developer, oversees the work at this level. Grade level discussions also occur during staff meetings, as Maria is committed to devoting thirty

minute each month to grade-specific discussions about student work. To the extent possible, she delegates facilitation of these discussions to experienced staff members.

Interestingly, Maria uses committee work as a strategy for socializing new teachers to the building and to the profession. New teachers bring a perspective that is fresh and sometimes challenging; veteran teachers bring a perspective that bears the fruit of experience, tempered by big picture thinking. Maria, the teacher/leader, is always looking for ways to give novices opportunities to learn from the wisdom of more experienced others.

Maria was drawn to Shining Star precisely because of its commitment to teacher development. As she reflects back on the type of professional community she has helped assemble at Shining Star, we get a picture of what she considers the essential traits of good teachers: courageous, bright thinkers who are willing to carry the banner of social justice. Everything else – including content knowledge – can be learned on the job.

My number one criteria was a teacher community that was highly intellectual, because I think that the better and the smarter the teacher, the smarter the teaching. So I wanted to develop a cadre of teachers that valued intellectual capital, that saw that as their number one resource. I knew that from that it would be easy to build content knowledge... I wanted them, of course, to be very strong in addressing issues of equity, a very culturally responsive teacher...in terms of anti-biased curriculum and teaching for social justice (6/01).

For this learning to occur, Maria needs the help of a professional community that values collegial work. Establishing this community is one of Maria's primary tasks. She accomplishes this first and foremost through relationship building. In doing so, she hopes to create "learners and leaders" who are prepared to "tackle the hard issues" together.

I invest heavily in building a community of learners and leaders and I do a lot of relational building with teachers. I work very hard at establishing a relationship with them and having them establish relationships with each other so that we can develop an environment of trust. Then we can tackle the hard issues... I want

them to be leaders. I want them to understand and to see the school through my eyes... That we're here to work together as a community to educate all of the kids in the school (6/01).

Two additional factors are critical to maintaining this community: social capital and accountability. For Maria, risk-taking and high standards go hand in hand.

You start with social capital. You start with making teachers feel good about themselves and what they are doing, and making them feel safe. Make them feel that this is a safe, risk-free environment for teaching and learning. If you set that up and do it consciously, they're going to do the work that they are about, which is intellectual... But the other thing that we do is accountability. We do hold teachers to high standards... because we work with such an at-risk population, I don't feel that we can let up (3/99).

A theme of accountability runs across all five interviews with Maria. As she explains in our second conversation, all teachers know that “*we are serious about education*” and “*we are going to hold you accountable.*” Maria’s direct approach to giving instructional advice is a prime example of this. When she recently discovered that a new teacher was only working with students twenty minutes a day, two days a week, in reading instruction, she knew that was not enough. She demanded that this teacher find the time to “*see these kids, every single child, on a daily basis.*”

One tension Maria must balance is her desire to protect new teachers with a competing need to enculturate them into the activity and routine of the school. “*I try to protect them as much as I can, but there are some things that they need to know.*” To this we can add the things new teachers need to do. We sense the pull between protecting and involving as Maria thinks about the extra commitments teachers are expected to take on as part of their PDS work. “*I think we have a lot of projects going on. [New teachers] are not expected to participate in all of them. I certainly don't expect them to do that. But I do expect them to participate in one of the projects that is going on.*”

Maria summarizes her role in facilitating professional community in the following statement. Note how she describes her work as that of scaffolding support so that her teachers can concentrate on teaching well.

If I'm going to hold those teachers to high standards, then I need to provide the supports they need. If I'm holding them to this assessment module, for example, then I need to provide release time for them to assess it. I need to provide training for them to know how to do it. I need to provide someone to input the data so they don't have to. ... And those are the same kinds of things I'm expecting in the classroom if they are holding kids to high standards (3/99).

The Case of James: Doing the Job

Last year I was very paranoid when he came in. This year, I'm like, you know what? He's here to help me. I don't need to be nervous, just teach, just do what you'd normally do if he wasn't here... Of course, he's always questioning and wanting to know my reasoning behind it, but I think that's good, he should. I've never left his office feeling like he didn't hear me, he didn't listen to me, he didn't respect me or he was condescending (Maya, 5/01).

As suggested in the quote above, James has high expectations for his teachers. Often this is frightening to the novice. At the same time, he is quick to offer support. In fact, he sees his job as just that – building a web of support around his teachers so they can do the job they have been hired for.

I think a new teacher coming in has to be able to perform their job. My job, number one, is to make sure they can do it. And number two, to support them in growing and developing as an educator. But they do have to be able to do the job and be effective at it. Nobody belongs in a classroom, given the needs of these students, if they can't meet the learning needs of these students (James, 8/01).

James did not begin teaching with thoughts of administrative work. Rather, he gradually assumed greater leadership responsibilities; first as a bilingual resource teacher, then as a head teacher. These experiences eventually pushed him toward an administrative credential. He is now completing his eleventh year as principal of Unity Elementary, a dual immersion charter school.

I now look at James' approach to new teacher support and evaluation through the lens of a) new teacher recruitment, hiring and placement; b) managing the environment and resource assistance; c) instructional development and evaluation; d) building relationships and a supportive professional culture.

New Teacher Recruitment, Hiring and Placement

Like most principals, James is responsible for new teacher hiring at Unity. Recent legislation mandating class size reduction in the lower grades, coupled with a shortage of certified bilingual teachers, has made the task more challenging in recent years. It's no longer uncommon for James to spend the month of August looking for teachers. The realities of teaching in California have reinforced for James the importance of linking with local teacher preparation institutions for help in "*growing our own*".

Today, James looks to Unity's long-standing relationship with the nearby University of California campus as a recruiting tool. Teacher candidates who show promise during their field placements, are supportive of the school mission, and fully credentialed are aggressively recruited for open positions each spring. Late summer appointments are often filled with individuals on emergency permit. An advantage to hiring former student teachers is that they have already begun the process of being socialized into the professional community at Unity.

In terms of the hiring process, James approaches this task collaboratively. He takes responsibility for "*flying*" open positions and searching for candidates who may be a "*good fit*". Ads are run in the paper, the school is represented at local teacher fairs, the names of interested individuals are kept on file. A hiring committee, of which he is a member, narrows the pool of candidates, conducts interviews and makes final decisions.

James avoids controlling this process, except under extreme circumstances, such as the year he pulled a favored candidate after uncovering charges of harassment.

As for teacher placement, James is looking for a ‘good fit’ between the new teacher’s perceived strengths and challenges and the needs of a particular position. When the fit is good, he is content with letting the novice carve his or her own niche on the staff. When the fit is not as ideal, James assumes a more proactive stance. For example, he recently made the decision to hire an under-qualified, yet promising young teacher precisely because of the strong instructional support she would get from her grade level peers, her BTSA mentor, and on-site staff developers. In this case, James sought multiple opportunities to support her learning and development at the onset.

Resource Assistance and Managing the Environment

Although the induction literature touts the importance of principal-led orientations, James doesn’t put a lot of importance on this as a formal activity. New staff orientation rarely lasts more than an hour, sometime the week before school begins. The emphasis is on making introductions, completing district paperwork, reviewing school-wide policies and procedures. Mostly, James relies on the grade level teams to orient newcomers. *“The grade level teams do a great job of bringing people in, and that happens without me. They do that on their own.”* Once school has begun, James will meet again with new staff to acquaint them with the evaluation process.

While formal orientation appears to be a non-event at Unity, James takes seriously an ongoing need to assess and meet individual needs. If he sees someone struggling with classroom management, he will try to link him or her with a colleague who can help. When a novice recently was without a phone in a challenging classroom,

James helped enact an emergency plan that drew on the help of colleagues teaching next door. Notably, James taps the expertise of others – often, but not always a mentor – to ensure that support is forthcoming. As a general rule of thumb: *“If they have certain kinds of specific challenges, then we’ll probably sit down and try to find resources that can be applied to help them through whatever the challenge is that they happen to be going through.”* For James, this is all part of the “nuts and bolts” of teaching, e.g. what a person needs to do the job effectively. As principal, it is his job to ensure that teacher needs are met.

Part of it is the nuts and bolts. What is it that the person needs to so they can do their job? Basic information about how the school works, the ins and outs, all the things that even as a student teacher you may not have been aware of, but that an experienced teacher takes for granted. [We have] an understanding that a lot of those pieces are missing and they need to be developed for that first year teacher, so we’re trying to be sensitive to that and support people and get those pieces in place (3/01).

Principals can also support new teachers by managing their environments. This can happen in a very direct and visible way, like when James steps in to protect the novice from difficult students.

If there is a particular student that’s being highly disruptive, I don’t want that (Recruiting, New, & Teachers,) teacher to suffer through and think they have to put up with the situation. ... I don’t want that teacher’s teaching to be stopped by that one student in the classroom. I want the student out of there. We can deal with it through the discipline process, through conferences with the parent. We can get the teacher the support they need to learn the skills they need to work effectively with that student. But time and time again it happens, a teacher will think, “I can’t manage the child’s behavior, so the principal is going to think I’m a terrible teacher and I won’t be hired or something.” What I try to tell them, my priority is that you are teaching and the kids are learning (5/01).

A more indirect way of managing the environment comes through careful budgeting, thereby “assuring that there’s always an allocation for materials and books

spread out among all the classrooms”. James considers budgeting a priority task when it comes to the principal’s role in supporting new teachers.

In summary, much of what James reports doing to support his novices has an indirect quality to it, where the task is one of creating, fostering and reinforcing support structures. By drawing on the expertise of others to creatively meet individual needs, James is helping to ensure that his newest faculty members are given the opportunity to grow and develop into effective teachers’. In turn, James expects their best effort. For James, this is all part of doing one’s job.

Their job is to make sure instruction happens effectively in that classroom. My job is to support them in that and get them resources that they need to be successful. Therefore, if there’s something they need, if there is a skill that they need to develop, or a book that they need...I’m a resource to make that happen. The bottom line is that they are responsible; their professional responsibility is to make sure instruction is taking place. It’s not my job to come in and show them how to teach (9/01).

Instructional Development and Evaluation

James, adopting more of a managerial, removed from the classroom leadership style, describes himself as an instructional leader of a certain kind.

James: I learn more from the teachers that I work with than I think they would ever learn from me. I think I have the ability and experience to be able to go into a classroom and be able to find, and be able to see, and criticize the teaching that I see going on in there... But I don’t see that as a primary strength of mine.

Cindy: Would you still call yourself an instructional leader or something else?

James: I would call myself an instructional leader in the sense that I hold the teachers accountable for the curriculum and instructional strategies that we’ve defined as being necessary for achieving the goals that we have, and working with people to move them forward and becoming more adept and more proficient in those different areas basically defined by the [CSTP] continuum of teacher abilities (3/01).

For James, the school runs best when everyone assumes the role they have been assigned. His own role in promoting effective instruction is to ensure that individual teachers are held accountable for enacting school-based curriculum and instructional strategies; whereas, more skilled others (e.g. grade level leaders; on-site Title VII staff developers) are responsible for providing instructional leadership close to the classroom. James depends heavily on the structures that have been created, as well as the individuals assigned to those structures, for promoting teacher development. It is not that James does not want to spend more time with teachers in the classroom. Rather, the multiple demands and continual interruptions of the principalship often preclude it.

Something I've always tried to do was block a time specifically to get out of my office and into the classrooms and cover as much ground as possible. Which, more often than not, is time that gets interrupted or gets usurped by some other incident that happens to be taking place (9/01).

Still, finding time remains a goal of his.

I think one of the things that people think is a weakness of mine is the fact that I don't spend more time in classrooms... but I know that I have made much progress there and part of it is because of all the other things that are happening. I have lots of excuses, but it is something that I think is a need, something I need to develop (9/01).

The Evaluation Process

Given James' hands-off style, his greatest opportunity for directly influencing novice instruction comes through the evaluation process. Guided by district protocol, James conducts three formal observations annually for each untenured teacher in the building. This process is guided by an individual learning plan that in recent years BTSA mentors have taken the lead in helping the novice prepare. James expects that these learning plans will address the six domains of the California teaching standards and hopes they will also address classroom management issues. Prior to each observation,

James asks the novice to complete a pre-conference questionnaire in which they are specific about what they want him to look for. Typical observations find James typing furiously on his laptop as the 45 to 60 minute lesson unfolds. He is looking for two things: a) evidence in support of the novice's learning goals, and b) evidence in support of the California teaching standards. Following the observation he will meet with the novice for 15 to 20 minutes in a post-observation conference. If learning goals are revised, they are done so at this time. Plans are also made for the next observation. When asked what he most wants to learn or see from this process, he responds:

What I'm really looking for is that they are reflecting on what they are doing with what the state and district have identified as being the critical elements of their profession, of their instruction, of their work as an educator (5/01).

Having participated in the development of this evaluation model, James is a firm believer that principals' primary role in the evaluation process is ultimately to support teacher professional development – which he does with almost religious devotion.

The questions in the evaluation document are really set up to have the teacher reflect on what they are doing, and to specifically ask the administrator what it is that the administrator can do, as another set of eyes in the classroom, to gather information that can be shared with the teacher to help in the development of their skill and ability (12/99).

At the beginning of each year James' schedules a meeting with all untenured teachers to share his "two hat" approach to the evaluation process. At this meeting he is up-front about what the new teacher can expect.

I try to be as explicit as possible and say that, as the administrator, I get to wear two hats. The only hat I really want to wear is the one where I am a professional resource to you in the development of your skills and ability. But I also have a responsibility to make sure that the best teachers are in these classrooms and the most competent teachers in these classrooms. At such a point that I become concerned, then I switch and put on a different hat and I make that very explicit. I will tell you that and I will document, I will put down on a pre-assistance form areas that I'm concerned about. I will remove myself from that other role and

work with you because there are some very specific concerns that I have about your performance (12/99).

Prior to donning the second hat, James will do what he can to address concerns as they first arise. Often times it is a matter of accessing additional resources that can help them over the hump. Other times it is simply a matter of drawing attention to the concern. For example, James finds that new teachers often get caught up in having too much recess or too much art – well-exercised children in pretty classrooms – at the expense of reading, writing and math. So during a post observation conference James may engage the novice in looking at their lesson book and counting the minutes spent on math for a given week, thus prompting a conversation about how instructional time is spent. This may lead to a new focus for the next round of observations. Reflecting back on what it takes to make these gestures work, James notes that it *“is the ability to form a working relationship and a sense of trust and confidence with the teacher”*. When problems continue and a concern becomes serious, James puts on his second hat – convinced that the artful blending of assessment with assistance is a challenge any good administrator must face. The bottom line, however, must always be student learning. *“A fundamental responsibility that I have is to make sure that there is a qualified teacher in each classroom. If they can’t show me that they have those qualifications, then it’s my job to remove them from the classroom.”*

Perhaps James is best characterized by a unique twist on the evaluation process that he has supported with the kindergarten team. Two years ago, all but one of the kindergarten teachers was new, and the only experienced teacher among them also doubled as their BTSA mentor. Rather than proceed one to one as is typical, the group decided to work together around a common area of focus by videotaping their work with

students and then meeting periodically with James, the vice principal, and their mentor to view the tapes and dialogue about what they saw. Group goals were then set for the next round of observations. In reflecting on this process, James highlights the value-added nature of “*expanding the conversation*” from one principal and one novice to a team that includes principals and mentors with novices.

I like to think that there's some value in my coming in and observing someone in the classroom. But I think probably for most people it's seen as a burden. We have interesting comments about it and I'm sure they get some value out of it. But, it doesn't compare in my mind to what we've done with the kindergarten group where we have the group of colleagues sitting together, observing somebody's practice and having dialogue and giving people feedback. That in my mind is a lot more valuable to the teacher than the notion of my coming in, with my busy schedule, responding to their questions. I said that definitely has some value. I'm not going to write myself off. I do have something to offer. But, anytime that you expand the conversation to include other people that increases the value exponentially (5/01).

Building Relationships and a Supportive Professional Culture

James does his best to be sensitive to the needs of new teachers and give plenty of positive reinforcement, as exemplified in this story.

I try to be very sensitive to the needs of new teachers and understand that they've got tremendous challenges in front of them... For instance, I had one teacher last year who was an emergency credential type and is just a star. She made a point of every month having her kids do an art project, which she then put them up on the bulletin board here in the office. It made just a wonderful contribution. So when I sat down to do my evaluation, I made a point of just being really positive and appreciative of that effort. So I wouldn't go and say, “You know, I really think you ought to be doing more of this or that.” That is the last thing that someone who is feeling overwhelmed or dealing with the challenges of the first year will be open to hearing (9/01).

Nonetheless, building and sustaining relationships with faculty is an area of admitted weakness for James. Periodically he reminds me that his job is not about rewarding teachers with gold stars and happy-grams; rather, holding them accountable for good, effective teaching. For James, it is all about doing your job.

We all have jobs to do and the most important thing is teaching those kids. I'm not going to give you a report card with little stars on it because we've got more important work to do. You've got a role and I have a role and I work my butt off making it happen and that's what we do here together. That to me is the affirmation that I'm looking for (3/01).

At the same time, James is quick to note that he is only one element of a larger effort supporting the new teacher. Equally important are mentors, staff developers, resource teachers, and grade level colleagues. The fact that he has responsibility and authority to pass final evaluative judgment makes that all the more necessary.

Nurturing a Professional Culture

It is fitting to conclude any discussion of James by looking at his efforts to build professional culture at Unity. In his own authoritative, yet quiet style, James' has helped to build, nurture and sustain a community of teachers – new and not so new – who reflect, inquire and learn from each other. As James reflects on Unity, he sees a school where teacher preparation, new teacher induction and professional development programs are “*in sync*” with one another and where a commitment to the classroom binds everyone together. He credits the use of a shared language, particularly as found in the work of the local BTSA program, for much of this.

This big part of that is the fact that all those different elements are talking the same language. They are talking about the same things. Especially and primarily the [BTSA] project is supporting those teachers and moving them toward mastery of those strategies (4/99).

Several factors enable professional community at Unity. First, the virtual elimination of bilingual education in the state forced the school's recommitment to a dual-immersion model through charter status. Unity teachers remain deeply committed to this model despite poor test scores in the upper elementary grades. Second, the addition of federal and state grant monies have enabled the school to hire on-site staff developers

and resource specialists, as well as develop a “super sub” program which allows for regular co-planning sessions at grade level – an essential component of the dual-immersion model. As James shares, from the very beginning the goal has been to move away from the image of an isolated teacher. Third, the school has a long-standing relationship with the local University of California teacher preparation program and spin-off BTSA program, both of which have drawn attention and resources to teacher development at the preservice, induction and professional development stages.

It builds on itself as the teacher moves from a student teacher, to a new teacher, to an experienced teacher. You have teacher education, you have BTSA, you have our evaluation system, and you have our own internal staff development program. All are integrated and connected (3/01).

As evidence of his ongoing commitment to collaborative work, James is now pushing teachers to articulate their goals across grade levels (vertically) as a complement to the strong team structure that exists at the grade level (horizontally). The need to raise state test scores in the upper grades is partially responsible for this move.

In my conversations with James, he frequently jumped from talk about new teachers, to student teachers, to veteran teachers. Although James is clearly sensitive to the needs of beginning teachers in his building, there is an equally strong pull to have all teachers participate in the Unity community as equals. James manages this tension by addressing individual needs and paying attention to when these needs are good for all teachers, while at the same time expecting active participation from the novice. In the following excerpt, James describes what he hopes for when a novice joins the staff.

What I would like to see is a rookie teacher standing up for what they believe in and not being intimidated by the people that are already here. Somebody who is ready to jump with both feet and engage in the grade level team... I understand completely that, especially the first year, teaching is just overwhelming... I feel happy when I have a rookie teacher who is meeting the challenge of their first

year and also engaging in various aspects of the school. Whether it's participating or coming to the council meetings once a month, getting out in the yard and playing with kids during their lunch time, having lunch with their kids in the cafeteria, participating in presenting workshops to parents. Those are all extra things. I definitely can think of some teachers that it just was not possible for them to do that their first year. But I guess what I do sense is some people come in and see that as part of being a teacher. And for other people that are overwhelmed by it and just feel like they don't have any energy or the time to do some of these other activities, it seems to be an approach that gets carried on to the rest of their career. They end up being people that never do participate in those other activities (8/01).

When asked what fueled his commitment to building professional community around a shared mission, James nominates his staff. More than colleagues at any other level in the system, he attributes his faculty for moving him forward as a leader.

It's the synergy that has developed among the staff, especially the staff that stuck with this program over the years. Learning from each other and bringing our strengths together in such a way that allow us all to grow not only individually but collectively, since we're linked and zeroed in on what we're trying to accomplish... More than anything it's the relationships I've had with my colleagues here at the school site. Then probably the next level down would be my colleagues here at the district level and fellow principals. But once you make that leap from the school site to something outside of the school site... the scale of impact of influence, in terms of myself, is at a much lower level. It's really what happens there with the folks that I get to work with that I think moved my abilities and thinking forward (3/01).

Promoting, facilitating, building teacher support structures are all part of the principal role as James envisions it. To his credit, he is guided by the vision of preparing bilingual and biliterate children – a vision that requires teachers to be skilled, knowledgeable, and creative. At the same time, he holds everyone accountable for doing their job effectively and getting results.

I have no need or desire to wield power or authority over other people. What I want to see happen is people be responsible for their work, be proud of their work and put the best product out there so that student achievement happens. To the extent that I can support that, there are many different roles that I play as an administrator to make that happen. But [I] do not need to be a patriarchal power

figure in the equation. I think that's probably one of the least effective models for change (12/99).

The Case of Karen: Principal and Mentor to the Novice

She really cares, that shines through. I think she really takes time when you're sitting with her and conferencing about your observation. She gives you good feedback. I really appreciate that (Sonja, New Teacher, 5/01)

As suggested in the quote above, Karen is a principal who cares enough to take your development as an educator seriously. A veteran of the classroom and former BTSA mentor, Karen knows what it is like to be a newcomer and a beginner. From the moment the novice is hired, Karen is reaching out to encourage and help. Like Maria and James, however, this sense of caring does not prevent her from taking a strong professional stand. Expectations at Arts Elementary are high. New teachers who fail to recognize that they need help are probably not going to appreciate Karen's "caring with a purpose" approach.

I expect them to know teaching strategies and techniques to support our second language learners and know something about differentiated instruction. I expect them to have a philosophy of collaboration and call on help when needed. I don't want somebody who is self-contained, who says I don't need anything. We all need lots of help. So that's really what I'm looking for. Somebody that can get along with others and have some basic methods and knows where to go for resources (5/01).

We now look at Karen's approach to new teacher support and evaluation through the lens of a) new teacher recruitment, hiring and placement; b) managing the environment and resource assistance; c) instructional development and evaluation; and d) building relationships and a supportive professional culture.

New Teacher Recruitment, Hiring and Placement

Like the other principals in this study, Karen supports a collaborative approach to hiring. *"I'm part of the committee and I have the same voice that everybody else does."*

Karen proved this last spring when her top choice was not the same as that of the search committee. Believing that she has an obligation to *"model the democratic process"*, Karen pulled back, allowing the search committee to select a team member they felt best matched their needs.

Karen does intervene, however, during the placement process. Critically aware of new teacher needs, she is determined to see that novices are given the best placements possible – even when she has to defend these decisions to hard-working veteran teachers accustomed to having their choice of assignments. Her goal is to get to the point where conversations, like the one reported below, don't happen because new teacher support is an assumed part of the professional culture.

We've hired a couple of new people and we've had to make some changes, create some combinations because of our enrollment, and I will not give a new teacher a combination class and I will not give them students that are more difficult. They will go to an experienced teacher. It was hard telling an experienced teacher that they were going to do a combination and they said, "Why don't you give it to the new teacher?" I said, "I'm not doing that"... That should be understood for all of us. That's not what we do (6/01).

Karen attributes her experience as a BTSA mentor with this heightened sensitivity.

I think it's [local BTSA project] made me more aware of, you know, being more sensitive to their needs in terms of being respectful. Not giving them the worst room and not giving them combination classes and really making sure that there is equity in terms of when we make class assignments and what kind of students are going to go into a new teacher's class. Really advocating for them so they don't get the worst or most difficult assignments (6/01).

Resource Assistance and Managing the Environment

As a former BTSA mentor, Karen is very aware of how important the first days and weeks are for the new teacher. She estimates that her involvement in new teacher support is greatest at the beginning of the school year. Her first concern is always management. Quick visits in and out of classroom those first weeks frame her early assessments of performance. If a teacher has not received a BTSA mentor, she is quick to find a buddy teacher in the building. She distributes back-to-school gifts to teachers and reminds them that her door is always open.

I tend to always check in with management... that's the part I check in on. And I give them strategies and ways to support them so that their kids are not always in the office. Those who don't end up with a mentor, since we have new staff that transfer in or have some experience, we pair them up... The staff has been great about taking a new person in so that they take them under their wing. I assign two people to kind of be their buddies. And definitely I always have an open door policy. I'm very accessible... I check in with people usually the first couple of weeks. I'll pop in the classroom a lot and I'll leave little notes asking if they need anything. We always go to the local teacher education store and we buy goodies and put it in their boxes (5/01).

Once Karen is certain her new teachers are well-established, she steps back a bit. Some of this is a matter of logistics – things come up that pull her attention in other directions. Some of this pulling back, however, is very intentional. Karen respects and trusts the work of mentors. Although she is quick to help new teachers with managing effective classroom environments, Karen leaves the finer details of working on curriculum and instruction to mentors.

Instructional Development and Evaluation

Karen works hard to be an instructional leader. After all, it was a love of teaching and an interest in staff development that drew her to the principalship in the first place –

not the mundane task of playground pest control and hot lunch inspection. When asked how she helps support teachers, she replied:

I try to visit classrooms regularly. I don't get to them as much as I want to, but I do chat with people and I think I know curriculum and I know good teaching strategies because of my solid background in teaching. I don't have a lot of administrative background but I know teaching and... I encourage people to visit one another. I really facilitate opportunities for people to share things that are happening (12/99).

Karen makes a point of letting others know the good things she sees going on, either by verbally announcing it or simply posting it so others can see. She reads to children so teachers are free to visit other classrooms. She does quick 3-minute walk-throughs just to better understand what teachers are teaching. And she makes student learning the focus of staff meetings, sometimes bringing in test score data for teachers to discuss.

We look at a lot of data. Our staff meetings are structured around looking at data and analyzing data, having conversations about what needs to happen, identifying areas where students are not strong and planning activities and strategies that will support them learning and them gaining skills in the areas that they are weakest in (6/01).

When Karen has questions or concerns about a teacher's performance, she approaches the individual slowly and cautiously. Her goal is to tread softly in order to not destroy their relationship. In these situations, Karen acts very much like the mentor she once was. Consider the following story.

If I see them when they're lined up out on the playground, and they're going into the classroom all over the place, and I walk in and they're just talking and really noisy, things like that, I will kind of offer and say, "I'd love to come in your room." I don't start like, "I'll come into your room." I usually start with, "There's some sponge activities to do for when your kids come in so that they can settle down after recess." And then two weeks later I'll say, "How did those activities work? Would it be okay if I came into your classroom and did something? I want to connect with your kids (5/01)."

But acting as a mentor is only good for helping promoting teacher development when the stakes are low. When it comes to conducting summative evaluations, Karen is working hard to get tough and to be direct. Early in her first year as principal, her mentor made the observation that Karen was acting too much like a coach (i.e. mentor) and not enough like an appraiser (i.e. principal). She has made it a personal goal to correct this stance and once year after our first conversation was congratulating herself on progress made.

The Evaluation Process

Karen honors the evaluation process as directed by the district. However, unlike the other principals in this study who rely on mentors to help their new teachers prepare individualized learning plans (ILP) each fall, Karen experimented this past year with a team approach. She and an experienced mentor, Jennifer, hosted an after-school ILP writing session for all new teachers in the building. She notes, *"It was great because it actually created relationships among the teachers because they knew what each other was working on... it really empowered the new teachers... there was energy in the room!"* In fact, for two of the novices it led to shared classroom observations during the year.

As for giving beginning teachers feedback on the appropriateness of their chosen ILP goal, Karen imagines that there would be instances when that would be an acceptable thing, but only for a second year teacher. First year teachers need to identify their own goals because she doesn't have a basis for making suggestions so early in the year. However, by the second year this shifts. Karen describes how she might approach such a situation. *I'd probably say, "Just from our work last year, how can we integrate some of*

the things that I'm seeing? Where can we fit them so they do get addressed this year (5/01)?"

Regarding the evaluation cycle, Karen is quick to note:

I love doing the observations. I love having post conferences with teachers. I feel really comfortable...I understand the six domains [of the CSTP]. I know where to put information in. I'm really at ease sharing that. The struggle, as I said, is the part about being direct (12/99).

These comments are not surprising, given Karen's background and interest in mentoring and coaching. Nor is it surprising that Karen will use the evaluation process as a tool for helping the novice get better. While some principals will never be comfortable playing such an active role, for Karen, it comes naturally. For example, Karen recently felt a novice was not sufficiently prepared for an upcoming observation, as based on their pre-conference session. Her response was not to sit back and see what happened, but to a) involve the mentor in re-designing the lesson and b) reschedule the observation until the task was successfully completed. Her comments about the usefulness of writing summary evaluations midway and at the end of the year are telling.

I like doing them. I don't like putting in the time, but I like it because it makes me think... It makes me think about each individual [teacher] and what's special about them and what are their strengths and what are their weaknesses... so it gets me to focus in (5/01).

When concerns do emerge out of the evaluation process, Karen is learning how to be more direct with her teachers. She's come to see that critical feedback is not always a bad thing, but can be a helpful reminder, especially when something can easily be corrected, e.g. getting students to line up quietly and orderly. She has also discovered that if she wants changes made, she needs to assert that earlier rather than later to give the novice a reasonable amount of time for making the necessary adjustments. Although

Karen is not opposed to including the mentor in the improvement process or even delegating it to the mentor, she is just as likely to offer direct assistance herself.

Building Relationships and a Supportive Professional Culture

Earning the trust and confidence of her staff is important to Karen, unlike the distance that characterized her own relationship with former principals. Instead, she considers herself a new type of principal, one who is “*data driven and knows instruction*”, but especially one who cares and who is interested.

It is part of who I am. I am a people person and I want to know about people. I am interested and I hear bits of conversations. I spend a lot of time chatting with people in the hallways and building relationships. I really learned that...the more rapport I have [with teachers] the more we can work together. I can ask them to serve on committees and... they know it's because I care and because it's an interest of theirs. So I've really worked at making those relationships with people (3/01).

As this story about finding committee members demonstrates, Karen uses the information gained for mutual benefit; for what she calls “*working together.*” One gets the sense in talking to Karen that she treats all members of the staff this way, new and old.

Another reason for developing a good working relationship with her teachers is to create the trust necessary for giving/receiving critical feedback. She credits her mentor training with helping her develop skill and understanding in the relationship-building process.

I truly understand relationships and comfort. When you have that with a person you can coach that person. So I'm real conscious of building relationships with people so that they can be open to feedback. Without rapport, I learned that through [BTSA], without rapport it's hard to work with people, especially when you do have concerns (12/99).

At the same time, Karen is cautious to not cross the boundary between boss and friend. *"I don't fraternize outside of work, but we joke a lot informally and we connect in lots of different ways."*

Nurturing a Professional Culture

Many of the strategies Karen uses to support instructional development have a value-added nature. Encouraging teachers to observe one another; sharing the good things that are happening between classrooms; devoting staff meetings to discussions about student learning; connecting test score data to the curriculum; ensuring that all new teachers have a buddy -- each contribute to a professional culture that values critical reflection and inquiry. As an experienced former teacher, Karen understands that if teachers are going to work together they need prompting and time. Gradually, Karen is trying to put these things into place. Because the staff has had three principals in as many years, she is starting slowly.

One way Karen deliberately *"passes"* new ideas on to her staff is by involving as many as possible in off-site staff development opportunities. She has found it especially helpful to use resource specialists who do not need a substitute when gone during the day, but who return to work in a wide variety of classes. *"They have a lot of influence so whatever they pick up they are going to pass on informally. I find that's more effective than requiring that everybody do some kind of training."* Karen is also a big believer in data-driven instruction, so periodically makes data the focus of staff meetings.

We look at a lot of data. Our staff meetings are structured around looking at data and analyzing data, having conversations about what needs to happen and identifying areas where students are not strong. And planning activities and strategies that will support them learning and gaining skills in the areas that they are weakest in (6/01).

When asked what sort of professional community she envisioned and what she was willing to do to make it happen, Karen responded:

Ideally my plan is to have teachers do that [work collaboratively] on their own without having us facilitate that all the time. So setting up the structures for staff to automatically, when they get together at grade level say, "Well, let's look at where our students are at. Let's look at what we need to do." Giving them more opportunities to collaborate on their own. That is what I would like to see (6/01).

Karen's ultimate dream is to find ways to incorporate the work of mentors into the daily routine at Arts.

I'd love for them to be at all our staff development days... I'd like to encourage more of that where advisors come and share good strategies. It's not the new teachers who need it, it's the old veteran teacher who has been here twenty-five years. She's using the same techniques that they did twenty-five years ago that I'd love to see benefit. I'm not quite sure how to facilitate that, but that is something that I want to start incorporating because the new teachers are getting a lot of stuff. They get a lot of new ideas and new strategies and their problem is management for the most part and long-term planning. But they [experienced teachers] know how to do it. So I'd love there to be just a collegiality between all of us. It is like it doesn't matter what hat you wear, who you are, we are all in here for the same reasons. It's really to provide quality instruction to our students... that's what I would like to see, having them [mentors] be a part of the staff as a resource for all of us (12/99).

The Case of Ramon: Blinded by Competing Demands

He comes into my class a lot, just kind of drops in and leaves a little note: "great work." For the formal evaluation he actually writes things down. He comes in, he sits there for a whole lesson and writes down what I do and then I meet with him... and he just thinks that everything I do is really fabulous. I find that hard to, I mean, I don't think I'm a bad teacher, but I definitely could use some improvement and I've never gotten much feedback from the principal (Karla, New Teacher, 5/01).

Of the four principals in the study, Ramon brings the least knowledge and skill as an instructional leader to his work as principal – in spite of a long and successful run at classroom teaching. That his new teachers wish for more feedback, as the above quote suggests, does not come as a big surprise. Revered for his ability to relate to and work

with the local community, Ramon struggles through his early years as principal to establish the professional teaching culture he dreams of. While we might offer a number of different explanations for why this is, including the press of high-stakes testing with limited resources and a non-English speaking population, it is apparent that Ramon lacks a clear and well-articulated vision for what reform-minded, ambitious teaching is and can be. As noted in the excerpt below, Ramon's definition of good teaching is limited to relating well with students.

Good teaching is good teaching. I mean, if you have a good teacher you can have the lousiest curriculum; but still the kids will learn because it is all about teaching. That's what we want to focus on (5/01).

New Teacher Recruitment, Hiring and Placement

Recruiting new teachers to South County is often a challenge. First and foremost, teacher salaries do not match the cost of living in the region. Schools are seriously under-resourced – a fact of life for teachers across the state. Finally, South County teachers must be willing to work with diverse students, many of whom come from homes where English is not spoken. Every year teachers transfer out of the district at the last minute, leaving principals like Ramon in a wait and see mode as summer vacation wanes. Other teachers transfer around the district in search of better positions. By late summer, teachers are recruited from wherever they can be found. Two years ago, Ramon was still looking for two teachers the week before school began.

Like the other three principals, Ramon approaches the teacher hiring process according to district guidelines. Candidates are screened at the central office and then interviewed by a team of teachers from Valley. Unlike the other principals, however, Ramon makes the final decision regarding who he recommends to the board. In his

words, “*when it comes down to it, I am the one that evaluates and I’m the one that’s responsible if it doesn’t work out.*”

Although Ramon prefers to hire fully-credentialed teachers, he does not always have that choice. He does expect that any untrained new teacher will work toward a credential, however. If this does not happen -- a situation he encountered recently -- he will release the teacher. In this case the teacher had a lot of “*potential*” and “*heart*”, but no credential. She was not offered a new contract.

She has done an excellent job, a super job. And the reason – I told her very frank – the reason you are not coming back is because you don’t have a credential. You need that theory and the teaching theory. The other teachers that have that will have a job (5/01).

Resource Assistance and Managing the Environment

Ramon reports taking more care with his newest teachers. He tries to check in on them periodically, visiting their classroom and asking if they need anything. He offers two explanations for this, their newness to the site and their newness to the profession.

I take more interest in the new teachers, because they are new to the site and new to the profession. So I take more interest in what they need and the questions that they have about things, procedures (6/01).

Still, Ramon’s offers of help are mostly that: offers. For new teacher to experience this support, they must know what they need and be willing to ask for it. Not all beginning teachers do this equally well. Moreover, it is not clear whether Ramon – still learning to be a principal – is able to assess the needs of new teachers and respond proactively through his role as principal. Clearly, he expects that veteran teachers will assume a great deal of the responsibility for welcoming and orienting the novice.

New teachers are welcome as far as everybody tries to help them as much as they can. This goes beyond just finding pencils and paper. It goes as far as providing history on their kids, as far as what they know about the family or what they know

about their child's academic progress or abilities. I see the veteran teachers really, really eager to help the new teachers in any way that they can (6/01).

Notably, Ramon recognizes that he could do more for his new teachers.

When a new teacher comes to our site, I don't think I've done enough really. I ask how it is going, let me know if you need anything, [I go] into their classroom and just [be] there for the teacher (3/01).

Instructional Development and Evaluation

Ramon has a relatively large number of new teachers on his staff; roughly one third of Valley teachers were in their first or second year of teaching during his second year as principal. This has created some interesting challenges and opportunities. Ramon comments, *"because of lack of experience on my part and their part as well, we're kind of learning as we go along."* One example of *"learning as we go"* resulted when Ramon observed several groups of new teachers leading grade level meetings. As might be expected, the group was having a difficult time getting started. To help guide their work in a more fruitful direction, Ramon rotated among groups as a facilitator, sometimes just helping the group set an agenda. From his perspective, what they needed most were *"more tools on how to be facilitating, how to be working as a team."*

This story captures the essence of Ramon's approach to teacher development. He does not take an active, hands-on role like Maria or Karen. Rather, he prefers to facilitate the work around the edges. Why is this? Although Ramon is widely considered to be an accomplished former teacher, he admittedly struggles to put that knowledge and skill to work as an administrator. Notably, he is frustrated by his own lack of initiative and involvement. The problem, from his perspective, is a lack of time for extended work with kids in the classroom. Too much of his day is spent solving problems for students, parents, staff. *"Yes, I do classroom observations, I give comments, but there's not a lot of*

time to really work with people on curriculum.” In the following excerpt, Ramon explains his reluctance to take a more active and vocal role in what he calls “*curriculum*” – a belief that likely gets in the way of him leading the staff instructionally.

To be an instructional leader you have to be teaching. You have to be teaching and you have to be practicing and you have to be implementing, you have to be modifying in the classroom. For us, as administrators and instructional leaders...it means that you've read everything. You know the curriculum. It's all in a book. How can you be a curriculum leader if all your experience is what you read in a book without really practicing it? That's where I feel left out because I always have to draw upon my experience as a classroom teacher...and explain, "this is what worked for me and I think it will work for you in this situation." But when I get together with teachers and talk about curriculum that is going on, I feel, why should I put my two cents into something that they're into already? They know the kids. They know the curriculum. So I feel left out (3/01).

In this powerful excerpt we can feel Ramon's frustration with the current state of affairs. Feelings of isolation – from kids and teachers, teaching and best practice – have stripped him of the confidence to lead his staff instructionally. In some cases, such beliefs might actually better prepare a principal to step aside, thereby empowering teacher leaders to play a more significant role in instructional development. This doesn't appear to be the case with Ramon. Instead, he remains caught in the tension of not doing what he thinks he ought to be, while at the same time not comfortable delegating the task to others. How this tension resolves itself in the coming years will be critical to the type of principal Ramon becomes.

The Evaluation Process

Overall, Ramon bases his judgement of a novice's performance on a combination of formal and informal observations. His second year on the job he reflects on the large group of new teachers in the building.

They are doing an excellent job. I see it in the observations. I see it in their professionalism. I see the kids benefiting by being in the classroom and doing excellent work in their lesson planning (12/99).

When asked for details, Ramon described how a kindergarten teacher kept careful records on each of her students that enabled her to document their growth over time. He described another teacher who was routinely observed asking his colleagues “critical, very important questions” about children who had been reassigned to his English-only classroom. Furthermore, Ramon felt the students “truly respected him.” Based on these examples, we get a glimpse of what Ramon really cares about. Are teachers using data to promote student achievement? Are they taking care to get to know their students as bilingual learners? Do the students handle themselves appropriately in the teacher’s classroom? Does the teacher show an interest in working collaboratively? Ultimately, this is what Ramon looks for during the evaluation process.

As a teacher you are paid to do a job. You are measured by the success of the kids...that’s the bottom line, accountability. You can’t measure every teacher with the same yardstick. So that’s the end result. I also measure success by how well the teachers work with students and their colleagues (5/01).

Ramon conducts the formal evaluation process according to district policy. New teachers prepare individualized learning plans with the assistance of their BTSA mentor and these are presented to Ramon prior to the first observation cycle. Embedded in the entire process are the California teaching standards, which Ramon uses to guide his assessments. Furthermore, Ramon is convinced that good teaching may look different across various classrooms. “My own personal style of teaching is different than some teachers and I don’t want to push my style.” As a result, he comes across as quite tolerant of various instructional styles. Ultimately, he considers the evaluation process a means for learning more about a teacher’s unique and valued presence.

Sometimes I ask for help from the teacher. I don't see everything they do. So I say, "Help me out. What have you done when I'm not there?" You know, it's hard to shed light on the evaluation because teachers do a lot of great things that are not seen sometimes (5/01).

While Ramon admits that in his first year the process had an evaluative overtone, he credits his continuing work with his coach and the district evaluation trainer for helping him become more of an instructional coach. *"Last year it had the overtone of evaluation because that's what I've known all the time. Working with [my principal coach] I found out that it's outdated. It is now coaching."* He adds, *"It's not do the model lesson and move on. It's not that. It's a system to talk about teaching."* Ramon has come to favor this approach. If there is anything Ramon would change about the evaluation process, it is the amount of paperwork and time that it demands. Still, he is convinced that his efforts are *"profitable in the long run."*

Building Relationships and a Supportive Professional Culture

It's important to Ramon that his new teachers feel *"comfortable"* in their new role and that they feel free asking questions that arise. He strives toward this by *"having dialogue with them"* and *"making the new teachers comfortable with their assignment and comfortable with them coming to me and inquiring about certain things that they have questions on."* Ramon tries to convey this to his new teachers and their mentors each year, explaining *"I will always make time for the new teachers. It is just part of the job."* Still, experience has proven otherwise for Ramon. In his second year on the job, Ramon recalls a mentor asking that he be more accessible. As he tells the story,

I need to be more accessible. I didn't know that, but teachers needed more than the talk that I had with them outside the classroom, or the observations required by the district. So it's good to have a [mentor].... They said, "You know this is something our new teachers have been saying and it would be helpful if...you

would spend a little bit more time with them, give more positive feedback. That's good for me because I didn't know that. I thought I was giving positives (12/99).

In this excerpt Ramon shows that he is sympathetic to their cause as new teachers.

He wants to do what is right. He wants them to be successful and happy. He simply doesn't always see what it is that he can do differently. Overwhelmed by the challenges of being principal, Ramon needs the unsolicited advice of the new teacher mentors. As this story illustrates, Ramon is deeply appreciative of their willingness to offer it.

Nurturing a Professional Culture

Ramon is a firm believer in collaborative work. *"I think more collaboration is the key. It can come from top down as far as what you need to do, but it isn't as effective as working together toward the common goal."* At the same time, he understands teacher resistance – for he was once there himself. Ramon has had to hold firm to this vision in spite of pressures to back down from some members of staff. Today, he remains convinced that as people experience the success of teaming, they will join the bandwagon.

I know how they feel, because I felt that I was successful back when I was teaching. I didn't like teaming. But then I teamed and I saw the fruits of the labor. I understood how, back in September, I understand that I was going to get resistance. But I understand also that once people saw something that was successful, everybody else would gather in... [So] it helps me understand... I knew what to expect and I wasn't surprised when I heard that (6/01).

When asked how he views himself as a leader, Ramon's response hints at how the tension between top down and bottom up leadership pervades his actions as principal. In his mind, the decisions he makes or does not make are *"all calculated, except that people don't see that."*

There are leaders that are authoritarian and there are leaders that like to include people in the process... I know where I am as a leader. I know how to work with

people and have them have a say in what the process is or how the decisions get made. At times I find myself, when we are in a situation such as now, people like to be told what to do because it is easier, instead of going through the process of thinking and working with other people and collaborating and such. I listen to people maybe too much, not really decide on or make a decision and that is it. So I'm trying to balance...[between] including everyone in the process, but also making those critical decisions without input from anyone (3/01).

Ramon's ambiguity between leading forcefully or following collegially continues to emerge as he describes his work as a principal. He talks about needing to be stronger without hurting others feelings and showing disrespect. How to do this seems to be a constant struggle.

I feel there is a need for me to tell them how it is going to be. But, if I do that then the whole process will be seen as, "It is the administration doing it." I don't want to go there, so I am kind of holding back and still getting heat for that. But it is all planned. I have seen administrators not be respectful people, cutting people down. "This is the way it is going to be." Hurting people's feelings in ways that could have been addressed differently. But I think I can be stronger. I have to be stronger (3/01).

Underlying Ramon's work with his faculty are reports of poor communication. To illustrate, Ramon argues that continually repeating student academic goals to the staff is "over kill" as they are "ingrained in everything we do." Yet some teachers report feeling left out of the loop, unaware of what the real focus is. To some degree this contradicts his own belief that people feel comfortable approaching him with questions or concerns. "*I think they feel comfortable enough to ask me when they need something. I don't think they are afraid of me. I think I'm approachable.*"

That these issues repeated themselves throughout the interviews is telling. Getting Valley Elementary on track to raise scores is Ramon's number one concern. He intends to do so through collaboration and professional growth. "Working on that," he says, "*I think our program and our school can be very successful.*"

It's still a risk, but it's a risk worth taking. I think the benefits will be so great that it is worth that risk. This plan requires more collaborative work, with grade levels and vertical meetings. It requires more sharing of professional knowledge. I think this is the biggest thing that has happened this year as far as the direction of the school (6/01).

Helping to hold the staff together is an active faculty advisory committee. This group has been very involved in developing the new instructional program for raising student achievement scores in English. New teachers have a voice in this committee, although it is typically composed of more experienced teachers. Valley also boasts a grade level structure where curriculum and instructional procedures are addressed. However, Ramon admits that some groups are more committed to the process than others. Again, he trusts that newly implemented changes to the instructional plan will bring about needed change. Ultimately, he hopes this change will lead to a new professional culture in the building. If so, new teachers are likely to reap the benefit.

The teaming will set a culture in the school. I think that is precisely what we need because we have a high turnover in this school of teachers moving away...we don't pay enough. So they move to a community that pays more...We wanted to have a professional community, teachers willing to team and set a structure, a program for that so that if teachers leave something is in place already. Something that is expected of all the new teacher and veteran teachers. This program has to be student-centered. Discussions are related to the students only and their achievements... Even if teachers leave, there is a system. If principals leave, there is a system (6/01).

Cross-Case Discussion: Principal Responsibility for New Teacher Support

This chapter explores the research question: *How do principals report enacting their roles and responsibilities vis a vis new teachers?* Implicit in this discussion is an understanding that new teacher support is first and foremost about developing strong and effective teachers whose aim is improved student achievement for an under-served population. On this the principals are unanimous. Where they differ is in the enactment of

this support. Four summary findings emerge from the data presented here. First, the little things add up. Notably, all four principals approached the charge differently. More important was that their efforts toward support were recognized and felt in multiple ways. Second, supportive principals build relationships with their newest teachers and are alert to individual needs. Third, effective principals treat evaluation as another opportunity for teacher learning. Fourth, principal instructional leadership for novice support can be direct and hands-on, or indirect and hands-off – more important is that principals know when it is best to step aside and let mentors do the work and when it is best to step in.

Principal Involvement Varies: The Little Things Add Up

Although there are numerous ways that principals might support, develop and evaluate new teachers, no principal in this study came even remotely close to doing it all. Rather, they reported picking and choosing among various alternatives, basing their decision on at least three things: a) leadership style, as dictated by personal preference, knowledge and skill; b) stated or perceived learning needs of the novice; and c) availability of school-based resources, human and material. Principals' leadership style and preference (e.g. authoritarian vs. collaborative), and to a lesser degree knowledge and skill (e.g. curricular expertise; skill in conflict resolution), dictate the degree to which the principal is comfortable with and/or compelled to get involved. What the principal believes the new teacher most needs to learn shapes what they pay attention to and where they are likely to direct their support. Finally, the context, including human and material resources, to a large extent determines the nature and degree of support that is possible.

What principals do to support new teachers is therefore likely to shift with changing needs, interests and contexts. For example, principals may provide an

orientation for all new teachers at the beginning of the academic year, but act in more individually-appropriate ways as the year progresses. A young teacher who is struggling with classroom management may be encouraged to attend a first days of school seminar, while a teacher who has an especially challenging set of students may be given a classroom assistant for part of the day.

More important than what principals' do, however, is that they do something. Gestures, large and small, add up. As the sample of beginning teachers in this study confirms, a teacher takes notice when their principal demonstrates care and concern. This is particularly true when the principal's actions are immediately visible to the novice. Although the novice benefits when the principal quietly asks a colleague next door to keep an eye on the classroom, the novice also misses an opportunity to learn from the situation and interact with the principal on a professional level. Principals must weigh costs and benefits as they make these types of decisions. What is gained by the novice participating in their own problem-solving? Conversely, what are the risks of involving the novice more actively? Clearly, both approaches are warranted.

Minimize Orientation, Maximize Relationships

On a related note, the principals in this study minimize the importance and value of a formal orientation. Although each does this on a limited basis at the beginning of the school year, they rely heavily on their new teacher mentors and grade level colleagues to orient the newcomer as questions arise during the year. All four were very comfortable with this arrangement. What do they do instead? Maria gives us the best picture of an alternative. She welcomes the new teacher, introduces them to others, focuses their efforts on the classroom with minimal distractions, talks to them about their lives outside

of school. She makes these gestures intentionally to earn trust and respect – to build a relationship with the new teacher. Although James and Karen do not talk much about their efforts in this regard, their new teachers are immensely appreciative of the little ways they show care and concern, e.g. stopping by the classroom to say hello at the end of a long day, and generating parent support and enthusiasm for an upcoming environmental unit.

While these four principals do not disregard the learning opportunities presented by group-oriented support strategies, like orientations and seminars, they do tend to favor assistance that is specific to individual needs. The value-added benefit of this approach is that principals are building a relationship with the novice at the same time they are supporting them. Through sustained talk over time they are clarifying expectations and building trust. The pay-off from this strategy may not be immediate, but over time it gives the principal and novice opportunities to get to know one another and develop a rapport that will enable professional work in the future.

Evaluation as a Learning Opportunity

All principals in this study looked to the summative evaluation process as a learning opportunity for the novice; an opportunity to “*talk pedagogically*.” Rather than a separate activity, evaluation was seen as part of an ongoing continuum facilitating teacher growth and development. This was the district’s intent and they remained faithful to that. Although they made minor adaptations to the forms and procedures to streamline what was otherwise a time-consuming process, each of the principals followed district protocol. As James described, the principal is to be a second set of eyes, gathering

previously specified data for the novice. Only when a new teacher was struggling did principals indicate a desire to shape and guide the process.

With the exception of Karen, who was learning to be more direct in the evaluation process, principals seemed comfortable with their duty to both assist and assess. Notably, none of them reported a role conflict. Instead, they used their commitment to student learning as justification for acting in an authoritative and decisive role when necessary. In a nutshell, supporting students was more important than supporting teachers. At the same time, they acknowledged how difficult it was to do both at the same time. James and Karen were particularly articulate, describing it as a matter of wearing two hats – a theme that will be explored in greater depth in the following chapter.

For each of these principals, teaching is professional work. To that end, they each use the California teaching standards to frame their formal observations. This has several advantages: a) it creates a shared language for talking about teaching and learning in the building; b) it promotes an understanding of what good teaching and learning look like; and c) it holds new teachers accountable to a shared and known set of expectations.

This discussion demonstrates that the presence of well-trained and highly skilled mentors did not seem to change or diminish how principals viewed their responsibility toward new teacher evaluation. Rather, all four principals spoke at length about their commitment to the process in theory and in practice. We might conclude that the presence of mentors actually served as a motivating factor by prompting principals to do their job well – if not, the mentor would know and call their bluff (see also Caruso, 1990).

Instructional Leadership: Knowing When to Step Aside

In this set of cases, we see two approaches to instructional leadership with respect to new teacher support. James and Ramon describe their practice in what can be characterized as an indirect, hands-off style. Their talk is peppered with references to creating conditions and expectations favorable to collegial work. James, in particular, expounds at length about his efforts to create enabling support structures. Neither report working closely with teachers to plan or deliver instruction. On the other hand, Maria and Karen take a distinctly different approach. In addition to fostering collegial work and managing the environment, both women show a willingness, even eagerness to *do* the work of instructional leadership. Both report instances where they worked with one or more teachers to co-plan or co-teach. In contrast, James and Ramon are more inclined to create the right set of conditions, then get out of the way so that others – particularly mentors, but also on-site staff developers and curricular specialists – can do the work.

Arguably, both approaches to new teacher support can be considered effective, given the right circumstances. To illustrate, the five new teachers interviewed for this study were unanimous in their view that specific, concrete instructional feedback was welcomed, even when it came from the principal. General comments like, “you’re doing a great job” and “keep up the good work” were generally not considered helpful. Because these teachers receive weekly one-to-one assistance from knowledgeable and skilled mentors, principals’ feedback must be well-timed and well-informed for it to be considered. Principals who know the intricacies of teaching and learning – like Maria and Karen – are well-positioned to offer such advice. However, principals who are not as knowledgeable and skilled, or whose recent experiences are removed from the classroom

– like James and Ramon – may be better off stepping aside and deferring to mentors. In this instance, principals would be wise to spend their efforts facilitating the work of others as opposed to “doing” the hands-on work of close-to-the-classroom instructional leadership.

Closing Thoughts

This chapter highlights principals’ reported practice of new teacher support. Note the close alignment between what principals believe and report doing across the four cases. Based on the work of Argyris & Schon (1974), these four principals are enacting personally effective theories of professional practice. Furthermore, the range of support tasks identified here, coupled with the notion that there is no perfect algorithm for enacting new teacher support, development and evaluation, argues in favor of a distributed perspective where principal, mentor and other designated support personnel (e.g. professional development directors, assistant principal) share responsibility for meeting the multiple learning needs of new teachers.

Equally noteworthy, in the data we see some striking differences, but mostly we see a great deal of similarity. These four principals work in virtually the same context and bring nearly identical backgrounds to the work, with one exception: Maria and Karen have extensive training in new teacher mentoring and development, whereas James and Ramon have been left to figure this out on their own. What James has refined over time, Ramon has yet to learn. This chapter raises an important set of questions: What role does prior experience and background play in preparing principals for the work of new teacher support, and what are the implications for induction policy and practice?

Chapter 5: Principals Working with Mentors

I really need to help my novice learn to teach. That is my job. I'm in a teaching role.

~ Mentor Teacher (Feiman-Nemser, 1998, p. 72)

Chapter Overview

In this data chapter the emphasis shifts to principals' work with mentors. The focus of analysis is the research question: *How do principals report enacting their roles and responsibilities vis a vis new teacher mentors?* After illustrating how each of the four principals works with a select mentor in their building, I discuss the value-added nature of principals and mentors working collaboratively, especially when the new teacher struggles. I then outline a set of three guiding principles or pre-conditions: a strong, trustworthy and professional relationship between mentor and principal; shared knowledge about good teaching; and a mutual commitment to promoting teacher development while at the same time ensuring professional accountability. In closing, I argue that principals and mentors have the potential, under the right set of circumstances, to complement and enhance one another's responsibility for new teacher support.

New Roles, New Possibilities

In the following extended excerpt, drawn from one of our final interviews together, James openly reflects on his work with new teacher mentors.²⁰ In this interview I ask him to once again, as concretely as he can, talk about his work with new teacher mentors. When are they likely to talk about a new teacher? What are those conversations

²⁰ This set of excerpts is drawn from the fifth (of six) interview with James. Some editing of the text, including limited rearranging, was done to make the narrative read smoothly and coherently. Every effort, however, was made to preserve meaning and intent.

like? And are there things they avoid talking about? In this particular excerpt, James contrasts two mentors, each with different perspectives on their work with principals. Both are protective of the novice, but one is guarded in what she shares, while the other is more openly communicative, particularly when there is a problem. As James puts ideas into words, the image of an idealized relationship between principal and mentor emerges. I share it for two reasons. First, because of the potentially powerful and new possibilities this understanding of principal and mentor roles presents. Second, because it foreshadows the conditions under which more open communication and shared work would depend.

[How we work together] depends on the mentor and the relationship I have with the mentor. One mentor – I'm trying to think of individual people – might come to me and say, "You know, James, have you spent any time looking at how the third grade teachers are presenting information in their math classes or their science classes?" Because of the experience I've had with that person, I would know that meant it was something I needed to pay attention to. So it would be something I would follow up on. But that person takes their role as an advocate for the individual teacher under their charge very seriously. So that person would hesitate to specifically name the person.

Another mentor would come in and say, "Can we have one of our conversations?" She'd come in, close the door and we'd have a closed-door conversation. She would be very up front and explicit with me in saying, "So and so in that classroom, I observed them say that the moon was made out green cheese, as a fact, and I'm very concerned about that and I think you need to be too." And I'd say, "Ok." We might then continue to sort of work together in formulating a plan to help support that person address those needs... because that person trusts me to approach it as a professional development issue and not as an assistance or a disciplinary issue. We'd have a conversation and come up with a plan for addressing the issue (James, 8/01).

James continues by highlighting what he sees to be the critical difference between the role of principal and mentor. In doing so, he clearly leans toward an open and coordinated approach to new teacher support and development.

I'm also sensitive and honor the fact that a mentor is also an advocate. I mean a better word might be an ally of the new teacher. I see a lot of value in having that kind of trust and that kind of relationship. It's part of the support process for the

new teacher. So I'd want to be very sensitive to how that would develop... What I hope they would do is share their concern with me. The mentor I'm thinking of that's very open with me, when concerns come up we coordinate our response. There are things that she does with her coaching and her work and there are things that I do, with the evaluation process, so the issue is addressed

Last year I had three mentors on campus and one of them – the open one – made a point of being in my office every week and sitting down with me and saying how things were going and having sort of an open channel of communication. Another one would talk to me from time to time. And the other one never talked to me. But in that particular situation we both felt confident that she had no concerns about the people she was working with. I like it better when there is that open channel of communication, we're communicating regularly and talking about specifics or generalities, just talking and saying, these are some of the issues that I'm concerned about. What have you seen? What are some things that we can do to address whatever the situation or issue happens to be (James, 8/01)?

In concluding, James reflects on how his thinking has changed over time.

Experience has shown him the value of working with mentors in a more collaborative fashion, particularly in terms of its potential for accelerating novice growth and development.

I think what you're suggesting would be an acceptable thing to do now. To basically say, let's meet on a regular basis and be sensitive to the mentor's role as an ally but also coming together in our shared concern that people who shouldn't be teaching or the people that need specific kinds of help to make them good teachers, that those things happen... That both principals and mentors can play that role.

It's funny how this all developed... You know, the kind of conversations we were having and the openness and frankness of them was contrary to the way it was supposed to be. But because of the concerns that the person had about a certain teacher it sort of developed from there. And she sort of went off on a limb and trusted me and then it developed into what I think is now a very effective relationship. There's no reason why, obviously, there doesn't need to be any guilt associated with that. In actuality it's an ideal relationship and actually should serve as a model for the kinds of relationships that develop with other mentors that are working on my site (James, 8/01).

Reflecting on his experience with different mentors in recent years, James describes two communication preferences commonly taken by mentors. One approach

keeps the principal at a professional distance; talk is guarded in order to protect the novice's confidentiality and trust. Important messages about the novices' performance are passed from the mentor to the principal through a pattern of indirect statements. In the other approach, mentor and principal talk openly with the dual intent of helping the novice for students' benefit. Appropriate support is then articulated and coordinated between the two individuals. Important to note, both mentors believe they are acting professionally. Mentor one does so under the rationale that it is best for the novice; mentor two does so believing that it is best for kids. Examined side by side, each begs the question: *Who has the preferred approach?*

Looking to the Literature for Clues

Proponents of new teacher mentoring have consistently argued that assisting and assessing new teachers are incompatible functions (Costa & Garmston, 1994; Huling-Austin, 1990). Their concern is that new teachers will not open up and take the risks necessary to learn, grow and develop for fear that they will be evaluated. Some mentor programs, like BTSA, even prohibit mentors from participating in summative evaluation. The reasoning behind this is to protect and ensure a trusting relationship between the mentor and novice. But we need to ask ourselves: *How necessary is this distinct division of labor? And on what evidence do we base this decision?*

Clearly, both support and evaluation are warranted. If we are to keep new teachers in the profession and help them develop to their potential, we need to provide them with access to ongoing assistance and learning opportunities designed to meet their individual needs. We also need to hold them accountable to doing good work. Teaching is a difficult, complex practice learned over time. Not everyone who attempts it will be

successful. Obviously, we need a means for holding the profession accountable to the public it serves. Teacher evaluation, at least hypothetically, provides that needed measure of quality assurance.

However, we also know that new teacher support and evaluation are often not practiced in the ways that we might desire. Teacher evaluation continues to be a non-event for most teachers. Evaluations are typically limited to one or two observations by principals who are far removed from the classroom. Teacher input is rarely considered in the evaluation process (Wise, Darling-Hammond, Bernstein, & McLaughlin, 1984a) and when there is a problem, principals often overlook it (Bridges, 1986). At the same time, many mentor programs today lack the rigor and vision that would promote the kinds of ambitious, standards-based teaching reformers advocate. Rather than promote the labor intensive and challenging work of instructional development, too many programs rely instead on easy-to-provide emotional support (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999). Thus, we also ask: *Can we counteract this tendency toward ineffectual practice by bringing the work of principals and mentors together?*

In the late 1980's, Judith Shulman of the WestEd Regional Laboratory teamed with Joel Colbert of the Los Angeles Unified School District to develop a set of teaching cases appropriate for use with teacher mentors in the California Mentor Teacher Project (CMTP). This work, developed during the early days of the CMTP, led to two related observations (Shulman, 1987). The first regards what they coined the "*confidentiality rule*." Because state regulations prevented CMTP mentors from conducting summative evaluation, an unspoken ground rule emerged: mentors will not talk to principals about the teaching practices of any teacher and all interactions between mentors and their

mentees will be kept confidential. Moreover, the authors found a lack of shared purpose and common agreement between principals and mentors regarding their respective responsibilities for new teacher support. Instead, principals tended to go about their duties, despite the presence of trained mentors, as though the other was not present.²¹

Such insights led Shulman (1987) to question how mentors and principals can truly assist new teachers if they cannot also share critical information about the new teacher with one another. Her concern was valid. Would, in her words, “*rigidly separate domains of interest and authority*” be counter-productive (p. 10)? She explains her concerns as a problem of role conflict.

The essence of the problem appears to rest with a state of role conflict that arises when mentors attempt to perform their new function. Both principals and mentors are charged with overseeing the induction of new teachers. Both must be sources of support. Both must make evaluative judgements if their assistance is to be more than superficial. But only the principal is permitted to exercise a formal evaluative role, even though the mentors are clearly the most expert witnesses (p. 15).

She continues by suggesting that there is value to be gained when mentors and principals share what they know.

The current situation is untenable because it puts both mentors and principals in an impossible situation. If they are to work as a team and do justice to the induction and support of beginning teachers, it appears that both mentors and principals must combine the information and insights that they each have (p. 16).

In conclusion, Shulman suggests that when a growth-oriented approach is taken to teacher evaluation and the emphasis is placed on promoting teacher development (particularly when done collaboratively by peers or by a combination of peers and

²¹ Notably, a similar occurrence was taking place in Connecticut. In 1990, Caruso (1990) coined the term “*parallel supervision*” to describe how mentors and principals in Connecticut’s Beginning Educator Support and Training project – like the California group – also tended to work independent of one another, in spite of their shared focus on new teacher support.

administrators), then role conflict might be minimized. This suggestion was supported by Phillip Schlechty's work with the Charlotte Mecklenburg schools. After reviewing their new teacher evaluation system, where evaluations were conducted by teams that included administrators and teacher mentors, he concluded: since the idea of "*evaluation as a form of inspection is rejected, no distinction has been made between the roles of those who engage in formative and in summative assessment*" (1985, p. 40, cited in Shulman, 1987, p. 19). Here we see evidence in support of Shulman's findings.

Armed with the belief that principals and mentors *can* share responsibility for new teacher support, development and evaluation, it is high time to pursue these notions in the context of principals' routine practice. We do so on the grounds that it is good for teachers. But mentoring and induction must be about something more. Our concerns need to also go to the children in the classroom. At its core, induction support should help our newest recruits engage students in sustained academic work around commonly recognized standards. Adopting the Hippocratic oath to "do no harm", what is good for teachers, must also be good for students.

Although we all may make mistakes when learning, the right of a mentee learning to be a better teacher or of an experienced teacher learning to mentor does not include the right to harm children in the process (Portner, 2001, p. 69).

In summary, support and evaluation – as practiced by principals and mentors – are necessarily coupled when the bottom line is quality teaching for sustained student learning.

The Value-added Nature of Sharing Support

Spillane and colleagues, drawing on their ongoing work with Chicago public schools engaged in reform, found that when school leaders work collectively on a task it

frequently results in a product which is “*more than the sum of each individual’s practice*” (Spillane, et al., 2001, p. 25). This is as true of school leaders who work together toward a shared goal, as those who – still sharing the same goal -- work interdependent of one another. To illustrate their point, the authors share the example of a principal and assistant principal working in tandem to supervise and evaluate teachers. One is responsible for conducting formative assessment, the other summative. Both share their findings to better understand teachers’ practice.

The assistant principal, who maintains a friendly and supportive relationship with teachers, visits classrooms frequently and engages in formative evaluation by providing regular feedback to teachers on instructional issues. He talks to teachers prior to his observation to determine areas of focus, observes their classroom instruction, and follows up with a post-observation conversation. The principal, on the other hand, functions more as an authority figure...she engages in summative evaluation, visiting classrooms one to two times per year and making final determinations about the quality of teachers’ instructional practices. The assistant principal shares his learning with the principal, and the two use their collective observations to develop a rich understanding of teachers’ practices (p. 25).

Through this example, Spillane and colleagues describe what they call a distributed approach to leadership, where tasks are stretched across multiple persons. They go on to explain the value-added nature of this approach, where principal and assistant principal work “*separate but interdependent.*”

This separate but interdependent practice allows the principal to avoid making judgements based on the “horse and pony” shows that she feels are an ineffective basis for evaluating teachers. Working separately but interdependently, these two leaders co-construct a practice of leading instructional change through the evaluation of teaching practice. While they have a shared goal, they practice separately but interdependently. This practice of leading instructional change through the teacher evaluation process is stretched across the separate but interdependent work of these two leaders (p. 25).

The analysis that follows builds on Spillane’s theory of distributed leadership to explain how and why principals and mentors might work together on behalf of new

teachers and the students they serve. Further, I argue that these cases point to a new understanding of principal practice, one where the incongruity between espoused belief (e.g. principals and mentors should never break the “*rule of confidence*”) and reported practice (e.g. principals and mentors do talk when the situation demands it and when certain governing conditions are in place) present a dilemma that forces a re-examination of the problem (Argyris & Schon, 1974). I begin by examining the reported work of the four principals and a select mentor for each. The data reported here comes from interviews with both principals and mentors. In keeping with earlier data chapters, the chapter ends with a cross-case summary.

Maria and Kathryn: Accelerating Development through Responsible Support

In previous chapters we were introduced to the work of Maria, a self-described “*teacher’s principal*.” A former teacher in the building, Maria claims to know teaching as well as or better than any member of staff. Although she is happy to share leadership responsibilities at Shining Star, Maria will not abdicate her role as an instructional leader. It follows that Maria assumes a visible presence in the building. She is in and out of classrooms, actively engaged with her teachers in the “*nitty gritty*” work of teaching and learning. As the previous chapters illustrated, Maria takes her responsibility for new teacher support seriously. The following section describes in greater detail her work with Kathryn, Shining Star’s in-house professional development coordinator and new teacher mentor.

Mentoring new teachers is just one of Kathryn’s many responsibilities at Shining Star. As the full-time on-site professional development school liaison, Kathryn is responsible for the growth and development of all teachers in the building, from

preservice candidates to new and veteran teachers. Like Maria, Kathryn was recruited to Shining Star at the time it became a professional development school. Importantly, Kathryn shares Maria's commitment to teacher development, as viewed through the lens of equity and social justice. With offices near one another, the two work as partners, checking in with the other several times daily to ensure the school is running smoothly, teachers are doing their job well and students are learning. While Maria is clearly the leader in charge, Kathryn plays a significant supporting role.

What does this supporting role look like? How do Maria and Kathryn work together around beginning teacher support? Equally important, what is the rationale they give for that work? Under typical circumstances, Maria and Kathryn check in with one another routinely to share observations, insights, concerns about the new teachers. For example, after formal observations, Maria will share, *"I saw this and this, but I didn't see this. And then we'll talk about how come that happened. What can we do to help them?"* Sometimes this will lead to Maria accessing resources, including monetary support for attending workshops or time for observing other classrooms. At other times it will prompt Kathryn to plan a series of demonstration lessons or more focused discussions around an issue of concern.

The purpose, first and foremost, behind these conversations is to share information that might guide and coordinate support interventions. When the new teacher is doing well, Maria tends to step back, trusting Kathryn to take the lead. When the new teacher struggles, Maria's involvement grows, and yet they are both careful to protect the trust and confidence that Kathryn has earned with the novice. As a result, Maria's visible involvement almost always is secondary to Kathryn's efforts.

If a teacher is struggling, I'll usually go in and I'll say to Kathryn. "Did you notice this? Perhaps this needs to happen." That kind of thing. We work closely together that way, through discussion. I'll get involved with the overall assistance with the teacher, but Kathryn fills in the details. Kathryn is the one who is doing it daily... we want to keep the relationship between the new teacher and Kathryn safe (12/99).

Often, when a beginning teacher struggles, Kathryn will subtly shift from being an informant to an advocate. This seems to be a function of their traditional roles: Maria as evaluator and Kathryn as support provider. As Maria explains, "*Her work is to support them, mine is to evaluate. She is very much their advocate. She will say to me, 'Maria, I think this one has this particular piece done and why don't you come in and see it. We're working on this. I think she's progressing.'*" At the same time, Maria recalls instances where she has played the advocate, urging Kathryn to withhold judgement a while longer. Maria explains, "*My job is to look at the potential of all teachers. I can't discount anyone. I have to be able to support everyone... but Kathryn will, if there is somebody on the staff that she thinks I'm looking at through rose colored lenses, she'll come in. So it's a two-way street.*"

When there is tension between Maria and a beginning teacher in the building, it is often Kathryn who will mediate the conflict. During the course of data collection, Maria had an emotional encounter with an exemplary new teacher when, in the course of the post-observation conference, Maria shared a concern about classroom management. This exchange, shared by Maria in hopes that it would be a useful observation, was interpreted very differently by the novice, who immediately welled up with tears. It was Kathryn, the outsider, who helped the new teacher understand the intent of the feedback and mediate the conflict. In Maria's words,

I felt bad, but on the other hand, I wanted her [the novice] to hear that there were some things that she could improve on... I talked to Kathryn about it and asked her to let [the novice] know that I loved the observation. It's great to have someone like that be my mediator (5/01).

In addition, Kathryn reviews formal evaluation procedures and expectations with each new cohort of teachers as the school year begins. Kathryn also assists Maria by helping beginning teachers write their individualized learning plans (ILP) each fall, mid-term reviews in the winter and end-of-year reviews in the spring. Over time, this has become an efficient means of handling the task. When asked if she is ever tempted to intervene in this work, Maria shares the following:

I would if I felt that a teacher needed it. But so far, teachers I've had are pretty much on target with what they need. If I feel they are not stressing something I think they need to address, then I'll address it through the observations (5/01).

The picture emerging is one of coordinated support. Primarily through discussion, concerns are shared, problems solved and action plans developed. Maria remembers a time when they often worked as a “threesome”, Maria and Kathryn meeting directly with the new teacher. Today the two are more likely to communicate their thoughts in private, thereby coordinating an efficient plan of support that is appropriate for the novice.

It is often argued that the type of coordinated support described here threatens the trusting relationship between novice and mentor. How do Maria and Kathryn, both firm believers in the “*rule of confidentiality*”, resolve this dilemma inherent to their work?

The answer lies in their shared commitment to promoting teacher development.

I think we support each other. Because remember, our twin or common goal is teacher development. So any of the conversations we have about the beginning teachers are always, how are we improving instruction with them (5/01)?

The fact that the two routinely converse about new teachers should not imply that they share responsibility for summative evaluation. Both are quick to reply that Kathryn's

careful and up-close work with the beginning teacher would not be possible if the fear of evaluation were hanging over their heads. In Kathryn's words,

I expect a great deal from them [new teachers] and we're very rigorous in our relationship and I give them 100% support and encouragement. It's just very full. I don't believe that we could enter into the relationship at that level if they were concerned that I was evaluating them or their job was on the line (5/01).

As Maria notes, her work with new teachers, as the building principal, is very different from that of mentors. With great respect for what mentors do, Maria hints at the complementary nature of their interdependent roles.

Their role [mentors] with new teachers is good. The teachers, they mentor and they counsel; whereas my role falls not only to mentor and counsel, but I have an obligation to coach in a more, you know, I'm coaching for superior performance and skill. They're coaching for development. So it's a nice match. It's a nice marriage in that I can depend on them to do what they need to do.... They are a tremendous help to me. I couldn't do the work that I do if I didn't have them because they deal with the day to day, the nitty-gritty details of teaching. That I don't have time to do (3/99).

Maria adds,

I don't want anything to compromise teacher development.... I feel when teachers know you are the evaluator, there is something there; whereas with Kathryn, there are no boundaries. She can accelerate teacher development. She can do what she does because the shadow of evaluation isn't there. The flip side of that is to support responsibly. I'm not sure everybody does that, but Kathryn is particularly skilled (5/01).

Described here is a coordinated approach to new teacher support by both principal and mentor. Underlying the work is a shared commitment to promoting teacher development through rigorous and responsible assistance.

James and Anne: Teaming to be Pillars of Support

James is the longest serving principal in the study. A former bilingual classroom teacher, lead teacher and mentor through the California Mentor Teacher Project, James

has proven himself to be a knowledgeable and skilled school leader. At the close of every school year he polls his staff, asking whether or not he is the one to lead them into the future. With the exception of one year, the results have been unanimous. The reason for his success? Perhaps it is his belief that everyone has a job to do; a job that he will hold you accountable for.

In my first interview with James three years ago, he described his work with new teachers and their mentors as a coordinated effort. In fact, it was James that first framed for me the idea of a support triad.

What we've tried to do is set up sort of a triad between myself, the mentor, and the new teacher, so that the work I do with evaluation and the work they do with new teacher support are coordinated (12/99).

To coordinate this work, James expects to meet periodically with the mentors in his building. Often informal, these meetings can be initiated by either James or the mentor to share new teacher progress, get input on local building needs, identify emerging concerns and, if necessary, develop an individualized support plan.

Either I'm calling the meeting because I want some input about things that I'm seeing or the stage that I am in with the evaluation process. Or they have a concern that they think I need to be aware of or that my involvement needs to be brought to bear (12/99).

Importantly, how things get talked about vary. When the new teacher is doing well, the conversation is often limited, as there is little to talk about. When the novice is beginning to show signs of concern, most mentors will deliberately “invite” James in to the classroom. Over time, he has learned to read between the lines. When mentors ask if he has been in to see new teacher X recently, he knows things are amiss. When mentors report in February that they are *still* working on classroom management, he understands this to mean progress is slow. When a problem is full-blown, James and the mentor are

more likely to engage in open and honest problem solving with the ultimate intent of guiding new teachers' development. To illustrate, in a recent case James authorized an emergency contact procedure – with him in the point position – for a new teacher who was having a difficult time controlling his classroom. This example is important, as few mentors would have the authority to implement such a plan without principal approval, and few principals would know the necessity of their involvement without an open line of communication.

For James, a coordinated approach to new teacher support is both efficient and practical.

The mentor and I work with new teachers so that the activities they have to be engaged in, both for the induction program and for the evaluation process, don't overlap or don't duplicate themselves, but are coordinated and integrated and part of the same effort (12/99).

As James reports telling his new teachers, *"I'm one more element, one more person in the effort to support you and move you along the process of professional development."* Only when James has a serious concern about a beginning teacher's performance does he adopt a more critical stance. He describes this to new teachers at the onset of each school year as wearing two hats. As long as they are doing well, he wears a hat of support. However, if concerns emerge, he will switch to a second hat, arguing that *"my fundamental responsibility is to make sure there is a qualified teacher in each classroom. If they can't show me that they have those qualifications, then it is my job to remove them."*

In the early days of the induction program, James often met directly with the new teacher and their mentor. Today, he and the mentor are more likely to develop an action plan that brings together their respective strengths. For example, James is best able to

access resources, like phones and water coolers, and tap funds for workshop attendance; whereas mentors are in a better position to arrange demonstration lessons and engage in co-planning. Most important is that the new teacher's needs are being met.

In the excerpt that opened this chapter, James gives us a glimpse of how principals and mentors might work collaboratively to support new teachers, providing one condition has been met: the mentor trusts the principal to do no harm. At this point I push harder. Are you really advocating that principals and mentors talk more freely and honestly about the new teacher? In a reflective tone, James responds affirmatively. Experience has shown him that principals and mentors can come together, out of shared concern, to promote teacher development. Key is maintaining sensitivity to their respective roles while upholding their commitment to professional accountability.

In a similar way, Anne, a mentor teacher in the building, describes the necessity of bringing James on board, particularly when the novice is struggling. For her, this has become a strategy for motivating new teachers to take their growth – and her suggestions – more seriously.

Sometimes, because I'm not an evaluator, it's hard for me to motivate [new teachers]... I know what they need to do so I'll ask [the principal] for support. I'll ask, "Could you please mention to so and so that they need to do this?", because I don't have clout! I'm not the one writing the evaluation... Because I'm not an evaluator and I'm not writing their evaluation and whether or not they get a job next year isn't depending on my word alone... I have to work with their supervisors, sometimes, to make sure that if I have a concern I voice it because I have a commitment to the students in the classroom... If I see that my suggestions and my modeling and my sitting down with them and working through things is not being transferred to their daily practice, then I'll go because it's too important and my time is too limited with them to not take care of business (5/01).

Clearly, James prefers an open and honest flow of communication with mentors.

At the same time, James is highly professional in his use of this feedback. He is careful to

maintain confidentiality by not disclosing what he has learned directly to the novice; instead, using that information to inform his judgement and ensuing action. It is with the utmost care and respect that James works collaboratively with mentors.

What I basically say to them is that I understand that your role is to be an advocate for this teacher. I want to support you in that role because I understand how critical and important it is. I think that the relationships between the triad that I was describing can be a very powerful one. So let's talk about those things that we can do to honor and respect your role as an advocate and that can benefit from my involvement (12/99).

Karen and Jennifer: The Power of a Trusting Relationship

We now examine the work of Karen, a new principal and former BTSA mentor, and Jennifer, a veteran mentor who visits the school on a weekly basis. Long-time colleagues and friends, Jennifer first taught under Karen as a student teacher. As Karen reflects back, the fact that they had a long-standing working relationship – including a style of communicating and a basis for understanding one another – makes the task of sharing new teacher support much easier.

I have a relationship with them [Jennifer and the other mentor in the building], so it's been really easy. The doors open, they drop me notes. I drop them notes, saying: These are some of the things I'm concerned about. Would mind working on this with so and so? I also get notes from them, saying: These are some of the things we have been working on. Why don't you go in and check this out. I like the way this is... I like to have open and honest communication with the mentor and say these are some things that are causing me a little bit of difficulty, would you check on that? (12/99)

In this excerpt, we see how Karen routinely enlists the help of mentors. Through carefully worded phrases designed to protect the novice (e.g. *this is what we are working on, why don't you check it out?*) Karen and Jennifer alert one another to classroom successes and emerging problems. Often this takes place through written notes and

chance meetings as they pass in the hallway. Abbreviated comments about what is being worked on become hints about areas of challenge or concern. In turn, these concerns become the basis of new and ongoing assistance. To illustrate, Karen shares the following story.

I had a teacher who I was really concerned about and it was really wonderful for me to pick up the phone or put a note in Jennifer's box and say, "Jennifer, it's coming close to observation time. Please help X with planning because I need to be in there and I want her not to be stressed about it." So then I get a note back. "We met on Saturday and we have a long range plan. Please go in there and talk to her about it." The new teacher felt good about it, I felt good about it, and the advisor felt good about it. Ultimately, the kids were getting a structured curriculum (12/99).

In another instance, Jennifer – at Karen's request – helped a second year teacher redesign her lesson plan prior to one of Karen's formal observations. Karen actually postponed the observation following the pre-observation conference so that a more appropriate lesson could be developed. It was at that point that she enlisted Jennifer's targeted help.

Although most of the time they work independent of one another in their support of new teachers, Karen and Jennifer have collaborated under special circumstances. Karen is willing to do so, stating, *"if there is somebody I am real concerned about, we would make it a priority and we would schedule it."* In a more informal and serendipitous way, this happened recently when Karen happened to be walking by a classroom just as Jennifer and one of her new teachers began observing a classroom video together. Because Karen and Jennifer had previously shared concerns about this particular novice, it made sense for Karen to join them without the auspices of a formal meeting hanging over their heads.

Notably, when Karen and Jennifer do work together, they do so in a professional manner that is respectful of the new teacher. As described by Sonja, a new teacher at Arts who is assigned to Jennifer,

Jennifer's let me know sometime when she's talked to Karen, and I think Karen's let's me know or Jennifer's let me know when she's talked to Karen. I think I've let that go and just realize that it's part of where I am at and part of the fact that it's in their best interest. If they do, I trust them as professionals (5/01).

Importantly, this works because Jennifer, like Karen, sees student achievement as her bottom line. Passing along critical information, raising questions, and sharing insights is acceptable when principal and mentor trust one another to be professional in their actions. As Karen states,

I think there's a fine line between being the mentor and being the evaluator, but I think we all have the responsibility to make sure that kids are being served. And the mentor has that responsibility as well. Without breaking the confidence of the teacher, I think usually there is a rapport between the advisor and the beginning teacher where you can say, "Let's work on this because this is a problem" (6/01).

Nonetheless, there is a limit to what Karen is willing to share with and hear from Jennifer. As a former mentor, Karen is protective of the relationship that exists between the new teacher and mentor. Only when the new teacher struggles does Karen feel justified in talking openly about concerns. Asked why maintaining a code of confidence is so important, Karen asserts,

It puts the teacher in an awkward position when the advisor comes to me. The teacher needs to know that they have an ally and they need to know that the advisor is there for them to really share everything that they need to share (12/99).

Although Karen would love to be viewed as a new teacher ally, her responsibility for summative evaluation prevents her from playing this role. Instead, she relies on the mentor to nurture such a relationship.

In reflecting on this case and the data from which it is drawn, an important theme emerges: relationships. In this case we get a glimpse of how vital it is that principals and mentors can effectively communicate with one another around shared understandings and can trust the other to act professionally in the novices' best interests.

When first asked how she builds this relationship with new mentors in the building,

Karen responds:

It's having an open door. And I try to attend induction programs and activities because I want mentors to know that I want to work with them and that this has to be a relationship... For me it would be the same kind of thing as with any new staff person – building rapport and being honest and open about what I need (12/99).

One year later, she builds on her previous comment:

I try to make people feel comfortable and I let them know that I am here for student achievement. My bottom line is we need to do what's best for kids. I think when you depersonalize it – it's not about me, it's not about them, we're all here for the same reason – I think that really always creates the feeling that we really are all here for kids. I think that kind of relaxes people (5/01).

Ramon and Rebecca: Coaching in Instructional Leadership

We now examine this issue through the eyes of Ramon and Rebecca, a new teacher mentor. Recall from previous chapters, Ramon is a new principal placed in a challenging setting. At the time of data collection, Valley Elementary was struggling to raise student test scores in hopes of averting district take-over. After a full year of planning, with the assistance of outside consultants, the faculty began implementing a new instructional plan at the start of the past school year. Compounding the challenge, roughly one-third of Valley's teaching faculty is new to the profession. Not surprising, Ramon's own newness has left him feeling overwhelmed at times. That he looks to his

new teacher mentors for help in negotiating the task of new teacher support seems fitting.

In his words,

I think we work as a team; not as an evaluating team, but as a team to speak about needs. So, not to evaluate anyone, [but] to talk about teaching and things that maybe I need to provide the new teachers, or support, or guidance, or any of those sorts of things. Basically...the idea is to work together and help the new teacher succeed (6/01).

Two things in this comment warrant further attention. First, in this excerpt Ramon makes clear his preference for working with the mentor as though they were a team. A disposition toward working collaboratively and equally is implied when he says they talk about teaching and things he needs to provide the new teacher with. Further, he indicates an openness to being coached by the new teacher mentor – a theme he returns to in later interviews. Second, this team is focused on meeting new teacher learning needs, which stands in stark contrast with a more evaluative and traditional principal role. Rather than judge a new teacher's competence, his emphasis is on helping the new teacher succeed.

When asked what he expects from mentors, Ramon responds:

I meet regularly with the mentors. We talk about ways of helping new teachers, from my end. Also, sometimes the new teachers don't want to share things with me but they share with the mentor. Let's say they need more supplies and they see me as always running around real busy. They don't want to stop me and say, "Look, I need this." So they kind of communicate with the mentor and then the mentor comes to me (12/99).

From this we can ascertain that Ramon meets regularly with mentors and that they freely share non-confidential information back and forth. Based on this, we get the impression that mentors also use these occasions to pass along important insights and observations – things that Ramon may not see on his own, but should nonetheless be aware of. Note how this comes out in the following dialogue.

Ramon: But now I know... they [new teachers] needed me to be more

accessible. I didn't know that teachers needed more from me than the conversation I have with them outside the classroom, or the observations required by the district. So it's good to have a mentor.

Cindy: *So the mentor brought that to your attention?*

Ramon: *Yes... if you would spend a little more time with them, give more positive feedback. And that's good for me, because I didn't know that. I thought I was giving positive feedback...I thought I was doing that, but I go, whoa. Maybe I wasn't doing as much as I should have (12/99).*

Alternately, when Ramon has a concern he is comfortable sharing that with Rebecca. For example, recently a new bilingual teacher at the school was not providing students with any instruction in Spanish. Although Ramon reportedly addressed this directly with the teacher, he also shared his concerns with Rebecca in hope that she would follow-through in her work with the novice. At last report, things were improving in this situation, thanks to a "team" effort.

At the same time, Ramon is careful to not breach confidentiality. He understands that the new teacher/mentor relationship is a private one. However, he also distinguishes between conversations focused on improving teaching and those focused on evaluating performance. When the former is in play, he believes confidentiality is less an issue.

Probed as to what constitutes a breach of confidence, Ramon explains:

We're speaking about teaching and learning, we're not talking about evaluation. So it's not confidentiality, I mean, it's working to make the teacher successful. If you do not share, it might be too late...the sooner we start working on it, the better we can address a problem or need (6/01).

This comment reminds us that time does not stand still in schools. Problems that get overlooked or set-aside often get bigger and more difficult to handle. Taking care of matters before they get out of hand is Ramon's preference.

Reflecting on this case, Ramon's desire to be coached by Rebecca and the other new teacher mentors in the building is worthy of noting once again. Importantly, Rebecca has a complementary understanding of her role. She shares,

When I come in, he'll say to me, "Oh, good! I want to ask your opinion about this and this"... I have to coach him a lot on what to look for when he goes into the room... He can talk about their sense of control in the class. He can talk about how he thinks they're responding to the kids, but he can't talk about what they are teaching (5/01).

Note, what Rebecca hints at here is critical. Ramon cannot help his new teachers grow and develop if he lacks confidence and skill in his ability to do so. As raised in the last chapter, both are issues he struggles with. Rebecca's coaching, no matter how skilled, can only bring him so far. For that reason, he and his new teachers are fortunate to have Rebecca in the building. Perhaps he knows this already; when asked what he expects in terms of support from mentors, Ramon responds:

They [mentors] are helping me so much already by coaching the new teachers, by spending the time that they do with new teachers. They are doing things to assist me in those ways... (6/01).

Cross-Case Analysis: Principals and Mentors Working Toward a Common Goal

In the data reported we hear strong references to what Shulman (1987) coined the "*rule of confidence*." All four principals are not only aware of the reported tension between principal as evaluator and mentor as supporter, they are outspoken in their desire to preserve this separation. Or are they? A close look at the data reveals a discrepancy between what principals espouse and what they report actually doing. Although each advocates for confidentiality under the guise that it protects the new teacher, they each find ways to circumvent this guiding principle when teacher development and/or student

learning is at stake. In the terms of Argyris and Schon (1974), this stance toward maintaining confidentiality at all costs acts as a self-reinforcing system that is rule-bound, standardized and predictable with sharp role definitions. In simpler terms, the system is characterized by outdated professional thinking.

Argyris and Schon (1974) go on to claim that dilemmas arise when there is a mismatch between espoused and enacted theory, and it is out of these dilemmas that new theories of professional practice are born. I will argue in the pages that follow that this is precisely what is happening in the South County Schools as the presence of BTSA mentors slowly and unknowingly challenge the way things are traditionally done. This is not to say that the “*rule of confidence*” should be discarded. Rather, that it needs amending under certain circumstances or pre-conditions. As a result, a new theory of practice that better explains effective support of new teachers and their mentors by principals is needed. I argue further that this new theory must reflect a shared or distributed perspective on instructional leadership (Spillane, et al, 2001).

Valued-Added Nature of Working Collaboratively

I begin this cross-case analysis by highlighting the value-added nature of principals and mentors working collaboratively, claiming that this work is good for the principal and mentor, the new teacher, and the children he or she teaches.

Working Together is Good for New Teachers and their Students

New teachers can become easily overwhelmed by the multiple demands placed on them. When the expectations of a mentor do not match with those of the principal, the sense of overwhelm may become too great. One advantage of principals communicating openly with mentors about a new teacher’s developing practice is a sense of shared

expectation. Even when perspectives differ, there is an opportunity to make that difference publicly known and discussed. Furthermore, for the new teacher who is wary of yet another suggestion for improvement, a unified stand can be motivating. Recall Anne mentioning this in reference to her work with James.

Students are another reason for mentors and principals talking together. Mentors are not there to protect new teachers at all costs, but to guide them in their development as teachers and professionals. Principals carry a similar responsibility. When students' needs are not being met, the mentor and principal must be prepared to act. By serving as each other's confidential sounding board, principals and mentors can better equip themselves to take needed action. It is also likely that by talking regularly and openly they will surface potential problems earlier.

Working Together is Good for Principals and Mentors

When it is understood that principals and mentors work together to support new teacher development, there is no need for principals to read between the lines of mentor talk. Nor do mentors need to work so hard to cover up their concerns through guarded hints and clues. Communication can be more open and honest. One obvious benefit comes as a result of combining two sets of strengths and resources. Mentors have time and expertise; principals have money and authority. By joining forces, new teacher support is effectively doubled.

But more than shared resources result when principals and mentors work together. Each can be a trusted second opinion for the other as they seek consensus in their impressions and observations. Moreover, when there is a conflict between the new teacher and either mentor or principal, there is a mediator in waiting. Recall Kathryn's

description of this in her work with Maria. All of this adds up to greater efficiency as principals and mentors strive for effectiveness.

Guiding Principles

That said, none of the value-added benefits identified above are automatic when principals and mentors work together. The four cases presented here suggest that at least three guiding principles govern such work: 1) the presence of a trusting relationship between principal and mentor based on professional norms of practice; 2) a shared understanding of what good teaching can be; 3) the willingness to promote teacher development as well as ensure teacher quality, e.g. a commitment to blending assistance with assessment.

Trusting Relationships

For the support triad to work, an investment in relationship-building is needed. Mentors must develop trusting relationships with novices and their principals. Likewise, principals must develop trusting relationships with novices and their mentors. First and foremost, these relationships depend on open and honest communication where performance expectations are clearly articulated among the three. At the very least, principals and mentors need to openly communicate with one another their expectations for the novice, which in turn needs to be shared with the new teacher.

Equally important, these relationships require trust. Novices must know that they are safe to learn and that communication between principal and mentor is for the purpose of assisting their development. Recall Sonja's acknowledgment of Karen and Jennifer's conversations about her. At the very core, mentors must trust that principals will not use information about the new teacher to do harm, or as Jennifer puts it, "*to fink*" on the new

teacher. Part of this is understanding and respecting the boundaries of their respective roles and responsibilities. In the excerpt below, Jennifer reflects on the ease with which she can talk to James about new teachers – a comfort level that he helped to create through his words and actions.²²

It's like the way James always said it... I know you're not in the position to give me evaluative feedback, I know it's not your role to give me evaluative feedback. But I'm wondering if you can let me know how it's going so I can best support this teacher. That was always so perfect. It was like he was saying, don't worry, I'm not going to take what you say and go slam this teacher. I'm not going to write it up in their files. I'm trying to hear from you what you see because you see them more often. It always made me feel really comfortable because he was saying, I understand the boundaries of your role. I'm not finking on this teacher. But please give me some insight... so I can do my job to support this teacher (4/02).

In this excerpt we can identify three essential features of the principal/mentor relationship: mutual understanding of and respect for one's role; open and honest communication; and a trusting professional relationship where the new teacher's best interests are central.

Knowledge of Good Teaching

As much as strong relationships are critical, they are not sufficient to support collaborative work between principals and mentors. Also needed is a shared public vision of good teaching with student learning as the bottom line. In absence of this, new teacher understandings of principal and mentor expectations are likely to appear idiosyncratic and unpredictable. The goal must be to articulate and make public what counts as effective, quality teaching so that it can be part of the ongoing discourse among all teachers in a building, not just those who are new. The fact that all four principals in this

²² Jennifer was first interviewed as the mentor paired with Karen; however, in this interview she reflects on her work with various principals, including James. I include this reference because of its relevance to the issue discussed.

study have adopted the use of the California teaching standards has helped provide a common language around which good teaching can be discussed in their buildings.

Equally important, as these cases illustrate, the more sophisticated a principal's understanding of teacher development is, the more productive joint problem-solving can be. As we see with Ramon, a limited understanding of good teaching prevents the kind of sophisticated exchange around issues of teaching and learning that Rebecca hopes for. In place of joint work, Rebecca is left coaching Ramon in what it means to support and develop a new teacher's budding practice.

Commitment to Assistance with Assessment

Finally, these cases highlight the importance of both support and evaluation to novice development. We see this most clearly in the example set by Maria, James and Karen where the evaluation process is framed as a learning opportunity that is purposefully designed a) to link with the new teacher's individual goals and b) to extend the work of the mentor. Here, assistance in the form of ongoing formative assessment is combined with formal evaluation. Notably, both functions – assistance and assessment – are shared or “*distributed*” across the principal and mentor.

Importantly, opportunities to combine assistance with assessment are not limited to the formal evaluation process. As Maria notes, mentors like Kathryn are careful to support new teachers in ways that are rigorous and responsible. Not all beginning teaching is effective, and not all novice goals are worthy. Using ongoing formative assessment as their guide, good mentors help move new teacher development toward a shared public vision for good teaching.

True of all four principals, the combination of support and evaluation (or assistance and assessment) is considered a necessary means of promoting teacher development and ensuring professional accountability. This conviction was most evident as principals responded to a series of three vignettes in the third interview. Each vignette presented a situation where the mentor was aware of a problem with the new teacher, but the principal was not. After hearing the vignette read aloud, principals were asked whether or not they would expect the mentor to share what they know. In each case, their responses were unanimous. When student learning or professional ethics were at issue, principals wanted to know so that they could respond proactively in a manner that would protect students, while at the same time facilitate the novice's development. Only when reasonable assistance was offered would a negative evaluation outcome be realized.

Principals Complement and Enhance Mentors Role

This study argues from the premise that principals' efforts to support new teachers are no better than or more important than those of the mentor. Rather, principals' efforts complement and enhance that of the mentor. To illustrate, despite all that Maria reports doing for Sharon, the new teacher, her efforts are overshadowed by the efforts of Kathryn, the on-site mentor. Perhaps the real question, then, is not what principals do better than mentors, but: *What do principals do that enhances, adds to, or complements the work of mentors?*

As this analysis has shown, there are good reasons for principals and mentors to work collaboratively in the support and development of new teachers, provided that certain basic conditions are met: a trusting professional relationship; a shared knowledge of good teaching; and a combination of assistance with assessment. Although respect for

the “*rule of confidentiality*” pervades this data, a new understanding of shared or distributed responsibility for new teachers is emerging in their reported day to day efforts, thereby suggesting a revision to traditional thinking on what constitutes effective professional practice by principals when working with new teachers and their mentors.

Chapter 6: Bringing the Support Triad Together

One of the ways that BTSA program has changed our culture is that it's really caused us to take a look at the role of the administrator. What we've changed from is the traditional supervisory role into a more collegial support role. Just as our teachers are collaborative working with each other, the administrators have now adopted that collegial support system. They are much more interested in [asking], how do I coach that new employee to excellence?

~ Assistant Superintendent (CTE/CDE, 1997)

Chapter Overview

Whereas previous data chapters described the principal and his or her relationship with novice teachers and their mentors, this chapter looks specifically at the support triad as a unit of analysis. Two distributed models of principal support for new teachers and their mentors emerge from this analysis, each with implications for principal effectiveness. In concluding, I address the final research question posed in this study: *Does principals' work with new teachers and their mentors change or alter how they go about their work with teachers more broadly?* Although the data are sketchy on this point, I argue that there is good reason to be hopeful. The active presence of skilled mentors effectively puts new teachers and their development on principals' list of things that matter. This gives principals a reason to pay attention to teacher development writ large, as well as an opportunity to develop professional working relationships that last long after the novice has arrived.

Introduction

Chapters three, four and five presented a descriptive account of how four

elementary principals – Maria, James, Karen and Ramon – understand and report enacting the support, development and evaluation of new teachers and their mentors. Chapter three highlighted the similar and yet different paths each individual took to the principalship. All four have significant teaching experience in the district and a well-documented history of promoting quality teaching and learning for its large number of English Language Learners. However, their backgrounds differ with respect to the knowledge and skill they bring to the task of new teacher development.

As former BTSA mentors, Maria and Karen have an extensive background in mentoring new teachers. They know what is likely to be difficult and when for the novice. They understand the importance of developing a trusting relationship in which the new teacher is comfortable learning and growing as an early-career professional. They also have an intuitive understanding of when to directly guide the novice and when to sit back and let the learning unfold. James and Ramon, on the other hand, do not come to the principalship with this set of experiences. Interestingly, James has figured his way around this dilemma by getting out of the mentor's way. Instead, he concentrates his efforts on creating structures that support novice development. Ramon, a new principal at the time of this study, has yet to discover what new teachers need to learn, how they learn that, and who might be in the best position to guide that learning. In an interesting twist, Ramon ends up being coached by mentors in his building.

Notably, there is alignment and coherence between what these principals believe and reporting doing (Argyris & Schon, 1974), suggesting each operates from his or her own theory of practice. However, it is also apparent that not all four theories of practice are equal. Based on self-report, Maria, James and Karen might be considered more

“effective” than Ramon with respect to new teacher support and development. One reasonable explanation for this contrast may be the depth of knowledge and skill in new teacher development that each brings to the principalship. When the principal has a robust vision of what good teaching can be, as well as a sense for how to move new teachers in that direction, the potential for success is enhanced. It might be further argued that a sophisticated understanding of what good teaching is begets more elaborate practice. Thus, it is hard to enact a well-developed practice as an instructional leader when your vision of what is possible remains limited. Arguably, Maria, James and Karen each possess rich understanding.

In the case of Ramon, I argue that two additional factors – one personal and the other contextual – further limit his ability to do more. First, Valley Elementary is an under-performing school under threat of state takeover. As a result, most of his instructional leadership time is spent trying to reverse that trend. Finding time to attend to the needs of new teachers is improbable. Second, Ramon’s preferred leadership style – at least in curricular and instructional matters – is hands-off. Keeping his distance from teachers and this form of “teachers’ work” is a choice he makes.

Any further discrepancy in reported practice among the four principals shows up most clearly in chapter four. Although each principal approaches the task of new teacher support in different ways, the end result for Maria, James and Karen – as judged by the new teachers and mentors they work with – is effective practice. For each, the little things they do add up to something significant. This includes the desire to get to know the new teacher and to lay the foundation for a sound working relationship. Equally important, these principals are observant of new teachers’ learning needs. Likewise, they are skilled

in turning the teacher evaluation process into a learning opportunity for the novice. With more coaching from mentors and an improved professional climate at Valley, we might reasonably expect Ramon to grow in effectiveness over time.

The discussion continues in chapter five with a focus on principals' work with mentors. After arguing the value-added nature of working together, especially when the novice struggles, I identify a set of three pre-conditions, each essential in supporting collaborative work between principals and mentors. First and foremost, the principal and mentor must have a trusting professional relationship, one where they rely on the other to "do no harm." Also important is a shared knowledge of what good teaching is, as well as a mutual commitment to both assist and assess, support and evaluate. In concluding, I argue that when these pre-conditions are met, the possibility is increased that principals and mentors can work together in ways that complement and enhance each other's role.

This brings us to the final data chapter, a synthesis of the three that preceded it, where the unit of analysis has been broadened to include the full support triad. In doing so, two models of professional practice (Argyris & Schon, 1974) emerge, both of which are examples of shared or distributed leadership (Spillane, et al, 2001). In the section that follows, I elaborate on these points.

Two Models of the Support Triad

A careful look at the data reveals subtle differences in how each of these individuals approaches the support and development of new teachers and their mentors. Most alike are Maria, James and Karen. Although faced with the unique circumstances of their respective schools, each similarly describes working with mentors to provide coordinated assistance to the novice. This is particularly true when the novice struggles to

teach well. Nonetheless, Maria and James describe a more nuanced understanding, largely drawn from experience, of how to work with mentors in a truly collaborative manner. Karen aspires to this, but is still in the process of learning how to enact such a practice. Ramon remains an unknown. Despite a reported interest in supporting new teachers, his efforts tend to fall short. Notably, it is the mentor, Rebecca, who instrumentally coaches him in the intricacies of principal support. Only time will tell whether or not the combination of personal commitment and outside coaching will lead to more effective enactment.

An examination of the support triad in each of these instances provides us with an explanation for why these cases differ. By looking across the two distributed support models, we are better able to see the distinct advantages and disadvantages of each. We begin with Maria and James.

Maria and James: Coordinating Assistance

Maria and James share a commitment to supporting and guiding new teachers, as well as assessing their developing practice. Both report coordinating their efforts with the mentors in their buildings. However, what this looks like in practice differs somewhat between their two buildings. Maria is fortunate to have Kathryn, a full-time mentor/professional development coordinator on site; whereas James works with three different mentors, only one of whom works out of his building.

For Maria and Kathryn, this arrangement makes it easy for the two to talk informally on a daily basis. Their ease with communicating likely stems from their teacher days when Shining Star was first named a professional development school. Today they both share a passion for creating a school where issues of diversity and equity

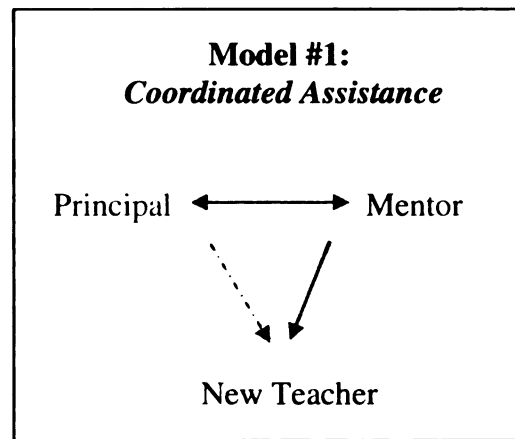
are central. Although Kathryn does not carry the title of assistant principal, she operates with the authority and respect of one. To an outsider, the two seem an inseparable pair.

James must work around the inconvenience of not having on-site mentors. In recent years he has worked with as many as three mentors in the building. Fortunately, one is a former teacher in the building, another remains on staff as a part-time literacy specialist, so they have comfort and familiarity with school operations. Typically, each stops by James' office periodically to check in, to ask if anything new is happening, or to recount what they have been working on of late. Sometimes these meetings are scheduled in advance, but they are just as likely to occur informally as they pass each other in the halls. When circumstances demand it, James reports being able to have "*closed door*" conversations with two of the three mentors. The third is new to the building, so she and James have not had as many opportunities to develop rapport that would support collaborative work.

These two instances, one with on-site mentor support and the other with off-site mentor support, both illustrate a model of coordinated assistance (see Figure 3) where the principal and mentor communicate openly and freely to share information relevant to the support, development and evaluation of the novice (represented by a solid line). As a result, the mentor is able to offer timely and appropriate one-to-one assistance (also represented by a solid line), knowing that the principal is there to affirm the work and provide back up as needed (represented by a hatched line). Because the principal is kept abreast of the new teacher's unique learning needs, as worked on by the mentor, they are better able to offer assistance to the novice. This may occur in a variety of ways. The principal may help access needed resources or intentionally link the evaluation process

with the mentor's work goals. The principal may even give direct support to the novice. All of this works to the new teacher's benefit.

Figure 3:



Karen: Overlapping Assistance

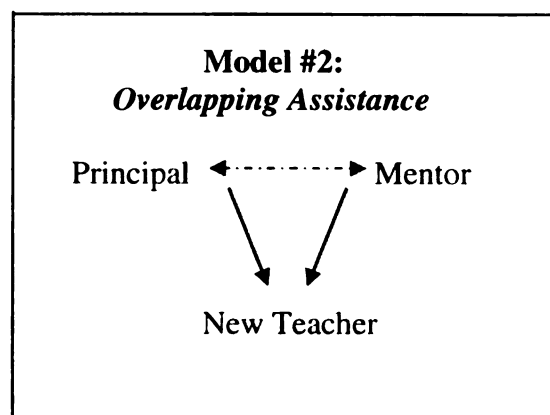
Karen provides a subtle contrast to Maria and James. As experienced principals, both Maria and James are comfortable taking a backseat to the mentor in charge. Karen, on the other hand, is eager to step up and play the role of mentor. As a former support provider, this is her comfort zone. It is what she enjoys and feels good doing. However, it is also the source of some tension in her work with new teacher mentors. Invoking the unspoken "*rule of confidence*", Karen is hesitant to talk too much with the mentors in her building. Her ultimate concern is for protecting the novice. Therefore, by offering support directly to the new teacher Karen is able to avoid conversations where problems and concerns are openly shared.

Although this appears to be changing some as she gains experience, Karen falls prey to duplicating or overlapping the services of the mentor. Because her communication with mentors remains somewhat guarded, she is unable to learn from

their experience and insight. While her support efforts may be coordinated with the mentor, they are just as likely to overlap with that of the mentor. The end result is good for the confident novice who receives double offers of support. For the novice who struggles, however, any conflicting messages may be difficult to interpret. Not only is this approach inefficient for a busy administrator, it may be unnecessarily confusing to the novice.

This case suggests a model of overlapping assistance (see Figure 4) where sometimes the mentor leads in providing offers of support, and sometimes the principal leads (represented by the solid lines). The new teacher benefits from a dual support system where assistance comes from both mentor and principal. However, because the communication between principal and mentor is inconsistent (represented by the hatched line), the new teacher may suffer from unclear and even competing expectations. Moreover, this approach is prone to duplicating support efforts – an unnecessary use of time for an already busy principal.

Figure 4:



Learning from Ramon

Finally, the case of Ramon is important for what it teaches us about the potential for mentors' influence on principals. Here we see an overwhelmed beginning principal who wants to be supportive of his newest recruits, but lacks the knowledge and skill needed to do so in a meaningful and sustained way. Enter Rebecca, a well-trained and supported mentor, who gradually and gently tries to steer both Ramon and the new teacher toward more effective practices.

At the time data collection ended the results of Rebecca's influence was not clear. To be sure, her efforts ensure that new teachers experience timely and appropriate instructional guidance through thoughtful one to one mentoring. We also have reason to believe that Ramon is paying attention to and learning from her. Nonetheless, her actions could ultimately prompt quite different responses from Ramon. On the one hand, he could intentionally step aside, further limiting his interactions with new teachers on the grounds that Rebecca has more expertise and time to give to the task. On the other hand, he could continue learning from Rebecca, gradually taking on greater responsibility for new teacher support as trust emerges alongside a shared vision.

Given Ramon's interest in "*doing more*" for his new teachers, we have reason to believe that as Ramon gains confidence in his ability to manage the school, he will increasingly be able to focus on developing this critical aspect of his practice as a school leader – especially if Rebecca continues in her position as mentor teacher at Valley Elementary. If not, Ramon will have more or less delegated the entirety of new teacher support to Rebecca, a task she is willing and able to assume. However, while the novice

is not left feeling isolated and alone, any opportunities for sharing sights and mutually supporting each other's efforts are lost between mentor and principal in this arrangement.

Arguably, stepping aside is a reasonable response for an overwhelmed principal with little expertise in instructional development. In this case, allowing the mentor to assume full responsibility for new teacher support and development has clear advantages. This is particularly true when the principal cannot be trusted to work collaboratively and professionally. The inherent risk, however, is that the principal fails to acknowledge the importance of his or her position and authority in creating a system that supports the new teachers' development. Additionally, it places the burden on the mentor of educating the principal and keeping him or her in the loop. At the same time, it leaves the mentor alone in their work, without the benefit of the principals' opinion and insight.

Identifying Effectiveness: The Situated Nature of Principal Support

Based on these two models, a clear preference for the first, "*Coordinated Assistance*," emerges. Coordinated assistance benefits the novice by providing one-to-one mentoring support with principal backup. The principal gains from knowing that the novices needs are being met, thus freeing the principal to attend to other pressing matters. Together, the principal and mentor share information that can help each do their respective work more effectively – an example of distributed leadership in action. Model two, "*Overlapping Assistance*," represents a reasonable alternative, even though it may not be the most efficient approach to new teacher support, development and evaluation. Regardless, both require that principals and mentors are able to work collaboratively and professionally together around shared goals.

When collaborative work between principals and mentors is not possible, it may be best for the principal to step aside completely, thereby providing the mentor with time and space to work. This way the new teachers' needs are addressed and in the process, the principal may actually grow in his/her capacity to provide effective support.

This discussion highlights the situated nature of principal support for new teachers and their mentors. While the "*Coordinated Assistance*" model may present itself as the ideal, it cannot be viewed as the only possible and desired approach without taking into account who the principal is, who the mentor is, and in what setting they work together. The bottom line must be what is best for students' learning.

Cross-Case Findings: Reinforcing the Triad

I now look across the four cases to a set of cross-case findings relevant to the support triad. Although each is distinct from the other, together they represent a more systemic approach to new teacher support that is not just concerned with what principals do, but how they come to think that way, and what enables or constrains that contextually. The following findings are discussed. First, principals' attentiveness to new teacher learning needs is likely shaped by their prior knowledge, skill and experience. Second, mentors help to focus principals' attention on new teachers and their learning needs in significant ways. Third, mentoring can be a pathway to the ideals of instructional leadership for both principals and teacher leaders. Fourth, the presence of a well-defined mission allows principals to focus attention on teacher development. In other word, the setting matters.

Prior Knowledge and Skill Help Frame Principal Attention

The four principals in this study followed a similar path to the principalship; still, their commitments and practice differ in subtle ways. Prior experience and/or training in teaching, mentoring and administrative work are likely influences on what a principal pays attention to. To illustrate, each of the principals in this study began teaching in South County with a commitment to serving bilingual children. Each taught for seven or more years at the elementary level. When asked how long it takes to become a master teacher, they responded with answers that ranged from three to eight, maybe ten years. While Ramon was reluctant to claim classroom instructional expertise; Maria claimed to know teaching as well as any teacher in the building.

Moreover, each of the principals in this study had experience as a mentor: James and Ramon under the now defunct California Mentor Teacher Project; Maria and Karen through BTSA. Notably, only the former BTSA mentors had significant and ongoing training for this new mentor role. Of additional interest, although Karen and Ramon had been assigned a leadership coach to assist them through the first years of being a principal, not one of the four experienced mentoring as a beginning teacher.

As well, each of the principals in this study made a gradual transition from teaching to administration, encouraged by former colleagues and driven by a desire to impact change on a larger scale. James spent several years as a lead teacher in his building. Ramon spent his vacation time in the role of summer school principal. Maria left teaching to work at the university in teacher preparation, then returned to teaching a second time before deciding to give the principalship a try. Karen gained confidence in an administrative career through her years as a BTSA mentor. Although each found

things useful in their various administrative preparation programs (e.g. budget and finance, school law), all four credit much of what they know to learning on the job.

Despite these varied experiences, Maria, James and Karen are the ones who are more likely to share a common understanding of good teaching and teacher development. Although Ramon professes the same end-goal, he lacks the knowledge and skill to consistently enact such an understanding. Notably, James is in the same position; however, he understands his limitations and proactively seeks help from those who can “share” the leadership load.

Mentors Focus Principals’ Attention on New Teachers and their Needs

It is assumed that principals do not have the time or the expertise needed to lend support to their new teachers. Certainly, there are few formal expectations for them doing so. That principals spend their time doing other things is not surprising. Others have suggested that the mere presence of mentors will encourage principals to direct their time and attention elsewhere, believing someone else will pick up the pieces. Yet, this was not the case for our four principals. The presence of well-trained mentors actually drew principals’ attention toward new teachers and their needs. Periodic meetings between principals and mentors to review the novice’s progress serve as a reminder that the novice is a learner and a beginner. Through ongoing conversation, a shared discourse focused on improved teaching and learning begins to be articulated. Mentor assistance with the goal-setting process, as well as mid- and end-of-year reviews, highlights the importance of routine and required events as learning opportunities. Rather than stepping out of the picture, mentors have actually helped to bring these four principals into the viewfinder.

The research reported here counters prevailing thought in that principals are drawn in to the work of new teacher support through the work of mentor teachers, as opposed to cast aside. While the data is silent on the issue of retention, we have some reason to hope. If the mere presence of mentors focuses principals' attention on new teachers and their needs, then it may also get them thinking about what they can do to address the problem of working conditions. The combination of close to the classroom mentoring, coupled with a principal who is attentive to new teacher needs, willing to garner resources to positively impact the new teacher's experience, and to facilitate a school environment where teachers and students learn together is a potentially new and powerful combination.

Of late there has been ample talk about the problems of retaining teachers in the profession. Research suggests that poor working conditions are a factor in why many leave the profession so quickly. Although mentoring has been proven to be an effective strategy for retaining novice teachers, it is not the panacea. New teachers will continue to leave the profession if we do not address the issue of work conditions with greater urgency.

Mentoring as an Apprenticeship in Instructional Leadership

All four principals in this study are committed to impacting social change in their local schools. Further, each wants to bring a teacher development focus to their buildings. As former teachers, these principals understand the importance and value of focusing their efforts on teacher knowledge, skill and attitudes. However, as the cases of Maria and Karen illustrate, a teaching background is not sufficient for close-to-the-classroom, hands-on instructional leadership. Maria and Karen know and understand the mechanics

of teaching in ways that James and Ramon do not. Both taught in the classroom for significantly longer periods of time. In addition, their training and experience as mentors and teacher educators taught them how to examine the teaching process; first breaking it down into understandable steps, then putting it back together again. In Karen's words,

I think it has helped me a whole lot. It would be really wonderful if all principals had mentoring experience because then you really do see the benefits and you do understand the needs of teachers. I think it's made me more understanding of new teachers. When I do see them, you know, there are kids all over the place. I know, it's "oh my god, they are still struggling with management." But they will get that. We will have a seminar. We'll get past this (Karen, 6/01).

A strong background in teaching and mentoring can be a real help to the new principal. It can also get in the way. As we see with Karen, her tendency to want to coach and nurture obstructed her ability to be direct and authoritative when necessary. Being a principal means many things, including public relations, budgeting, and facility oversight. Principals who know teaching deeply may have less to learn initially. However, keeping the vision focused on instruction over time takes skill and commitment that go beyond what a former teacher and mentor might bring to the principalship. Mentoring is clearly a promising pathway to administrative work, but is not sufficient in and of itself. Being a site administrator draws on what a good teacher and mentor knows and does, but at the same time it encompasses a body of knowledge unique to the principalship. Of equal importance, mentoring serves as an apprenticeship in instructional leadership that will serve any mentor well as he or she moves on to other leadership roles.

Importance of the Setting

Maria and James both lead schools with a clear and focused mission. This mission guides who gets hired, how they are oriented and why they teach as they do. In both schools a strong sense of professional community ties teachers together, new and

experienced. Importantly, the presence of a functioning, articulated and shared school mission affords these two principals the time to focus more deliberately on teacher development, specifically that which addresses new teacher needs. For Karen and Ramon, dealing with multiple demands, internal and external, is enough to keep them busy. In these two cases, we see how the tasks of developing professional community and raising test scores compete with time principals might otherwise have for new teacher support. For new or challenged principals, teacher support is a luxury they may not have the time or resources for.

This finding suggests an interesting notion: place new principals in protected settings. Karen and Ramon, as new principals, have their hands full. In addition to learning how to lead, each has the enormous added responsibility of caring for a cadre of new and beginning teachers. Ramon has the additional challenge of raising test scores in a building that reportedly resists his efforts to work collectively. Because the central tasks of learning to lead, and supporting (new) teachers are demanding, districts must think carefully about where they place new principals. Principals assigned to effective schools with large numbers of master teachers have the advantage of learning how to lead in protected settings. Principals assigned to under-achieving schools with large numbers of new and inexperienced teachers face an uphill battle that few would succeed in doing.

Parting Thoughts: The Big Ideas Within

Clearly, new teachers deserve focused and intensive instructional support and development. In the same vein, the public is right to demand accountability for competent practice. It makes sense to continue supporting the critically important work that well-trained and supported mentors can provide. However, new teacher support is not the sole

responsibility of a mentor. Effective support comes through multiple means. It also makes sense to see the principal, however peripheral, as part of the new teacher support crew as there are aspects of support that only a principal can provide. Raising principal consciousness about those aspects is critical if we are to jump the hurdle currently facing induction today – poor working conditions and unsupportive workplaces. Offering monthly seminars and providing mentors will not take care of all new teacher needs. A systemic approach, one that includes the principal, is needed.

Despite the limitations of self-report interview data with a small sample of subjects, this study has noteworthy implications for our understanding of new teacher learning; induction and mentoring; and instructional leadership as conceived by principals. By getting inside the thinking of four individuals, each with varying degrees of success in supporting, developing and evaluating new teachers, we are able to see a glimpse of the possible. In this concluding section, I take the opportunity to highlight what I see as the big ideas that emerge from this study. In doing so, I want to once again emphasize that while this study cannot make claims about principals' practice, it does contribute to our understanding of why principals might act as they do, as well as how they might have come to such understandings.

Mentor as Colleague and Coach

This data shows that the presence of strong mentors can raise principal consciousness, force their attention, and shape their guidance in the area of new teacher support and development. Moreover, this research challenges the notion that principals are not interested in new teacher support and will use the presence of mentors to justify a minimal role. Further, we saw from the cases of Maria and James the power of a model

that featured coordinated and shared assistance between the mentor and principal.

Provided that the necessary conditions have been met – a trusting relationship; a solid understanding of what good teaching entails, and a commitment to ensuring quality – coordinated assistance appears to be an ideal worth striving for. Coordinated assistance, whether with exemplary or struggling newcomers, has the further advantage of modeling truly collaborative working relationships that can facilitate opportunities for meaningful conversations about good teaching and student learning, and target individual needs within a given context.

Much of the discussion to this point has presumed that the new teacher is struggling. Working together around shared concerns legitimately draws principals and mentors together. But what happens when the new teacher does well? Arguably, the principal can benefit from knowing what is going well in order to build on the novice's strengths in ways that improve the entire educational program in a school. It can also be a way of identifying leadership capacity in a given area. At the very least, it is a means of sharing "good news" – something all of our schools can do more of.

If I feel the teacher needs some support, I want the advisor to know what areas I am concerned about so that they can work with the new teacher. The same with areas where they are doing really well. I want to make sure the advisor has seen that as well. Vice Versa, I'd like them to point things out to me in case I haven't seen it. Mostly in the areas where the teacher is doing really well (Karen, 6/01).

This said, a caution is in order. If induction and mentoring programs want to attract and use principals more effectively, they must be willing to develop and refine understandings about principal roles and responsibilities. Equally important, if we expect mentors to work more closely with principals, then both will need to learn new skills, adopt new perspectives, define new expectations, and negotiate new roles.

Worth noting, these four principals did not immediately begin supporting new teachers, but learned the ropes through experience. Realistically, for most principals, the needs of new teachers will not emerge on their radar screen until other more pressing demands are met; specialized knowledge and skill are acquired; and their own confidence in this work is elevated. If this is a phenomenon of more sophisticated principal practice, then ongoing training and support for principals in working effectively with new teachers and their mentors should be timed appropriately.

Mentors as a Catalyst for Attention to Teacher Learning and Development

We must also address the question of how principals' work with new teachers and their mentors might shape their support of teacher development more broadly. This study, however small its sample size, suggests that the presence of well-trained mentors can help to focus principals' attention on issues of teacher learning. Moreover, as we saw in the case of Ramon, well-trained mentors can model for principals a set of effective teacher development strategies. If this claim holds true in other settings, it would be worthwhile to follow principals and mentors over an extended period of time. In what ways does their presence act like a reform intervention? And are there ways that mentor skills become a professional resource to the principal? The actual experience of mentoring may serve as an apprenticeship to instructional leadership. For those without a mentoring or teacher development background, perhaps it is mentors themselves who will help to guide principal learning on the job, one new teacher at a time.

An alternate take on this question is to imagine the professional culture that new teachers are being socialized into. In the best case scenario, we might ask: What do beginning teachers learn when they are encouraged and supported as learners to reflect on

their teaching and inquire about their students' learning? What do they learn from watching the example set by their principal and mentor who work collaboratively to ensure that they are provided with meaningful learning opportunities and supportive workplace conditions? When principals support new teachers they are helping to create a professional culture. Since many of these newcomers will stay in the profession, the work a principal begins during those critical early years will continue long after tenure is offered. More importantly, new teachers will come to expect this from their principals.

Importantly, mentoring appears to be a useful pathway for training future principals. Although missing knowledge and skill in crafting budgets, managing public relations and knowing the intricacies of school law, it does provide focused training and experience in teacher education/teacher development that future administrators and teacher leaders, alike, would benefit from.

Principals' Role in Facilitating Supportive Working Conditions

Clearly, principals do have an important role to play in induction, both in developing new teachers and supporting their mentors. Simply put: effective principals actively support new teachers and their mentors. But the data surfaces an additional thought worth considering. If the mere presence of mentors focuses principals' attention on new teachers and their needs, then it may also get them thinking about what they can do to address the problem of unsuitable and unsupportive working conditions – a problem that mentoring alone cannot be expected to address. In fact, in the presence of well-trained mentors, advocating and facilitating supportive working conditions may be principals' first and foremost role in supporting new teachers.

This study takes a hard look at an important issue and yet, the sample size is small. Some will ask, what can we learn from four principals, doing exemplary work, in a supportive context? The intent of this research, as an exploratory case study, was never to generalize to a larger population; rather, to better understand a highly-situated, local phenomenon with the hope that it will reveal new questions, prompting further empirical study, deeper conceptual work, and contribute to thoughtful professional practice. I hope it has done that for the reader.

The question opening this study remains: Given the emergence of induction and mentoring programs, what role should principals play in new teacher support? By now the answer should be clear. Principals have a professional obligation to support new teachers and their mentors. But being supportive can mean a variety of things: from taking an active, hands-on role as instructional leader, to stepping aside and allowing the mentor to emerge in a leadership role; and from being protective of the confidential nature of mentors' work with new teachers, to going beyond the "rule of confidence" to collaboratively support new teacher development in ways that serve children best. A wise principal and instructional leader understands the difference.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Literature Review

Appendix B: Interview Protocols

Questionnaire

Principal #1

Principal #2

Principal #3

Principal #4

Mentor Teacher

New Teacher

Appendix C: NUD*IST Coding Tree

Appendix A:

Review of the Literature

Introduction

We live at a time when standards for teaching and learning have never been higher. The past decade has seen one state after another implement high-stakes tests as a measure of what K-12 students know and can do. Recent passage of the federal “*No Child Left Behind Act*” (2002) ensures that standardized tests are here to stay – at least for the near future. Professional groups, like the *National Council for the Teachers of Mathematics* and the *National Council for Teachers of English*, have contributed to the fervor with their own widely-regarded standards documents. Other professional organizations, such as the *National Board for Professional Teaching Standards*, have followed suit with complementary teaching standards. All of this is supported by public opinion that argues the centrality of teachers in developing and sustaining high-performing schools (RNT, 1998). Increasingly, the public is demanding more and better teachers.

At the same time, we are facing a serious teacher shortage in this country. It is estimated that up to 40% of our current workforce – the so-called baby boomer era – will turn over in the next ten years. Moreover, if precedent holds, we know that the mostly novice teachers who fill these open spots will be clustered in our poorest schools (Shields, Esch, Humphrey, Young, Gaston, & Hunt, 1999). Further challenging matters, up to one half of these new teachers will leave the profession within their first three to five years, just as they are getting their professional feet wet (Darling-Hammond, 1997). For many, the job will become impossible and the demands too great. Recent studies

suggest that new teachers leave the profession because of poor working conditions, including low pay and status. Still others leave because of a lack of support from administrators, colleagues, students and their parents (Ingersoll, 2001a; Ingersoll, 1999).

The recent widespread interest in new teacher induction – with mentoring as a core strategy – is not a surprise. A tenable solution to multiple problems, induction is seen as a means for improving teaching; increasing retention; eliminating the unfit; and increasing student achievement (Huling-Austin, 1990; Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999). Missing, however, is a strong and extensive research-base on induction and mentoring. Early empirical work is limited in scope and rigor (Zeichner, 1982; Little, 1990; Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999). Few studies go beyond program features, early implementation and/or global mentoring practices, and the method of choice is often limited to surveys with some anecdotal self-report. Given the interest and rapid growth in induction programming, research is needed that looks beyond the surface to the subtleties of new teacher development within this unique context.

This study contributes to that much needed research base. Principals' role in new teacher support is grossly under-conceptualized in the literature. Recommendations are limited to principal support of local mentor programs and beginning of the year orientations. The studies that have been reported are small in scope, limited to the first year of implementation, and there is no mention of principals' relationship with mentors.

What follows is a select review of three distinct sets of literature: new teacher learning; induction and mentoring; and principal instructional leadership. Rather than provide a comprehensive survey of each strand, my intent in this appended review is to look across the three bodies of literature to find areas of overlap that simultaneously

support and inform this work, both conceptually and methodologically. My goal is not to learn all that is known, but to “*develop sharper and more insightful questions about the topic*” of new teacher support by principals (Yin, 1994, p. 9). I begin by highlighting issues pertinent to this study, as found in the literature on new teacher learning; induction and mentoring; and principal leadership. Next, I summarize how previous studies of new teacher support by principals have approached the problem, what they found and what questions remain uncovered. I conclude by arguing the need for further study in this area.

New Teacher Learning: New Teachers Matter

Victims of our own prestige, we often fight the good fight, on our own, without seeking support. I was a hotshot new teacher – I didn’t need help. But I did, and I was afraid to ask. When we finally do ask, there is a degree of shame. Either things have gotten so crazy that we should never have let them get this far along, or the problem that we observe is so banal that to mention it is to whine. As a first-year teacher there are many understanding nods, and often there is sound advice. But when you are stuck behind a pile of philosophy journals and your F block thinks that it is fun to torture the different kid, words do not assuage one’s despair. To invite the department chair into my room or call in a dean was tantamount to admitting defeat. I didn’t want to be perceived as a quitter; I was worthy to work at Brookline High.

~ New Teacher (Donaldson & Poon, 1999, p. 26)

Teacher expertise is considered one of the most important factors, next to small schools and class sizes, influencing student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Haycock, 1998). In one of the most widely-regarded reports of the past decade, *What Matters Most: Teaching and America’s Future* (NCTAF, 1996) the authors convincingly argue that teachers and teaching matter. At the same time we invest in creating learning opportunities for our students, so we must do likewise for teachers. Schools need to be

transformed into places where teachers learn alongside their students. Notably, this report helped shift the national reform agenda toward issues of teacher recruitment, preparation, induction, and professional development.

The Challenge of Teacher Preparation

With respect to teacher preparation, the traditional and still most common route into teaching, various critiques have been waged through the years (e.g. Conant, 1963; Koerner, 1963; Silberman, 1970; Goodlad, 1994). These arguments range from course fragmentation and inadequate time, to uninspired teaching methods within a superficial curriculum for traditional school settings (NCTAF, 1996). The most recent of these reports, issued by the Abell Foundation, asserts that teacher effectiveness is not improved through teacher education; therefore, barriers to the profession, i.e. certification requirements, ought to be lifted (Walsh, 2001).

However, there is equally strong research suggesting that teachers who enter the profession without thoughtful teacher preparation may learn to teach in counterproductive ways (Grossman, 1990). Areas of difficulty include long-term curriculum planning, effective classroom management, the diagnosis of student learning needs, and skill in adapting instruction to meet student needs. Not surprising, those without teacher preparation report feeling less prepared (Shields et al., 1999). In a rejoinder to the Abell report, Linda Darling-Hammond (Darling-Hammond, 2002) takes issue with Walsh's findings, citing numerous studies that support the influence of teacher preparation on improved student achievement.

I raise the issue of teacher preparation as background for the question: *What do new teachers need to know and be able to do?* My assumption is that teachers do have

things to learn during their early years on the job; things that can be targeted through thoughtfully planned induction and mentoring programs. But what those “things” are continues to be part of public debate (see Reynolds, 1992). As Zeichner (1999) recently noted, the historical development of teacher education programs has been more a reaction to mandates than a *“thoughtful, analytic and forward-looking process based on the attempt to implement a coherent, well-thought out set of principles and ideas about what teachers need to know and need to be able to do (p. 12).”* If new teacher induction programs are to avoid this pitfall, we would be wise to proceed slowly and cautiously.

The Nature of Beginning Teaching

It has been said that beginning teachers have two tasks: to teach and to learn to teach (Wildman, Niles, Magliaro, & McLaughlin, 1989). This understanding underscores the obvious. Regardless of how good one’s preservice preparation was, no beginner is fully prepared for the demands of teaching. As Veenman (1984) reminds us, beginning teaching is a time of *“reality shock.”* Suddenly, the new teacher has sole responsibility for the intellectual development of an entire classroom of students. For the novice this can be exhilarating, overwhelming or a dizzying combination of the two. Further complicating matters, on top of instructional planning, delivery and assessment, there is always one more errand to run, problem to solve, parent to call, paper to grade. Teaching is a time of relentless doing.

This wouldn’t be so hard if teaching itself were easier, but it is not. Teaching is uncertain work. It leaves one tired and exhausted at the end of the day. It requires deep subject matter knowledge and skill in teaching it to others; it requires an understanding of all students, including those who are different from us; it demands organizational skill

and the ability to manage large groups of children for extended periods of time (Shulman, 1987). It is estimated that it can take anywhere from three to seven years to become an effective teacher (Berliner, 2000). Much of what new teachers need to learn comes on the job, through trial and error (Lortie, 1975). And while much of this learning will be helpful; some of it may not be (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985). Thus the paradox: new teachers are expected to perform that which they do not yet understand (Schon, 1983).

Further complicating matters, the system works under the assumption that novices will know what it is that they need to learn and get better at. Yet, like the new teacher quoted at the beginning of this section makes clear, revealing one's failures and inadequacies is not easy. For new teachers to take this risk, they must feel safe as learners.

The Influence of Working Conditions

It is estimated that between thirty and fifty percent of new teachers leave the profession within the first three to five years (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Schlechy & Vance, 1983). Based on an interview survey of one hundred ten first year teachers in New Jersey, forty-three percent reported plans to leave classroom teaching, suggesting that many teachers enter the profession tentatively or conditionally (Johnson & Kardos, 2002). Richard Ingersoll's (2001) widely reported research on teacher retention finds that teachers leave the profession due to low salaries, problems with student discipline, a lack of support from building administrators, and the lack of input into decision-making – all issues beyond the realm of effective induction and mentoring.

The dilemma of poor working conditions and unsupportive workplaces is not new. In the late 1980's, Susan Rosenholtz (1989) examined the relationship between school workplaces and beginning teacher needs. Her review of the literature prompted the following set of policy recommendations. It is important to note that all remain applicable today.

- ✓ *Avoid placing novices in the most difficult schools, or with the most difficult students.*
- ✓ *Give novices discretion and autonomy to participate in classroom-based decision-making.*
- ✓ *Goals, developed with the novice's assistance, must be clear.*
- ✓ *Give novices clear, frequent and helpful feedback on their progress.*
- ✓ *Be encouraging of novice efforts.*
- ✓ *Establish a school culture or ethos that encourages advice-seeking and giving.*
- ✓ *Provide novices with opportunities to talk frequently with and observe their more expert peers.*
- ✓ *Encourage novices to experiment continuously with new teaching ideas.*
- ✓ *Set schoolwide standards for student conduct.*
- ✓ *Provide novices with opportunities to work with and involve parents.*

As Huling-Austin (1992) warned, our efforts to create strong induction programming and effective mentoring practices must not preclude the need to also pay attention to the problems of poor working conditions and unsupportive work environments. Beginning teachers need opportunities to practice what they have been prepared to do; not to have their learning impeded by multiple preparations and out-of-subject placements.

Defining New Teacher Learning Needs

Over the past thirty years, researchers have attempted to answer the question: *What do new teachers need to learn?* Historically, the literature represents an eclectic mix of real and perceived needs and concerns based largely on survey and self-report data (Fuller, 1969; Veenman, 1984). Moreover, this literature tends to treat all new teachers as

if they came to teaching with the same understandings and skills. Increasingly, new teachers arrive on the job via alternate routes with little or no formal preparation. For those who do come with preservice training, experiences vary widely from state to state and institution to institution.

Once on the job, we know that some contexts, e.g. inner city classrooms with large numbers of poor and minority students, can be more challenging than others, e.g. well-resourced suburban classrooms (Haberman, 1995). We also know that the subject matters (Shulman, 1987). Teaching children how to read is significantly different from teaching them mathematical concepts. Finally, our understanding of learning to teach during the early years is complicated by the intensely personal, even idiosyncratic nature of that learning (Bullough, 1989; Bullough & Baughman, 1997). Featherstone's (1992) observation of a beginning teacher study group illustrates how one's personal need for support and reassurance is intertwined with a corresponding need to demonstrate instructional skill and fluidity.

To our credit, more recent conceptions of teacher learning (Featherstone, 1992; Grossman, 1990) have begun to remedy the shortcomings found in earlier prescriptive approaches, based largely on self-report data. Drawing on qualitative methods such as case studies, stories and narratives, these accounts of new teacher learning provide fresh perspectives on what novices need to learn and how they best learn it. At the same time, they help shift the focus from generic *needs*, broadly construed as worries and concerns, to the potentially rich idea of *learning needs*. This shift in emphasis pushes us to think harder about what it might mean to help a new teacher develop his or her practice during the critical early years of teaching. Underlying this perspective are a set of beliefs about

learning to teach as a process that continues into the early years of teaching, that is grounded in deep subject matter understanding, and aligned with professional standards of teaching and learning.

Beyond Support: Toward a Curriculum of Induction

It is from this stance that we might begin to draft a framework for induction that goes beyond support. If we want induction to be more than a random, shot-in-the-dark opportunity at improving teaching, better theories of what new teachers most need to learn will be necessary. It will require us to ground our understandings in the authentic and dynamic contexts in which new teachers are likely to find themselves. Like our growing understanding of on-going professional development, “one size fits all” induction is not sufficient for the task. Because new teachers are in the unique and difficult position of having to both teach and learn to teach, any formal induction program must be attentive to both.

Clearly, the early years of teaching are important in the life of the novice. Feiman-Nemser (2000) notes the complexity of what needs to be learned, including the importance of tapping into the novice’s prior understanding, acknowledging the reality of individual contexts, and being patient with the extended time this learning requires. Ultimately, she stresses that learning during the induction phase “*unfold in ways that strengthen the beginning teacher’s capacity for further growth (p. 23).*” She identifies the following as central tasks of a well-conceived induction curriculum.

- ✓ *Gaining local knowledge of students, curriculum and school context.*
- ✓ *Designing responsive curriculum and instruction.*
- ✓ *Enacting a beginning repertoire in purposeful ways.*
- ✓ *Creating a classroom learning community.*
- ✓ *Developing a professional identity.*
- ✓ *Learning in and from practice.*

The demanding and rigorous curriculum proposed here implicates the need for a variety of support activities, including assistance, development, ongoing assessment and evaluation. This re-conceptualization of the work of beginning teaching opens the door to new roles and responsibilities among all actors with respect to new teacher support.

Principal Understanding of New Teacher Learning Needs

This research is an attempt to understand principal perspectives on new teacher learning needs. This inquiry is significant. Principals, as site-based instructional leaders and evaluators, exert a powerful influence on the novice by the way classroom placements are made, resources distributed and a school-wide culture established – decisions that shape what the novice ultimately has an opportunity to learn (see Kardos, et al 2001; Grossman, et al, 2001). However, the literature on induction and mentoring is essentially void of reference to principals' role (Scott, 2001). Unanswered are questions such as: *How do principals think of new teachers as beginners and learners? Do principals view new teacher learning needs in generic or subject specific terms? What do principals believe new teachers learn from experience?*

Ultimately, new teacher learning should lead to changes or improvements in the ways beginning teachers think and act as educators, particularly as reflected by the state and national teaching standards advocated by reformers. These changes can be supported through targeted interventions, such as those offered by high quality induction and mentoring programs. This research further argues that principals need to be considered a key player in that process.

Induction and Mentoring: The Need for a School-wide Approach

Overburdened principals charged with the supervision and evaluation of all teachers, along with their other responsibilities, have typically been unable to provide the intensive mentoring and oversight that novices require.
(Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin & Bernstein, 1984, cited in Darling-Hammond et al, 1999, p. 216)

Formal induction programs are sweeping the country. In the 1980's, only fifteen states had passed legislation authorizing induction programming (Hirsch, Koppich, & Knapp, 2001). Currently, over thirty states have induction policies and most urban districts offer some kind of support to beginning teachers (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999). Programs include California's *Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment* (BTSA) program, *Connecticut's Beginning Educator Support and Training* (BEST) program, Kentucky's *Teacher Internship* program and North Carolina's *Beginning Teacher Induction* program. Legislative statutes in twenty-nine states require that mentoring be included as a core component, with an average program length of one year (AFT, 2001).

This rapid growth, born out of the realization that new teachers need more than their schools (e.g. principals) can reasonably provide, has led some to claim induction as the fastest growing educational reform movement today (Huling-Austin, 1990). Various reasons account for this development including a projected teacher shortage, alarmingly rates of attrition during the early years of teaching, and a growing realization that even the best pre-service program cannot complete the job of preparing someone for teaching.

Induction Goals and Purpose

Induction has been described as “*the process of socialization to the profession, adjustment to the procedures and mores of the school site and system, and development of effective instructional and classroom management skills that take place during the first three years of teaching*” (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999, p. 9). In addition to viewing induction as a *process*, induction can also be thought of as a *phase* and *program* (Feiman-Nemser, Schwille, Carver & Yusko, 1999). Induction as a phase highlights the importance of new teachers’ transition from student of teaching to teacher of students. Induction as a process implicates the various types of learning that characterize this transition, e.g. professional socialization into established norms of practice, growing intellectual confidence in one’s subject matter understanding, increasing skill in meet the needs of diverse learners. Induction as a program describes the formal set of learning opportunities offered to new teachers during their early years on the job. Examined separately, each of these perspectives or definitions puts the spotlight on a unique set of issues. To illustrate, in this study a formal induction program is an important component of the setting. But the issues underlying the study are focused less on programmatic issues, as they are the process of new teacher learning and socialization which occur during a critical phase or time in a teacher’s career.

Commonly recognized goals for induction include slowed rates of teacher attrition, elimination of the unfit and retention of the competent, extension of the teacher preparation and learning period, overall improved school climate, and increased student achievement (Huling-Austin, 1990; Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999; Humphrey, Adelman,

Esch, Riehl, Shields, & Tiffany, 2000). It has also been suggested that new teacher induction can play a critical role in promoting equity by supporting stronger teaching and learning in urban and rural schools where new teachers tend to be concentrated.

Given the nature of beginning teaching and the multiple learning needs of new teachers, formal induction programming – with mentoring as a core component – is a natural response. Still, despite recent interest and activity, existing research is thin. Most empirical studies are limited to program analyses and self-reports of impact – a problem long noted in the field (Zeichner, 1982; Little, 1990; Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999).

Principals: Missing in Action

One particular area of omission has been principals' role in induction. To illustrate, Scott's (2001) review of the induction literature found few references to principals. When they were mentioned, it was limited to the traditional role of principal as evaluator. Scott concludes that insulating principals from the induction process impairs the potential for program success. She states:

A truly successful program requires close cooperation and mutual understanding of all those at the school site – the principal and other administrators, the mentors, the more experienced faculty members, the support staff and the new teachers (Scott, 2001, p. 25).

There is some reason to believe this trend is reversing. *Recruiting New Teacher's* survey of urban teacher induction programs and practices in the United States concludes with six policy recommendations, one of which highlights the principal's role in induction: "*Ensure that school site administrators understand how to orient inductees, create supportive working conditions for them and effectively meet their professional needs.*" The report continues:

Principals should be trained to be knowledgeable about and alert to inductees' needs and concerns and should convey to the entire staff the importance of welcoming, guiding and assisting them. Buddy teachers in the same hall, grade level, or department can be asked to be available for emergencies arising in between scheduled mentor visits. Site administrators and department heads should also refrain from mis-assigning inductees to classes they are not qualified to teach or loading them up with extra duties (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999, p. 116).

Portner (2001) issues a similar plea by arguing for a system-wide approach to induction programming that is more structured and inclusive of administrators and classroom colleagues. Gradually, the realization that sound induction policy requires district and school-wide involvement seems to be taking hold. Nonetheless, this is not meant to imply that principals appropriate responsibility for support from mentors. On the contrary, as the quote opening this section suggests, principals do not have time or expertise to do it all. Rather, we must concentrate our efforts instead on identifying what roles and responsibilities principals can and ought to reasonably play in new teacher support.

Balancing Assistance with Assessment

One explanation for why principals have been left out of the literature has to do with their traditional role as formal evaluators. Underlying a more inclusive, school-wide approach to induction, one that includes the principal as a key player, is the tension between new teacher support and assessment – a tension that also weaves throughout the literature on principal instructional leadership. It has long been thought that new teachers will be afraid to take risks and learn if they are also being evaluated. For this reason, most mentoring programs prohibit mentors from assuming an evaluative stance, believing that induction perceived as a test of competence, and not learning, is equivalent to leaving the

learning to mere chance (Tickle, 1994). Thus, there is a valid reason for why principals have been systematically silenced in the literature.

Reform reports during the 1980's, including the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) and the work of the Holmes Group (1986), urged that teachers be encouraged to take on leadership roles and to see themselves as professionals. What these reports were missing, however, was a "*clear definition of the new role of principals or guidance about how teachers and principals ought to work together as school leaders*" (Shulman, 1987, p. 1-2). Drawing on her work with the California Mentor Teacher Project at the time, Shulman asked:

What kinds of tensions and dilemmas arise when teachers and principals are suddenly put in situations where both parties are responsible to assert leadership? What happens when the constraints of their respective roles limit their opportunities for working together (p. 2)?

In the years hence, the question of how principals work with teacher leaders, such as mentors, has not been resolved. While there is evidence to suggest that the functions of support and evaluation are often combined in practice (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999), including a few states (e.g. California and Connecticut) and districts (e.g. Toledo, Rochester, Columbus, Cincinnati), prevailing opinion continues to advocate that the two functions be kept separate (Huling-Austin, 1990). Although more recently this perspective has been challenged (Feiman-Nemser, et al, 2000), the tension between assistance and assessment remains a persistent dilemma with implications for induction policy and programming. If principals were to play a larger role in induction, what are likely implications for the practice of new teacher support, development and evaluation; for their work with mentors; and for new teachers' developing practice?

The Limits of Induction and Mentoring

New teacher induction and mentoring are easy concepts to embrace. Who among us has not wished for a guide, coach or teacher, someone to walk with us along the rocky path to professional competence? However, in our zeal to “solve” the problems of beginning teaching through the creation of induction and mentoring programs, it is wise to remind ourselves that new teachers do not enter the profession in a protected bubble, but are fully immersed in real schools. Induction and mentoring programs can only realize a part of the dream. Individual schools and their leaders must do their part, as well.

Ken Zeichner was one of the first to make this point in an AERA panel discussion on the topic. His purpose was not to argue against the logic of induction, but to point out that not all causes of teacher discontent, e.g. low salaries, the lack of job autonomy and authority for decision-making, can be ameliorated by induction and mentoring.

The period of induction is clearly important and merits greater attention, but unless this greater attention to beginning teachers is coupled with systematic efforts to reform the structure of teaching and workplace characteristics affecting the development of all teachers, the consequences of additional allocation of resources to the induction period will be minimal... problems related to teaching effectiveness, teacher morale, and longevity are probably more closely related to conditions of schools affecting the development of all teachers (such as the lack of teacher autonomy) than to problems that are unique to the induction period (Zeichner, 1982, p. 26).

Once decade later, Leslie Huling-Austin (1992) reminds us that common workplace conditions, e.g. passing the most challenging students to the novice or demanding time-consuming committee work during the beginning years, “*not only add stress but also hinder the process of learning to teach*” (p. 179). She continues,

It is crucial that research on learning to teach focus on the conditions of schools as well as on the individuals entering them. If schools operate in ways that are

unresponsive to the needs of students, it is unreasonable to expect novice teachers to learn to operate effectively in them (p. 178-179).

Judith Warren Little (1990) makes a similar claim when she reminds us that mentoring cannot be expected to overcome problems of mis-assignment or work overload.

Ultimately, an effective blending of new teacher support, development and evaluation will require a broader view than currently exists, and this will necessitate the re-definition of roles and relationships as beginning teachers, mentors and principals adopt new ways of working together. As Ganser reminds us, simplistic viewpoints are no longer sufficient.

The increasingly sophisticated research on schools as learning communities reveals that previous views of mentoring may have failed to take into account schools as organizations, thereby presenting an overly simplistic view of mentoring and mentoring programs (Ganser et al., 1998, p. 20).

In summary, induction programs need to contribute to teacher development and not just teacher support (Feiman-Nemser, et al, 1999). Quality induction programming recognizes that new teachers are learners, thereby offering meaningful learning opportunities that facilitate professional growth and development. Access to induction support and guidance should make a difference in new teachers' instructional practice, their understanding of teaching and learning, and their commitment to the needs of all students. But such changes will require everyone's help: principals, mentors and new teachers working together.

Principal Leadership: Supporting New Teacher Development

The challenge for principals is to continue fulfilling their responsibilities for the instructional supervision of teachers while taking advantage of mentoring as a professional development activity. This may place principals in a quandry, since the best source of information regarding the progress of a beginning teacher – the mentor – may not be available because of confidentiality considerations... mentoring creates new roles which may not correspond to the traditional roles and responsibilities of principals (Ganser, cited in Fidler & Haselkorn, 1999, p. 18).

The past two decades have been a time of discontent in the field of educational administration. New understandings of teaching and learning have prompted a strong critique of traditional, top-down managerial approaches to school leadership (Murphy & Forsyth, 1999). In response, new twists on the instructional leadership theme continue to emerge, including recent discussion around the notion of shared or distributed leadership (Elmore, 2000; Houston, 2001; Spillane et al., 2001). Understanding the possibilities and limits of these new conceptions, however, requires an acknowledgement of the “*density and busyness*” of principals’ lives and work (Cusick, 1992).

The Nature of Principals’ Work

A fictitious job description for principal reads as follows:

Wanted: Exceptional School Leaders. Must know how to implement change that helps ensure the academic success of all students. Must be an instructional leader and have the ability to promote teacher growth. Must be dedicated to creating a shared vision of an outstanding school through collaboration with faculty, parents, and community members. Must have strong interpersonal skills, excellent communication skills (ASCD, 2000, p. 1).

Today's principal, often looked to as the resident expert on a wide range of matters, is expected to take on the role of superhero – doing it all, in limited time with few resources. Copland (2001) refers to this as the “*myth of the superprincipal*.” Principal guru, Roland Barth (1990), describes work in schools as being a lot like a tennis shoe in the laundry dryer.

Probably no image captures so fully for me the life of an adult working in an elementary, middle or senior high school. For educators, schoolwork much of the time is turbulent, heated, confused, disoriented, congested, and full of recurring bumps (p. 1).

A number of studies through the years have pointed out the obvious: principals' work is not only unending, it is also highly interpersonal. As Wolcott (1978) described in the now classic ethnography, *The Man in the Principal's Office*,

The greatest part of a principal's time is spent in an almost endless series of encounters, from the moment he arrives at school until the moment he leaves. Most of these encounters are face-to-face, tending to keep the principalship in a highly personal role (p. 88)."

Although principals' responsibilities have always been divided between managerial and instructional demands (Greenfield, 1987), it wasn't until the effective schools movement (Edmonds, 1979; Purkey & Smith, 1983) that instructional leadership became a focus of national attention and discussion. Among five correlates of effective schools, number one is strong principal leadership (Edmonds, 1979). While both management and instructional leadership continue to be viewed as critically important, striking a balance between the two – rather than letting one dominate the other – continues to be a pervasive dilemma in the field.

While many principals might dream of being effective instructional leaders by enhancing the activities of teaching and learning in their schools, in reality, their experience is shaped by the press of administrative and managerial functions that mitigate against that dream becoming fact (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1980, p. 24).

Principals and Teachers

The nature of principals' relationship with teachers, as reported in the literature, is often tenuous and fleeting (Blase & Kirby, 1992; Lortie, 1975; Sarason, 1997; Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992). A preference for separateness pervades their work. As Cusick (1992) describes it, neither principal nor teacher really wants the other looking over their shoulder.

Principals want teachers to get along with students, to take care of their own problems and to leave them (the principal) alone. Teachers want principals to manage the organization, to maintain an orderly and supportive atmosphere, and to leave them (the teachers) alone (p. 80).

However, in the past decade there has been a growing acknowledgment that the work of principals and teachers, especially teacher leaders, is funneled in the same direction: improving student achievement. This has led to an ongoing discussion in the field around the need for stronger and more collaborative ties between principals and teachers (Barth, 1990; Donaldson, 2001; Lambert, Walker, Zimmerman, Cooper, Lambert, Gardner, & Stack, 1995; Sergiovanni, 1994). Common to all of these perspectives is a shared commitment to instructional leadership.

The Challenge of Instructional Leadership

Among a long list of principal duties and responsibilities is the enormous and unwieldy task of instructional leadership. Considered by many to be their most crucial responsibility, principals have been called to be "*head learners*" (Barth, 1990) and "*lead teachers*" (Shulman, 2001).

My own view is that principal is the lead teacher. The word principal is not only a noun, but also an adjective, the first word of a two-word title, principal teacher. Principals, therefore, should be highly accomplished teachers who have the

capacity to manage, organize, lead, and develop the capabilities of other teachers (Shulman, 2001, p 7).

Still, experience has shown the difficulty of enacting idealized impressions of instructional leadership. Years of trying have left us in a befuddled mess, wondering: *What does instructional leadership look like? What sustains it? How do principals learn to do it? And, does it look different for new teachers?* As Spillane and colleagues (1999) remind us,

*We know relatively little about the **how** of school leadership; that is, knowledge of the ways in which school leaders develop and sustain those conditions and processes believed necessary for instructional innovation. While there is an expansive literature about **what** school structures, programs and processes are necessary for instructional change, we know less about **how** these changes are undertaken or enacted by school leaders (p. 2).*

Learning to Lead

Most states and districts regulate who can be a principal, with the most traditional route into the profession being through a university-based administrative credential program. Still, the role of informal learning while “in the trenches” is tremendous in terms of its ability to shape and influence principal practice.

The informal learning that occurs as people enact these various roles is probably a major influence shaping their capabilities as a principal (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1980, p. 258).

The frequent mismatch between what a principal reports believing and what he or she subsequently does can likely be traced back to how principals’ learn their craft. Like learning to teach, learning to lead involves gaining mastery over a set of skills that are perhaps best acquired in the context of doing. Of course, what gets learned is of critical importance.

As in the case of classroom teaching, the spectrum of knowledge and skills that school administrators must be able to bring into play are not easily learned in a classroom setting; they are learned in practice. Administrators, unlike most teachers, have nothing like a student teaching experience. A student teacher serves a sort of apprenticeship, working side by side with a master teacher, receiving daily modeling and feedback. Administrators, while they typically move through positions of increasing responsibility, step into those positions with very limited practical preparation (Bloom, 1999).

In recognition of the multiple demands placed on principals today, coupled with the reality of learning while on the job, the National Staff Development Council (Sparks & Hirsch, 2000), the National Association for Secondary School Principals (Tirozzi, 2001), the National Association for Elementary School Principals (Ferrandino, 2001), and the American Association for School Administrators (Houston, 2001) have all issued policy statements which support high quality, ongoing professional development opportunities for all school leaders. Approaching the problem from a different angle, others have argued the importance of creating mentor programs specifically designed around the needs of new principals (Bloom, 1999).

Notably, most agree that today's principals must learn how to motivate and lead instructional change through the creation of strong learning communities where leadership is shared between principals and teacher leaders – no easy task.

Better professional development can help leaders learn to lead teams in distributed leadership, which is very different from the traditional, top-down style of authoritative leadership. They must learn how to build support for change, motivate teachers to become leaders and take charge of their own projects, and provide reasons for people to want to change. They need to learn how to let go of some authority and controls so teachers also have opportunities to become leaders (Sparks & Hirsch, 2000, p. 15).

Arguably, another area of learning revolves around the needs of new teachers. Not yet armed with the knowledge and skill of their more experienced peers, new teachers deserve the attention of the principal – not as a manager, but as a strong instructional leader – alongside their mentors. With no known studies of principal learning in the context of new teacher induction programs to draw from, I look to related studies of principal learning in the context of instructional reform for guidance and insight (Elmore & Burney, 1997; Elmore & Burney, 2000; Nelson, 1999; Nelson & Sassi, 2000; Nelson & Sassi, 1998; Prawatt & Peterson, 1996; Spillane et al., 2001; Stein & D'Amico, 2000).

Using Subject Matter to Raise Student Achievement

Two dimensions of instructional leadership that have drawn attention recently include principals' role in promoting subject matter understanding and raising student achievement. Increasingly researchers are arguing that principals' understanding of subject matter is critically important if they are to effectively lead curriculum reform efforts (Nelson, 1997, 1999; Nelson & Sassi, 1998). In the words of one of these researchers, *"a responsible reply to recent calls for more instructionally relevant models of school leadership must face the analytic and pragmatic challenges of making subject matter visible in and useful to theories of school leadership"* (Stein & D'Amico, 2000, p. 1). An interesting practical approach to this problem is being examined at the Educational Development Center in Boston where principals are experiencing first hand the learning and teaching of reform-minded mathematics with the hope that they will be in a better position to assess teachers' mathematics instruction (Nelson, 1999).

Related to this are efforts to focus leadership around raised student achievement (Newmann, 1996; Sparks & Hirsch, 2000; Houston, 2001). The current movement toward

distributed leadership is one example of how policymakers and researchers are attempting to re-conceptualize the territory of school leadership with an explicit focus on improving student achievement (Spillane et al, 2001; Neuman & Simmons, 2000; Elmore, 2001). Efforts to link stronger subject matter knowledge by principals with a shared focus on leadership for student learning have important and potentially powerful implications.

Principals' Role in New Teacher Support

It is appropriate to look to the principal literature for a description of the principal's role with respect to new teacher support. What we find, however, is disappointing. Rather than distinguishing among the various needs, concerns and interests of new and experienced teachers, the tendency in the principal literature is to group teachers together as one. Recommendations that are directed toward principals' work with new teachers tend to over-simplify the nature of the work by focusing on discrete tasks as opposed to discussing broader issues, such as leadership style (see Brock & Grady, 2001; Portner, 2001).

Certainly, identifying the discrete tasks of effective leadership for new teachers (as contrasted with their more experienced peers) is warranted. After all, *"instructional leadership involves creating the conditions necessary for teachers to be effective and satisfied, and focusing teachers and instructional programs on the purposes and objectives to be achieved"* (Pounder, 1987, p. 295). As an example, principals should show care in creating optimal working conditions for new teachers. Hiring and placement, as a particular kind of working condition, is widely discussed in the policy literature connected to new teachers and induction

(NCTAF, 1996; Fidler & Haselkorn, 1999; Ingersoll, 2001). As Leithwood

(1990) reminds us,

Principals have the opportunity to prevent painful beginnings. They are preventable through such interventions as realistic classroom assignments in combination with ongoing assistance in the development of classroom management skills, provision of a supportive mentor close at hand, and the avoidance of heavy-handed supervision practices (Leithwood, 1990, p. 81).

However, limiting the discussion to the mere identification of tasks does not address the deeper issues at play. Also needed by principals is a stance toward leadership on behalf of new teachers that is proactive and visionary, rather than heavy-handed and bureaucratic. The right kind of support, early in one's career, may be the difference between mediocrity and excellence.

What too many educators fail to understand is that money and time invested in developing new teachers is money and time saved in the future. Indeed, much of the time that principals spend dealing with problems could be saved if experienced teachers had been given the training, support and opportunity to solve these problems when they were new to the system. The alternative to careful induction into the occupation is tight, bureaucratic supervision. Bureaucratic structures can guarantee a relatively decent level of mediocrity, but excellence requires a more liberating and inviting leadership style (Schlechy & Whitford, 1989, p. 448).

Principals' Role in New Teacher Development and Evaluation

When a difference between novice and veteran needs are noted in the literature, it is often in the area of teacher supervision and evaluation. Prevailing views see the purpose of new teacher evaluation as different from that of established veterans. In other words, teacher assessment should have as a priority removal of the unfit and incompetent (e.g. teacher evaluation as gate-keeper) and should be about promoting growth (e.g. teacher evaluation as professional development through formative assessment). According to this

line of thinking, as a teacher gains skill and demonstrates competence the evaluation process can gradually assume a heavier emphasis on learning (versus accountability).

While some argue for an expanded role set where principals engage in new teacher support and assessment, others take the issue further by suggesting that principals step back from assuming primary responsibility for new teacher evaluation by promoting a team-based approach to support and assessment (Duke, 1995; Duke & Stiggins, 1990; Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin, & Bernstein, 1984b). According to this view, evaluation by team is more advantageous for three reasons: a) it allows principals time to devote to more pressing matters, b) it tempers the role conflict many principals feel as they try to be both an evaluator and a supporter, and c) it avoids putting principals in the position of having to be an expert in all subjects.

Freeing principals of the primary responsibility for evaluating new and marginal teachers accomplishes several things. It relieves them of a time-consuming obligation and allows them to direct their energies at more general, school-wide improvement efforts, including the less onerous task of regular (interim) teacher evaluation. It tempers the role conflict experienced by principals who must maintain school morale and cohesion while enforcing standards of accountability. And it encourages a closer match between the teaching skills of the evaluator and evaluatee than would be possible if principals were sole evaluators of all personnel in their buildings (Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin & Bernstein, 1984, p. 121).

The onset of induction and mentoring opens the door to one kind of team, i.e. principal and mentor. As Ganser (cited in Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999) notes in the opening quote to this section, the challenge for principals is in learning how best to capitalize on the presence of mentors as a new and valued resource in the building. Even when the principal remains the sole evaluator, however, the evaluation process can still be used as a diagnostic tool for identifying teacher development “*starting points*” (Leithwood, 1990). It is hoped that when teacher evaluation is adapted to

conform to teachers' needs, teacher learning opportunities in a school will be increased (Rosenholz, 1989).

Themes across the Literature

Looking across the literature on new teacher learning; mentoring and induction; and principal leadership, several themes seem apparent. First, mention of principals in relation to new teachers is infrequent and scattered, which suggests that the principal's role is scarcely more than peripheral. Yet we know from new teachers that they desperately want administrative approval and affirmation (Peterson, 1990; Brock & Grady, 1997). Moreover, it is widely believed that the principal plays a central role in establishing a building-wide culture of learning and in setting expectations for student achievement and teacher performance – each of which directly impacts the new teacher. Thus, we might assume that the principal's role in new teacher support and development does matter, although we have little empirical data on which to base this understanding. These sets of literature leave us asking: *What about principal support matters?*

Secondly, the influence of working conditions on new teacher learning and experience pops up in all three strands of literature. As the new teacher learning literature highlights, poor working conditions and non-supportive work places mediate against keeping novices in the profession. Although improved working conditions are widely argued as critical in the induction and mentoring literature, little to date has been done to adjust on-the-job demands to meet the unique learning needs of new teachers. Clearly, it is outside the boundaries of the mentors' role to create meaningful change in working conditions. This is not true of the principal. Unlike mentors, principals have the power

and authority to make needed changes, accommodations, adjustments. Thus, we might ask: *What role can and should principals play in new teacher support?*

Third, the principal literature – with few exceptions – makes only passing reference to the challenges of beginning teaching and mentoring. This body of literature generally lacks a sophisticated understanding of what it means to teach and learn to teach at all phases of a teacher's career, including the induction years. This brief summary across the strands helps to highlight the ways in which one strand, e.g. new teacher learning can significantly enrich the other, e.g. principal leadership. This raises an interesting question: What do principals need to know (and how do they come to know that) in order to be strong instructional leaders?

Finally, the tension between new teacher assistance and assessment shows up in all three literatures, lending strength to the notion that the contraries of assistance and assessment cannot be easily separated in practice, therefore may as well be embraced as complementary functions (Elbow, 1983). Examining this tension from the unique perspectives of new teacher learning; induction and mentoring; and principal leadership, we ask: *How do principals manage and embrace the contraries of assistance and assessment in the context of new teacher induction?*

In a continuing effort to understand the topic of principal support for new teachers and their mentors, I now turn to a small set of empirical studies that pave the way for the research efforts reported here.

Learning From Others: A Summary of Earlier Studies

How are principals' roles changing with the introduction of mentoring and induction? To date, I have been able to locate four published research studies that have

explored principal's role in new teacher support. Two of these studies draw on mixed methods (survey and interview) while the other two rely on interviews, observations and/or narrative accounts. Of the four, two draw their data exclusively from principals, the other two look across principal, mentor and/or novice data, although the principal continues to be the focus. Sample sizes are small and drawn from a variety of contexts, including elementary and secondary, mentoring and no mentoring, urban and rural, public and non-public, United States and Canada. Notably, all are set within the early years of program implementation. Listed in chronological order, I summarize each study briefly.

Study #1: *Supervisory roles and responsibilities of principals to teacher leaders and novice teachers in four Connecticut schools: A close-up look* (1990). Joseph J. Caruso.

This study took place in the early days of the Connecticut Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) and Cooperating Teacher (CT) programs, both of which featured a collaborative leadership model where principals and teachers were to share responsibility for novice support and evaluation. Caruso's study design reflected his observation that principals and teacher leaders were "*experiencing role conflict and ambiguity as they struggled to re-conceptualize their roles in terms of their personal expectations and the expectations of state policies*" (p. 3). Importantly, Caruso saw mentor/novice confidentiality, as well as teacher assessment and evaluation, as problematic issues. He suggests:

The ways in which principals sort out, re-align, and enact their roles and responsibilities with respect to instructional supervision will be critical toward developing a new definition of principal and teacher instructional leadership in schools (p. 5).

Research questions included: 1) What are the supervisory roles and responsibilities of principals to mentors and novices? 2) What is the nature of the

principal's supervision of mentors and novices? 3) What is the difference between principal and mentor supervision of novices and do they ever share supervisory duty? The primary source of data consisted of single interviews with four principals and multiple interviews with six mentor/novice pairs across four pilot schools.

Caruso found that principal attitudes played a key role in whether or not the program was considered successful. For example, principals' mindset toward supervision and knowledge of the program influenced their support of program participants, e.g. a commitment to instructional supervision and leadership led to stronger support practices. Although there was disagreement as to the nature and extent of shared responsibility for new teacher supervision, principals universally welcomed mentor involvement. However, any resulting shared or overlapping supervisory responsibility for new teachers was not formally discussed or planned, "*principals and teacher leaders simply carried out their supervisory roles and responsibilities based on their own perceptions of the job*" (p. 93). Finally, principals did not view these programs as impacting their supervisory roles, nor did they see either program as part of a long-term plan for school improvement. Principals were universally viewed positively by mentors and novices. Caruso concludes that the presence of mentors and teacher leaders does not diminish, but enhances instructional leadership by principals.

Study #2: *The perceptions of school principals about a mentoring program for newly hired urban school teachers* (1993). Tom Ganser, Melissa Freiberg & John Zbikowski.

This study looked at principals' direct and indirect role in a newly implemented urban mentor teacher program. Unique to this site, principals were not responsible for mentor selection and matching, nor were they expected to facilitate mentoring activities –

such duties were assumed by a collaborative mentor board. Researchers were thus interested in how the principal's role as educational leader may have changed, and how they felt about such change, given the presence of a mentor.

As mentors assume a significant role in teacher induction, principals may view them as supplementing or even replacing them in some supervisory tasks. The dilemma for principals is to avoid shirking their responsibilities for the instructional supervision of teachers working in their building, while taking advantage of mentoring as perhaps a better way to foster professional development. This may place principals in a quandary, since the best source of information regarding the progress of a beginning teacher—the mentor – may not be available because of confidentiality considerations. As is true with other educational innovations, mentoring creates new roles which may not correspond to the traditional roles and responsibilities of principals (p. 6).

Findings were based on two sets of data. First, all district principals were surveyed using a nineteen-item questionnaire. Second, an additional eighteen principals volunteered for a short phone interview (approximately fifteen minutes) designed to elaborate on survey responses. Worth noting, data collection was limited to the early months of program implementation.

Among relevant findings, researchers found that principals' view mentors as "helpful supplements" to their staff. Several principals viewed mentors as an extension of their own role, someone who could fill in the gaps for teacher supervision when the principal lacked time. When asked about the degree to which they wanted to be involved in the mentoring program, principals were split in their responses. While some preferred staying in the background, others desired more contact. There were unified, however, in wanting information about program goals and design. The authors conclude by noting,

With rare exception, principals readily acknowledge the centrality of confidentiality in the mentoring relationship, yet they desire to have the important insights of mentors to better meet the needs of new teachers on their staff (p. 15).

This study raises questions about the relationship between principals and mentors, particularly the degree to which principals and mentors communicate with one another about new teacher development. As plausible as these tentative findings might be, a lack of methodological rigor (limited sample, brief data collection points during early months of implementation) leaves them suspect.

Study #3: *Problems and paradoxes in beginning teacher support: Issues concerning school administrators* (1993). Ardra Cole.

Unlike the other two, this study was conducted in Canada. The context is familiar, however, as the research was done with principals in the process of implementing a school-based induction program. The purpose of this analysis was to explore principal's role in NT induction and support. In the author's words,

Much of the literature advocating school-based support efforts identifies, and in some cases defines, the roles of school administrators in new teacher induction and development... Also apparent in most of this work is the lack of formalized attention to those roles. The research on which this paper is based was conducted in response to a need for clarification and more in-depth understanding of the roles and responsibilities of school administrators identified in literature on the subject and, more pragmatically, for those in schools involved in beginning teacher support efforts (p. 4).

In this report, Cole describes how administrators in one district perceive and carry out their roles in relationship to new teacher support. More importantly, she highlights issues identified by the principals as problematic. Data for this analysis, drawn from a larger research and development project on which the author acted as a consultant, consisted of six to eight interviews with four principals as well as focus group discussion with twenty-three elementary and secondary administrators. Analysis was done by first identifying themes and patterns within topic areas and then juxtaposing these against relevant literature in teacher induction, teacher learning and school improvement.

Findings suggest that principal's responsibilities for new teacher support includes establishing a school climate that recognizes and values new teacher support. While principals often lack the time for day-to-day involvement, they can indirectly support induction by facilitating induction activities, taking care with new teacher placements, articulating a school-wide vision for teaching and learning, and providing information, advice and emotional support. Cole concludes that these principals conceptualize their role as a *facilitator* of new teacher support.

Cole identifies a number of problems inherent to principals' role vis a vis new teachers. Among them are 1) coming to terms with the dual roles of helper and evaluator, 2) treading the fine line between intervention and support, 3) respecting individualism while encouraging openness, and 4) responding to needs and concerns of beginning teachers without jeopardizing the professional well being of other staff.

In summary, Cole suggests that principals can manipulate two factors, school culture and leadership style, to minimize the effect of these problematic issues.

School culture and leadership style were critical factors contributing to and/or helping to resolve most of the dilemmas, particularly those associated with evaluation, intervention, fairness, and sensitivity to individual differences. For these four administrators, facilitating new teacher support was (and is) integrally connected to the broader issue of school-wide professional development. Providing beginning teachers with a facilitative induction to teaching in all cases meant significant changes within the schools. In some cases, the changes involved reallocation of space, time, and resources; in others, changes represented challenges to traditional isolationist norms and patterns of professional interaction. It is this latter kind of change that seems fundamental to the realization of the broad potential of teacher induction and to diminishing the problematic and paradoxical nature of school administrators' roles (p. 31).

She adds,

When helping, sharing, supporting, and working together become the accepted way of doing things; that is, the natural way for people to relate to and work with

one another, many of the dilemmas identified by the school administrators in this study become non-issues (p. 34).

In conclusion, Cole makes several recommendations. First, many of these dilemmas can be resolved with close attention to leadership style and norms of professional interaction in a building. Second, evaluation practices need to be growth-oriented and encourage shared decision-making. Third, work environments that support learning and risk-taking are necessary. Finally, new teacher support needs to be seen as a natural part of school practice so that it is not seen as adding duties to already busy teachers and administrators.

Study #4: Public and parochial school principals' perceptions of beginning teachers and the principal's role in the induction process (1996). Barbara Brock and Marilyn Grady.

Grady and Brock collaborated on a mixed method study (using survey and interview data) with new teachers and principals in public and private schools (with and without mentoring) that explores principals' role in beginning teacher support. The study was guided by three research questions: 1) What differences exist between reports of beginning teachers and principals regarding the problems that first-year teachers experience? 2) What role expectations do beginning teachers and principals have for each other? and 3) What differences exist between the kinds of assistance that beginning teachers want and the kinds of assistance that principals provide?

To summarize, they found that principals expect their first-year teachers to exhibit a professional attitude, be knowledgeable in their subject area, have good classroom management skills, communicate well, believe all children can learn and have a desire to help all students succeed. On the flip side, new teachers see the principal as the most important person in the school; their greatest expectation is that the principal will guide

them through the first year. Additionally, despite fall orientations, assignment of mentors and evaluation reports, new teachers report wanting a more serious and sustained induction program that includes mentoring and extends through their entire first year.

Brock and Grady report on this study and other related research in their popular Corwin Press publication, *From First-Year to First-Rate: Principals Guiding Beginning Teachers*, now in its 2nd edition. Their work stems from the premise that principals play a central role in the professional development of beginning teachers. They write in the introduction:

Although principals are called on to be instructional leaders, the literature provides little direction for principals in their efforts to help beginning teachers. Not much attention has been paid to the basic needs of beginning teachers, the challenges that principals face in working with them, or the design of effective assistance programs. Without quality induction programs, many novice teachers become frustrated. Their enthusiasm and dreams give way to disillusionment and despair. Feeling that they have failed, they leave the profession with the first two years. The consequences of this action for administrators are continual rehiring and a disruption in the quality and continuity of their school programs (p. 2).

Like the Ganser study, these findings need to be read cautiously given the unclear nature of data collection (e.g. broad sample with need for disaggregated data points) and subsequent data analysis (e.g. lack of theoretical or conceptual framing).

Implications for Continued Research

Collectively, these studies refute any claim that principals feel threatened by the presence of mentors (Shulman, 1987). Rather, these principals welcome and appreciate the time and help mentors are able to offer. These studies also offer new dimensions to an otherwise rudimentary understanding of principals' role. For example, Cole's (1993) principals saw themselves as "*facilitators*" of new teacher support, a term that suggests a

powerful, but peripheral presence. Notably, Caruso's (1990) principals enacted this role independent of teacher leaders, a tendency he coined "*parallel supervision*".

These studies also point to tensions or dilemmas that principals are likely to experience as they enact their role vis a vis new teachers and their mentors. First among these is the ongoing challenge of balancing between being supportive and holding novices accountable for good work. A second dilemma revolves around the issue of confidentiality. Although principal and mentor alike argue the importance of maintaining confidentiality in helping to create a safe space for novices to grow and develop, principals also want to be trusted to use critical information wisely and professionally. Lastly, principals are always juggling between what they perceive as good for new teachers and what they perceive as good for all remaining teachers. Interestingly, Cole (1993) suggests that these tensions diminish over time when principals adjust school culture and their leadership style in order to "*provide beginning teachers with a facilitative induction to teaching*".

Without diminishing the contribution of each, however, it is important to note limitations of the existing body of research. Methodologically, five key differences emerge between these studies and my work. 1) They look across the K-12 spectrum to include principals and assistant principals, whereas I focus exclusively on elementary principals. 2) They explore principals' changing roles during the early phases of induction programming, whereas I look at this issue in the context of a well-established induction program. 3) They rely on principal self-report to derive an understanding of practice, whereas I offer mentor and new teacher accounts of principal work to strengthen my claims. 4) None of these studies look at how principals perceive their role with

respect to new teacher *mentors*. 5) Only the Cole (1993) study offers a theoretical framework for explaining the data, whereas I draw equally on the literature in new teacher learning, induction/mentoring, and principal leadership to conceptualize this work. In summary, my study has the methodological rigor and theoretical insight to contribute toward a broader and deeper understanding of the topic.

Appendix B:
Interview Protocols

Principal Questionnaire

Principal Interview #1: *Professional Background and Experience*

Principal Interview #2: *Working with New Teachers & Mentors*

Principal Interview #3: *Pulling it all Together*

Principal Interview #4: *One Year Later*

Mentor Teacher Interview

New Teacher Interview

**It's the Principal that Matters: A Look at Principals' Understanding of their
Roles and Responsibilities vis a vis New Teachers and their Mentors**

Principal Questionnaire

This questionnaire has been designed to provide a foundation from which to begin our first interview. Please respond to the questions with brief written answers and return to me in the enclosed stamped envelope. If you prefer, attach a resume rather than responding to the questions about professional experience and educational background. If you have any questions, please contact me at (517) 339-8001 or carvercy@msu.edu. I look forward to visiting with you soon! Cindy Carver

Contact Information

Full Name _____ Date _____

School Address _____

_____ School Phone _____

School Fax _____ E-mail _____

Home Address _____

_____ Home Phone _____

What is the best way to reach you?

Professional Background *(attach current resume if available)*

How many years (total) have you been employed in school administration? _____

How many of those years have been in this district? _____

How many of those years have been in this school? _____

How many years (total) of teaching experience do you have? _____

How many of those years have been in this district? _____

How many of those years have been in this school? _____

List all administrative positions held (including any outside this district) as well as the number of years you held each position and your major responsibilities.

| Position Title | District/School | Dates | Responsibilities |
|----------------|-----------------|-------|------------------|
| | | | |

List all teaching positions held (including any outside this district), as well as the number of years you held each position and your major responsibilities.

| <i>Position/Title</i> | School/District | Dates | Responsibilities |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------|------------------|
| | | | |

List all teaching and administrative credentials or certificates attained, including any that may have lapsed.

List all post-secondary degrees held, including year and institution.

| Degree | Institution | Dates |
|--------|-------------|-------|
| | | |

Briefly describe significant education-related work experiences.

Personal Background and Interests

Are you: _____ single _____ married or partner

Do you have children? _____ yes _____ no

If yes, what are their ages?

How do you prefer spending your free time?

Your School

Being as accurate as you can, complete the following:

- _____ Student enrollment
- _____ Total teachers on staff
- _____ First year teachers on staff
- _____ Second year teachers on staff

How many of your first and second year teachers are NOT fully credentialed? _____

What three words characterize the *students* in this school?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What three words characterize the *teachers* in this school?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What word or phrase best describes you as a *school leader*?

What is one *goal* you are working on with your staff this year?

Thank you for your time!

It's the Principal that Matters: A Look at Principals' Understanding of their Roles and Responsibilities vis a vis New Teachers and their Mentors

Principal Interview #1: *Professional Background and Experience*

Introduction: (5 minutes)

- ✓ Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Before we begin, I need your written consent. Please read the following consent form carefully and sign at the bottom if you agree to these terms. Please keep a copy for your own record. Do you have any questions before we begin?
- ✓ Today's interview looks across your professional career. For example, I want to know why you became a principal and how you see your work at [school name]. I also want to know more about your own experiences as a teacher. Your responses will serve as a foundation for our continued conversations. In May we'll talk more specifically about how you think about your work with new teachers and their advisors. Later this summer (perhaps by phone?) we'll talk about your work more broadly within the context of the school, as well as with the NTP.
- ✓ As a reminder, you are free to pass on any question or discontinue participation at any time during the interview. To ensure that I hear your responses correctly, I ask your permission to audiotape our conversation today. Would you also like a copy of the tape when we are done?

Learning to Lead

These first questions are focused on how you learned to be a principal. When we talk about NTs, I'm referring to those who are in their first years of teaching.

Why did you become an elementary principal?

What do you like most about the work?

What do you find most challenging?

Think back to your formal administrative training.

What did this training or background most prepare you to do as a principal?

Is there something you wish you would have learned during this training?

If yes, describe.

Once on the job, what kinds of things did you have to learn your first years?

How did you get better at that?

Did you have a (formal/informal) mentor?

Are there things you are still learning? If yes, tell me about them.

What helps you learn that?

Have you received training for your work with NTs?

What was that like?

Is there some kind of training that would be helpful?

Have you changed as a principal since your first year? If yes, describe.

What/who most influenced those changes?

What changes lie ahead for you as a principal?

Describe how you see yourself as a leader.

Is this how your staff sees you?

Is this how new teachers see you?

Learning to Teach

You were a teacher before you were a principal. This next set of questions asks you to reflect on your own learning to teach.

Why did you become a teacher?

What did you most enjoy about classroom teaching?

Let's talk briefly about your teacher preparation: What did it help you know or do as a beginning classroom teacher? Were there aspects of teaching that it didn't prepare you for?

Now think about your first year of teaching. What was your experience like?

What did you most need to learn?

How did you learn that?

Who helped you learn that?

How do you think your experience as a first year teacher is like the first year teachers you work with? Is it different?

How would you characterize your relationship with other teachers?

What was your relationship with the principal like?

Shared Understandings

Our entire conversation presumes we share an understanding of what new teacher induction means.

In our last interview, you said that principals play a central role in inducting new teachers to a school. What does "inducting NTs to a school" mean to you?

Clarifying Background Information

Did you receive and complete the biographical questionnaire, mailed earlier?

Last time we spoke you had _____ beginning teachers in the building, and this year you have _____. What do you anticipate for the coming year? _____

Are there new or important developments or happenings (e.g. losing charter school status due to test scores; piloting a new curriculum; preparing for dramatic increase in student pop for upcoming year) at the school that I should be aware of?

Next Steps

Before wrapping up today, we need to do the following:

- ✓ *Stipend paperwork.*
- ✓ Identify a novice/advisor pair to a) interview and b) get copies of evaluation records.
- ✓ Schedule next visit, week of May 14. (Ideal would be a 90 minute slot in order to review evaluation records.)
- ✓ What about a final phone interview this summer? Optional observation/case review/focus group in October?
- ✓ I would like to correspond with you periodically between now and October to a) stay abreast of current happenings, b) seek clarification as I read the data and reflect on our interviews and c) occasionally send you a "problem" or "task" to respond to, e.g. Imagine NT "x" did "y". What would be your response? Would you tell his/her advisor? Why/why not? Can we do this via email?
- ✓ Last time we spoke, you expressed interest in findings from our work. I'm currently writing a paper that contrasts principals in SC and Cincinnati that I'm willing to share when done. Also, I would like to share a draft case from this set of interviews with you this fall for feedback. I'd like you involve you in this research process to the extent that you are willing and able.

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Principal Interview #2: *Working with New Teachers and their Mentors*

Introduction:

- ✓ This second interview asks you to elaborate on your work with new teachers and their mentors. Today I will be encouraging you to recall specific examples that illustrate your work as a principal. We'll also review evaluation records from a new teacher.
- ✓ As a reminder, you are free to pass on any question or discontinue participation at any time during the interview. To ensure that I hear your responses correctly, I ask your permission to audiotape our conversation today. Would you also like a copy of the tape when we are done?

Last time we met we talked about how you became a principal and how you see your work as a principal. Today let's talk more specifically about your involvement with new teachers and their mentors. We'll start with the beginning of the year and the hiring process.

Principal Beliefs about New Teacher Support and Development

[Some questions have already been asked in earlier interviews; edit appropriately]

What role do you play in the hiring process?

How are classroom placements and extra duties assigned?

Is this the same for all teachers? Why/why not?

When you hire a beginning teacher, what are you expecting them to know and do?

What do beginning teachers in your school most need to learn in their first years on the job to be effective?

How do they best learn that?

How would you describe your role in helping them learn these things?

How long does it take for someone to get to be a really good teacher?

What do you do early in the year to support new teachers?

Does this change as the year progresses?

What role are you likely to play when the new teacher seems to be doing well?

When might you intervene?

Can you tell me about a time when you did this?

Is this something you discussed with the NTP advisor?

What role are you likely to play when the new teacher seems to be struggling?

When might you intervene?

Can you tell me about a time when you had to do this?

Is this something you discussed with the new teacher's advisor?

Are you familiar with the formative assessment activities that NTP advisors do, e.g. ILP and analysis of student work?

How is this the same or different from what you do with NTs?

Principal Beliefs about New Teacher Assessment and Evaluation

As principal, you are responsible for conducting new teacher evaluations.

What counts as evidence of growth or learning in the evaluation process?

Can you give an example?

Is this the same criteria or process you use with experienced teachers? If no, what's different?

Do you find the teacher evaluation process helpful? Why? Who benefits?

The new district evaluation process asks you, as principal, to both support NT's learning and also evaluate their effectiveness. Some argue that the same person cannot do both functions – support and evaluation.

Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Was there a time when you felt some tension between your support role and your evaluation role?

How did you balance between these two functions?

What do you find most difficult about the evaluation process?

New Teacher Evaluation Up-Close

To put all of this into context, let's take a look at an evaluation record for one novice.

The ILP states the following as goals.... How were these determined?

Did you have any additional goals, perhaps unstated, for [novice]?

If yes, did you share these with [advisor]?

What evidence of progress toward these goals did you see this year?

What role did you play in helping [novice] meet her goals?

Did the NT advisor play a role in helping [novice] meet her goals?

Did you and the advisor ever talk about [novice]?

Would you consider this a learning opportunity for [novice]?

If yes, what did she learn?

How useful was this process for you? Did you learn something?

Working with Mentors

This next set of questions focuses on your work with advisors.

How often have you observed advisors and new teachers working together?

What types of things have you seen?

What is your understanding of their work?

How would you characterize their relationship with one another?

What are your expectations for an advisor's work with new teachers?

What are your expectations for an advisor's work with you?

What are your expectations for an advisor's work with staff in the building?

Have you ever disagreed with an advisor over a new teacher's progress or needs?

If yes, tell me about what happened.

If no, can you imagine under what circumstances this might happen?

When might you intervene between the new teacher and advisor?

Have you ever needed to do this?

Imagine that your duties suddenly expand and you are unable to fulfill your responsibility for NT evaluation. The superintendent asks for your opinion. Would you recommend that the NTP advisors fill the role of evaluator in an emergency?

Why or why not?

It's the Principal that Matters: A Look at Principals' Understanding of their Roles and Responsibilities vis a vis New Teachers and their Mentors

Principal Interview #3: *Pulling it all together*

Introduction

- ✓ In this final interview I want to put your work with new teachers into a broader context. First I'll ask you about your work at the school level, then with the NTP. Next we'll look at some vignettes of actual practice. In addition, we'll look broadly at questions of impact. This interview also gives us a chance to clarify or add to things said in earlier conversations.
- ✓ As in our previous interviews, you are free to pass on any question or discontinue participation at any time during the interview. To ensure that I hear your responses correctly, I ask your permission to audiotape our conversation today. Would you also like a copy of the tape when we are done?

Being a School Leader

I'd like to begin by talking generally about your work in this school. In a moment we'll talk about the question I e-mailed to you last week. But first, I want to know what gets your time and attention as a principal.

What do you spend most of your time doing?

If you had more time, would you do anything differently? Explain.

Roughly, how much time do you work in an average week?

Is this more than you worked as a teacher?

In a recent e-mail I asked you to describe the invisible or "behind the scenes" things you do to support teaching and learning in your school. Let's talk more about that.

What are the invisible and indirect ways you support teaching and learning in your building?

Is it a problem that teachers don't see this level of involvement? Explain.

You've often said the bottom line is student achievement. What do you do to focus teachers' attention on student learning?

How would you describe or characterize the type of teacher community you hope for at your school?

Is this what happened this year?

Are there things you did to facilitate that community?

What about next year?

What role do you like to see NTs play in the building?

How are they perceived by other teachers in this school?
Is your relationship with NTs different from or the same as veteran teachers?
Why is that?

How long does it take to get to be a really good master teacher? (James, Karen)

Learning to Teach (Ramon, James)

You were a teacher before you were a principal. This next set of questions asks you to reflect on your own learning to teach.

Let's talk briefly about your teacher preparation. What did it help you know or do as a beginning classroom teacher?

Were there aspects of teaching that it didn't prepare you for?

Now think about your first year of teaching. What was your experience like?

Do you remember wishing you'd learned something different in your preparation?

What did you most need to learn?

How did you learn that?

How do you think your experience as a 1st year teacher is the same or different from the 1st year teachers you work with?

How would you characterize your relationship with other teachers?

What was your relationship with the principal like?

Working with the NTP

As a principal, how would you describe your role (or responsibilities) in relationship to the NTP?

Where does this understanding come from?

Are there things about your role that you would change if you could?

What are your expectations of the NTP?

Have these expectations been met over the years?

Have you ever disagreed with a NTP policy?

Does the project have an effect on the building overall, e.g. on the way teachers talk about teaching or the things they do with children? [Probes: climate, school language]

Has the project had an impact on you? How?

Vignettes of Practice: Maintaining Confidentiality

To make things more concrete, I'd like to share 3 vignettes – each drawn from actual conversations with principals. As you'll soon see, this work is trickier when the beginning teacher is struggling. After I read each vignette, I'll ask a few questions.

Case #1: Weak Content Knowledge

You've hired a new and credentialed 4th grade teacher who came with strong personal recommendations. Your informal observations of her work suggest that she's doing well and you're feeling satisfied. Your first formal observation of a literacy lesson confirmed this. However, by late fall it's becoming increasingly clear to the NTP advisor that this BT has a poor grasp of the math and science she's teaching. While her background in bilingual literacy is commendable, her conceptual understanding of mathematics is weak – as evidenced by her inability to answer student questions – and in a couple of science lessons she has presented false or misleading information. Based on the advisor's weekly observations, it's clear that students are struggling to make sense of their learning in math and science. As principal, you were not aware there was a problem.

What do you expect the advisor to do in this case?

Would it be appropriate for the advisor to bring this to your attention? Why/why not?

Case #2: Disparaging remarks about students'

It was a fairly good year from your perspective. Your new 3rd grade teacher adjusted quickly to the school, kids were happy in his classroom and your formal observations, complete with pre and post-conferences, went better than you had anticipated. Yet you have a gut-feeling that this BT is putting on a show when you're around and telling you what you want to hear. You're beginning to wonder how to crack through this façade in the coming year. Unbeknownst to you, the NTP advisor had similar feelings throughout the year, but had been reluctant to share them without more concrete evidence. Now, in their final meeting of the year, the BT let down his guard and spoke quite openly and disparaging about his students, describing them as lazy and unmotivated. Reflecting back on the year, the BT comfortably rationalizes his students' low academic performance as an inability to learn. The advisor is stunned. Has she heard him correctly? If so, her fears are confirmed. The BT has convinced himself that his students not only don't want to learn, but can't learn. She wonders how this will influence his expectations for students next year.

What do you expect the advisor to do in this case?

Would it be appropriate for the advisor to bring this to your attention? Why/why not?

Case #3: Unclear Self-Understanding

It's quickly becoming clear to those who teach near her – your new 1st grade teacher is struggling with the subtleties of classroom organization and management. The kids still aren't lining up properly and are often disrespectful to one another in and out of the class. A close look at their papers suggests that they take more care in socializing with one another than in doing careful written work. Learning centers are often haphazard

arrangements. It's hard to imagine quality learning occurring in this environment. The NTP advisor, along with grade level colleagues and yourself, have all been working independently of one another to help the BT overcome these challenges. However, despite everyone's best efforts, things aren't getting much better and it's now November. Surprisingly, the BT seems to be encouraged by her slow progress. Day after day she greets you, the principal, with a smile and says things are going really well. You're not sure what to believe since your own observations are infrequent and quick – perhaps things are going better. Her grade level colleagues haven't said much recently and her advisor tells you they are working on addressing the problem. Still, you're wondering: What's the next step?

What do you expect the advisor to do in this case?

Would it be appropriate for the advisor to bring this to your attention? Why/why not?

Learning Opportunities, Revisited

Think about your work with new teachers over the years. What are the critical events or persons that have shaped how you think about your work with new teachers? Can you think of other things? [Probe: experience mentoring, experience as NT, administrative training]

If you were to give a novice principal advice about working with NTs and their mentors, what would you say?

It's the Principal that Matters: A Look at Principals' Understanding of their Roles and Responsibilities vis a vis New Teachers and their Mentors

Principal Interview 4: *One Year Later*

[NOTE: Approximately 2 weeks ahead of my scheduled visit, each principal received a copy of a 10-12 page descriptive case based on our earlier interviews. Participants were asked to read and reflect on the case, noting any questions or concerns with the text as written, identify areas of the text that needed clarification, as well as note the things that stood out as they read.]

As you know, the purpose of this final interview is to get some feedback on my understandings of your work and clarifying some of the issues that have emerged as I read and work with the data. But first, let's start with an update...

News/Update

How was your year? Any interesting new developments?

Maria: Have you made a decision regarding SJS? Have you told the staff yet?

James: When we last spoke in August, you were contemplating a meeting with advisors at the beginning of the year. Did this ever materialize?

Ramon: How are things in the building this year as the plan for raising test scores is implemented?

Karen: Are things falling into a routine? What about plans for developing a schoolwide mission?

Reactions to the Case

What stands out, for you, from this case?

What surprised you?

Are there things that bothered you?

Are there aspects of your work with new teachers or new teacher mentors that are not represented here? If yes, tell me about them.

Are there aspects of your work with new teachers that I might have misrepresented or aspects of your professional background that I didn't get right?

Follow-up Questions

Influence of Teaching Experience

In what ways did your background as a classroom teacher prepare you for the principalship?

Do you still draw on this background in your work as a school principal?
Can you give me an example?

Influence of Mentoring

How did your training and experience as a new teacher mentor prepare you for the principalship?

Do you still draw on this background in your work as a principal?
Can you give me an example?

Did your background as a mentor/teacher present challenges to your work as an administrator? If yes, explain.

Influence of Experience:

Karen/Ramon: As a 3rd year principal, is your approach to NT support the same or different from your 1st year. Why/why not?

Maria/James: As principal, you've learned a great deal over the years. What lessons have you learned about the nature and importance of NT support?

Relationships:

On this sheet of white paper, draw your relationship in this building to both new teachers and their mentors.

Closing

Any thoughts you'd like to add about your experience as a participant in this study, e.g. what you might have discovered about yourself, new teachers and/or mentors?

Any questions you have?

Mentor Teacher Interview Protocol

[The following questions were asked in the context of a larger interview for *New Teacher Induction: Promising Policies and Practices*. The novice in question was now in their second year of teaching.]

Principal Leadership

Did you talk often to [principal] about [novice]? Why or why not?

What kinds of things did you talk about?

How often did this happen?

Are there things you don't talk to principals about? Why?

Did you participate in the summative evaluation process (i.e. ILP development) this year?

If yes, what role did you play? Was this the same as last year?

If no, why not? Was this the same as last year?

Was evaluation a learning opportunity for [novice]? Why or why not?

If yes, what did he/she learn?

What role did [principal] play? Did this change over the two years?

Could [principal] have done something different to make it a better learning opportunity?

Looking back over the two years, are there things [principal] did to support [novice] that only he/she – as principal – could do?

Are there things he/she did to support you?

New Teacher Interview Protocol

[The following questions were asked in the context of a larger interview for *New Teacher Induction: Promising Policies and Practices*. The novice in question was now in their second year of teaching.]

Relationship with Principal

What was your relationship with [principal] like this year?

Did you have much contact?

How does this compare with last year?

Were there specific things [principal] did to support you the past two years?

How important were these things to your learning to teach?

How did your principal evaluation work this year?

Was it helpful to you? How and why?

Would anything have made it better?

How is the principal evaluation different from or similar to your advisors formative assessment?

Did you ever disagree?

How was that resolved?

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