THE DISCURSIVE NATURE OF MENTORING: HOW PARTICIPATION IN A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP TRANSFORMS THE IDENTITIES AND PRACTICES OF PROSPECTIVE AND PRACTICING TEACHERS

By

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For Mom & Dad and Megan & Matthew
Thanks for your unwavering love and belief in me.
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In the field of education, mentoring has become increasingly important for improving teacher retention, job satisfaction, and teacher quality. However, researchers have documented that mentoring within an educational context was often focused on situational adjustment, technical advice, and emotional support, which encultured new teachers into the current systems rather than helping them to critique or challenge the existing practices of schooling. Consequently, a new understanding of mentoring has emerged called educative mentoring, which encourages novices to challenge their thinking and practices and to engage in critical reflection that can be used to foster reform in schools, as well as in classrooms.

My personal interests, as well as my beliefs that mentoring and the identities of mentor and mentee are socially constructed through discourse, led me to design a study that investigated how mentors and mentees utilized discourse in negotiating their relationship and what role the mentoring relationship played in their co-construction of knowledge about teaching and learning, as well as the transformation of their individual identities and practices. The following questions guided my research: (1) How does the relationship among mentors and mentees, engaged in studying their practices, develop and evolve? and (2) How do the relationship among mentors
and mentees and the discourse(s) in which they are situated transform their identities and practices?

This research was framed by social constructionism and employed audio-taped dialogue sessions, field notes from participant observations, and a researcher’s journal to explore how the mentors and mentees negotiated their relationships, co-constructed understandings of teaching and learning, and transformed their identities and practices. Aspects of Gee’s (2005) discourse analysis and Fairclough’s (2003) critical discourse analysis served as a vehicle for illuminating the discursive aspects of the participants’ dialogue, as well as how they established and maintained rapport, planned and co-planned lessons, and participated in reflective discussions about instruction and classroom management. Although the mentors and mentees engaged in many of the same mentoring activities, their identities as mentors, as mentees, and as teachers were influenced by the ways in which they negotiated power, as well as the ways in which they positioned each other. Mentors and mentees who shared power and positioned each other as collaborative partners developed relationships that shaped and transformed their practices and identities. Moreover, the nature of each mentoring relationship was influenced by the discourses that constructed the sociopolitical context in which the mentors and mentees were situated, and the interdependence between mentors’ and mentees’ identities shaped not only the nature of their situated mentoring discourse, but also the ways in which the activities of mentoring were enacted.

This research provided evidence of the complexity of mentoring and the ways in which discourses are constructed and changed as they are employed to engage in the activities of mentoring and to transform the identities of the relational partners. These findings have important implications for teacher education, as well as for the mentoring practices of
individuals. Teacher education programs might consider providing prospective mentors and mentees with a better understanding of the philosophies and practices of educative mentoring and how the discourses in which they are situated, as well as the dialogues they co-construct, can be used to create a relationship and a context for learning and transformation.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background

Athena, in the guise of Mentes, sought out Telemachus and said, “For you, I have some good advice, if only you will accept it . . . . It all rests with you. Take my words to heart” (Homer, trans. 1996, pp. 86-87), and so it seems that with these words, the phenomenon of mentoring was born. Indeed, it is this story that most scholars cite as a starting point in their search for an understanding of this multi-faceted, multi-layered, enigmatic term. This original Mentor, rooted in Greek mythology, was an Ithacan noble in Homer’s epic tale, The Odyssey. Mentor was entrusted by Odysseus with the care and development of his son, Telemachus, still an infant, when Odysseus went off to fight in the Trojan War. Ten years after the war ended and The Odyssey began, Telemachus was a young man, helpless to stop the mob of suitors who were attempting to devour the estate of Odysseus and to court his mother, Penelope. Athena pled her case to Zeus and was dispatched to provide Telemachus with sage advice and guidance, “to inspire his heart with courage” (Homer, trans. 1996, p. 80). She appears throughout The Odyssey, often in the guise of Mentes or Mentor, in order to explain the mysteries Telemachus confronted, to point the way and clear the obstacles, as well as to provide him with encouragement. Thus, Mentor served as the embodiment of wisdom, a parental archetype, with male and female, mortal and immortal qualities.

For many of us, myself included, Homer’s epic tale, The Odyssey, served as our introduction to mentoring, and colored our initial understandings of the phenomenon and what it meant to mentor, to be mentored. This mythological character also seemed to serve as a divine benchmark against which we often measured the mentoring we received. Although our inspiration might come from divine sources, we remained mere mortals, fascinated by the stories
of mentors and their protégés, often consumed by our attempts to understand what it meant to mentor within a particular human context. The intricacies of this complex relationship often confounded attempts to develop a mutually satisfying relationship that effectively met the needs of both participants. Even so, we continued to seek out those who recognized, and perhaps even embraced our dreams, seeking their counsel as we began a transformational journey in which we searched for new perspectives, negotiated new meanings, and possibly forged new identities. Faced with such a daunting task, both mentor and protégé might wish for the wisdom of the gods as they engaged in what was often a sacred journey together.

The relationship between Mentor and Telemachus, as well as the relationships between other historical examples of mentors and mentees (i.e., Socrates and Plato, Freud and Jung, Anne Sullivan and Helen Keller), set a benchmark for characterizing and setting expectations for our future mentoring relationships. This mythological legacy provided us with a sense that mentoring was a powerful emotional interaction between an expert and a novice, a relationship in which the expert was trusted, loving, and experienced in the guidance of the novice (Merriam, 1983). Thus, the mentor helped to shape the growth and development of the protégé. Levinson (1978) concurred and described a mentor as one who assumed the roles of teacher, sponsor, counselor, developer of skills and intellect, host, guide, and exemplar. He believed that mentoring synthesized the characteristics of the parent-child relationship and peer support without being either and concluded that not having a mentor could be a great handicap to one’s psychological, as well as career development (Levinson, 1978).

Business adopted a different view of mentoring and developed understandings of mentoring from the perspective of career development, rather than from a more general framework of adult development. The system of apprenticeship developed during the Middle
Ages could be viewed as a specific case of just such mentoring. These apprenticeships involved a craft master, or mentor, who employed young people, or protégés, as inexpensive forms of labor in exchange for providing the protégé with formal training in a craft. Most apprentices during this era were young males (usually from fourteen to twenty-one years of age) and unmarried. They lived in the household of the master craftsman during their contract term, usually seven years, after which they spent time as a journeyman or acquired their own workshops as master craftsmen. Apprenticeships focused on the development of specific career skills, rather than any psychological or social benefits, although we might assume that the craft master also socialized the apprentice into a particular community of craftsmen. Modern business also focused on the benefits of mentoring from the perspective of a protégé’s career development. Mentoring was often characterized as a means of providing a role model for younger associates in an effort to teach them the skills necessary for career advancement, as well as socializing them into a professional community. Shapiro, Haseltine, and Rowe (1978) arranged these advisory/support relationships, which facilitated access to positions of leadership and authority in professional fields, along a continuum from peer pal (someone at your own level with whom you share information and strategies) to mentor (an intense relationship in which an individual assumes the role of both teacher and advocate).

Mentorships also occurred within academic settings in which the learning experiences were central to the mentor-protégé relationship. The mentor was a sometimes older, definitely more experienced professional, who guided and cultivated the intellect of the usually younger, less experienced protégé. Academic mentors were aware that their protégés needed to observe them as they engaged in the activities that were specific to a particular profession. They invited their protégés to participate with them in their professional work and allowed them to gradually
assume greater responsibility and autonomy (Johnson & Huwe, 2003). They also hoped to instill within their protégés a sense of pride in the profession and a commitment to behave in an ethical manner (Johnson & Huwe, 1990; VanZandt, 1990).

**Origins of the Study**

Much of my life has been lived in a classroom, as a student and/or a teacher and as an observer and/or participant. For me, and possibly for others, this life in the classroom has proved to be a relational one. The relationships I have encountered and participated in have occurred between and among the individuals within the classroom, between those individuals and learning, as well as between the individuals in the classroom and the larger community in which the classroom was situated. In my own experience, some of these relationships developed easily and proved beneficial for all involved, while other relationships were more troubled and seemed to stymie, even resist my efforts to meet my own needs and expectations, as well those of my relational partners. Additionally, I developed relationships beyond the classroom walls with parents, colleagues, and administrators, as well as with published research, various universities, and state and federal departments of education. Although I still find myself spending a good deal of time in classrooms, my roles and responsibilities within it have changed considerably. I am no longer responsible for any of the day-to-day interactions with elementary school students; rather, I supervise pre-service teaching interns for a university, observing their teaching, providing feedback, and encouraging them to reflect on their practices and learning as they discover the teachers they are meant to be. My autobiography, with its stories of the relationships I have experienced as a student and teacher, has provided me with lenses that influence what I see and how I interpret what I observe in the classrooms I visit. While I must be aware of these lenses and subjectivities, as they may blind me and constrain my ability to reach other possible interpretations, they have also provided the impetus for this study.
Given the complexity of learning how to teach, it was not surprising that in-service teachers almost always mentioned the primary importance of their student teaching or internship experience in the development of their teaching practices (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990). There was evidence that this mentoring relationship between the pre-service teaching intern and the in-service teacher was an important one, and so I was interested in how this relationship was constructed and negotiated and how it affected each of the participants. I would agree that my student teaching experience was important, although possibly not in the ways my “mentor” teachers may have intended. While my relationships with both of the teachers with whom I was placed were cordial and congenial, these “mentors” did not fashion a relationship with me or provide a place in which I was encouraged to reflect and question and discuss. Indeed, these women were identified as my “supervising teachers,” and perhaps the semantics of this label determined the nature of the relationship that developed between us. My first supervising teacher was unable to provide me with specific feedback. Her usual comment after she observed my teaching was, “The lesson was fine.” Even when I persisted in asking what could be improved, she was unable or unwilling to provide me with specific suggestions. Although I complained to my university supervisor, the situation remained unresolved, and I was at a loss as to how to initiate a conversation that would have enabled me to make my needs and expectations clear, so that she might have been motivated and able to provide the kind of guidance I needed.

In contrast, my second supervising teacher took the time to present me with written feedback after every lesson. She specifically commented on what had gone well and what I should do the next time in order to improve my lesson and its presentation. However, there was never an in-depth or critical discussion of the lesson, my teaching style, and whether or not student learning had occurred; instead, she simply prescribed what I could do to improve future
lessons. Indeed, much of the teaching I saw modeled was derived directly from a teacher’s manual, and so I spent many hours in the years that followed searching for ideas and strategies that were more compatible with my personal philosophies of teaching and learning and the needs and abilities of my students.

I did not encounter the woman I would consider my first “real” mentor until I had almost completed work on a Master’s degree. She was the first person who was genuinely interested in what I had to say and seemed to see in me the “teacher,” even the person I was meant to be. She encouraged reflection and engaged me in lively discussion about ideas, challenged my thinking, and provided me with opportunities that encouraged me to make use of all I had learned. These discussions encouraged me to become confident in my abilities and to take the risks that would be necessary for my growth and transformation.

However, it is my current work that has most directly influenced the focus of this study. For the past five years I have served as a university supervisor for groups of pre-service teaching interns as they completed a nine-month long internship. Although the interns have changed from year to year, many of the mentor teachers have remained the same. I have been able to observe these mentor teachers as they developed relationships with their interns and have watched as these relationships have either flourished or floundered. Some of the mentors seemed capable of matching their mentoring style to the needs of the particular intern with whom they were currently partnered. Other mentors seem to have an unalterable mentoring style and required the intern to adjust her needs accordingly. Whether these other mentors were unable or were simply refusing to furnish the scaffolding the novice teacher needed was questionable, but they often structured the mentoring relationship in such a way that the intern’s ideas and questions were ignored or discounted. Thus, I have watched interns, fresh from the university, brimming with
ideas about the teaching strategies and learning activities they wished to implement in a real-world classroom, unable to find an acceptable way of questioning the practices they saw modeled and being constructively critical of their mentor teacher’s traditional practices. Unfortunately, these mentoring relationships often devolved into adversarial confrontations, which silenced the intern’s voice, as she acquiesced to the mentor’s prescriptive expectations.

For other interns, their mentoring relationships were purely social in nature, due to the fact that they were mismatched with regard to their teaching styles and educational philosophies, and so the mentors were unable to provide these interns with models of teaching that they deemed credible. While some of these pairs maintained a friendship that went beyond the term of the internship, without a clear and compatible professional model, these interns often felt adrift as they attempted to develop identities as teachers.

Additionally, during the course of my doctoral studies, I came across an article entitled, “Multiple Annies: Feminist Poststructural Theory and the Making of a Teacher,” which provided an illustration of some of what I had been observing in the field placements of my own interns. Annie was placed with two teachers (Candace and Sheila) during her internship and she described their very different mentoring styles and how these mentors influenced the development of her teacher identity. Annie and Candace had similar teaching philosophies, and so, in Candace’s classroom, Annie felt free to be the kind of teacher she had envisioned herself to be (Jackson, 2001). In contrast, Annie felt controlled and dominated by Sheila whose rigid, teacher-centered pedagogy left Annie baffled as to how to engage the students and to develop an identity as a teacher. It seemed that the power relations between the participants, as well as the discourses in which they were situated produced a “truth” about what it meant to teach, which often had a powerful effect on the identity a mentee developed, as well as her ability to become a
member of a community of practice. Moreover, this particular article provided me with two other relational aspects to consider: power and discourse. Thus, the following questions occurred to me: What can we legitimately expect from mentoring? How can participants make their needs known in a way that is constructive to the development of a collaborative relationship? How does the discourse or dialogue affect the way in which a relationship is constructed? If we believe that relationships are dynamic, how do participants continue to negotiate their roles and responsibilities as the relationship develops? Is it possible for mentors and protégés with differing expectations and needs to construct a relationship that is effective for both? How does mentoring transform the participants? Is it possible that some people are incapable of mentoring, of being mentored? These questions influenced the ways in which I continued to think about mentors and mentees and their relationships and consequently, proved crucial in my construction and framing of the research questions that guided this study.

As I continued to read, I came across another study, this one by Sharon Feiman-Nemser (2001) entitled “Helping Novices Learn to Teach.” In this article the mentor teacher stated, “I want to be a co-thinker with them (the pre-service teachers) so that I can help them to see new perspectives, new ways to solve the problems they have” (p. 17). Feiman-Nemser (2001) labeled this mentor an “educative mentor” and described the work of the mentor as enabling a novice to learn in and from his or her practice by creating opportunities and conditions that supported meaningful teacher learning in the service of student learning. Additionally, Feiman-Nemser (2001) suggested that educative mentoring “promotes teacher development by cultivating a disposition of inquiry, focusing attention on student thinking and understanding, and fostering disciplined talk about problems of practice” (p.14). It was equally obvious, given the nature of the data excerpts, that the roles of mentor and mentee, as well as the activities in which they
engaged were influenced and enacted through the discourse(s) in which the mentor and mentee were situated. However, while the mentor teacher, who was the subject of this article, eloquently described his mentoring practices, what was missing was a description and interpretation of the interactions between mentor and mentee. I wanted to explore the relational process of how mentors and mentees co-thought or co-constructed knowledge and how their interactions transformed their identities and practices.

**Purpose of the Study**

Thus, the purpose of my study was to investigate how mentors and mentees utilized discourse in negotiating their relationship and what role this mentoring relationship played in their co-construction of knowledge about teaching and learning. In addition, I was interested in understanding how this “knowledge of practice” might transform their individual identities and practices (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

**Research Questions**

I framed my study within a constructionist perspective because the knowledge, which is produced within this framework, is a product of social processes, in which all understandings and statements about what is true, are situated within particular communities and are always subject to other interpretations (Gergen, 1994). In this way, constructionism was a means of democratizing the conversation about human practices and of submitting these practices to a continuous process of reflection (Gergen, 1994). Therefore, this perspective allowed me to open a space for reflection upon and reconsideration of the traditional meanings and understandings of mentoring and provided a foundation for considering new interpretations and constructing new, possibly more appropriate, situated meanings. Accordingly, the following questions guided my research:
- How do the relationships between mentors and mentees, engaged in studying their practices, develop and evolve?
- How do the relationships among mentors and mentees and the discourse(s) in which they are situated transform their identities and practices?

**Significance of the Study**

Learning to teach and the pre-service teaching internship seemed to be a kind of situated learning that was accomplished through a process of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In this kind of learning, individuals participated in a community of practitioners in which their mastery of knowledge and skills required novice teachers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of the education community. Within this perspective, the character of knowledge and learning was relational, meaning was negotiated so that the practitioners, the activities, and the social world in which they were situated continually shaped and defined each other (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Through participation, novice practitioners became members of a professional community, participating in and negotiating the meaning of the activities, the discourse, even the identities they assumed as members of that community. Thus, mentoring might play an important role in socializing and welcoming pre-service teachers into a community of educational practice.

Many scholars have attempted to define mentoring and to describe the roles of mentors and protégés (Kram, 1986, 1988; Levinson, 1978). Others have described the developmental nature of the relationship itself, enumerating stages through which the participants passed as the relationship proceeded over time (Kram, 1986, 1988). Moreover, there have been studies conducted that specifically described the mentoring relationship from the perspective of the pre-service teaching intern (Huffman & Leak, 1986), as well as the mentor teacher (Hayes, 1999). However, few studies explored the relationship as it was constructed and negotiated by the two participants. The goal of this study was to explore, and possibly to illuminate, how mentor and
mentee engaged in dialogue in order to make their expectations known to each other and then to collaboratively design, negotiate, and construct a mentoring relationship that transformed their practices and identities.

**Summary**

My personal experiences, as well as my reading of the mentoring research, provided the basis for my interest in pursuing this study. The phenomenon of mentoring, while based in Greek mythology, has been transferred to a number of settings, redefined by the contexts, and enacted in ways that were influenced by those who were involved in the relationship. It seemed that mentoring relationships were dynamic and that their shapes were constantly questioned; they were continually co-constructed, affecting the activities, identities, understandings, and practices of their participants (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Fletcher, 2000; Lucas, 2001; Zachary, 2002). Thus, this study explored not only the nature of the relationship that developed between mentors and mentees, but also the way in which the relationship was negotiated through discourse, as well as how this collaboration transformed the identities and practices of the individual participants.

The chapters that follow illustrate how I studied and understood the discourses that were employed by mentors and mentees to co-construct their mentoring relationships and their knowledge about teaching and learning, as well as to transform their identities and practices. In Chapter 2, I present a review of the literature pertinent to mentoring, specifically the mentoring of pre-service teaching interns, which includes the ways in which mentoring has been defined, the roles and responsibilities of the mentors and mentees, the developmental phases of the relationship, and the professional, as well as personal benefits for the participants. In Chapter 3, I describe the methodology, including the theoretical framework of social constructionism, my data collection and data analysis methods, as well as the trustworthiness, and the limitations of my methodology. In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I provide excerpts from my data that are relevant to
my research question and illustrate the activities and identities co-constructed by the participants within each of the mentoring groups. In Chapter 7, I present my conclusions and the implications of my findings for teacher education, as well as mentoring.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of the research related to mentoring generally, and more specifically, to the mentoring of pre-service teachers. This chapter includes relevant professional literature that traces the development of our understanding of mentoring, describes the phases of mentoring, and identifies the characteristics and roles of mentors and mentees. In addition, this chapter will review research that describes some of the benefits derived from effective mentoring, as well as new perspectives for mentoring in teacher education.

Definitions of Mentoring

One of the consequences of a concept’s applicability across contexts and disciplines was an increased susceptibility to variation in interpretation and meaning (Brookfield, 1995). Thus, the focus of many research studies has been to define this somewhat elusive term as it was experienced within specific contexts. Indeed, this quest began with the Greeks, and since that time, many authors and researchers have offered definitions of mentoring based on their understanding of the most compelling and salient features of mentoring. Among these scholars was the oft-cited Levinson (1978), who conducted studies of mentoring relationships among men that were situated in the work place. He concluded that the mentoring relationship was one of the most complex and developmentally important relationships his participants experienced as young men. He defined this relationship as one in which:

He [the mentor] may act as a teacher (emphasis added) to enhance the young man’s skills and intellectual development. Serving as a sponsor, he may use his influence to facilitate the young man’s entry and advancement. He may be a host and guide, welcoming the initiate into a new occupational and social world and acquainting him with its values, customs, resources, and cast of characters. Through his own virtues, achievements, and way of living the mentor may be an exemplar that the protégé can admire and seek to emulate. He may provide counsel and moral support in times of stress. (Levinson, 1978, p. 98)
Zey (1984) also studied mentoring from a corporate perspective, but unlike Levinson, who cast mentoring in terms of human growth and development, Zey believed that the roles of the mentor were tied to the politics and economics of business. He defined a mentor as “a person who oversees the career and development of another person, usually a junior, through teaching, counseling, providing psychological support, protecting, and at times promoting or sponsoring” (p. 7). Similarly, Parkay (1988) investigated the mentoring relationships that occurred in the business world, and his understanding of mentoring corroborated the definitions provided by other scholars. He characterized mentoring as “an intensive, one-to-one form of teaching in which the wise and experienced mentor inducts the aspiring protégé into a particular, usually professional way of life” (p. 196). In the same vein, Kram (1988), who also studied mentoring in the context of organizational life, found that these relationships supported the career development of the individuals involved and enabled them to move through adulthood and an organizational career. She found that these relationships encouraged individuals to address concerns about self, career, and family and provided opportunities for the participants to gain knowledge, skills, and competence and attend to personal, as well as professional dilemmas (Kram, 1988).

On the other hand, Daloz (1986) provided a perspective on mentoring that occurred in educational settings. He believed that we had much to learn from the mythology of mentoring and suggested that, “if mentors did not exist we would have to invent them” (Daloz, 1986, p. 16). Through investigating his own mentoring practices, he understood the mentor as someone who “engenders trust, provides encouragement, and offers a vision for the journey” (Daloz, 1986, p.30). For many mentees, the mentor served as a concrete manifestation of what they wished to become. Moreover, Johnson & Huwe (2003), who were interested in academic mentoring,
developed the following definition as they attempted to describe the contours and boundaries of mentoring in an educational setting:

Mentoring is a personal relationship in which a more experienced (usually older) faculty member acts as a guide, role model, teacher, and sponsor of a less experienced (usually younger) student. A mentor provides the protégé with knowledge, advice, challenge, counsel, and support in the protégé’s pursuit of becoming a full member of a particular profession (p. 6).

Meanwhile, Zachary (2000) maintained that learning was the primary purpose of any mentoring relationship. She suggested a learner-centered mentoring paradigm to replace the more traditional “authoritarian teacher-dependent student-suppliant paradigm” (Zachary, 2000, p. 3). In this kind of mentoring, “wisdom is not passed from an authoritarian teacher to a supplicant student, but is discovered in a learning relationship in which both stand to gain a greater understanding of the workplace and the world” (Aubrey & Cohen, 1995, p. 161). The mentor and mentee shared accountability and responsibility for achieving a mentee’s goals and the mentor nurtured and developed the mentee’s capacity for self-direction over the course of their relationship (Zachary, 2000).

Additionally, Achinstein and Athanases (2006), whose interests focused on the mentoring of pre-service and novice teachers, advocated educative mentoring, which provided more than emotional support, technical advice, and professional socialization. This kind of mentoring provided mentees with opportunities for learning and dialogue that challenged the mentees’ thinking and practice in order to inform, or even transform their practice (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Educative mentoring highlighted the critical nature of a mentor’s focus on her mentee’s cognitive development. Educative mentors supported novice and pre-service teachers as they developed an inquiry stance, critically questioned and re-framed their thinking and beliefs about students, teaching, and learning, and problematized their practices and assumptions (Achinstein & Barrett, 2004). Thus, educative mentoring supported and encouraged a “critical constructivist
perspective,” furthering the efforts of new teachers as they posed problems, uncovered assumptions and reconstructed their practice (Wang & Odell, 2002). Moreover, this kind of mentoring moved from knowledge transmission to knowledge transformation as mentors and mentees co-constructed knowledge of practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) and questioned their taken for granted assumptions of educational systems and classrooms in an attempt to foster reform (Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995).

Finally, an understanding of mentoring from a multicultural perspective had implications for any mentoring relationship, in which the diverse backgrounds, experiences, beliefs, and abilities of mentors and mentees added a layer of complexity to the already complicated world of human relationships. According to Gonzalez-Rodriguez (1995) multicultural mentoring was:

The mentoring of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, from traditionally underrepresented populations, and of many cognitive perspectives….It creates spaces for differences and celebrates democracy by facilitating inclusion and participation. It allows learning to take place while guarding that no one’s voice is silenced (p. 70).

Hence, mentoring no longer scaffolded a reproduction of the status quo. Instead, institutions and individuals explored, challenged, and critiqued their cultural assumptions and philosophical stances, and mentoring became a vehicle for pluralism rather than assimilation (Gonzalez-Rodriguez, 1995). Educative mentors supported pre-service teachers as they taught for social justice and equity (Wang & Odell, 2002) and these mentors, along with their mentees, became agents of change as they engaged in critical reflection about their classrooms and schools.

**The Mentoring Relationship**

These understandings and definitions of mentoring characterized it as a complex, diverse, and complicated phenomenon which encompassed a “myriad of social and psychological interactions based within diverse organizational and personal settings which are often subjected
to differing aims, objectives, and interpretations identified by the organization, the mentor, and even the mentee” (Roberts, 1999, p. 145). Moreover, Hardcastle (1988) understood the mentor-mentee relationship as mutual, comprehensive, informal, interactive, and enduring. Ultimately, it seemed the mentoring relationship was comprised of multiple and dynamic relational interactions that had definite, predictable patterns and cycles (Phillips-Jones, 2001).

According to Daloz (1986), mentoring was a passionate relationship comprised of developmental stages. He acknowledged that the relationship most often began in a complementary mode in which the mentor was clearly dominant, but that the relationship became more symmetrical as the participants came to know each other more intimately. Kram (1986) also described four phases through which a mentoring relationship progressed. The first stage was an initiation phase in which mentor and mentee met and set expectations. This was followed by a cultivation phase in which the opportunities for meaningful interactions increased and the emotional bonds between participants were strengthened. The third stage was a separation phase in which the nature of the relationship was altered by structural changes in the organizational context and/or by psychological changes within one or both of the participants. Finally, a redefinition occurred in which the relationship either developed into a completely new form or was brought to a close.

Zachary (2000) also identified four predictable phases of mentoring relationships: (a) preparing, (b) negotiating, (c) enabling, and (d) coming to closure. These phases formed a developmental sequence, which varied in length from one relationship to another. During the preparing stage, both mentor and mentee prepared individually and in partnership by assessing their motivations and readiness for mentoring. In this initial stage, expectations and roles were clarified. The negotiating phase was the business phase of the relationship in which the
mentoring partners defined their learning goals, as well as the content and process of their relationship. The next phase, the enabling phase was the implementation phase of the mentoring relationship. This was the time in which the journey toward the mentee’s goals was accomplished. Finally, the relationship was brought to closure, which involved evaluating, acknowledging, and celebrating the achievements of the relationship.

Furthermore, Phillips-Jones (2001) also identified five developmental stages in mentoring relationships, which corresponded to the developmental models of other scholars and included: (a) mutual admiration, (b) development, (c) disillusionment/realistic appraisal, (d) parting, and (e) transformation. Thus, the metaphorical association of mentoring with a journey, or odyssey, seemed an apt one, as this relationship began with a voyage of discovery that most often ended with the mentees’ induction into a community of practice.

**Mentor Characteristics and Roles**

Phillips-Jones (2001) characterized mentors as “experienced people who go out of their way to help a mentee clarify her vision and then help her build the skills to reach them” (p. 21), who took on the roles of coach, learning broker, accountability partner, cheerleader, and sounding board. Additionally, mentors have been described as guides, facilitators, gurus, friends, and mothers who provide support and challenge, explain and protect (Daloz, 1986). They were often expected, indeed, required to assume multiple roles that included coaching, exposure, challenging work, role modeling, and the encouragement of reflection (Anderson & Shannon, 1988; Hawkey, 1997; Koerner, Rust, & Baumgartner, 2002; Kram, 1986, 1988; Levinson, 1978, 1996; Wildman, Magliaro, Niles, & Niles, 1992), although some research has suggested that mentees should seek and develop relationships with multiple mentors in order to meet their specific needs and expectations (Burlew, 1991; Phillips-Jones, 2001).
Moreover mentors were individuals who provided mentees with knowledge, advice, challenge, and support (Johnson & Huwe, 2003). Successful mentors assumed specific roles or provided specific functions at various junctures in the mentor relationship. Kram (1986, 1988) summarized these functions that enhanced a mentee’s personal growth and professional development into two broad categories: career functions and psychosocial functions. Career functions were those aspects of the relationship that supported a mentee in “learning the ropes” and becoming a full-fledged member of the professional community. They included sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments and these functions were possible because of the mentors’ experience and influence in the organizational context. On the other hand, psychosocial functions were those aspects of the relationship that enhanced a mentee’s sense of competence and clarity with regard to her professional identity. These functions included role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling, and friendship or mutuality. The psychosocial functions were possible because of an interpersonal relationship between mentor and mentee that fostered mutual trust and intimacy. Together the career and psychosocial functions enabled a mentee to address the challenges of becoming a full-fledged member of a professional community (Kram, 1988).

Daloz (1999) characterized an effective mentor as one who was able to provide support, challenge, and vision. He described support as “the activity of holding, providing a safe place where the student can contact her need for fundamental trust” (p. 209); whereas, challenge was sometimes referred to as a creative tension that sought resolution. Thus, feedback was often an effective tool for assisting students as they encountered challenges (Zachary, 2002). Additionally, challenge provided the means for mentors and mentees to engage in discussion, set up dichotomies, construct hypotheses, and set high standards (Daloz, 1986). Finally, mentors
were expected to provide vision in a variety of ways, such as role modeling specific behaviors and reminding the mentee of the journey and growth ahead (Zachary, 2002).

Similarly, Hardcastle (1988) identified mentors as people with integrity, high expectations, a sense of humor, and “the ability to act as a catalyst” in the lives of the mentees (p. 206). “They offered [the mentees] unique visions of themselves, motivated them to grow professionally, showed them new ways to be, and were spiritual supports” (Hardcastle, 1988, p. 207). Mentors have also been described as being guides to practical knowledge, sources of moral support, and creators of a context in which mentees could “show their stuff” (Awaya, McEwan, Heyler, Linsky, Lum, & Wakukawa, 2003).

Other scholars such as Burlew (1991), Kram (1988), and Merriam (1983) have emphasized the importance of trust within the mentoring relationship and the supportive role of the mentor. A mentor not only taught the mentee what it meant to be a professional (Bova & Phillips, 1984), but also served as a *role model, teacher, sponsor, encourager, counselor, and friend*, with the ultimate goal of promoting the mentee’s personal, as well as professional development (Brown, Davis, & McClendon, 1999). Thus, experienced mentors assisted mentees as they were socialized into a community’s practices and made those practices part of their subjective reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Parkay (1988) concurred, stating that “the protégé learns from the mentor not only the objective, manifest content of professional knowledge and skills, but also a subjective, nondiscursive appreciation for how and when to employ these learnings in the arena of professional practice” (p. 196). In other words, the mentor helped socialize the mentee into a profession over the course of their mentoring relationship and during that time, the mentee selectively chose those attributes of the mentor or mentoring relationship that would contribute to his or her unique identity.
Several authors have chosen to discuss the “spiritual” roles a mentor might fulfill within a mentoring relationship. Johnson and Huwe (2003) suggested that excellent mentors bless their protégés by calling forth their life and career aspirations or what Levinson (1978) called “the dream.” In other words, “the mentor nourishes a dream in the student and sets the students into creative flight, tempering idealism with the wisdom of experience” (Davis, Little, & Thornton, 1997, p. 61). Daloz (1986) agreed, believing that the first business of a mentor was to listen to the dreams of the protégé. He wrote that mentors were spiritual guides

[who] lead us along the journey of our lives. We trust them because they have been there before. They embody our hopes, cast light on the way ahead, interpret arcane signs, warn us of lurking dangers, and point out unexpected delights along the way (p. 17).

In this way, the protégé experienced a transformation and became an equal colleague and perhaps, trusted peer of the guide who was once his or her mentor. Yamamoto (1988) believed that mentors were transformers and that mentoring involved an experience of transcendence for the mentor and one of transformation for the mentee. Mentors must (a) see a person yet to be born in their mentee, (b) anticipate and guide the mentee to see what is yet to be seen, and (c) see the world they themselves can only dream of through their faith and trust in the guide (Yamamoto, 1988). Thus, “a mentor helps the person under his or her care to see beyond oneself and become more fully human” (Yamamoto, 1988, p. 188). Additionally, according to Carger (1996), true mentoring was more than imparting information or training skills.

It is a human process, in which one sees, reflected in a mentor, aspects of one’s self, facets not clearly in focus, potentials not fully realized. True mentoring is an intimate process because it involves more than just modeling; it requires self-discovery as well. There is a bond that forms when “kindred spirits” encounter one another and see beyond the surface to the substance” (Carger, 1996, p. 27).

Ultimately, mentoring was concerned with touching the life of another, sharing core values, and encouraging one another; thus, what transpired within a mentoring relationship affected the generations that followed (Carger, 1996). Moreover, mentoring could be viewed
as gift giving in which the mentor was a gift giver (Gehrke, 1988). Over time, the mentor created a gift of wisdom, a new way of seeing things that permeated all the mentor did with the mentee. The mentee underwent a transformation, a realization of the possibilities for his or her life, as a result of receiving the mentor’s gift. Out of gratitude, the mentee then made a commitment to further work, desiring to meet the mentor’s expectations and to be worthy of the mentor’s belief in him or her. Finally there was a passing of the gift to a new recipient when the mentee became a mentor (Gehrke, 1998).

Lipschutz (1993) also viewed mentoring as a process that extended beyond the mere transmission of subject matter. For him, mentoring was a valuing, transforming relationship in which the mentor was actively invested in and aware of the responsibilities he or she assumed for shaping a mentee’s knowledge, perceptions, and behaviors. Along those lines, Peddy (2001) described a mentor as one who helped a mentee to develop the qualities she would need to attain her goals without a mentor. These qualities included wisdom, judgment, resilience and independence (Peddy, 2001). Developing wisdom meant learning the spoken and unspoken rules of the profession so that the mentee could become an integral part of the community. Judgment was characterized by understanding the consequences of one’s decisions and actions, as well as the long-term impact of one’s choices. Resilience involved learning from one’s mistakes and moving forward with confidence, strength, and determination. Finally, independence occurred when the mentee was ready to accept increasing challenges and reasonable risks (Peddy, 2001). The mentee became a colleague and a bona fide member of the professional community.

Healy and Welchert (1990) held a similar view of mentoring and defined it as “a reciprocal association between superior and subordinate that effects their mutual
transformations” (p. 19). Oftentimes, mentees did more than become proficient in a domain or job skills. They also acquired risk-taking and political skills (Bova & Phillips, 1984). Hardcastle (1988) found that mentors gave mentee unique insights into their potential while Zuckerman (1977) described how mentors often influenced the modes of thoughts and identities of their mentees. Thus, the imbalance between superior and subordinate shifted to an affiliation between equals (Healy & Welchert, 1990). Additionally, in the act of guiding and promoting others, mentors affected their own transformations (Healy & Welchert, 1990). In addition, Blackburn, Chapman, and Cameron (1981) observed that academic mentors derived gratification from collaborating with mentees to produce new knowledge, and Kram (1986) reported that successful mentoring provided the mentor with intrinsic satisfaction, added responsibilities, and leadership recognition. Thus, the mentoring relationship was often created and re-created, thereby providing opportunities for collaboration between former mentors and their mentees, who were now colleagues and partners.

**Mentee Characteristics and Roles**

The mentoring relationship was not the sole responsibility of the mentor; indeed, the mentee had equally important roles to play. Johnson and Huwe (2003) suggested that mentees should be emotionally stable, coachable, committed, and similar to their mentor with regard to interests and philosophy. Additionally, Portner (2002) described mentees as those who were willing and able to participate, take responsibility, observe, ask, take informed risks, reflect, and give back. More specifically, mentors of student teachers expected their mentees to be willing to listen and learn as a means of extending their professional development, to accept advice and act upon it, and to develop positive relationships with their students (Hayes, 1999).
Benefits of Mentoring

The benefits of mentoring often seemed more obvious for the mentee. According to Phillips-Jones (2001), mentees benefited from their mentor’s encouragement as they gained new or improved skills and knowledge, as well as being provided with an exemplary role model and opportunities to perform. The mentor reaped rewards from her relationship with a mentee through getting more work done, being rewarded for developing talent, achieving vicariously through his/her mentee, investing in the mentee’s future, repaying past debts, and enjoying a positive relationship (Phillips-Jones, 2001).

Additionally, “mentors feel a tremendous pleasure that one could have shared so much in common with someone else and that one could be so privileged to think one is actually contributing to the real intellectual and full awakening of another human being” (Daloz, 1986, p. 182). They also enjoyed the benefits of rich learning opportunities and their own growth was nurtured through their interactions with their mentees and their reflections upon the experience (Zachary, 2000). Ideally, the mentoring relationship had a profound, deep, and enduring impact on both participants.

Mentoring Pre-Service Teachers

Traditionally, mentoring had been characterized as the transmission of knowledge and skills. As previously discussed, Kram (1988), who studied and described mentoring in a business context, suggested that mentoring was a developmental relationship whose goal was to enhance the mentor’s and mentee’s career advancement, sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in a professional role. Thus, mentors taught, coached, counseled, and challenged their mentees. However, the activities and identities of the mentoring relationships she described demonstrated a propensity to reproduce, rather than to transform the organizational context.
This business model of mentoring was appropriated to educational contexts and classrooms where it has been reconceptualized and enacted in various ways. In fact, since the late 1980’s, teacher education reformers have promoted teacher mentoring as an important aspect in novices learning to teach (Holmes Group, 1986, 1990), and most teachers, when they recalled their professional education, named their field experience or student teaching as the most important element in their development as teachers (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990). This experience of student teaching most often involved pre-service teachers assuming the responsibilities of teaching while establishing and developing relationships with one or more mentor teachers and a university supervisor. They were surrounded not only by other adults who shared in certain power relationships, but also by students with whom they shared a different sort of power relationship (Jackson, 2001). Thus, student teaching was a complicated emotional and interpersonal experience that was often critically important in the making of a teacher (Koerner, Rust, & Baumgartner, 2002).

The cooperating or mentor teacher was a classroom teacher who had been asked by a teacher education program to work with pre-service teachers in their classrooms. According to Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1987) “cooperating teachers set the affective and intellectual tone and also shape what student teachers learn by the way they conceive and carry out their roles as teacher educators” (p. 256). Some cooperating teachers allowed pre-service teachers into their classrooms as participant observers, while others viewed pre-service teachers as colleagues in their own professional development (Koerner, Rust, & Baumgartner, 2002). Furthermore, these mentor teachers were expected to possess and model instructional and management strengths and to be active listeners, who were sensitive to the views of others and who were able and willing to articulate the intricacies of their craft.
and the subtleties of the school culture (Enz & Cook, 1992). In addition to these socializing functions, mentor teachers also served as educational colleagues who supported pre-service teachers as they reflected on their experiences and gained insights that promoted the development of their teaching skills. Finally, those mentor teachers who acted as agents of change sought to break down barriers that prevented teachers from sharing, inquiring, and collaborating about their teaching (Enz & Cook, 1992). In these ways, the mentor teacher was still cast in the roles of expert and director, albeit a caring and nurturing one.

Pre-service teachers had rather broad conceptions of the roles of their mentor teachers and often relied on them to be models of good pedagogy and classroom management (Copas, 1984). Additionally they expected their mentor teachers to provide them with the basic information needed to adjust to their placement, to help them acquire materials and resources, to involve them in planning and evaluation, to hold conferences with them regularly, to observe them teach, and to provide feedback on their teaching (Copas, 1984; Grimmett & Ratzlaff, 1986). Moreover, the relationship that developed between mentor and pre-service teacher often had a significant effect on the mentor teacher’s own work and career (Ganser, 1996).

Furthermore, a study by Wildman, Magliaro, Niles and Niles (1992) found that pre-service teachers expected their mentors to encourage reflection, direction and support their actions and plans, to provide direct assistance in the development of a product, policy, or process, as well as to provide information or products for the pre-service teachers’ possible use or modification. In other words, mentor teachers were expected to encourage and support their mentees. This research also found that the personality characteristics of the mentor affected the nature and effectiveness of the relationship. The following mentor
characteristics were deemed important by pre-service teachers: (a) willingness to mentor, (b) sensitivity, (c) helpful, but not authoritarian, (d) diplomatic, (e) able to anticipate problems, (f) enthusiastic about teaching, and (g) good role model at all times (Wildman et. al, 1992). Moreover, the prime trait that supported and maintained the relationship was the willingness of the mentor teacher to mentor. However, the personality characteristics of the pre-service teacher sometimes undermined the mentoring relationship. The traits mentioned most often by mentors as having a negative impact on the mentoring relationship included the pre-service teachers’ inability to admit problems and ask for and accept help, their unwillingness to reciprocate in the sharing process, as well as their lack of professionalism with regard to attendance, punctuality, and dress code (Wildman et. al., 1992).

Hence, mentors and mentees often entered a mentoring relationship with specific expectations of each other. Perhaps none were more important than the pre-service teachers’ expectations for encouragement and counsel with regard to their instructional decision-making and classroom management. These aspects of learning to teach and their implications for mentoring are discussed in the next two sections.

Classroom Instruction and Mentoring

Providing pre-service teachers with opportunities to become involved in structuring classroom environments for learning and building a series of experiences for students who have a wide range of abilities, interests, and learning needs was an important aspect of mentoring novice teachers in the complexities of classroom instruction (Gunter, Estes, & Schwab, 1999). In these ways, mentors supported pre-service teachers as they began the process of constructing their identities as teachers, identities that would remain flexible and sensitive to social contexts (Danielewicz, 2001). Consequently, mentoring novice teachers as
they planned and provided instruction was an important aspect of their learning to teach in real world classrooms.

Current conceptions of teaching have cast teachers as instructional decision-makers who “set goals and developed a rationale for instruction, defined objectives, constructed a means of evaluation, created units of study that will encompass the content, and designed lessons for instruction using a variety of instructional models” (Gunter et. al., 1999, p. 1). In this way, teachers were responsible for assessing their students’ needs, abilities, and interests and providing instruction that was differentiated and culturally relevant. They also needed to be aware of the local, state, and federal mandates that influenced what their students needed to accomplish and were expected to adapt the curriculum and their individual lessons accordingly. It was through engaging in all of these instructional activities and soliciting feedback from their mentors that pre-service teachers constructed identities as educators and reflective practitioners, who created environments in which their students developed understandings of content, as well as the habits that would promote their engagement in life-long learning.

**Classroom Management and Mentoring**

Pre-service teachers also needed to develop their skills, strategies, and dispositions as classroom managers who were concerned with creating and maintaining environments that promoted and supported students’ learning. According to Evertson and Emmer (1981), effective classroom management consisted of teacher behaviors that produced high levels of student involvement in classroom activities, minimal amounts of student behavior that interfered with the teacher’s or other students’ work, and efficient use of instructional time.

Classroom management also included the related functions of student socialization and disciplinary interventions. Student socialization included “articulation of ideals;
communication of expectations; and modeling, teaching, and reinforcing of desirable personal attributes and behavior; as well as counseling, behavior modification, and other remediation work with students who show poor academic or social adjustment” (Brophy, 2006, p. 17); while disciplinary interventions “are actions taken to elicit or compel improved behavior from students who fail to conform to expectations, especially when their misbehavior is salient or sustained enough to disrupt the classroom management system” (Brophy, 2006, p. 17).

Hence, teachers who were effective classroom managers planned rules and procedures carefully, systematically taught these to their students, organized instruction to maximize student task engagement and success, and communicated directions and expectations to students. It was also critical for teachers to consider the developmental progress of their students, as understanding child and adolescent growth and development, as well as issues of students’ cognitive and cultural diversity was essential for laying the foundation of an effective and positive learning environment (Brophy, 2006). Thus, mentees expected their mentors to model effective management strategies and to engage them in dialogue about the consequences of their management decisions.

**Ethical Considerations and Mentoring**

Mentoring also involved some ethical considerations. Research by Silva and Tom (2001) suggested that mentoring had a moral basis, which consisted of three imperatives: (a) embracing a moral stance, (b) creating a moral context, and (c) engaging in a pedagogy of the moral. These imperatives recognized the importance of mentors creating spaces and caring contexts and engaging in moral pedagogies that moved pre-service teachers beyond competency (Lemma, 1993) and encouraged reflection and critical thought (Zeichner & Liston, 1996). The first imperative, embracing a moral stance was central to a mentor’s
acceptance of a mentoring role. According to Silva and Tom (2001), becoming a mentor meant assuming responsibility for a pre-service teacher’s growth, which was either an end in itself or a means for furthering their students’ growth.

In addition, three motives were ascribed to mentors who assumed responsibility for a pre-service teacher’s growth (Silva & Tom, 2001). First, many mentors engaged in mentoring because they believed that having an extra “teacher” in the classroom enabled them to more effectively meet the needs of all the students in their classrooms. Second, some mentors believed that they had a professional responsibility to educate tomorrow’s teachers so that these new teachers would be able to meet the demands and needs of tomorrow’s students and schools. Finally, many mentors felt obligated to engage in their own professional development as teachers and teacher educators. These motives for mentoring occurred singularly or in combination and were dependent on the individual mentor’s stance toward and philosophy of mentoring.

The creation of a moral context provided a caring and supportive place in which pre-service teachers could develop their skills and identities. Such contexts were accomplished through conversations between mentors and mentees which encouraged pre-service teachers to take risks and to seize opportunities for developing their own ideas (Silva & Tom, 2001). Additionally, the imperative of engaging in a moral pedagogy suggested that mentors went beyond the transmission of knowledge and skills to intentionally supporting pre-service teachers as they constructed their own pedagogical thinking through reflection and inquiry (Silva & Tom, 2001). Moral mentors did not advocate a particular set of values or promote a specific view of good teaching. Instead, these mentors acknowledged the individuality of the pre-service teacher and fostered his or her independence. Thus, these moral imperatives
required mentors to act in ways that promoted and supported the pre-service teachers’ growth and development (Silva & Tom, 2001).

New Directions

In their review of the literature, Wang and Odell (2002) found that learning to teach in a manner consistent with standards-based reform was (a) a process of active construction and reconstruction of beliefs, pedagogical content knowledge, and pedagogical learner knowledge, and of the relationships among them, (b) situated in the practice of teaching in which the relationship between theory and practice could be explored and assumptions about teaching and learning examined, (c) an ongoing process that involved individual reflection on and collaborative inquiry about teaching practice, and (d) a process that required mentoring and coaching, resources and time. Mentors of pre-service teachers must be committed to teaching reform and to supporting pre-service teachers as they continually questioned their practices, beliefs, and the context in which they were situated.

Recently, policymakers have attempted to define teacher mentoring policies and guidelines by aligning them with standards for professional teaching (Odell & Huling, 2000). They attempted to define what mentors must know in order to support novices and pre-service teachers in learning to teach in a way that educational reformers expected. First, mentors must be able to work with pre-service teachers as agents of change (Cochran-Smith, 1991). They needed to know how to support pre-service teachers in problematizing their teaching practice, in uncovering the assumptions that supported their practices, and in constructing and reconstructing curriculum and practice in their unique contexts (Wang & Odell, 2002). Second, mentors needed to develop a deeper understanding of subject matter, as well as how to engage pre-service teachers in developing similar understandings of subjects, students, and their relationships (Wang & Odell, 2002). Third, mentors were
expected to have a deep understanding of the relationship between knowledge and teaching practice and to support pre-service teachers in developing these understandings (Carter, 1988). Finally, mentors were expected to inquire systematically about and critically reflect on pre-service teachers’ practices and engage these novices in learning to teach through inquiry and reflection (Wang & Odell, 2002). They were expected to guide pre-service teachers’ discovery of learning to teach, rather than simply providing a repertoire of teaching strategies and techniques. Thus, mentors, alongside their mentees, were co-explorers of teaching practices, rather than evaluators of the positive and negative aspects of pre-service teachers’ observed teaching behaviors (Wang & Odell, 2002).

Moreover, Achinstein and Athanases (2006) have suggested that “mentors are not born, but developed through conscious, deliberate, ongoing learning” (p. 3), and this process of becoming a mentor involved reflecting on one’s own practice, inquiring into teaching and learning, and engaging in communities of practice with other mentors (Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, 2007). These mentors were problem posers who examined practice and sought to identify avenues for ongoing learning and growth. Furthermore, they worked with novices and pre-service teachers to co-construct knowledge and learn from their mentoring relationships (Achinstein & Villar, 2004). Thus, this new conception of mentoring cast mentors as lifelong learners and, “situated mentoring in complex contexts where issues collide and compete” (Achinstein & Villar, 2004, p. 8). Mentors were viewed as “cothinkers” who engaged in productive consultations with their mentees (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 22). In this way the act of mentoring moved from knowledge transmission to knowledge transformation as mentors collaborated with novice and pre-service teachers to challenge classrooms and schools in order to foster reform (Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995).
Summary

Mentoring has crossed disciplines and undergone a number of instantiations. Currently, mentoring seems to be understood as co-constructed by the mentor and mentee within the confines of a situated relationship that must be continually negotiated. The work of mentoring no longer signifies the passing of knowledge to a less experienced mentee. Instead, mentor and mentee work together to problematize, inquire into, and understand, not only their own individual and situated practices, but also the larger institutional and political arenas in which education is enacted. Peddy (2001) suggests that mentoring is often more art than science. Sometimes the mentor must be a storyteller; at other times, an empathetic listener. Thus, “the art [of mentoring] is not merely knowing what to say, but how to say it and when (Peddy, 2001, p. 25). Because time, experience together, and the perceptions and interpretations of each participant continually define the roles of the mentor and mentee, the mentoring relationships itself is a dynamic and interpersonal process (Lucas, 2001). Through the relational process:

The partners come to recognize their similarities and differences, are challenged to reassess their commitment to the relationship, respond to the reactions of their partners, cope with their own feelings of connection or discomfort, are affected by the limits of the social and physical context of their meeting place, explore the effect of engaging in different types of activities, and grow in their affection or lack of affection for one another over time (Lucas, 2001, p. 46).

Given all the research devoted to understanding the relationship between mentor and mentee, it seems that mentoring has most often been described and interpreted based on the experiences or the memories of one of the participants or conceptualized by scholars who have reviewed the literature. There are studies that describe the roles that mentors and mentees assume, as well as the developmental stages of the relationship itself. Moreover, the mentoring relationship has been characterized as being beneficial to both participants with
the mentee gaining the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for membership within a profession, and the mentor feeling valued for promoting the professional development of a future colleague. The relationship even has the potential of becoming a vehicle for change as mentoring moves from knowledge transmission to knowledge transformation (Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995). However, what seems to be missing is a window through which to view the lived experiences of classroom teachers (mentors) and pre-service teachers (mentees), as they engage in the dialogue and activities that may influence their understanding and practice of teaching. How is the relationship enacted and negotiated? In what ways does mentoring enable and encourage transformation? Consequently, this study will investigate how mentors and mentees utilize discourse in negotiating their relationship, what role this mentoring relationship plays in their co-construction of knowledge about teaching and learning, and how this “knowledge of practice” might transform their individual identities and practices (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001)
Qualitative inquiry was a natural choice for my study because it is concerned with understanding and interpreting what other human beings are doing and saying (Schwandt, 2000). Thus, this type of inquiry provided me with methods that enabled me to focus specifically on what in-service teachers and pre-service teaching interns were doing and saying as they constructed and negotiated their mentoring relationships. Additionally, a qualitative design was suited to studying the mentoring relationships as they were constructed and enacted within sociopolitical systems and cultures. It also accommodated a description of the role of the researcher, as well as a description of my own biases and ideological preferences. Finally, because qualitative design requires an ongoing analysis of the data, I was able to construct a more authentic and compelling narrative of what occurred in the study and within the stories of the participants (Janesick, 2000).

Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to describe the qualitative methodology that I employed as I conducted this study. This includes the purpose of my study and my research questions, the theoretical framework in which I situated my study, a description of the participants and context, as well as the data collection and data analysis methods that I utilized. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the trustworthiness of my research and the possible limitations of my research design and methods.

**Purpose of the Study**

My personal interests, as well as my beliefs that mentoring and the identities of mentor and mentee are socially constructed through discourse, led me to design a study that investigated how mentors and mentees utilized discourse in negotiating their relationship and what role the mentoring relationship played in their co-construction of knowledge about teaching and learning,
as well as the transformation of their individual identities and practices. The co-construction and negotiation of this relationship was studied through data collected as the mentors and mentees engaged in interactions (teaching, reflecting, and inquiry), which provided snapshots of their situated relationship at particular moments in time. The participants also reflected upon the development and evolution of the relationship, as well as how the relationship served as a catalyst in the transformation of their identities and practices. The following questions guided my research:

- How do the relationships between mentors and mentees, engaged in studying their practices, develop and evolve?
- How do the relationships among mentors and mentees and the discourse(s) in which they are situated inform/transform their identities and practices?

**Theoretical Perspective: Social Constructionism**

Because I was interested in studying the relationship between mentors and mentees and investigating the development and evolution of their relational responsibilities, as well as how the participants perceived and understood their mentoring relationships (Bodgan & Biklen, 1998), I framed my study within the epistemology of constructionism and the theoretical perspective of social constructionism. A constructionist epistemology rejects the idea that there is an objective truth waiting to be discovered. Truth, or meaning, is a result of our engagement with the world (Crotty, 1998). In fact, different people might construct different meanings regarding the same phenomenon; thus, subject and object emerge as partners in the generation of meaning, albeit, influenced by the culture in which they are situated (Crotty, 1998; Gergen, 1999, 2001). In this way, “the mind, which can only see what its existing cognitive structures allow, creates rather than reflects, and the nature of this creation cannot be separated from the surrounding social world” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 42). In addition, this meaning making is always an ongoing accomplishment (Crotty, 1998); our co-constructions of knowledge and relationships
are constantly in flux, negotiated through the diverse perspectives of those participating in the production of knowledge. Thus, any meaning we make is always partial and incomplete.

As humans, we have always attempted to make sense of the reality in which we are situated. Consequently, constructionism recognizes the unique experience of each one of us and suggests that each individual’s understanding is valid and worthy of respect in the construction of meaning. According to Gergen (1999), this stance has led to the characterization of constructionist views as relativist. “As it is said, constructionism has no values; it seems to tolerate everything and stand for nothing. Worse, it discourages commitment to any set of values or ideals; all are ‘just constructions’” (Gergen, 1999, p. 230). However, Gergen (1999) maintains that constructionism does not espouse relativism. Instead, he maintains that there is no position of relativism that is a transcendent viewpoint from which one could make decisions about the merits of various positions. Indeed, every viewpoint espouses some political and moral values. Constructionism simply invites us to engage in a process of constructing and possibly re-constructing our understandings and positions. As Gergen (1999) suggests:

All evaluations, deliberations, or comparisons of competing positions will necessarily carry with them presumptions of the real and the good. To be intelligible at all is to render support to some view of the world and what constitutes proper action within it. Constructionism may invite a posture of continuing reflection, but each moment of reflection will inevitably be value-saturated. (p. 231).

Therefore, because constructionism does not value one ideal over another, it invites deliberation about these positions or perspectives and provides us with the opportunity to create new, possibly more appropriate constructions. Because constructionism does not privilege one tradition or position over another, and because we all participate in the cultural generation of meaning, constructionism provides all of us with an opportunity to engage in a dialogue that “challenges the ‘truth’ and ‘the facts’ of the dominant order” (Gergen, 1999, p. 231) and to
participate in the construction of our social worlds. All interpretations and understandings are subject to question as we create situated knowledge and ways of being in the world.

Furthermore, defining or arguing for an objective “truth” is never the goal of constructionism.

Constructionism does not ask to be accepted because it is true. Rather, constructionism invites collaboration among people in giving sense and significance to the world and pressing on toward more inclusive futures together. Alternate “truths” are not thereby abolished; they are invited as participants in the dialogue (Gergen, 1999, p. 228).

This collaboration with others enables us to make sense of our realities, the intersubjective worlds we share with others, and to construct meanings for our realities that are continually understood and negotiated individually, or through interactions and communications with others (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). However, our knowledge of what others are doing and saying is always contingent upon some background knowledge or context that was defined through shared meanings, beliefs, values, and practices (Schwandt, 2000). In this way, although the others in this common reality might not share our perspectives, there is often an ongoing correspondence between the meanings of the self and the meanings of the other; therefore, one’s self and the other are able to share a “common” sense about their reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). This “common” understanding is necessary, even paramount, to the success of our interactions with others, for without it, communication and relationships would be difficult, if not impossible.

Moreover, social constructivism emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge based on that understanding. Therefore, moving from one culture to another, or from one discourse community to another, often provides strikingly diverse interpretations and understandings about reality and phenomena. “What constructionism drives home is that there is no true or valid interpretation; there are useful interpretations and...there are liberating forms of interpretation” (Crotty, 1998,
Accordingly, constructionist research requires that the researcher not remain blinded by the conventional meanings she has been taught to associate with the object; instead, the constructionist researcher is “invited to approach the object in a radical spirit of openness to [the phenomenon’s potential] for new or richer meaning. It is an invitation to reinterpretation” (Crotty, 1998, p. 51). Gergen (2001) concurs and characterizes a constructionist intelligibility as one that opens a space for reflection, reconsideration and possible reconstruction as we explore the possibilities of new meanings and new futures. Thus, constructionism is a means of broadening and democratizing the conversation about human practices and of submitting these practices to a continuous process of reflection (Gergen, 1994). In this spirit, my role as a constructionist researcher compelled me to engage in an ongoing analysis of my data and to search for possible interpretations, always recognizing that my understandings must be subjected to continued scrutiny and challenge.

Additionally, constructionism focuses on the collective generation and transmission of meaning (Crotty, 1998). In the same vein, Gergen (1994) argued that knowledge is the product of social processes and that all statements of the true, the rational, and the good are products of particular communities of interpreters. Thus, terms and actions acquire their meaning within the particular traditions of a relationship or community (Gergen, 2001).

Furthermore, the taken for granted world of today is also influenced by the meaning making of previous generations (Gergen, 1999). Culture directs our behavior and organizes our experience and is best seen as the source, rather than the result, of human thought and behavior (Crotty, 1998). We are born into a world of meaning, inheriting a cultural lens through which we view reality. Our culture brings certain phenomena into view for us and endows them with meaning, while, at the same time, predisposes us to ignore other phenomena or meanings.
Phenomena come to be reified, and we believe that the sense we make of things is the way things actually are.

In addition, layers of interpretation are placed on top of one another and our sedimented cultural meanings serve as a barrier between the culture in which we reside and the cultures of others (Crotty, 1998). Gergen (1999) suggested that our explorations of other understandings draw us into questions of similarity and difference that might aid us as we evaluate our inherited interpretations and consider their sustainability. We might come to realize that every evaluation of the other is not so much a reflection of the real; instead it is a reflection of our own modes of being and how it is that we constructed the world and with what end in mind (Gergen, 1999). A social constructionist sensibility recognizes that “the way things are” is simply just “the sense we make of them” (Crotty, 1998). The researcher views her understandings as “historically and culturally effected interpretations rather than eternal truths of some kind” (Crotty, 1998, p. 64). Different cultures in different eras have given birth to very divergent interpretations of the same phenomenon. The social constructionist researcher understands that when she describes or interprets something, she is “reporting how something is seen and reacted to, and thereby meaningfully constructed, within a given community” (Crotty, 1998, p. 64).

In this way, social constructionism served as a meaningful framework for understanding and interpreting mentoring. The mentoring relationships in this study were fluid, ongoing, and situated constructions that were shaped by the interactions between a mentor and his/her mentee(s) and their individual relational histories provided the lenses through which they understood and interpreted their relationship. The individual understandings that mentors and mentees brought with them to a new mentoring relationship were influenced by the cultures or
discourse communities in which they were situated and the sociohistorical interpretations that their particular communities acknowledged and valued.

However, in order for a mentoring relationship to be effective, mentor and mentees, despite their differing perspectives, created some shared understandings of mentoring that provided a foundation for their work together. In this way, mentoring was always understood within the boundaries of a particular mentoring relationship, although these situated understandings might have transferability to other relationships and contexts. Consequently, mentoring has been transformed in the process of being transferred from one profession or community to another, and while the sense that educators make of mentoring was influenced by the ways in which they understood their community of practice, as well as their motivation and rationale for engaging in mentoring relationships, the dialogue about the meaning and value of mentoring continues to refine and modify our understanding of this phenomenon.

**Constructionism and Relationships**

A constructionist perspective, specifically social constructivism, was well suited to a study of the relationships that developed and evolved between mentors and mentees because the process by which their relationships developed, as well as the learning that was constructed by the participants was often idiosyncratic and unpredictable. Due to this variability in the nature of individual relationships, McNamee and Gergen (1999) suggest that we develop “an appreciation of the contingent, indeterminate, historical, and relational aspects of our modes of constructing reality” (p. 20) when we reflect upon how our relationships are constructed and maintained, as well as the ways in which the relationships and the participants are transformed. Thus, each mentoring relationship created a unique construction of reality that was shaped by the relational histories and distinctive perspectives of the participants.
Constructionists also suggest that individuals be viewed as the manifestations of multiple relationships and that their relationships are enacted as particularized constructions of the world that are influenced by the participants’ unique relational histories. Therefore, any single description or narration of mentoring can no longer be considered the only representation of reality (Crotty, 1998). At different times, in different places, and between different people there have been very divergent interpretations of the same phenomena. Indeed, “different people may well inhabit different worlds and these worlds constitute for them diverse ways of knowing” (Crotty, 1998). The mentoring relationship itself, as well as our understanding of it, is locally and socially constructed in our relationships and “our interpretations [of mentoring] are not constructed in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language, and so forth” (Schwandt, 2000 p.197). In this way, our cultural understandings influence the development of the mentoring relationship, but, at the same time, the divergent perceptions and interpretations of mentor and mentee actively influence the mentoring as it occurs, redefining the identities of the mentor and mentee and the activities of mentoring (Lucas, 2001). It was this relational evolution and its transformational effect on mentors and mentees that was explored in this study.

Constructionism and Discourse

Constructionism also places primary emphasis on discourse as a means through which self and realities are articulated, as well as the ways in which such discourses function within social relationships (Gergen, 1999). In fact, the construction of the relationship itself is a dialogic process that has two transformative functions: (a) transforming the participants’ understanding of the action in question and (b) altering the relations among the participants themselves (McNamee & Gergen, 1999).
Moreover, because mentoring is often described as a social relationship that uses language in order to construct the identities, activities, beliefs, and attitudes of its participants, this study considered the questions posed by Gergen (1999): “What are the repercussions of these ways of talking? Who gains? Who is hurt? Who is silenced? What traditions are sustained? Which are undermined? How do I judge the future we are creating?” (p. 62) Additionally, because mentor and mentee are often immersed in many discourse communities, they must assume responsibility for developing an awareness of the connections between these diverse discourse communities. Furthermore, they must reflect upon the influence these communities exert on the construction of their relationships and identities, so that ultimately, mentor and mentee are able to reconstruct the world in a less adversarial way, which is better suited to their needs as they engage in a relationship (Gergen, 1999). Hence, mentors and mentees might choose to ask: How are we involved? How can we work together to create change? (McNamee & Gergen, 1999). These questions seemed especially appropriate for mentors and mentees who embraced an understanding of mentoring that was educative and who constructed identities as agents of reform in their classrooms and beyond.

**Defining Discourse**

The mentors and mentees in this study used Discourse to enact specific social and cultural perspectives, activities, and identities. For Gee (2005), their language-in-use (discourse with a “little d”) often commingled with non-language aspects of communication thereby creating “big D” Discourses. Thus, while discourse is specifically associated with the language participants used, Discourse is understood as “ways of acting, interacting, feeling, believing, valuing, and using various sorts of objects, symbols, tools, and technologies – to recognize yourself and others as meaning and meaningful in certain ways” (Gee, 2005, p. 7). As mentors and mentees interacted with each other they were producing, reproducing, sustaining, and transforming a
given “form of life” or Discourse (Gee, 2005). In this way, “all life [or relationships] for all of us is just a patchwork of thoughts, words, objects, events, actions, and interactions in Discourses” (Gee, 2005, p. 7).

The dialogic interactions in which the mentors and mentees engaged over the course of this study revealed that they moved in and among several Discourses. The sociohistorical and political foundations and interpretations of these Discourses which have been enacted, interpreted, and transformed by often disparate communities of practice, as well as a number of scholars situated in various disciplines, are described in Chapter 2. Furthermore, because these Discourses recognized situated ways of interacting, the behaviors of those engaged in discursive relationships involved the positioning of one’s self and one’s relational partnerships, as well as the distribution and negotiation of power. Social constructionism would suggest that these positionings and the distribution of power would be fluid, co-constructed by the relational partners, and subjected to a process of continual reflection and transformation as the participants collaboratively constructed their own social world and their practices and identities within this world.

**Discourse and the Positioning of Self**

Scholars have suggested a number of understandings of identity and self. Some view identity as a relatively stable self that remains more or less uniform across contexts. Others believe that identities are multiple and in a constant state of flux. For Gee (2001) identity is “the ‘kind of person’ one is recognized as ‘being,’ at a given time and place, [which] can change from moment to moment in the interaction, can change from context to context, and of course, can be ambiguous or unstable” (p. 99). He describes four ways of viewing identity: (a) nature identity, (b) institution identity, (c) discourse identity, and (d) affinity identity.
According to Gee (2001) nature identity is a state developed from forces in nature, such as being an identical twin. These identities arise through “forces” over which we have no control. However, they can only become identities when they are recognized as meaningful by us and others. In contrast, an institution identity is a position authorized by authorities within institutions, such as being a classroom teacher or a student. This is not an identity provided by nature, nor can it be accomplished without the authority of an institution. In contrast, a discourse identity is an individual trait recognized in the discourse of or with “rational” individuals. An example of this would be someone who is recognized as an accomplished teacher. This identity depends on the recognition of others, as it is only because people treat, talk about, and interact with this teacher as an accomplished teacher that she is, indeed, one. Finally, an affinity identity is an experience shared in the practice of “affinity groups,” such as Trekkies or professional learning communities. People in an affinity group share “allegiance to, access to, and participation in specific practices” (Gee, 2001, p. 105) that provides each member with the experiences necessary for participation in the group. The process through which an affinity identity is constructed is accomplished through participation in and sharing among members of a particular community.

Danielewicz (2001), who wrote about teachers’ selves, defines identity as “our understanding of who we are and of who we think other people are” (p. 10). These identities are not fixed and they are always in flux, always multiple, and continually under construction. Every person is composed of multiple, often conflicting identities, which exist in volatile states of construction or reconstruction, reformation or erosion, addition or expansion (Danielewicz, 2001). Ultimately, no matter what the context, we are continuously engaged in becoming something or someone (Smith, 1988). Individuals are constituted by and their identities are
produced through Discourse (Danielewicz, 2001; Gee 2006, 1999). Because all of us are members of a variety of Discourse communities, we possess the agency to determine and transform our identities, but, at the same time, the Discourse affects the construction of our individual identities. It is this interplay of internal and external forces in the midst of social interaction that enables the construction of specific and situated identities (Danielewicz, 2001).

In this study, the identities of the mentors and mentees tended to be created through their experiences with institutions or discursive partners and practices. The university identified the individual participants as mentors and mentees. However, it was within their situated relationships that the individual mentors and mentees co-constructed and transformed their identities as teachers, as well as mentors and mentees, and they accomplished this through engaging each other in dialogue that was situated within a particular Discourse community.

Positioning can influence the construction of identity and is understood as “the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person’s actions intelligible and relatively determinate as social acts and within which the members of the conversation have specific locations” (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p.16). Fluid positions, rather than fixed roles, are used by people to make sense of and cope with the situations in which they find themselves. These positions are relational and emerge naturally out of their conversations and contexts. However, there are times when an individual seizes a dominant position within a conversation and forces other speakers into positions they would not occupy voluntarily. Additionally, initial positionings may be challenged and speakers are sometimes repositioned.

There are several forms in which positioning occurs as a discursive practice. First order positionings refer to the way people locate themselves and others within an ongoing and lived storyline. Within a conversation each participant always positions the other while
simultaneously positioning him or herself. Thus, first order positionings include the discursive practices in which people position themselves, position others, and are positioned by them. Second order positionings occur when the first order positioning is questioned and has to be negotiated. These second order positionings can be questioned within the original conversation or within another conversation about that first conversation. In this way the discursive practices that result in these second order positionings become a topic or target.

The rights for self-positioning and other-positioning are unequally distributed, creating four forms of intentional positioning: (a) situations of deliberate self-positioning, (b) situations of forced self-positioning, (c) situations of deliberate positioning of others, and (d) situations of forced positioning of others (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). Deliberate self-positioning expresses a personal identity and references a unique point of view, or an event in one’s biography. This kind of positioning assumes the speaker has a goal in mind, and the stories people tell about themselves vary according to how they wish to present themselves. Forced self-positioning differs from deliberate self-positioning in that the initiative for the positioning is with someone or something else (i.e., an institution), rather than the person involved.

The deliberate, as well as the forced positioning of others can be accomplished in the presence or absence of the person being positioned. The deliberate positioning and forced positioning of others when the person is present creates a space in the speaker’s storyline which may or may not be taken up by the person being positioned. People also differ in their capacity to position themselves and others, in their power to achieve positioning acts, as well as in their willingness or intention to position and be positioned. However, all conversations involve some sort of positioning.
Therefore, although all the classroom teachers in this study have been identified as mentors, they used dialogue to position themselves in various ways depending on their understandings of mentoring, their particular situations, and the needs of their individual mentees. In this way, mentors might choose to position themselves as facilitators, thereby positioning their mentees as teachers or practitioners in one instance, and in another circumstance they might position themselves as models that the mentee was expected to emulate.

**Discourse and Power**

Power is an omnipresent and tightly intertwined aspect of the ways in which we, as relational beings, relate to each other and our systems of knowledge or truth (Foucault, 1980). Indeed, power is often sought, envied, and feared as it controls, subjugates, represses, and can provide a catalyst for resistance. “What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn’t only weight on us a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse” (Foucault, 1980, p. 119). In this way, power produces most of our ideas about what we should do and be in order to locate, supervise, and control individuals.

Foucault focused on the forms of knowledge and techniques of power that serve to discipline and train human beings, thereby turning them into the sorts of objects society needs. This disciplining occurs through the exercise of classification, surveillance, normalization, reward, and punishment, and “these disciplining forces that affect us individually include the beliefs, expectations, values, practices (e.g., of Discourses) which not only dictate what we should say, but reward or punish us when we fail to comply with the standards built into them” (Jardine, 2005, p. 25). Thus, these discursive and nondiscursive ideas, expectations, values, and practices leave us with the sense of being continually monitored, compared, classified, and judged in relation to disciplinary categories of the normal and the abnormal. Once we are
acculturated, we then experience the world through a set of discursive practices. To the extent that this disciplining power is successful we became, willingly or not, complicit in its continuance and maintenance. Jardine (2005) reminds us that Foucault insisted we be “continually vigilant about the effect of everything in which we participate in order to undo the objectifying, controlling effects exerted by the operation of knowledge and acts of power in modernist, Western normalizing, disciplining societies” (p. 26). Finally, Foucault (1990) believed that critique is a crucially important aspect of life and that where power is exerted there is always resistance:

A critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practice that we accept rests. Criticism is a matter of flushing out that thought and trying to change it: to show that things are not as self-evident as one believed, to see that what is accepted as self-evident will no longer be accepted as such. Practicing criticism is a matter of making facile gestures difficult (Foucault, 1990, pp. 154-155).

Heinrich (1995) also investigated the ways in which power is manifested and used in relationships. Her participants described two types of power: personal power and legitimate power. Personal power was the power within a person and both mentors and mentees have this power simply through the virtue of being human. Legitimate power was power bestowed by an institution. For instance, only the classroom teachers in this study have legitimate power vested in them by the university and the school district.

Heinrich (1995) also noted three ways in which power was manifested within relationships: (a) “power with” relationships, (b) “power over” relationship, and (c) “power disabused” relationships. In “power with” relationships, power was defined as strength and it was shared. “Power with” mentors owned their legitimate power, shared their power with their mentees, and negotiated any conflict openly and directly. They balanced the task and interpersonal dimensions of their mentoring relationships. They also protected their mentees,
when necessary, within the bureaucratic system. In “power over” relationships, mentees relinquished their personal power and found themselves in relationships in which control, authority, domination, concern for being objective and fair, and strength in the form of force were central issues. “Power over” mentors owned their legitimate power, established relationship with mentees that were hierarchical and task oriented, and handled conflict through direct confrontation. Finally, in “power disowned” relationships, the mentor abdicated her legitimate power in order to focus on interpersonal harmony to the detriment of task accomplishment. These mentors were kind and empathetic as long as the situation did not call for advocacy or direct confrontation.

All relationships involve the negotiation of power, and the mentoring relationship was no exception. In these relationships, power was manifested in the discursive practices of the participants and often served to control and manage them within the contexts of their situated classrooms. However, as Foucault (1990) has suggested, this power also provided an impetus for resistance, and those mentors and mentees who engaged in educative mentoring called into question the disciplinary nature of our taken for granted understandings of schooling and challenged their previously unquestioned assumptions about their own teaching practices and identities.

The Research Context

In qualitative inquiry, context is critical to understanding (Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) cited portraitist Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot’s (1997) understanding of context as crucial for the documentation of human experience and I found her insights relevant for my study:

By context, I [Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot] mean the setting—physical, geographic, temporal, historical, cultural, aesthetic—within which action take place. Context becomes the framework, the reference point, the map, the ecological sphere; it is used to place people and action in time and space and as a resource for understanding what they say and do. The context is rich in clues for interpreting the experience of the actors in the setting. We
have no idea how to decipher or decode an action, a gesture, a conversation, or an exclamation unless we see it embedded in context (p. 41).

Thus, the context in which the mentors and mentees constructed their relationships, their practices, and their identities influenced their constructions of mentoring and their discursive interactions in multiple and sometimes unexpected ways. The next sections describe a number of aspects of the research context including the city and school in which the research was conducted, the university’s teacher preparation program in which all of the pre-service teachers were situated, as well as a description of the participants and the researcher and the roles they assumed within the research setting.

**Allenton**

This study took place in Allenton, a rural, southeastern city, which was located fourteen miles from the state’s largest and oldest university. Allenton had a population of 17,420, with a median age of 28.8. Seventy-seven percent of the population was Caucasian, 20% black, 1% Asian, 5% Hispanic, and 3% other. There were 6,752 households with a median income of $46,863. It was located along a major interstate corridor and supported industry that ranged from agricultural to manufacturing.

**Allenton Elementary School**

Allenton Elementary School, located in Allenton, and one of the oldest continuously operating schools in the United States, provided the specific site in which this study was situated. The school served nearly 500 students in grades three, four, and five. Sixty-four percent of the students were Caucasian, 29% black, 4% Hispanic, 2% multiracial and less than 1% American Indian or Asian. Its mission was excellence through initiative, innovation and involvement. Moreover, Allenton was a Title I school and 57% of its student population was eligible for the free or reduced lunch program. The student teacher ratio was 15:1 and 61% of teachers at the
school held an advanced degree. Additionally, Allenton received a grade of “A” from the state’s department of education for the 2006-2007 academic year.

Three classrooms within Allenton Elementary served as the settings for the dialogue sessions and observations. The demographics of each of the classrooms were representative of the demographics of the school. These classrooms will be described in more detail in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

**ProTeach: A Teacher Preparation Program**

The teacher education program, from which all the pre-service teachers were selected, was designed to prepare teachers with a dual emphasis in elementary education and mild disabilities. All graduates were prepared to work with students who are English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). The curriculum of this teacher education program incorporated information about effective teachers’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions, as well as current developments in instructional approaches and new technologies. Teachers who completed this program would be capable of: (a) creating and maintaining supportive and productive classrooms for diverse student populations and (b) working collaboratively with school personnel, families, and members of the community to develop alternative ways of educating children, including those who have traditionally been labeled hard-to-teach and hard-to-manage (Ross, Lane, & McCallum, 2005).

The pre-service teachers in this program were organized into cohorts of 25-35 during each semester of the program and cohort groups changed at the end of each semester, so that they had a chance to interact with a variety of their peers across the program. Moreover, all of the pre-service teachers were involved in early and continuous field experiences. During their freshman and sophomore years, students engaged in several observation and participation activities in elementary school classrooms during prerequisite coursework. Beginning in their junior year,
students had required field work each semester of the program. During their junior year, the students completed a pre-internship which involved spending 16 hours a week in a classroom over the course of the semester. ProTeach students also completed an internship during their senior year and this involved full-time attendance in a classroom.

The pre-service teachers who participated in my study were in the second semester of their junior years and were beginning their pre-internship placements. Two pre-service teachers were partnered in an elementary school classroom and were expected to design lessons and to plan, implement, and evaluate accommodations for struggling learners, as well as to engage in various models of co-teaching. Every effort was made to place these students in schools with inclusive classrooms in which the teachers modeled best practices (Ross, Lane, & McCallum, 2005).

**The Participants and Their Roles**

Criterion sampling (Patton, 2002) was used to select three groups of participants from the ProTeach pre-interns and their classroom mentors. For this study all of the pre-service teaching interns were registered in the ProTeach teacher education program and completing their pre-internship during spring, 2007. All of the in-service mentor teachers: (a) were over 21 years of age, (b) identified by their principal as exemplary teachers, and (c) had at least three years of teaching experience (d) were teaching at a professional development school (PDS). Professional development schools were chosen as the site for this research because these schools supported the development of teachers as leaders and inquirers into their own practice, and I believed that teachers who have adopted an inquiry stance might be more amenable to becoming members of a study that was designed to explore their practices. Table 3-1 provides a brief summary of the participants’ biographical information, and their biographies will be described in more detail in chapters 4, 5, and 6.
All of the participants engaged in a number of roles over the course of this study. Sometimes they taught lessons in the classroom. Other times they observed and then worked with individual students as they independently completed assignments and learning activities. Sometimes, the mentor and mentees engaged each other in conversation during our dialogue sessions and answered the questions I posed; at other times they participated in specific mentoring activities, such as pre- and post conferences. Finally, they reflected on their learning and the transformation of their identities and practices and took part in member checking my interpretations of their mentoring relationships and their co-construction of knowledge about teaching and learning.

The Researcher and Her Roles

Subjectivity has always been a part of research (Glesne, 1999) and in this section I explore aspects of my relational history and past experiences that might influence my perceptions and interpretations of the data in this study. I have spent most of my life in educational contexts. There were times when I was positioned as a student, and there were other times when I was positioned as a teacher. I have come to believe that these two identities, student and teacher, exist for me in a fluid, interactive, and ever changing relationship. One identity influences and informs the other, and there are instances in which they operate in tandem. Even now, my identities as a teacher and a student are not fully formed, and I will continue to use my life’s experiences to make sense of who I am as a teacher and student.

Student teaching is usually a requirement for becoming a certified teacher. Thus, the mentees, their mentors, and I have all had an experience of being placed in a classroom with an in-service teacher in order to begin to construct our teaching practices and our identities as teachers. As a pre-service teacher, I was placed in the classrooms of two in-service teachers who were responsible for supervising my practicum experiences. I remember friendly
relationships with both of my cooperating teachers, and they provided me with the technical assistance I needed, as well as the evaluations required by my program. While my relationships with them did influence my understanding of teaching, I would not have described either of them as a mentor. They provided me with feedback regarding my teaching, but we did not engage in a critical reflection of our practices and the larger educational context. More recently, during my Master’s and doctoral studies, I have encountered several professors whom I consider mentors. These professors were often not the advisors that the university assigned me. Instead, we found each other and made a mutual decision to develop a relationship. They have provided a critical friendship that has proved beneficial to my growth as a researcher and scholar. However, as I write this, I’m reminded of a quote from Fish (1990) that, “all objects are made and not found and they are made by the interpretive strategies we set in motion” (p. 191). So while we had to physically find one another, my understanding of mentoring has been constructed in relationship with these men and women. My identity as a mentee has developed and is understood in relation to the experiences I have had with my mentors in the particular contexts in which we are located. As Lucas (2001) suggests,

> Defining what a mentor or a mentee is presents a perfectly arranged, still-life painting. Although this image is beautiful and inspirational, it is a lovely fantasy of recollected impact. I propose that taking on the role of a mentor or mentee in a planned mentoring relationship is a dynamic, interpersonal process (p. 46).

For me, mentoring is continually constructed and reconstructed, and my identity as a mentee, and the identity of my mentor are the objects of constant assessment and negotiation as we share experiences within the context of our particular relationship.

I have also had the opportunity to work as a supervisor of pre-service teachers for the university and have supported interns and pre-interns as they began to develop identities as teachers. Positioned as a supervisor, I believed my main responsibility to be one of facilitating
the interns’ critical reflection on their own practices, as well as the educational contexts in which they were situated. However, I found that, once again, my identity as a supervisor and the roles I fulfilled were constructed in relationship with interns and mentors. Some interns needed more guidance when developing lesson plans; others had very specific ideas about the teaching behaviors they wished me to scrutinize, which influenced my observations of their specific lessons and the ways in which I engaged them in reflection. I also developed relationships with the classroom mentor teachers and sometimes supported mentors and interns as they negotiated particularly troublesome times within their relationship.

Because our perceptions of any experience are influenced by our relational histories, it is important to disclose that my history includes previous relationships with all of the mentor teachers who volunteered to participate in this study. I was James’s university supervisor during his internship in 2002-2003. Both Barbara and James mentored some of the pre-interns whom I supervised during fall, 2006, and I had numerous conversations with Kenneth in the faculty room of Allenton Elementary. As I conducted my analysis and shared my findings, I noted instances when I believe my subjectivity might have influenced my interpretations.

All of these experiences, as well as extensive reading of the literature devoted to mentoring, piqued my interest and provoked a passion to study the relationships of mentors and mentees. Because many of the same classroom teachers volunteer to be mentors each year, I had witnessed the different ways in which the interns and classroom teachers co-constructed their mentoring relationships and identities as mentors and mentees. Some of the mentors and mentees were closely aligned personally and professionally and this alignment seemed to benefit the learning of both. Others found that the disparity between their professional beliefs constrained their relationship. Sometimes these differences were negotiated, other times, ignored,
often with consequences that went beyond the particular situation. My experiences as an insider and an outsider have led me to believe that, because relationships and identities are constructed through discourse, there is something to be discovered in the dialogue and silences of a mentoring relationship. It is these beliefs that shaped my study.

My roles within this study were multiple and this multiplicity created a number of tensions that furthered complicated the decisions I made about how to position myself at particular instances over the course of this research. My initial role and positioning as the principal researcher was reinforced by the university’s IRB requirements, as well as by the expectations of the men and women who volunteered to participate in this study. In our first dialogue session, I told my participants that I wished to position them as co-researchers and that I wanted them to engage each other as we discussed mentoring and to suggest meaningful topics and issues we could explore together. Although there were instances when one or more of my co-researchers would begin our dialogue sessions with a pressing concern or observation, I found that they often looked to me for specific questions to guide their discussion. In addition, my participants had not been involved in the design of the study and were not necessarily as interested in or as passionate about studying situated mentoring relationships. I was also conflicted about the consequences of engaging with the mentors and mentees in the co-construction of knowledge about mentoring. What were the parameters of my being a participant in the dialogue sessions? I found that not only did I sometimes have to ask the questions that provided an impetus and direction for our dialogues, but I also realized that sometimes when I commented on what I had heard, my words often normalized and ended that particular discussion. Even when I attempted to probe further, the discussion was short lived and generated no new meanings or understandings.
Moreover, although my educational background provided me with some inside knowledge of the context and the various discourses, I felt, for the most part, like an outsider, especially with regard to the particulars of the mentoring relationships that were being developed between these mentors and their mentees. For the most part I observed them as they used dialogue to negotiate their positionings and to define their identities. I was unsure of my place in their co-construction of knowledge about mentoring and did not wish for my participation in any of their discussions to be viewed as interference or, even worse, harmful. Consequently, I was often silent and simply listened to their dialogue and observed their interactions. Even so I influenced their co-construction of mentoring because I provided them with a space in which to discuss the issues that concerned them and to reflect on previous experiences that were shaping their identities and practices – a space they might not have created otherwise. In fact, one of my co-researchers commented that their relationship was even better because of their discussions during our dialogue sessions.

While I was always positioned as an observer of the interactions within the classroom, I also actively participated in those same classrooms and worked with individual students who needed assistance with assignments. In these instances, I focused on the task at hand and may have missed other interactions in the classroom that might have been pertinent to my study. However, I did gain a more elaborate understanding of the context and the students, which enriched my understanding of the dialogue, especially when I was reduced to relying only on the transcripts.

In summary, my roles within this study varied between those expected of a more traditional researcher and those emerging from a social constructionist perspective of co-researchers. Thus, I asked questions and listened to responses, all the while encouraging the
mentors and mentees to suggest topics for discussion and to co-construct the dialogue sessions with me. I was an observer and a participant in the classroom. I interpreted the data, shared my understandings, and returned to the data again. My varied roles within this research context have transformed the ways in which I think about research and I will discuss my shifting understandings and perceptions in the trustworthiness section of this chapter.

**Data Collection**

There were a number of gatekeepers from whom I had to obtain permission before I was granted access to a context for my study. Initially, I applied to the university’s IRB and gained consent to conduct my study in November, 2006. I then applied for permission to conduct research from the school board’s department of research, assessment, and student information. In their application I described the purposes of my study and the kinds of data I would be collecting, as well as the responsibilities of the participants. I was also required to name the specific schools to which I hoped to gain access. I applied to nine different elementary schools and ultimately one principal agreed to grant me access. On January 25, 2007 I attended a meeting of all the mentors in that school and solicited volunteers for my study. I described the purpose of my study, the parameters of their participation in it, as well as the potential benefits of this research for me and for them. Three mentors, Kenneth, Barbara, and James volunteered to participate. I then scheduled and conducted meetings with their pre-interns and explained the study and the ways in which they might participate in it. All of the pre-interns agreed to participate. At this point I asked all the mentors and pre-interns to sign an informed consent. A complete timeline of the study can be found in Appendix A.

Data were collected from the three mentoring groups through the use of interviews (or dialogue sessions) and participant observations. Interviews were chosen because they made use of the discourse in which the participants were situated and could be used “to understand the
world from the participants’ points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experience, and to uncover their lived worlds” (Kvale, 1996, p. 1). However, there are limitations to what can be learned through what people say, so participant observation was used to elaborate the complexity of the relationship as demonstrated through the mentors’ and mentees’ behavior and other non-verbal aspects of their discourse. The data collected through these two methods complemented each other and were used to reveal and illuminate the realities that were being co-constructed by the participants as they engaged in the social world and practice of teaching.

Data Sources: Dialogue Sessions

Traditionally, interviews have been conceptualized as interactional situations in which the researcher coordinates a conversation designed to elicit certain desired knowledge and the participants are limited to a relatively passive role of providing information from his or her personal experiences (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003). Interviewing has also been understood as a means of enabling the researcher to understand the world from the participants’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples’ experiences, to uncover their lived worlds prior to scientific explanations (Kvale, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

However, the interview itself is a construction site of knowledge and the knowledge generated is related to the conversation, the narrative, the language, the context, as well as the interrelational nature of knowledge, and “here is an alternation between the knowers and the known, between the constructors of knowledge and the knowledge constructed” (Kvale, 1996, p.15). According to Holstein and Gubrium (2003), “the interview is more than a simple information-gathering operation; it’s a site of, and occasion for, producing knowledge itself” (p 4). Thus, meaning is actively and socially constructed in the interview itself and the value of the interview data lies not only in their meanings, but in how those meanings are constructed (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003).
These new understandings of interviewing were well suited to the study I had designed, but I felt that the term “interview” might carry the remnants of its traditional meanings into my research context, and so I decided to name my data collection methods “dialogue sessions.” These sessions encouraged all participants to be actively engaged in and responsible for the co-construction of knowledge, and Koro-Ljungberg’s (2008) understanding of a constructionist interview provided a framework for these sessions:

Constructionist interviews are dialogical performances, social meaning-making acts, and cofacilitated knowledge exchanges. In order for researchers to understand the meaning-making activities that take place during an interview, they must focus on the actions of individuals that influence the immediate social process and context of the interview, as well as those actions that have been influences by other sociopolitical contexts or discourses (p. 430).

Finally, the qualitative researcher is, herself, a research instrument and is not neutral, distant, or emotionally uninvolved (Kvale, 1996). In fact, neutrality is not a legitimate goal; rather the researcher attempts to achieve balance, listening for multiple sides of a story (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). However, a qualitative researcher must be “sensitive to her own biases and to the social and intellectual baggage she brings to the interview” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 14) and consider how these subjectivities influence the knowledge that is co-constructed within the interview, as well as the interpretations she arrives at during analysis. For these reasons I have provided a subjectivity statement and continually considered how my subjectivities might have influenced the research process.

I spent one day a week in the classroom of each mentoring group. Mondays were spent with Kenneth and Susan, Tuesdays with Barbara, Elizabeth, and Melissa, and Thursdays with James, Amy, and Jessica. The dialogue sessions with Kenneth and Susan were scheduled for after school, while the dialogue sessions for the other two groups took place during their planning periods. I conducted five dialogue sessions with Kenneth’s group and seven sessions
with each of the other two groups. The discrepancy in the number of sessions conducted was
due to a federal holiday that occurred on a Monday and personal obligations of some of the
participants. Sometimes the dialogue sessions included a discussion of a felt difficulty or
concern of one of the participants. Other discussions focused on what had occurred that day in
the classroom. Still other dialogues sessions captured the interactions of the mentor and mentees
as they engaged in one of the activities of mentoring or teaching (e.g., planning a lesson,
conducting a post conference). See Appendix B for a summary of the dates and topics of the
dialogue sessions for each of the mentoring groups.

Each dialogue session was audio-taped and transcribed verbatim, within a week’s time
when my schedule permitted. In order to prepare for each week’s dialogue session, I listened to
the previous week’s tape, noting points within the discussion that I wished to revisit or noting
additional topics that might make for fruitful discussions. Although the topics of our interview
discussions, as well as the roles we assumed within these dialogue sessions were negotiated by
the mentors, the pre-interns and me, I also prepared a list of questions that might be used to
initiate a discussion. At the beginning of each session, mentors and mentees were encouraged to
share any thoughts they had on previous dialogue sessions or on any interactions that had
occurred during the past week. If the mentors and pre-interns had nothing pressing to discuss, I
used the questions I had prepared to begin the dialogue session. The participants, including
myself, determined the breath and depth of each discussion, reflecting and elaborating on our
own statements, as well as questioning each other. Before the final dialogue session, I listened to
the tapes of all the sessions for each group and noted salient points (see Appendix C), which I
shared with the participants of each group in order to member check my initial interpretations
(Creswell, 1998). I encouraged them to extend or elaborate their understandings of any of these
points and to propose additional topics that would further illustrate or illuminate their mentoring relationship and individual transformations. The comments I received during this member check most often included the participants’ amazement as to the elaborate nature and influence of their mentoring relationships.

In addition to these dialogue sessions, I kept a researcher’s notebook in which I recorded my personal feelings about and reactions to the discussions, as well as reflections about the meaning and significance of what was said (Patton, 2002). I described the setting and the demeanor of all participants during the dialogue session. Moreover, I used the notebook to record my insights, interpretations, and beginning analyses of what was happening in the setting and what it meant (Patton, 2002) (See Appendix. D)

Data Sources: Participant Observation

Although my primary source of data collection was the dialogue sessions, I also wanted to study our relationship in action, as the activities in which we engaged in the classroom were part of the discourse in which we were situated and reflected the knowledge we were co-constructing or our own individual transformations in non-verbal ways. Participant observation enabled the study of our relationships and activities, as well as the immediate sociocultural contexts in which these relationships unfolded (Jorgenson, 1989). Thus, I noted the language, behaviors, and interactions among us, as well as between any one of the co-researchers and the students in the classroom. However, this observation data was a secondary data source and was not subjected to extensive analysis. Instead it was used to elaborate and understand the social context in which we were situated and to locate my study within that context.

My observations took the form of written field notes in which I noted my own actions, as well as those of the mentors and mentees. These notes were expanded the evening after each session. The expanded field notes also contained information similar to that found in the
researcher’s notebook in which I reflected upon my dialogue sessions with the pre-service teachers and mentors (i.e., my thoughts, feelings, initial interpretations, additional questions). I shared my expanded field notes and reflections with my participants and asked for their interpretations and reflections, which, if there were any, I then recorded these in my notebook (see Appendix E).

**Data Analysis**

According to Phillips and Hardy (2002), “social reality is produced and made real through discourses and social interactions and cannot be fully understood without reference to the discourses that give them meaning” (p. 3). Therefore, I decided to use discourse analysis to analyze the interactions that occurred between mentors, mentees, and a university researcher as we engaged in the study of their mentoring and teaching practices. Because their discourses were embodied and enacted in a variety of texts, and these texts took a variety of forms including spoken words, symbols, pictures, and artifacts (Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 1999; Phillips & Hardy, 2002), discourse analysis was a useful method of analysis due to its strong constructionist view and the way in which it explored the relationships between text, discourse, and context (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Ultimately, discourse analysis examined how language constructed phenomena and assumed that the world cannot be known separately from discourse (Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 1999; Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Because mentoring relationships were most often constructed and negotiated through dialogue, I felt that discourse analysis would prove useful in uncovering the meanings that are often veiled by our taken for granted assumptions about language-in-use. To this end, I employed two aspects from two complementary forms of discourse analysis: the method developed by James P. Gee, as well as the critical discourse analysis described by Norman Fairclough.
Table 3-3, found at the end of the chapter, provides a summary of the data analysis I describe in this section. My analysis began as I transcribed the interviews. The dialogue sessions were transcribed verbatim and certain dialogical interactions were notated, those interactions being pauses, words or phrases that were emphasized, overlapping speech, and descriptions of events such as coughs or laughter. Appendix F provides an abbreviated example of my transcription and Table 3-1 lists the conversational interactions that were identified and the ways those interactions were notated (Grbich, 2007).

Table 3-1. Conversational interactions and their notations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation Interaction</th>
<th>Notation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Just noticeable pause</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longer pause</td>
<td>. .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Underlined sounds or words were emphasized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>()</td>
<td>Unidentifiable speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[</td>
<td>Successive brackets on two lines with utterances from different speakers indicate the start of overlapping speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>]</td>
<td>A right bracket bridging two lines indicates that overlapping or simultaneous utterances at this point have stopped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(())</td>
<td>Description of events, e.g., ((coughs)) or ((laughs))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the tapes were transcribed, I printed each transcript and read through the entire set of each groups’ dialogue sessions. I read through the data a second time, making notes next to excerpts that seemed to apply to one or both of my research questions. I used open coding during a third read of the data in order to reduce and organize it. Once I had a list of open codes, I grouped similar codes together and used these groups to identify the discourses in which the codes and accompanying data excerpts were located. After the discourses were identified, I employed two aspects of both Gee’s and Fairclough’s discourse analyses in order to further interpret and understand the data. Gee’s discourse analysis was used to conduct a macro analysis
of the data, identifying the activities and identities of mentoring. Fairclough’s discourse analysis was used to conduct a micro analysis of the same excerpts in order to understand how language was used to construct the activities and identities of mentoring. The analytic process was an iterative, not a linear one and each step in my analysis caused me to return to previous steps and interpretations, and even now, I do not feel that my analysis is definitive or final. The sections that follow describe the two analysis methods I employed, as well as the ways in which I utilized them.

**Gee’s Discourse Analysis (Macro Analysis)**

According to Gee (1999, 2005) discourse is “language used in tandem with action, interactions, non-linguistic symbol systems, objects, tools, technologies, and distinctive ways of thinking valuing, feeling, and believing” (p. 11). Because discourse plays an important role in the construction of mentoring relationships, this analysis method can be used to discern the meaning and value of aspects of the material world, activities, identities and relationships, politics, connections, and semiotics that occur between mentors and mentees (Gee, 1999, 2005). Moreover, Gee (2005) suggests that we use language to build seven areas of reality and I focused on two of them: activities and identities, as I believed that these building tasks provided me with analytic methods that would enable me to answer my research questions. Therefore, I asked the following two questions of the identified data excerpts that exemplified language in use:

- What activity or activities is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e., get others to recognize as going on)?
- What identity or identities is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e., get others to recognize as operative)?

The activities were sometimes described by the participants in statements or longer narratives (e.g., I emailed my mentor teacher for advice). At other times the participants were actively engaged in the task (i.e., teaching a lesson, reflecting on a lesson) and the activity (i.e.,...
asking for feedback) became apparent based on the language they used as they interacted with one another (e.g., I wondered how I could have managed that situation differently?). The identities being enacted in the excerpts were either stated directly in “I” statement (e.g., I am a special education teacher) or were implied by the language used in their statements. For instance, in a discussion about how to teach vocabulary, Melissa cited course readings and research and assumed an identity of expert in this particular discussion as she was the one providing the information.

According to Gee (1999, 2005), “an ‘ideal’ discourse analysis involves asking questions about how language, at a given time and place, is used to construe the aspects of a situation network as realized at that time and place and how the aspects of the situation network simultaneously give meaning to that language” (p. 92). Recognizing that no discourse analysis could be ideal, I still made use of the following questions that he suggested were relevant for an analysis of how language is used to construct activities and identities:

**Activity building:**

- What is the larger or main activity (or set of activities) going on in the situation?
- What sub-activities compose this activity (or these activities)?
- What actions (down to the level of things like “requests for reasons”) compose these sub-activities and activities?

**Socioculturally-situated identity building:**

- What identities (roles, positions), with their concomitant persona, social, and cultural knowledge and beliefs (cognition), feelings (affect), and values seem to be relevant to the situation?
- How are these identities stabilized or transformed in the situation?
- In terms of identities and activities, what Discourses are relevant (and irrelevant) in the situation? How are they made relevant (and irrelevant), and in what ways?
While Gee’s discourse analysis was used for a macro analysis of the data, I also thought it was important to analyze the distinctive grammar of the social language(s) employed, as well as the ways in which the grammatical units were used to create patterns that influenced the situated identities of the participants and the specific activities in which they engaged. “The whos and whats are not really discrete and separable. You are who you are partly through what you are doing and what you are doing is partly recognized for what it is by who is doing it” (Gee, 2005, p. 23). Thus, I utilized two aspects of Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis to illuminate how language was used to construct and was constructed by the participants’ identities and activities within a specific context, and how these situated meanings and identities were negotiated by the participants engaged in communicative interactions.

**Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis (Micro Analysis)**

Fairclough’s (2003) approach to discourse analysis is “based upon the assumption that language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life, so that social analysis and research always have to take account of language” (p. 2). The main emphasis of this discourse analysis is a grammatical and semantic one; although he acknowledges that texts, or language in use, contribute to transformation in people, actions, social relations, and the material world. He believes that texts need to be analyzed in order to clarify their contribution to processes of meaning making and his analysis methods are designed to uncover the ways in which social agents construct texts by setting up relations between the elements within a text. Fairclough (2003) further cautions that no analysis of a text can reveal everything there is to be said about it. The analysis of any text is always biased by the subjectivity of the analyst and remains provisional and open to other interpretations.

I decided to use two aspects of Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis: (a) difference, and (b) exchanges, speech functions, and grammatical mood. Each of the mentoring relationships
that I explored was composed of people with disparate relational histories, previous experiences, and perceptions, and according to Fairclough (2003), “the production of any interaction as meaningful entails active and continual ‘negotiation’ of differences of meaning” (p. 41). Therefore, it seemed that the participants would use their dialogical interactions to negotiate their differences; therefore, analyzing their orientation to difference might uncover the ways in which their perceptions, understandings, and identities were transformed. Additionally, because Gee’s theory of discourse is one of language in use, I wanted to investigate how the participants used words and sentences to co-construct knowledge and identities as they engaged in the activities of mentoring.

Fairclough (2003) identified five scenarios related to difference that I employed to analyze the dialogue:

- An openness to, acceptance of, recognition of difference; an exploration of difference, as in dialogue in the richest sense of the term
- An accentuation of difference, conflict, polemic, a struggle over meaning, norms, power
- An attempt to resolve or overcome difference
- A bracketing of difference, a focus on commonality, solidarity
- Consensus, a normalization and acceptance of differences of power which brackets or suppresses difference of meaning and norms

Finally, social events, such as the activities of mentoring are enacted in dialogue, which, according to Fairclough (2003), consists of two primary types of exchanges, a number of speech functions, as well as the grammatical mood, or the way in which meanings are realized through sentence type. Questions that were asked of the data included:

- What are the predominant types of exchange (activity exchange or knowledge exchange) and speech functions (statement, question, demand, offer)?
- What types of statements are there? (realis statements, [i.e., statements of fact], irrealis statements, [i.e., predictions and hypotheticals], and evaluations)?
• Are there metaphorical relations between exchanges, speech functions, or types of statements (e.g., demands which appear as statements, evaluations which appear as factual statements)?

• What is the predominant grammatical mood (declarative, interrogative, imperative)?

An exchange is a sequence of two or more conversational turns or moves with alternating speakers, where the occurrence of move 1 leads to the expectation of move 2 and so forth, with the proviso that what is expected does not always occur (Cameron, 2001). Exchanges are oriented toward knowledge or activity. A knowledge exchange is a speech act that is oriented to providing information. It might be initiated by the person with the information (e.g., “I am twenty-two years old.”) or by the person who wants the knowledge (e.g., “How old are you?”). On the other hand, activity exchanges are often oriented to non-textual actions, such as doing things, or getting things done, rather than just saying things. However, “Answer the question!” is an activity exchange that is oriented to a textual action, that of providing the information in the form of an answer. Activity exchanges might also be initiated by the one who will perform the action (e.g., “Do you want a coke?”) or another desiring a specific action (e.g., “May I please have a coke?”).

Speech functions include demands, offers, questions, and statements. Statements are of three types. “Realis” statements are statements of fact about what is, was, or has been the case (e.g., “I met Violeta yesterday evening.”). “Irrealis” statements include predictions (e.g., “I will meet Violeta tomorrow.”) and hypothetical statements (e.g., “I might meet Violeta [if she comes to England].”) Evaluations might be phrased as statements or exclamations (e.g., “Violet is a fine person” or “What a fine person!”) Demands include ordering, requesting, and begging; while offers included promising, threatening, promising, and thanking.

Speech function and the distinction between main sentence types (declarative, interrogative, and imperative) are related to grammatical mood, but the relationship is not
necessarily a straightforward one. The strongest link is between declarative clauses and statements. Questions are usually interrogative, but there were also “declarative questions” (e.g., “How old are you?” and “You’re over eighteen?”). Offers could be interrogative (“Do you want a coke?”), imperative (“Have a coke.”), or declarative (“Here’s a coke.”). Demands are most often imperative (“Give me a coke.”), but they could also be interrogative in the case of question-requests (“May I have a coke?”), or declarative (“I want a coke.”). Determining the speech function of a clause often requires taking account of social contextual factors. Then the mood of a text is differentiated by the distribution of speech functions among the participants and the ways in which the speech functions are realized (e.g., as declarative questions rather than interrogatives.

Fairclough (2003) also recognizes the metaphorical relationships among exchanges and speech functions. One such metaphorical relationship is a hortatory report in which “texts are apparently oriented to knowledge exchange but were actually oriented (also) to activity exchange. Factual statements were to a significant degree evaluations” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 112). For instance, the website of a university, while providing information about its location and academic culture may, at the same time, be promoting itself as the best of all possible educational worlds.

Thus, I used Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis in order to uncover how discourse was used to make meaning of a social practice (mentoring), how discourses were used to represent the practice of mentoring, as well as how discourses were used to negotiate the practice of mentoring. This analysis was useful in that it supported the notion of a constructed reality and provided analytical tools that enabled a micro-analysis of the interaction between participants. Furthermore, the analysis of the participants’ orientation to difference uncovered the multiple
and diverse voices that were created or constructed as a means of collaboration or resistance. According to Fairclough (2003), discourses are inherently positioned and the ways in which the participants in this study utilized discourse to make meaning, as well as to negotiate their differences provided insight into the ways in which they understood and transformed their practices and identities.

**Trustworthiness**

In this section, I begin by discussing the more traditional understandings of validity as they apply to qualitative research. I then consider Gee’s understandings of validity and use them to assess the trustworthiness of my study. The chapter concludes with a summary and an introduction to the findings chapters.

Because research is designed to understand and improve practice, researchers want to feel confident when incorporating research findings into practice, for what we do affects the lives of real people (Merriam, 1995). Establishing the internal validity of a study is a way of doing this and by attending to how congruent one’s findings are “with reality.” The following strategies were employed to strengthen the internal validity of my study: (a) triangulation, (b) member checks, (c) peer review, (d) statement of the researcher’s experiences, assumptions, biases, and (e) submersion/engagement in the research situation. Triangulation, as described by Denzin (1978) is of four types: (a) data triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) theory triangulation, and (d) methodological triangulation. For the purposes of this study, I engaged in data triangulation, using data collected from dialogue sessions and observations. I also employed two complementary discourse analysis methods (methodological triangulation) when interpreting the data. Member checking involved returning to my participants with my data and interpretations and seeking their feedback as to the credibility of my representations of their lived relationships (Creswell, 1998). Before each dialogue session, I shared my understanding of the
previous dialogue session with the participants and asked for their comments and feedback. At the beginning of our final dialogue session I shared my interpretations of the activities and identities that had been constructed by the mentors and mentees and solicited their feedback as to the validity of my interpretations. At that time, the participants did not dispute my interpretations and several commented that they had not been aware of how much had occurred within and as a result of their mentoring relationships.

Peer review (Creswell, 1998) involved soliciting the comments of peers and colleagues, and I have asked Dr. Nancy Dana and Dr. Mirka Koro-Ljungberg, as well as other members of my committee, for their feedback regarding the rigor of my methods and the trustworthiness of my interpretations. I made clear my biases and assumptions in a subjectivity statement that enabled the reader to understand the influences and lenses that shaped my interpretations. My researcher’s notebook and reiterative process of data analysis provided me with an ongoing means of assessing the influence of my subjectivities. Finally, I engaged these participants over the course of nine weeks, in a series of complex interactions, and I used data obtained during previous interactions to make decisions about subsequent interactions.

Additionally, I have provided my readers with an audit trail, a precise and detailed accounting of data collection and analysis and a description of how decisions were made throughout the research process (Creswell, 1998). My audit trail included my audiotaped interviews, as well as the written transcripts of the interviews, my reflections on the interviews, my observation notes and expanded field notes, as well as my researcher’s notebook that served as a record of my activities and reflections about the data and the research process.

External validity is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to a new situation, and this is not usually the goal of qualitative inquiry (Wolcott, 1994).
Qualitative researchers realize that their findings are situated and they leave the speculation of how their findings can be transferred to new situations to the readers of their research. However, there are several strategies that might enable a reader to make judgments regarding the transferability of the results of this study, among them thick description. Due to the detailed accounts of my methods, my data, and my interpretations, readers of my research will be able to determine whether or not their specific situation matches the one found in my study and whether or not the transferability of my interpretations to their context is appropriate.

Gee (2005) argues that “validity is never ‘once and for all’” (p. 113) and that some discourse analyses are more valid than others. However, he suggests that validity for discourse analysis can be based on four elements: (a) convergence, (b) agreement, (c) coverage, and (d) linguistic details. For Gee (2005), convergence is concerned with the ways in which the answers to the building task questions converge in the way they support the analysis. The two building tasks that I chose for the analysis were complementary, and I was able to answer all of the questions for Gee’s (2005) activity building and socioculturally situated identity building tasks for the excerpts that I chose to analyze. Indeed, the answers that I uncovered to these questions converged in a way that provided a relatively detailed and situated interpretation of the participants’ activities and identities.

Agreement considers the answers to the building task questions as more convincing when other discourse analysts or other kinds of researchers support our conclusions. Dr. Dana’s and Dr. Koro-Ljungberg’s peer review supported the conclusions I drew from my analysis, and provided agreement for my findings. On the other hand, coverage provides a measure of validity through questioning whether or not an analysis can be applied to related sorts of data. My interpretations uncovered some similarities across the three mentoring groups, with regard to the
kinds of activities that the mentors and mentees constructed, providing coverage. All of the mentoring groups engaged in developing rapport, in communicating, in planning lessons, and in providing feedback. However, the ways in which they engaged in these activities was also dissimilar based on the specific identities the mentors and mentees constructed. For example, when providing feedback, Kenneth constructed an identity as a facilitator of reflection; whereas James and Barbara constructed identities as experts and providers of constructive criticism. These differences in coverage were due to the mentors’ situated understandings of mentoring and the nature of the mentoring relationships in which they were engaged. Additionally, my analysis of the speech exchanges and the participant’s orientation to difference provided a means of linking their dialogue to the communicative functions they were enacting and the activities and identities they were constructing, thereby providing validity through my analysis of linguistic details or the linguistic structure of the dialogue. However, as Gee (2006) suggests, validity is social, not individual, and is never finished. Therefore, although I can argue for the validity of my study, it will always be subject to further discussion and dispute as the field evolves.

**Limitations**

While research is conducted in order to broaden and deepen our understanding of human beings and other phenomena, it is also limited or constrained by its design and the ways in which the data are collected and interpreted. Limitations of my study included: (a) subjectivities and positionings of the principal researcher, (b) quality/authenticity of the interactions between the researcher and the participants, (c) limitations of social constructionist research, and (d) limitations of the data collection methods.

**Subjectivities and Positionings of the Principal Researcher**

Because I co-constructed the context, as well as many of the interactions with my participants, my subjectivities and biases influenced the data collection and data analysis. I
wrote a subjectivity statement in which I made my relevant experiences, beliefs, biases, and affiliations transparent. As I reflected on my data collection and analysis, I attempted to remain aware of how my subjectivity was influencing the context and processes of data collection and analysis, as well as the interpretation and conclusions I drew from my findings. I have used member checking and peer review as a means of overcoming this limitation.

**Quality/Authenticity of the Interactions between the Researcher and the Participants**

Furthermore, even though I attempted to position the mentors and mentees as co-researchers, there may still have been instances when they felt as if they were research subjects, and so I considered the impact of this perception on the nature of our interactions, as well as the candor of their responses. I worked hard to establish a rapport and friendship with my participants, and I used member checking in an attempt to allow my participants to clarify any misunderstandings or misinterpretations that may have occurred during the data collection and data analysis process.

**The Challenges of Social Constructionist Research**

According to Weinberg (2008) “social constructionist studies are those that seek, at least in part, to replace fixed, universalistic, and sociohistorically invariant conceptions of things with more fluid, particularistic, and sociohistorically embedded conceptions of them” (p. 14). My research, in which I chose to investigate the very particular and evolving relationships of mentors and mentees, who were situated in a specific context and within specific Discourse(s) that influenced the construction of their knowledge, identities, and practices, seemed suited to a social constructionist study. However, I was interested in more than simply designing a social constructionist study. I also wanted to conduct it in a social constructionist, more participatory, way.
Social constructionist research does not recognize the authority of one participant over another. Ideally, all participants are involved in every part of the research process. However, certain aspects of my particular study made this ideal situation impossible. First, I was required to design the study in order to attain IRB approval and was unable to engage the participants in designing the research and choosing the research questions. Moreover, even though I attempted to position the mentors and pre-interns as collaborative researchers, they tended to resist this positioning and although they did become comfortable suggesting topics for discussion in our dialogue sessions, they never fully reconstructed their positioning of me as a principal researcher. Their understanding of the research process was aligned with more traditional understandings of the interview situation in which the researcher dominates the interaction within the interview session and controls the data and its interpretations (Kvale, 2006). As Koro-Ljungberg (2008) has suggested in social constructionist research, “The knowing subjects negotiate the research design, interview agenda and topics and analysis methods, analytic insights, and preferred representation of the data” (pp. 442-443). This is what my co-researchers and I must learn to do together.

Additionally, the ways in which the knowers participate within a study are affected by their prior knowledge and commitment to the project (Koro-Ljungberg, 2008), and our roles in the research process, as well as the knowledge we are constructing, will be subject to continuous critical reflection and negotiation. As Wagner (1997) has suggested the research process should be one of reflexive, systematic inquiry that is stimulated by ongoing collegial communication between researchers and practitioners. Consequently, an openness to difference and a willingness to explore those differences in an effort to create “new worlds” (Gergen, 1999), as well as an ability to collaborate and negotiate with others who may or may not agree with our
perspective (Koro-Ljungberg, 2008) are essential characteristics of a social constructionist researcher.

Unfortunately, from my point of view, teachers (the most likely population of my future studies) have tended to regard themselves as research subjects (Wagner, 1997) and I will have to consider ways in which to negotiate and reconstruct this perception with those who wish to engage with me in studying our practices. Although I have long since relinquished any notion of a researcher as a person in a white coat sitting behind a one-way mirror observing subjects in a sterile, laboratory setting, I have found that I am still affected by residual aspects of my previous conceptions of research and the Discourses in which I have been situated. I will continue to read and to seek opportunities to engage with others in this kind of research and to engage in the construction and transformation of the social constructionist research process.

Limitations of the Data Collection Methods

Each data collection method has its own strengths and limitations. Interview data is sometimes limited by distorted responses due to personal bias, anger, anxiety, politics or simple lack of awareness (Patton, 2002). In addition, the interview data may also be distorted when interviewees resort to self-serving responses. As researchers, we must be aware of our relationships with those being interviewed and take care not to reduce them to objects. These were issues that I considered as I analyzed and interpreted the dialogue sessions.

A limitation of observation data is that it only focuses on external behaviors and is often constrained by the limited sample of activities that are actually occurring during the timeframe of the observation (Patton, 2002). Again, because the participants were aware of being observed, their engagement with others in the setting might have been less authentic and intended to promote an identity that they believed was self-serving or desired by the researcher.
Triangulating my data collection methods might serve to overcome the limitations inherent in using any one of these methods alone.

**Summary**

In summary, my research study was framed within a social constructivist perspective in order to investigate how mentors and mentees utilized discourse in understanding and negotiating their relationship and what role this mentoring relationship played in their construction of knowledge about teaching and learning, as well as the transformation of their individual identities and practices. Data, in the form of dialogue sessions and observations was collected from three mentoring groups. Each group was composed of an in-service teacher, two pre-interns, who were enrolled in the ProTeach teacher education program at a local university, and me. Data were analyzed using two of the building tasks from Gee’s discourse analysis (activities and sociocultural identities), as well as two aspects of Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis (orientation to difference and speech exchanges, speech functions, and grammatical moods). My interpretations underwent member checking and peer review in order to enhance their validity. Ultimately, I attempted to share a rich description of the research process, the multi-layered voices of the mentors, mentees, and myself, as well as the questions I asked of the data so that a reader of this research could make his or her own decision about its validity, ethical rigor, and transferability.

**Overview of Chapters 4, 5, and 6**

The purpose of the next three chapters is to present my findings, filtered through the lenses provided by my research questions. In each chapter, I shall first provide a biographical description of the participants in the mentoring group, as well as the context in which they were situated. Next, I utilize a table, which is located at the end of each chapter, to summarize how the participants used dialogue, which was situated in and among three discourses (i.e., discourse
of mentoring, discourse of instruction, and discourse of classroom management), to transform the activities and practices of mentoring and teaching, as well as the identities they co-constructed and enacted over the course of their relationship. In addition, the table also summarizes the textual analysis that was performed throughout each chapter. Evidence of this textual analysis included the types of exchanges and speech functions that were used to enact each of the activities and identities, as well as the participants’ orientation to difference as they negotiated and constructed their identities and interactions within each of the activities. Next I use relevant and compelling excerpts from my data to illustrate how the mentor and mentee(s) used discourse to develop and maintain their mentoring relationships and to co-construct knowledge about teaching and learning. Each chapter will conclude with a consideration of how the mentor and mentee(s) co-constructed their individual practices and identitie
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentoring Group</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Biographical Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Mentoring Group 1 | Kenneth | Age: Thirties  
Race: Caucasian  
Role: Fourth grade teacher and mentor  
**Teaching Experience**: 9 years in ESE, third, and fourth grades  
**Most Advanced Degree**: Ed.S  
**Mentoring Experience**: 5-6 years |
| | Susan | Age: 22  
Race: Caucasian  
**Future Plans**: To teach in a Title 1 school |
| | Barbara | Age: Fifties  
Race: Caucasian  
Role: Third grade teacher and mentor  
**Teaching Experience**: 23 years in junior college, second and third grades  
**Most Advanced Degree**: Master’s degree  
**Mentoring Experience**: 7-8 years |
| Mentoring Group 2 | Elizabeth | Age: 22  
Race: Caucasian  
**Future Plans**: To teach special education |
| | Melissa | Age: 21  
Race: Caucasian  
**Future Plans**: To teach 2nd or 3rd grade in a school like Allenton |
| | James | Age: Twenties  
Race: Caucasian  
Role: Fourth grade teacher and mentor  
**Teaching Experience**: Four years in fourth grade.  
**Most Advanced Degree**: Ed.S  
**Mentoring Experience**: 3 years |
| Mentoring Group 3 | Amy | Age: 22  
Race: Caucasian  
**Future Plans**: To coach gymnastics |
| | Jessica | Age: 21  
Race: African-American  
**Future Plans**: To teach third, fourth, or fifth grade in Miami |
Table 3-3. The Reiterative Process of Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytic Step</th>
<th>Description of Process</th>
<th>Approximate Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transcription</td>
<td>Audio-tapes were transcribed verbatim and notated.</td>
<td>1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First reading of the data</td>
<td>The transcriptions were divided by mentoring group and each set of transcripts was read in its entirety.</td>
<td>1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second reading of the data</td>
<td>Each set of transcripts was read in its entirety. I noted excerpts that applied to one or both of my research questions.</td>
<td>1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third reading of the data: Open coding.</td>
<td>Each set of transcripts was read in its entirety. I used open coding to reduce and group the data.</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of the Discourses</td>
<td>I used the open codes to identify the Discourse that were being employed in the data.</td>
<td>1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration of Gee’s and Fairclough’s Discourse Analysis</td>
<td>I re-read the books by Gee and Fairclough and consulted with Mirka Koro-Ljungberg to make decisions about which aspects of these analytic methods would be most useful for my study.</td>
<td>1-2 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth reading of the data: Identification of the Discourses</td>
<td>Each set of the transcripts was read in its entirety. This time I noted which Discourse(s) were evident in each of the excerpts related to my research questions.</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth reading of the data: Gee’s analysis</td>
<td>The identified excerpts were analyzed using Gee’s activity-building questions.</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth reading of the data: Gee’s analysis</td>
<td>The identified excerpts were analyzed using Gee’s socioculturally-situated identity building questions.</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh reading of the data: Fairclough’s analysis</td>
<td>The identified excerpts were analyzed using Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis. The types of exchanges, speech functions, and grammatical mood were identified.</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth reading of the data: Fairclough’s analysis</td>
<td>The identified excerpts were analyzed using Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis. The participants’ orientation to difference was identified.</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of narrative for each mentoring group</td>
<td>I used the excerpts I had analyzed to construct narratives that illustrate how each of the mentoring groups developed and maintained their mentoring relationship and how they co-constructed knowledge of teaching and learning, and how their identities and practices were transformed</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4
ASKING QUESTIONS TO PROMOTE MENTEE-CENTERED MENTORING AND COLLABORATION

Mentoring Group 1: Kenneth and Susan

This mentoring group was situated in a fourth grade classroom at Allenton Elementary School. Originally the group was composed of a classroom teacher, Kenneth, and two pre-service teaching interns, Susan and Karen. However, shortly after the semester began, Karen withdrew from this placement for personal reasons. She was not present when my study began; however, she did return for a visit and participated in one of the dialogue sessions. I spent Mondays with this group and most of our dialogue sessions occurred at the end of the school day.

The Participants

Susan was a twenty-two year old Caucasian female who will graduate with a Master’s in elementary education. She has always wished to pursue a career in education because she believed it to be a rewarding profession. In fact, she has wanted to become a teacher ever since she attended kindergarten. Currently, she would prefer to teach students in the primary grades, preferably here in the Allenton area, or she would consider moving north. Susan has chosen an interdisciplinary focus for her degree because she did not want to limit herself to teaching a specific content area, and she would prefer teaching in a Title 1 school.

Kenneth was a Caucasian male in his thirties. He was a national board certified teacher and held a specialist degree. He had nine years of experience teaching, all of it in Allenton Elementary. His first job after graduation was in an ESE classroom. The following year he was placed in a third grade classroom at Allenton, but he has been teaching fourth grade for the past eight years. In addition, he has mentored pre-interns and interns for the past five or six years. While he has enjoyed and benefited from mentoring pre-service teachers, Kenneth originally
requested that no one be placed with him in the fall of 2006. He believed that in order to become a better mentor he needed some time to redefine himself as a teacher. However, due to a shortage of mentors, he agreed to take an intern during fall, 2006 and pre-interns during spring, 2007. Kenneth has also taught methods courses for the university, and next year he will be the site coordinator for Allenton Elementary and will work part time for the university as field advisor for the pre-interns and part time for the school district as a gifted educator at Allenton Elementary. Kenneth believed that this new role, as site coordinator, would strengthen and improve the connection between his school and the university’s teacher education program.

The Context

Susan and Kenneth were responsible for 24 fourth grade students and their class reflected the demographic makeup of the school. Students’ desks were arranged in groups of four. There was a blackboard on one wall, a screen on another and bulletin boards and several computers on a third wall. The teacher’s desk was located at the back of the classroom. There was also a classroom library in the back of the room with several beanbags for student seating.

Susan’s class schedule affected the amount of time she was able to spend with Kenneth in their fourth grade classroom. On Mondays she was able to spend the entire school day at Allenton Elementary School. However, on Tuesdays Susan was only able to spend three hours in the morning and on Thursdays and Fridays Susan spent four hours in the morning at school. Because Kenneth’s planning period occurred in the afternoon, he and Susan only had one day in which an extended amount of time could be devoted to discussion, planning, and mentoring. They frequently engaged in abbreviated conversations in the morning before the students entered the classroom and in whispered asides when necessary throughout the day. Kenneth and Susan also made use of email and the phone in order to communicate after hours and on weekends.
Overview of Kenneth’s and Susan’s Discourse

The purpose of this chapter was to investigate how Kenneth and Susan utilized discourse to negotiate their relationship and what role their mentoring relationship played in their co-construction of knowledge of teaching and learning. Hence, I sorted Kenneth’s and Susan’s discourse into two categories relative to the purposes of my study: “relationship development” and “co-construction of knowledge.” Table 4-1, which can be found at the end of this chapter, utilizes these two categories to summarize the ways I made use of aspects of Gee’s and Fairclough’s discourse analysis to understand Kenneth’s and Susan’s co-construction of their mentoring activities, as well as their identities as mentor and mentee.

As I analyzed the data in each of these categories, a number of distinctive activities emerged that characterized the nature of Kenneth’s and Susan’s discourse. These activities included developing an understanding of mentoring, establishing and maintaining rapport, communicating, observing, co-planning, providing feedback, and reflecting (See Column Two). Each activity resulted in the construction of specific identities, such as mentor and mentee as partners/friends; as facilitator and model, and as facilitator and reflective practitioner (See Column Three). Table 4-1 also reflects the ways that these activities and subsequent identity formations were situated within three distinct discourses as discussed in Chapter 2: (a) the discourse of mentoring, (b) the discourse of classroom management, and (c) the discourse of instruction (See Column 4). Finally, the table indicates the ways in which these activities and subsequent identity formations emerged through a textual analysis and consideration of how Kenneth and Susan used dialogue to negotiate their differences as described in Chapter 3 (See Column 5). In the remainder of this chapter, I utilize excerpts from the data to illustrate how each
activity and identity summarized in Table 4-1 contributed to Kenneth’s and Susan’s relationship
development and co-construction of knowledge.

Developing and Maintaining a Mentoring Relationship

According to McNamee and Gergen (1999), “persons represent the intersection of multiple
relationships” (p. 22); therefore, anyone who begins a new relationship brings with him or her
unique and specific relational histories that affect the ways in which future relationships are co-
constructed and enacted. In this way, the relationships developed by each of the mentors and
mentees were the result of their “broader relational engagements [which] intermingle [and] are
created and transformed” (McNamee & Gergen, 1999). These previous relationships often
resulted in the development of habits and expectations and it was through dialogue that the
participants created possibilities for new and unique configurations, which were always in flux,
and reshaped or recreated by the particularities of a specific interactive moment.

Developing an Understanding of Mentoring: Mentor and Mentee as Co-Constructors of
Meaning

Susan’s and Kenneth’s prior knowledge of and experience with mentoring were vastly
different. In fact, Susan’s previous experience with mentoring was limited, and the only
relationship she discussed had occurred during her practicum with a classroom teacher in a
different school. She revealed that while she had learned a lot about teaching and classroom
management through her observation of this teacher’s practices and methods, there had been
little time for questions and reflection and their conversations most often concerned the specific
assignments required by her university coursework or a discussion of their personal lives. In a
knowledge exchange, which included a number of evaluations, not only of her personal feelings
about this teacher, but also of the relevance of the learning that occurred, Susan summarized her
experience with this teacher and said:
I mean she was awesome and we really enjoyed it and we learned a lot from her but it wasn’t . . . us sitting down and talking to her about how she does certain things . . . I don’t really think that . . . we had much of a mentor experience before. It was more like observing and sitting there just watching . . . you know, not getting a chance to interact.

While the relationship Susan developed with this classroom teacher seemed to have met some of the psychosocial functions of mentoring (i.e., role modeling and friendship), it did not provide Susan with any of the career functions (i.e., coaching and challenging assignments) that would have supported Susan’s development as a teacher and reflective practitioner. Obviously, Susan recognized that a mentoring relationship encompassed more than she had previously experienced.

Consequently, Susan entered this new relationship with few preconceptions about mentoring and was open to the understandings she and Kenneth would construct about their roles as mentor and mentee, and the ways in which they would interact and relate. Her perceptions of mentoring underwent rapid and considerable transformation. In our first dialogue session she shared her changing impressions of mentoring in a series of realis statements that described her perceptions of how Kenneth provided mentoring. She said, “whereas now . . . it’s [mentoring] constant . . . back and forth. What you could do. What you’re . . . doing good. You know? Things like that.” In the mentoring relationship she developed with Kenneth, Susan was positioned as a partner or collaborator; although it also appeared that she, at least some of the time, positioned Kenneth as a coach or expert and depended on his feedback and counsel.

Unlike Susan, Kenneth had several years of experience as a mentor and described his concept of mentoring using the metaphor of a jigsaw puzzle enthusiast (Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, 2007). For him, the mentoring relationship was a jigsaw puzzle and the “many intricate pieces must come together to attain a cohesive, collaborative learning relationship” (Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, 2007, p. 45). Kenneth believed that one of his first tasks was to become acquainted with
the mentee personally, as well as professionally. In a succinct evaluation that was framed as a statement of fact, he shared one of the underlying tenets of his mentoring philosophy, “Everybody is different and you have to get to know them to be able to be a mentor.” For Kenneth, knowledge of and about his mentee was an important relational precursor if he was going to be able to be responsive to the needs of his mentee.

In concert with these beliefs, he espoused a learner-centered mentoring paradigm (Zachary, 2000) in which mentoring was characterized and performed as a learning partnership. For instance, he had learned that Susan liked “to have things very neatly organized and in a certain order. She wants to know exactly what’s expected.” Thus, every week Kenneth made sure to preview his instructional plans with Susan and to discuss her specific responsibilities. He also felt a responsibility to support his mentee in negotiating her goals as a teacher and her tasks as a university student. In this instance, he positioned himself as an advocate for Susan, who would guide her through this process, pointing out obstacles and facilitating her discovery of multiple interpretations and perspectives regarding her teaching practices. Ultimately, Kenneth believed that his mentoring should support and scaffold his mentee’s learning, teaching, and reflection, ensuring that a mentee’s “actions fit the teacher’s [mentee’s] platform, adhere to research-based practices, and suit the current teaching context” (Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, 2007, p. 46).

However, there were also times when Kenneth expressed his thoughts and provided explicit feedback regarding a specific situation. This was illustrated in an evaluation of his student-centered stance toward mentoring and his prediction of how his stance might affect future mentee behavior: “What I think isn’t as important as what they think and hopefully what will happen eventually is they’ll be able to . . . put what they think into action.” For Kenneth, a mentoring relationship involved collaboration and transformation. His philosophical stance
toward mentoring, inferred from the previous excerpts, seemed to indicate that he believed in sharing power with his mentee and in negotiating the nature of the relationship, as well as his own identity as a mentor as the relationship developed and evolved.

Establishing and Maintaining Rapport: Mentor and Mentee as Partners/Friends

In accordance with the research of many scholars, Susan and Kenneth agreed that establishing rapport and developing a personal connection was important to the effectiveness and quality of their mentoring relationship. Susan shared that she and Karen met Kenneth through a mutual friend early in the semester before their pre-internship. During the fall semester, 2006 Susan and Karen spent some informal time together with Kenneth and their mutual friend, attending the university’s homecoming parade, playing games, and eating. Susan shared that there was “a lot of playing games that I didn’t know how to play” and there was much laughter about a “shoe game” that each of them had trouble understanding. According to Kenneth, this “suffering together” helped them to form a rapport based on a shared experience of getting to know one another in an unofficial, informal, and more personal way. Susan and Karen also contacted Kenneth and asked if they could spend a day observing in his classroom before the Christmas break. He agreed, beginning the process of welcoming Susan and Karen into a particular community of practice. Furthermore, when Susan and Karen applied for placement as pre-interns, they requested Kenneth, “even though we might not have been supposed to,” and Kenneth, in an evaluative statement that assessed the effect of their actions, said, “Well I asked, too . . . . and that helped.” Their applications were approved and the university formally accorded Kevin the legitimate power of mentor and positioned Susan and Karen as his mentees.

Finally, Susan, Karen, and Kenneth met at a restaurant for the formal meeting suggested by the university in their placement letters. The interrogative mood of this conversation was created by the questions they asked each other about their personal, as well as their professional lives. In
this way they continued the process of becoming acquainted with one another. Some of the questions Kenneth posed included, “How many brothers and sisters do you have?” and “Where do you live?” Additionally, because Kenneth had also completed the teacher education program at the university Susan was attending, their conversation included a series of knowledge exchanges about the particularities of their individual experiences at the university and ended with an activity exchange in which their future interactions as mentor and mentee were discussed. Kenneth described this interaction and said that they had shared, “funny stories that we both . . . you know, [had] been through and then at the very end we talked about what we would be doing while we were interning ((laughs)).” For Kenneth, this personal connection was paramount to the development of a successful mentoring relationship. He believed that the rapport and trust they developed provided a necessary foundation for the work of teaching and mentoring.

Kenneth’s and Susan’s orientation to difference was one of searching for the commonalities within their experiences and understandings, as well as recognizing and accepting the differences that contributed to their unique relational histories and would enrich their relationship. In knowledge exchanges, composed of evaluative statements, they shared their interpretations and emphasized the value of establishing rapport for the development of their relationship and the effectiveness and relevance of the mentoring. Susan accentuated this difference, when she contrasted it with her previous mentoring experience and stated:

I think it helps because you know . . . we know something about one another . . . it was kind of intimidating when we walked into Ms. Hawthorne’s class, that’s who we, our mentor teacher was last year and we didn’t know her. And had never met her before and she’s like, “Hi. Who are you?”

Kenneth accepted this difference and then focused on the commonality of their understandings, providing further elaboration of Susan’s evaluation when he said:
It’s much easier to communicate with someone that you have trust with or you feel comfortable around . . . . Our personal lives, you know, really are . . . the rest of our day and this is part of it so we have to make sure that we take into account all of it. And I think a lot of times that doesn’t happen just for a variety of reasons. Like you said lack of time or lack of preparation.

While they both agreed that trust was a necessary aspect of an effective mentoring relationship, Kenneth acknowledged that there were often barriers, such as lack of time, which sometimes made it difficult to establish and maintain such a connection. However, it also appeared that Kenneth believed finding creative solutions for overcoming those barriers was an important part of his role as a mentor. Moreover, the level of trust they developed was of considerable significance in Susan’s development as an educator. She shared how their rapport created an environment in which she felt valued, respected and comfortable applying and reflecting on a variety of teaching practices that would inform her nascent identity as a teacher. In a realis statement, which evaluated the climate that had been created by the rapport she had developed with Kenneth, Susan said, “Because you feel more comfortable, you’re feeling like you’re, you can be yourself. You don’t feel like you’re . . . uptight and have to act a certain way.” Thus, Kenneth’s recognition, even celebration of the differences between them encouraged Susan to enact her philosophical stance and to become the teacher she envisioned. In the knowledge exchanges that follow, Kenneth described and evaluated his philosophy of mentoring that was informed by an openness to and exploration of the differences between him and his mentees:

Kenneth: [I know] that everybody is different and you have to get to know them to be able to be a mentor . . . . because you’re not gonna do the same thing for each person. What was good is I got to know them [his mentees] . . . a little bit before they came, you know. And then I could know like, Oh, you know, they make good cookies, you know. Little things like that.

Sharon: Mm hmm

Karen: ((laughs))
Kenneth: So, I, I think that that’s important to kind of be responsive to whatever you know that the person’s personality is like and what you know about them. Like I know that, um, Susan likes to have things very neatly organized in a certain order. And she wants to know exactly what’s expected and all those kinds of things. Not that Karen’s any different but, just using that as an example.

Kenneth accepted these differences and used them to tailor his interactions with Susan. He did not feel a need to resolve or overcome them. Instead, he used their differences to guide his interactions and dialogues with Susan. For instance, he always arranged to spend some time on Mondays reviewing the instructional plans for the week and discussing their individual responsibilities and roles within each lesson. Because his mentoring style was a learner-centered one, Kenneth believed that getting to know Susan enabled him to become an effective mentor for her. Kenneth positioned her as an authority on her needs and preferences and an irreplaceable contributor to the co-construction of their relationship. His mentoring stance accounted for the fact that his identity as a mentor was continually transformed by the relationships he developed with each of his mentees. For Kenneth, being a mentor was an ongoing process of transformation and becoming that was shaped by his openness to the nuances of each particular relationship.

Moreover, establishing and maintaining this rapport and connection with each other had implications for the professional work they accomplished. In an evaluative statement, Kenneth expressed their common perspective, “it was really important to have a building block for a relationship first before you do the tasks second.” Susan described how many of her peers had not had the opportunity to develop a relationship before beginning their pre-internships and how this had negatively affected not only their relationships, but also the nature of their teaching experiences in the classroom. According to Susan, some pre-interns were expected to design lessons and teach in a way that mirrored their mentor teachers’ styles, rather than experimenting with and evaluating the practices that were more suited to their own philosophies and teaching
practices; others were simply sitting in the back of the classroom grading papers. This recognition of the differences between her own experiences, as compared with those of her peers, provided Susan with additional confirmation of the efficacy of their mentoring relationship for her professional development and growth.

**Communication: Mentor and Mentee as Partners and Collaborative Problem-Solvers**

While Kenneth and Susan continually acknowledge the importance of rapport and trust for engaging in the work of mentoring and learning to teach, in a subsequent knowledge exchange, Kenneth shared that maintaining their personal connection was not always easy. During the week of the state test, he described their routine in the following realis statement, which revealed the starkness of their interactions that week, “I didn’t even have a chance to say hello pretty much. Come in in the morning, going hello. Here, go get your tests.” Furthermore, the only day that Susan was available for any extended dialogue and mentoring was Monday. Kenneth, who had embraced his positioning by the university as a mentor and was committed to developing a relationship that supported Susan as she became a teacher, summarized their dilemma in a knowledge exchange, which included his evaluation of the constraints imposed by their individual schedules on the time they could devote to mentoring. He said:

> It is hard. When she gets here, it’s like fifteen, twenty minutes in the morning . . . . And we do that. And we try to, we talk at lunch (pause) a lot . . . . But with the exception of Monday . . . it’s difficult. It’d be much more successful I think for both of us if we had more planning time.

In order to solve their predicament, Kenneth and Susan used a number of alternative means of communication including a dialogue journal, email, and phone calls in order to remain connected and to maintain their rapport. They also made good use of any time they had together throughout the day. For instance, when Susan arrived in the morning, she and Kenneth discussed any questions she had about the day’s instruction in the fifteen minutes before students entered
the classroom. When necessary, Kenneth had short, whispered conversations with Susan, while students were working independently, about what he had observed during the lesson that would be important for Susan to know as she worked with individual students. They also used their lunches for conferring about their students and instructional decisions, as well as sharing aspects of their personal lives. Both agreed that because Susan was rarely at school during Kenneth’s planning period, these lunchtime conversations were important to the success of their professional and personal relationship. The following exchange began with their evaluations of these lunchtime conversations and ended with realis statements that described the nature of their discourse:

Susan: I mean just eating lunch together I think helps.

Kenneth: Yeah. Our lunches are great though. I wish we had more lunches.

Susan: Yeah.

Kenneth: We talk about like, you know, this weekend, what’d you do? And all that stuff. And then we also talk about, so what are we gonna do with so and so? Or did you notice that so and so on his test did X? You know?

Susan: Mm hmm.

However, while they did their best to make optimal use of whatever time they had together for mentoring, Kenneth, in another evaluative statement ruefully admitted, “It’d be more successful I think for both of us if we had more planning time.” Ultimately, external factors constrained the amount of time available for mentoring, but Kenneth’s and Susan’s perseverance and flexibility with regard to their lack of shared planning time in all likelihood contributed to the successful development of their personal and professional relationship. They felt a shared commitment to maintaining a connection, and their positioning as partners within this relationship supported an openness that only enhanced the quality of the limited time they had for mentoring, professional development, and reflection.
Co-Constructing Knowledge of Teaching and Learning

Co-constructing knowledge of teaching and learning, as well as enacting and evaluating that knowledge was an important aspect of the mentoring relationship that developed between Susan and Kenneth. During this process, Susan was absorbed in developing her identity as a teacher and classroom manager, often positioning herself as a novice, who welcomed, even depended upon the guidance and support of her mentor, Kenneth. On the other hand, Kenneth, who already had a well-developed, yet flexible identity as a teacher, usually chose to engage Susan as a collaborator and partner as they co-planned and co-taught lessons. However, he never fully relinquished his positioning as a mentor in any of his interactions with Susan. He always seemed to be aware of his mentoring responsibilities, which included questioning, scaffolding, and modeling or providing expertise and specific direction when necessary. Thus, the mentoring discourse intermingled with the discourses of instruction and classroom management as Kenneth’s and Susan’s interactions and dialogues moved her from legitimate peripheral participant to full-fledged colleague.

Observation: Mentor as Model and Mentee as Observer and Active Learner

Susan’s pre-internship began in January; therefore, Kenneth had already established and taught the routines for his classroom and had also invested time in getting to know his students. Consequently, Susan positioned herself as an observer and Kenneth as an expert and model and relied on him as a source of the information she would need in order to be an effective classroom manager and teacher. Kenneth accepted this positioning, realizing that Susan needed to become familiar with the everyday routines he used with students to manage classroom activities and instruction. Kenneth acknowledged his positioning and described their early relationship in this knowledge exchange:
As time went on I would do things and they [Karen and Susan] would have no idea so they had to . . . ask me questions because I . . . you know, I can’t remember what I’ve said to whom or whatever so, like, they’d be like, “What is that? What’s the point?”

He expected Susan to be an active participant in her learning, questioning him about what she had observed and engaging him in a discussion that focused not only on what she had noticed, but also on the rationale for the behaviors, strategies, and techniques Kenneth demonstrated. Thus, mood of their initial relationship was primarily an interrogative one, as Susan had questions about the students and everything she was observing in the classroom. In a realis statement she recounted that Kenneth had described “what kind of students we had, kind of getting to know . . . our diverseness of our classroom. Kenneth’s take on co-teaching. What co-teaching models he felt . . . would work in certain types of lessons.” Even though Susan completed a classroom profile, which identified the characteristics and demographics of the class as a whole, she depended on Kenneth to provide further elaboration about each of the students in their classroom. Susan recognized that she needed specific and detailed information about the learning needs of each of the students if she was going to be effective in providing instruction that encouraged and supported student learning.

Additionally, Susan was expected to co-teach, and although she had been introduced to the various models, she had not yet developed a comprehensive understanding that would enable her to choose an appropriate co-teaching model for a specific lesson. Therefore, she positioned Kenneth as a teacher educator and relied on his experience and expertise to extend her limited knowledge and understanding of co-teaching, so that she would be able to make instructional decisions that would be suited to the content and would best support student learning. Kenneth was another resource for Susan to consult as she continued to make sense of the complex nature of teaching.
Co-Planning: Mentor as Facilitator, Model, and Instructional Designer and Mentee as Instructional Designer

Kenneth and Susan planned their instructional week on Mondays. Sometimes they co-planned lessons they would co-teach. In these instances, they positioned each other as collaborative partners, who brought their own unique expertise, perspectives, and skills to the task. Other times, due to university requirements, Susan was positioned as a designer of instruction for a lesson she would present by herself. In these instances, Kenneth provided support and positioned himself as a facilitator, using a combination of think-alouds and questions to scaffold her decision-making and consideration of alternative strategies for student learning.

An instance of co-planning occurred during our first dialogue session as Kenneth and Susan planned a math lesson that would introduce probability and the fractions used to represent probabilities. They had decided to develop two math stations, and Kenneth provided Susan with a choice as to which concept she would feel most comfortable teaching, creating the opportunity for her to be successful in planning and presenting instruction. Kenneth posed questions that positioned Susan as a designer of instruction and encouraged her to examine the knowledge base she was developing about teaching and learning:

Kenneth: We need to talk about our stations for tomorrow with math.
Susan: Yes.
Kenneth: Which one did you . . . wanna do? Did you wanna do the certain, unlikely, impossible, likely . . . or the fraction?
Susan: Um, it doesn’t matter to me. I mean, I feel comfortable with both. I . . . I don’t know. I can do the fraction one.
Kenneth: Okay. So do you have, have you thought about what you wanna do? Like what materials you wanna use?
Susan: You know, it’s funny because, you know, I was saying, I said that, I said, do you always use the spinner? The example that they gave in the book. And he said, “No, you
can use this or that or that.” And we actually . . . years ago, when I was at home at community college, we had to do a lesson for technology.

Kenneth: Right.

Susan: And I did M&M’s

Sharon: Oh

Susan: on a spreadsheet.

Kenneth: Oh yeah

Susan: But it was like, it was on probability ((laughs)).

Even though Kenneth positioned Susan as a collaborator in planning this lesson, he was, once again, always aware of his responsibilities as a mentor and his questions provided a space in which Susan was able to make instructional decisions and to develop her identity as a teacher. In this instance, her choice of a learning activity revealed her belief that instruction should actively engage the students in the learning. The activity she described required students to count how many of each color M&M was in their individual bags and then calculate the probabilities for pulling a particular color M&M from their bags. This learning activity also made it possible for students to collect data for their group or even the entire class and recalculate the probability of pulling a specific color from this larger set of M&M data.

Kenneth’s questions also made transparent the ways in which teachers think as they plan lessons, and encouraged Susan to position herself as an expert. Susan’s choice of a learning activity led to a number of activity exchanges on Kenneth’s part, requesting and modeling certain expectations for teacher behaviors during the lesson:

Susan: I can do the fractions with the M&M’s.

Kenneth: You can try . . . And you can do other things, too. I would do more than one thing.

Susan: Right. Like different examples.
Kenneth: So I would do like, you could do a two color counter cause that’s just one or two.

Susan: Right

Kenneth: You know, as long as they, the basic thing they have to know by the end is, of course, the top number is . . . you know

Susan: The out, the number of . . . whatever.

Kenneth: The actual outcome. And they have to use certain terms. And you want to use those.

Susan: Right.

Kenneth began this discussion with a very general, open-ended question (e.g., Which one do you want to do?) and then proceeded to ask more specific, probing questions as Susan identified the learning activities she would plan for this lesson. His requests directed her attention to specific aspects of planning a lesson and reminded Susan that the objective for student learning influenced her choice of learning activities and determined the instructional vocabulary that would be used.

Kenneth also addressed one of the practical issues involved and asked, “What kind of M&M’s are you gonna get? Are you gonna get like little bags?” Susan decided that the little bags would make the learning activity manageable and would also ensure that each student would actively participate. As Susan continued to participate in actively planning this lesson, she had questions of her own to pose, and she positioned Kenneth as a knowledgeable and experienced colleague. The mood of the dialogue that ensued was a declarative one composed of realis statements and evaluations. In this way Kenneth and Susan made decisions about the lesson and then questioned their decisions in order to finalize the format of the lesson they would co-teach:

Susan: Now would you, for the M&M’s would you have them like, with their own little sheet, fill out like their own . . . personal bag of M&M’s with their . . . have you seen that before? Where they have the sheet…is that how you would do it or?
Kenneth: I would as long as I modeled it for them first.

Susan: Right

Kenneth: And then say, “Here’s my bag of M&M’s and watch what I do.”

Susan: This is how many red ones I have, green ones I have

Kenneth: And ask ‘em questions as you go and then say, okay, here are your M&M’s. And make sure that, of course, you do little simple things like you don’t wanna eat them ‘til you’re done because you’re not gonna have accurate results, you know?

Susan: ((laughs)).

Kenneth: What if I ate, you need to ask them something like that, what if I ate one blue one? Then what will I have?

Susan: Okay.

Kenneth: But no, I think that’s great so, I would do, you know if you just wanna do like the coin counter just at the very beginning. Just so they have multiple ways of getting to the same thing.

Susan: Okay.

Kenneth. I think they’re gonna love that. And that’s good.

In the above series of activity exchanges, Kenneth provided some specific modeling of how Susan might introduce and conduct the activities at her station. Based on his teaching experience, Kenneth was able to present some scenarios for Susan to consider as she created her plan at home that evening.

Susan also questioned whether or not she should design a worksheet, which the fourth graders could use to record their data, or if they should develop their own chart. This time, instead of responding directly to her question, Kenneth encouraged Susan to draw on her knowledge of teaching and learning in order to discover her own answer:

Susan: Do I need to come up with some type of . . . worksheet for the M&M’s or should we just have them rip a piece of paper and do it?

Kenneth: Whatever works best for you.
Susan: It’d probably be quicker to go ahead and have a worksheet.

Kenneth: Right.

Susan: Just that way they don’t have to draw the table

Kenneth: Right.

Susan: Especially if you have some of ‘em in your group

Kenneth: Right

Susan: and then you’ll spend twenty minutes getting ready . . . to count M&M’s (laughs).

Kenneth: And our goal isn’t to have ‘em learn to make a chart for this thing.

As a planner of instruction, Susan was beginning to identify the multitude of decisions that determine whether or not a lesson is effective. She understood that due to limited time in their daily schedule, it was more appropriate for her to design a worksheet for students to use, rather than asking students to construct their own table for recording data. Kenneth provided some additional elaboration for her rationale, reminding Susan that the goal of this lesson was not to teach students how to make a chart; rather it was to teach students how to calculate probabilities. Susan learned that every aspect of the lesson needed to be planned and refined according to the needs of her students. Their dialogue continued, and Kenneth orally shared the instructional plans for his math station in a series of activity exchanges:

Kenneth: And then I’ll do the certain and unlikely. I’ll use, that’s really . . . handy for spinners. So I’ll use spinners for one thing. And maybe, oooh, I like to use dice because . . . we can talk about like . . . craps ((laughs)).

Susan: ((laughs)).

Kenneth: Or Yahtzee. You know, but you can talk about like which, how, you know, which one’s the most common. Seven. Why is seven considered lucky seven? Well, if you roll these dice, you’re gonna hit seven more than you hit anything else, you know? That’ll be good. Then we’ll do that. But we’ll have some sort of rec, record sheet, to so they can get experience with that.

Susan: Okay.
In this exchange, Kenneth made his planning practices transparent, sharing how he would connect his learning activities to the objective (learning how to calculate probabilities), to Susan’s station (students would also be recording their data), and to the fourth graders’ real-world experiences (playing Yatzee). His elaboration of the thought processes he employed when making decisions about a specific lesson provided Susan with an authentic and meaningful experience of co-planning a lesson. Additionally, Kenneth’s and Susan’s openness to and exploration of their differences resulted in the differentiation of instruction and provided their students with alternate ways of accessing and understanding the content. They were co-teachers, whose individual roles in planning for student learning, were valuable, indeed necessary. In fact, their differing instructional approaches were essential for the design of a meaningful lesson that would result in students mastering the learning objectives.

Through dialogue that encouraged collaboration, Kenneth and Susan co-constructed the professional knowledge necessary for designing a lesson that would meet the diverse needs of the students in their classroom. Kenneth posed questions that encouraged Susan to consider the practical, as well as the educational aspects of planning a lesson. Using a think-aloud technique, he modeled practitioner thinking, which provided Susan with feedback and scaffolded her development as a designer of instruction. Additionally, the interrogative mood, characterized by the questions Kenneth posed and indicative of his mentoring style, supported the development of Susan’s identity as a teacher who differentiated instruction.

**Planning: Mentor as Facilitator and Mentee as Instructional Designer**

In another instance, Susan was responsible for planning a reading lesson that would be observed by her university supervisor, and Kenneth embraced his role of supporting Susan in accomplishing this requirement of her teacher education program. Their fourth grade students were going to begin reading a chapter book and Kenneth suggested Susan spend that evening
becoming familiar with the book and considering the kinds of learning activities she might use to teach vocabulary and comprehension. Through requests and questions, as well as realis- 
statement, which described the nature of the chapter book and his previous experience with teaching it, Kenneth shared his perspective regarding the pacing of instruction and the complex nature of making instructional decisions. As a mentor, he made decisions about how much scaffolding he needed to provide Susan. Ultimately, he decided to foster her instructional decision-making skills through providing a brief glimpse into his previous experience and professional knowledge, which encouraged her to discover how to enact her teaching beliefs in ways that supported students’ learning:

Kenneth: So I guess, um, we’ll talk about tomorrow. And then by tomorrow give . . . kind of have a general idea about what kind of things you want to do. I saw you looking at the book today. What are the things you’d like to do with them? . . . .

Susan: So . . . are you planning . . . do you know, are you doing like . . . a chapter a day?

Kenneth: Well, probably not a chapter a day . . . . cause they’re longer . . . and they’re meatier. And I have to . . . it’s hard for me to tell you. I want to see what they [the fourth graders] do with it first.

Susan: Okay.

Because Kenneth’s teaching stance was a student-centered one, his pacing of these reading lessons would be determined by his students. However, Kenneth was also aware of his role as Susan’s mentor and of her need for more specific expectations. Thus, he continued this dialogue and provided Susan with some specific suggestions to consider as she previewed the chapter book. In these knowledge exchanges, Kenneth expressed his openness to difference, encouraging Susan to develop her own plans based on her own assessment of the materials and their fourth grade students:

Kenneth: Um, we’re gonna do a lot with sequencing with the book because there’s a lot of, like the whole thing is structured around six o’clock, seven o’clock, eight o’clock, nine o’clock
Susan: Like a time line. Okay.

Kenneth: Right. So, I mean, we’ll do that . . . Um . . . so . . . it’s up to you, what you feel like you want to do with it. There’s a lot of skills that are embedded and if you want to, I mean, tonight just look it over and see what you think.

Susan: Okay.

Kenneth: Like what I, what I’ll do is I’ll try to figure out . . . naturally what skills fall into that book.

Susan: Okay . . .

Kenneth: It’s just . . . like increasing the level of difficulty . . . so the higher level of Bloom’s, you know.

Susan: Okay.

Because Kenneth provided Susan with an example of one of the reading skills she could teach, Susan was more comfortable tackling this challenging assignment. Kenneth positioned Susan as a competent designer of instruction and welcomed the instructional decisions she would make when planning her lesson.

However, Susan’s abbreviated responses during their previous interaction may have prompted Kenneth to provide additional knowledge and support to Susan. Their conversation about planning this lesson continued, and Kenneth provided Susan with a possible framework for the structure of her reading lesson. Because he suggested some specific strategies without being prescriptive, he created room for Susan’s ideas, as well as any additional questions she might have:

Kenneth: Like tomorrow, we’ll do . . . vocabulary . . . for the chapter and, you know, read it . . . in a certain way. Have them respond to it somehow . . . I want to preview it again and make sure I know what he [the main character] does. I mean I know what he does, but I want to read it again.

Susan: So are you gonna have ‘em . . . Are you going to show them a timeline and have them fill out a timeline throughout the book? Like were you gonna have an add on each day?

Kenneth: Well, kind of. We’re gonna have like a sequence of events.
Susan: Okay.

Kenneth: Like one of the things I want them to do is look at how well the author describes things in here. And get them to develop image, talk about imagery.

Susan: Okay.

Kenneth: And they’re going to, cause these kids who, pretty much really enjoy drawing . . . so they get a lot out of it [drawing], so I’ll have them draw things, of what they see. In sequential order basically, so, I mean . . . sequencing by using a timeline.

Susan: Okay.

Kenneth responded to Susan’s questions and described how he modified a learning activity based on the interests and needs of his students. Therefore, this dialogue provided Susan with a number of issues to consider as she familiarized herself with the story and made decisions about how she would engage the students in reading and understanding one of the chapters in this book.

**Providing Reflection and Feedback: Mentor as Critical Friend and Facilitator and Mentee as Reflective Practitioner**

In addition to using their time together for planning lessons, Kenneth and Susan also engaged in reflecting on the lessons that Susan presented. Kenneth chose to temper his role as an evaluator and positioned himself as a critical friend, engaging Susan in co-reflection through the use of questions and evaluations, as well as sharing his own prior experience. The post conference I observed and audiotaped during our second dialogue session began with Kenneth posing an open-ended question that was followed by probing questions designed to elicit more specific answers from Susan:

Kenneth: So I want to start by asking you how you thought your lesson went today.

Susan: I think it could have gone a lot better.

Kenneth: What particular things are you thinking about? . . . Every time I’m teaching I know, and I noticed you did this throughout your lesson, you’re thinking about, okay, what do I need to do next? What do I need to do next? And so at the end when I’m done I
always think about, okay, if I did this again . . . what would I do? So that’s kind of what I’m asking you.

Susan: Um . . . it seems like no matter how prepared I am, like I told Sharon, I had note cards up there. Things I wanted to say. Do you think I said what I wanted to say off ((laughs)) my note cards? No. I looked at ‘em for two seconds and the . . . eh, there went that idea . . . I don’t know. I don’t think they [the students] got it [the learning objective].

Kenneth: And what are you . . . what do you think . . . um, will change in order, like, to help that? What do you think’s gonna happen to where you’ll be able to focus on your note cards or how much you’ve prepared? How’ll you be able to change? Why do you think you didn’t in other words?

Susan: I feel like . . . hopefully, eventually I won’t need note cards. Because it becomes intrinsic and I won’t have to, you know

Kenneth: Mm hmm . . . Mm hmm

Susan: But . . . I feel like, I write down the steps then . . . I say them, but then like I forget one or something. You know what I mean? Like I talk to you, co-teaching, how I really liked it because . . . it gave you a chance to fix ((snaps fingers)) everything the second time that you knew you messed up on or you knew you needed to change.

In this interaction, Kenneth encouraged Susan’s reflection by addressing her specific concerns with the lesson. The interrogative mood of their dialogue, created through Kenneth’s questions, helped Susan clarify the nature of her concerns and prompted her to consider how she would modify her teaching in the future. Kenneth then offered his perspective in the following series of realis statements, which cast him in the role of an observer who described Susan’s teaching practices during the lesson, and evaluations, which provided his insights regarding the behaviors of certain students:

Kenneth: Well, to me just from what I was, I mean, who am I? I’m just an observer. But it looked to me like . . . you had your plan. And you wanted to follow your plan. But at the same time you were trying to respond to what the students were doing. So sometimes when you do that, it’s kind, it’s hard to go back to your plan when you’ve got so many other things going on.

Susan: Right.

Kenneth: And I think the only way that’s gonna change is with the experience of doing more. I don’t think there’s anything that you can do right now . . . to change that, you know? ((laughs)).
Kenneth reassured Susan that it was evident she had planned and that, with experience, she would gain expertise in implementing her plan while, at the same time, remaining attentive to the needs of her students. However, effective instruction also depended on motivating students and managing any inappropriate behavior. Thus, Kenneth asked Susan to consider a specific situation he had witnessed during her lesson. He first employed realis statements to describe what had occurred during the lesson. Then he used questions and requests to encourage Susan’s reflection on the situation, which, in turn, facilitated her search for strategies that would address the perceived problems:

Kenneth: But I wanna ask you a couple questions. One of the things that I saw and that I heard, two kids particularly, Harry and Jacob. Um, Harry left his desk like this ((Kenneth used his two hands shoved himself and his chair back from the desk)).

Susan: I saw ‘im.

Kenneth. There was a reason for it though. And I figured out what the reason was. And I want you to figure out what it could be. . . . Do you have any idea what might of caused him to respond in that way? . . . Why did he do that?

Susan: Harry probably cause he didn’t have a clear role ((strikes the desk with her hand)). . . you know what I mean?

Kenneth: Mm hmm.

Susan: Like I don’t think, I know I wasn’t clear with their roles. I know that. So I think Harry’s problem was, is he felt like he wasn’t . . . able to do the whole thing. He wants to be hands in all the time.

Kenneth: Mm hmm.

Susan: And he wasn’t. And that group is just a mess to begin with ((laughs)).

Kenneth: Well, right. That group has a hard time working together . . . .

Susan: What was the cause?

Kenneth: Well I will just tell you, I don’t know. But a lot of the kids asked this question. They said am I gonna get a turn?

Susan: Yeah. I know I was not clear on the roles. I should have stated . . .
Kenneth: Right

Susan: once I finished doing it with them. The first object, seat number one will do. The second object, seat number two will do. Third object, seat number three will do.

Kenneth: Right . . . Even if you just said, it could just be, everyone’s gonna get a turn. I mean it didn’t even have to be that clear.

Kenneth recognized the difference in an attempt to direct Susan’s attention to the discrepancies so that she might discover how to resolve them. He positioned her as a knowledgeable and competent classroom manager, and Susan clearly specified the way in which she would eliminate this management problem in subsequent lessons. However, while Kenneth’s questions served to provide the challenge that would encourage Susan’s growing competence as an educator, he was also keenly aware of his need to provide empathy and perspective so that Susan did not judge herself too harshly. The following realis statements evaluated the totality of the activities that occurred in the day’s lesson. Kenneth stated:

It’s so hard when you have so many things to think about though because here you had to explain . . . you had to connect, obviously, activate their prior knowledge, which you did with those questions. You had to explain them handing out the materials and then putting up the materials. You had the chart to explain. You had the whole procedure of making sure you watch me and then make sure you do it and whatever. You know and that was a lot. There was a lot to do . . . .that’s just any lesson. Any lesson. There’s always gonna be ten things that you wanna do differently, so.

Thus, teaching is a complex activity and learning to teach is a lifelong endeavor. Kenneth aligned himself alongside Susan, revealing that there were always aspects of his lessons that he would choose to redesign or present differently if given the opportunity to do the lesson again. Feiman-Nemser (1998) has suggested that mentors, who wish to help pre-service teachers who are learning to teach, must have clear ideas about the kinds of teaching they want novices to learn and what that teaching entails. Kenneth’s feedback revealed his understanding of effective teaching and provided a basis for the knowledge that he and Susan co-constructed. In an evaluative statement Kenneth told Susan that the graphic organizer she designed made it easy for
the students to organize their information and thinking, and in a series of realis statements and evaluations Kenneth commended Susan for her attentiveness to the needs of her students, providing her with specific feedback as to the effectiveness of her teaching practices. He said:

The thing that I noticed that was . . . really neat for me was just . . . how well you were monitoring what they were doing. Because you always, you realized, you know, when they needed somebody to come over there and kinda redirect them. You realized . . . the three times that we needed to come back to as a whole group to like have our new direction or have . . . maybe . . . something you wanted to say that you didn’t get a chance to or something you wanted to reiterate because, you know, it didn’t sink in or whatever reason.

According to Kenneth, this monitoring of students’ attention and learning was far more important than following what she had written on her note cards. Finally, Kenneth questioned Susan as to how she would assess students’ learning. Susan admitted ignorance and positioned Kenneth as an expert, a role he willingly assumed in an effort to provide Susan with some viable alternatives for the future.

Susan: I don’t know how I’ll know [that the students had learned] ((laughs)).

Kenneth: So we can look at what they did today.

Susan: Mmm

Kenneth: When we get that turned in. And then look at different things that they do in the future maybe?

Susan: Yeah.

Kenneth: Like when we do . . . we’re gonna have to do a lesson on buoyancy and they’re gonna have to find out the density. So they’re gonna have to figure the mass. They’re gonna have to figure out the volume. And they’re gonna have to divide them . . . to figure out what the density of the object is, so . . .

Susan: Yeah . . . so I guess time will tell ((laughs)).

Kenneth connected Susan’s lesson with future lessons and provided her with an example of how she might encourage her students to apply new learning to solve problems. In modeling the many questions a teacher asks about any lesson, Kenneth encouraged Susan to develop the habits
of an effective educator. She was receptive to his questions and evaluations and willingly positioned herself as a reflective practitioner.

**Concluding Thoughts**

The analysis of Kenneth’s and Susan’s discourse, as reported in this chapter, revealed that their mentoring was a relational process and as such, the nature of their relationship provided the foundation upon which learning, negotiation, and transformation occurred. Kenneth and Susan developed a relationship in which they viewed each other as collaborators and partners whose perspectives and expertise benefited the learning of their students, as well as their own personal growth and transformation. The mood of their relationship was primarily an interrogative one, providing a context in which their differences were accepted and explored and created discourses that were critical and creative. Both Kenneth and Susan asked questions and thought aloud as they discovered answers, evaluated their choices and modified their decisions. Susan shared that she co-constructed knowledge about teaching and learning with Kenneth through the dialogues in which they engaged as they co-planned lessons and then reflected on these lessons. She evaluated these experiences and believed that her interactions with Kenneth were influencing her identity as a teacher:

Talking to him helps. . . . I guess kind of ingrain in my mind, like those are the things that I need to be thinking of as I write a lesson, as I plan a lesson as I . . . teach a lesson I try to remember . . . those, those things he mentioned that, you know, it might work better this way, you know. I take his advice with an open mind and I want to, to try . . . you know what he has because . . . he’s obviously been a successful teacher for many years.

However, Kenneth purposefully provided choice and opportunities for Susan to problematize the situation and discover multiple solutions. He clearly eschewed the role of providing a template of teaching practices for Susan to emulate. Cloning himself was not Kenneth’s goal. In fact, his own words eloquently expressed the nature of the mentoring relationship that he and Susan negotiated and nurtured:
I don’t want . . . to direct someone else’s teaching because their philosophy may be different from mine. And I don’t want to like push my philosophy onto them. So I figure if I question and . . . you know . . . kind of solicit input from . . . whoever I’m talking to then it’s gonna be much more meaningful for them and it’s going to really help me know more about them so I can help them decide . . . ((clears throat)) where they want to go next or what they want to do cause my job is not to . . . have them become me, it’s to have them become themselves.

Kenneth’s stance toward mentoring encouraged Susan to develop her own unique identity as a teacher; however, the relationship that developed between them, as well as Susan’s observation of Kenneth’s teaching practices influenced her beliefs about teaching and the teacher identity she was constructing. In the realis statement and evaluations that follow, Susan described and assessed some of the strategies and practices that were becoming a part of her identity:

Susan: I think Kenneth has . . . great classroom management. Um . . . and I, I think that’s a, a necessity in a class . . . . Going over and constantly reinforcing procedures is important. And following those procedures yourself. Kenneth always models it.

Sharon: Mm hmm

Susan: I mean, you know, how you want your students to act, you should act . . . . I like cooperative learning because I’ve, we’ve read a lot about it, but actually seeing it in the classroom. I really, really, really, really like and . . . you know, teachers say they try it and then they just kind of give up on it because it’s too much work, but . . . it’s constantly going in here, you know . . . . it’s the classroom community and I think that’s, that’s a key and I think those classroom building activities that he does where they have to write about one another in their journals and um . . . you know to earn team points and just, just simple things like that I think helps with . . . .like learning as a whole.

Observing Kenneth as he engaged in specific teaching practices was crucial for Susan’s understanding of specific strategies and techniques. She has realized the importance of modeling behaviors for her students, and she has also recognized that building community in the classroom was an important first step in creating an environment that supported student learning. While this internship experience was challenging, Susan had gained confidence in her abilities to plan
and present instruction and she was also able to make connections between her university coursework and its application in a real-world classroom.

In addition, the positioning of Kenneth as a mentor had implications for his own identity as a teacher. In a knowledge exchange he described and evaluated the influences of mentoring on his teaching practices and identity:

I think maybe I’m getting . . . better at connecting my own platform and philosophy with what I do. Because by . . . constantly rethinking about what I’m doing so that I know what . . . . I know how to show this to someone. Or I know how to explain this to someone or whatever. That I’m better at it because . . . you know, without Susan or some other inquisitive person here, I wouldn’t have um . . . really thought things through as much.

Thus, Kenneth problematized his own practices and became more aware not only of how he enacted his teaching and mentoring philosophies, but also of their implications for Susan and his fourth grade students. The interrogative mood of their relationship, which was created, in part, by Susan’s questions, provided Kenneth with an opportunity for critical reflection and a more elaborated understanding of his practices and philosophy of teaching, as well as mentoring.

Finally, even though there was a certain synchronicity in Kenneth’s and Susan’s teaching practices, it was their acceptance and exploration of their differences that more profoundly influenced and transformed their identities and practices. The following knowledge exchange occurred during our last dialogue session and provided a final evaluation of the lasting influence of their mentoring relationship:

Kenneth: It’s really neat because Susan . . . does a lot of things the way I would do them.
Sharon: Mm hmm.
Kenneth: It’s neat though because we’re not the same person so I do get to see . . . her ideas about doing some things.
Sharon: Right.
Kenneth: How she, how she looks at things with a similar idea but puts them into practice differently. I get a different perspective, um, and then being better at connecting my
practice and my platform. Being better at . . . not leading someone . . . to deciding what to do in their own practice, so they can, make their own decisions.

Susan: Yeah, I think that’s helped me, too. When he . . . when he does ask me, well what do you want to do in this lesson? Well what do you . . . you know, what do you have planned? And why are you doing this? That helps me . . . I guess I have it somewhere in my head, but it helps me verbalize it . . . . It helps me rethink it and make sure that’s exactly . . . how I wanna do it and um . . . kind of like a reassuring almost, you know?

Sharon: Mm hmm

Susan: Oh, that’s why we have objectives ((laughs)). You know what I mean?

Kenneth clearly differentiated his mentoring practices based on the needs of his mentee. This enabled him to create an environment and engage Susan in the kinds of activities and tasks that would support her development as a teacher, more specifically, as the teacher she envisioned herself to be. At the same time, he critically examined his own teaching and mentoring practices, which only served to support his own learning and the elaboration of his identities as a mentor and teacher. The reciprocity in their relationship benefited both of them and encouraged them to critically question their practices and position themselves as reflective practitioners, who embraced differences as an opportunity for transformation and growth, which ultimately benefited their students’ learning.
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Mentoring Group 2: Barbara, Melissa, and Elizabeth

This mentoring group was situated in a third grade classroom at Allenton Elementary School and was composed of Barbara, the mentor teacher and two pre-interns, Melissa and Elizabeth. I met with this group on Tuesdays, and our dialogue sessions were conducted during their daily planning period, which occurred in the morning.

The Participants

Elizabeth was a 22 year old Caucasian female whose motivation to become a teacher stemmed from her experiences teaching math, working at a summer camp for mentally and physically handicapped adults, and working as a teacher’s aide in a special education class at her high school. Elizabeth considered this special education teacher to be a mentor who “sparked my desire to do special ed.” She would like to teach out of state and mentioned Chicago as a place where she would like to live and begin her career. Elizabeth will receive a Bachelor’s degree in elementary education and a Master’s in special education.

Melissa was a 21 year old Caucasian female, who grew up in New Jersey and always wanted to attend an out-of-state college. To this end, she applied for and received a scholarship that would fund her out-of-state education as long as she agreed to teach in New Jersey for at least three years upon her graduation; otherwise she will have to repay the loan. She had some experience babysitting when she was growing up and she said, “I don’t know what else I would want to do, so why not?” Her philosophy was, “if I don’t like it, it’s not like I have to be a teacher for the rest of my life. But now [after her experiences in classrooms] I like it so . . . ” Melissa would like to teach either second or third grade and felt she would be most comfortable in a school like Allenton or in a private school. She also mentioned a preference for staying in
this state or returning to New Jersey, and at this point, did not see herself leaving the profession “cause I don’t want to have to go back to school ((laughs)).” Melissa will receive a Bachelor’s degree in elementary education and a Master’s in special education.

Barbara was a Caucasian female in her fifties. She held a Master’s degree in education and had twenty-three years of experience as a teacher. She began her career in education teaching second and third grades in a private elementary school for six years. She then taught at the junior college level for three years, as well as Title 1 and gifted classes before settling into her third grade position at Allenton. Barbara chose teaching as a career because “I wanted to be able to raise a family . . . and work.” She has been mentoring interns and pre-interns for at least seven or eight years. Because one of her favorite jobs was teaching at the junior college level she thought, “mentoring would be the same thing.” Barbara also shared that she has always enjoyed and benefited from discussing teaching and student learning with the pre-service teachers she has mentored.

The Context

Elizabeth, Melissa and Barbara taught in a third grade classroom of 23 students. The desks were arranged in groups of two or three, and these groups of desks were arranged horizontally and faced the front of the room. A chalkboard and screen were on the front wall. There were bookshelves on both of the side walls, as well as a writing center and couch for students to sit on during independent or partner reading. The teacher’s desk and computers were also at the back of the room, along with cupboards, a sink, and a table that served as a desk for Elizabeth and Melissa.

Elizabeth and Melissa negotiated their scheduled time at school with Barbara. Because weekly tests in reading and spelling were administered in the mornings every Friday, Barbara did not feel that Fridays would provide the pre-interns with the kinds of experiences they wished.
Thus, Melissa and Elizabeth chose to spend the entire day at school on Mondays and Thursdays, and four hours in the morning on Tuesdays.

**Overview of Barbara’s, Elizabeth’s, and Melissa’s Discourse**

The purpose of this chapter was to investigate how Barbara, Elizabeth, and Melissa utilized discourse to negotiate their relationship and what role their relationship played in their co-construction of knowledge of teaching and learning. Hence, I sorted their discourse into two categories relative to the purposes of my study: “relationship development” and “co-construction of knowledge.” Table 5-1, which can be found at the end of this chapter, utilizes these two categories to summarize the ways in which I made use of aspects of Gee’s and Fairclough’s discourse analysis to understand Barbara’s, Elizabeth’s, and Melissa’s co-construction of the activities of mentoring, as well as their identities as mentor and mentees.

As I analyzed the data in each of these categories, a number of distinctive activities emerged that characterized the nature of Barbara’s, Elizabeth’s, and Melissa’s discourse. These activities included developing an understanding of mentoring, establishing and maintaining rapport, communicating, observing, developing a professional knowledge base, planning, co-planning, providing feedback, and managing behavior (See Column Two). Each activity resulted in the construction of specific identities such as mentor and mentee as partners/friends; as knowledgeable facilitator and novice colleagues, and as provider of feedback and instructional designers (See Column Three). Table 5-1 also reflects the ways that these activities and subsequent identity formations were situated within three distinct discourses as discussed in Chapter 2: (a) the discourse of mentoring, (b) the discourse of classroom management, and (c) the discourse of instruction (See Column 4). Finally, the table indicates the ways in which these activities and subsequent identity formations emerged through a textual analysis and consideration of how Barbara, Elizabeth, and Melissa used dialogue to negotiate their differences.
as described in Chapter 3 (See Column 5). Once again, in the remainder of this chapter, I utilize excerpts from the data to illustrate how each activity and identity summarized in Table 5-1 contributed to Barbara’s, Melissa’s, and Elizabeth’s relationship development and co-construction of knowledge.

**Developing and Maintaining a Mentoring Relationship**

Barbara, Melissa, and Elizabeth brought their diverse relational histories with them as they began their relationship, and their histories influenced the ways in which they engaged each other in dialogue and shaped the nature of the relationship they developed. Once again, the mentor teacher, in this case, Barbara, had more previous experience with mentoring than either of her pre-interns and the initial conversations that she had with Elizabeth and Melissa were influential in shaping their relationship and the nature of their interactions as they explored the practices of teaching and mentoring.

**Developing an Understanding of Mentoring: Mentor and Mentees as Co-Constructors of Meaning**

Melissa and Elizabeth recounted experiences with other classroom teachers that were similar to Susan’s and did not provide them with any definitive understandings of mentoring. Melissa, in describing her experience in another elementary classroom two semesters previous to this one, shared that the expectations for this preceding placement were very different. She was only at the school two mornings a week and was expected to observe and to plan and present two lessons. She did not spend enough time in that classroom to know the students well or to become actively involved in the daily planning, teaching, and reflection upon lessons. Melissa stated, “she [her previous mentor] wasn’t really, um, all that helpful.” However, Melissa tempered her evaluation and said, “but at the same time we [Melissa and Elizabeth] weren’t really teaching.” Melissa excused this teacher from assuming a mentoring role, believing that
she was not positioned as a mentor by the university's expectations for this placement. Although she and this teacher shared personal stories, they did not engage in co-planning or any reflective discussions of their teaching practices.

Melissa was also beginning to realize that the interactions between herself and any classroom teacher with whom she was placed were influenced by the ways in which they were positioned, not only by each other, but also by the university. In fact, Melissa did not characterize any of her previous relationships with classroom teachers as mentoring relationships. According to Melissa, “I don’t even know if it was called mentor teacher until I came here.” For Melissa, the university played a role in positioning the pre-interns and the classroom teacher. In a letter specifying their placement, Barbara was specifically positioned as their mentor teacher. Thus, Melissa and Elizabeth were provided with a conceptual framework that they would continue to refine throughout their relationship with Barbara. Already, Melissa’s relational history was influencing her expectations for this relationship and her understanding of mentoring. In an activity exchange she shared, “I guess I was, I was expecting for the teacher, for my mentor teacher this time to be . . . um, more . . . encouraging and . . . um, you know, um getting me to do more and that kind of thing.” Melissa seemed to believe that mentors encouraged their mentees through providing challenging assignments and opportunities to engage in the practices of teaching.

Similarly, Elizabeth shared her lack of experience with the kinds of interactions considered effective mentoring practice. In a realis statement that described the interactions she had with a previous “mentor” teacher she said, “I never really talked to her [the classroom teacher] all that much and then we only had to do the two lessons and I’d say, ‘Oh is it okay if I teach a lesson on rhymes next Tuesday?’ and she said, ‘Yep.’” While Elizabeth showed initiative and faithfully
met the requirements of the teacher education program and her placement, she did not engage in any reflective conversations that problematized her own or her supervisory teacher’s classroom practices, conversations which might have furthered her development as an effective educator. Thus, Elizabeth’s and Melissa’s fledgling relationship with Barbara would not only provide entrance into a community of teaching practice, but would also enable them to elaborate and refine their understandings and expectations of mentoring.

Like Kenneth, Barbara also depended on her mentees to assist her in determining the kind of mentor she needed to be so that they could design a mentoring relationship that would suit all of their needs. She shared her perspective using evaluations and realis statements, which described their initial meetings and Barbara’s perceptions of them:

Barbara: It’s always fun getting to meet them for the first time because they all come in with different questions. And I remember Elizabeth, the first day she was here and had like ninety questions.

Elizabeth: ((laughs)).

Barbara: Which I thought was pretty neat. I like it when they have questions. I never know exactly where to start.

Because learning to teach is often a process of experiential learning, the experiences of pre-service teachers need to be taken as starting points for their learning (Koster, Korthagen, Wubbels, 1998). Moreover, Barbara realized that mentoring was an individualized and particular practice, based on each pre-intern’s unique combination of needs, interests, and abilities. Thus, the beginning of their relationship was characterized by an interrogative mood. Furthermore, because learning to teach is a complex, contextualized, and ongoing process, Barbara believed she was responsible for providing her pre-interns with meaningful and relevant experiences that would enable them to develop identities as teachers and would encourage and
support their growth as professionals. In the following knowledge exchange Barbara posed a series of questions that emphasized the situated nature of her mentoring:

There’s so much I want to teach them. There’s so much to cover. And you don’t want to overwhelm ‘em the first three weeks they’re here ((laughs)) . . . . [I wonder] am I modeling something that’s going to be helpful to them? Am I . . . ((laughs)) modeling something that’s not helpful to them. How can I encourage them to get involved in the classroom and with the kids? . . . . But, um . . . mostly I wanted, I want them to feel comfortable in my classroom. I want them to feel like it’s their classroom, too. I want them to feel this . . . ownership of kids.

Barbara was aware that Melissa and Elizabeth would be positioning her as an expert, but she also understood her role of recognizing and providing opportunities for her pre-interns to become legitimately involved in the teaching and learning that occurred in their classroom. Therefore, she asked Melissa and Elizabeth to work one-on-one with specific students the first day of their internship, acknowledging their need for incremental steps in becoming full-fledged members of the teaching community and providing them with opportunities to become involved in ways that complemented their skills and abilities. Melissa and Elizabeth began to understand that their mentor viewed them as novice colleagues and believed that learning about teaching was best accomplished by becoming actively involved with students and being provided with opportunities to develop their teaching practices.

Establishing and Maintaining Rapport: Mentor and Mentees as Partners and Friends

Although Barbara, Elizabeth, and Melissa did not spend extended time getting to know one another before the semester of their placement, they believed it was important to establish a personal connection and a rapport in order to develop the kind of mentoring relationship that would promote and support their development as teachers. When Melissa learned she would be placed with Barbara at Allenton Elementary School, she consulted her roommate, who knew the interns who had been placed with Barbara in a previous semester, and solicited the opinions of
others regarding their interactions with Barbara. In a knowledge exchange, Melissa shared the conversation she had with her roommate, as well as an evaluation of her upcoming experience:

I was like, ‘Oh I have Barbara’ and she’s [her roommate] like, ‘Oh, she’s good’ cause I guess she [her roommate] was friends with your interns, she’s like, ‘Oh, they like her’ so I knew that I wasn’t going into a really scary situation ((laughs)).

For Melissa knowing that other pre-interns had enjoyed their experience with Barbara seemed to provide a sense of security, which according to Maslow (1987), is an important precursor to learning, and was, in all likelihood, a necessary condition for Melissa as she began the work of learning to teach. Additionally, Elizabeth shared that, for her, knowing about Barbara’s family was especially important in establishing rapport. In a knowledge exchange of realis statements and evaluations Elizabeth shared her perspective of how learning this personal information affected her willingness to develop a relationship with Barbara:

Family is so important to me that knowing about her family helps with the relationship just because I know where she’s coming from and how the experience that she’s had, you know, raising kids and, you know, with adopted kids and everything, that was, that was a big, um, that was important to me to learn about her family.

In sharing the stories of her personal life, Barbara established a connection with her pre-interns based on their similarities. This focus on commonality was evident in Elizabeth’s evaluative statement that predicted the nature of their time together. She said, “It’s gonna be a great year ((laughs)).” Furthermore, the rapport they established with each other was important for Elizabeth and Melissa as they engaged in the complex task of learning to teach. Both of the pre-interns felt very comfortable discussing their ideas for learning activities and lessons with Barbara and soliciting her opinions and advice. Melissa described one instance in which she attempted to describe a game she wanted to use in a math lesson. Admittedly, Barbara did not understand her first explanation, and Melissa shared that had it not been for the trust and rapport she had developed with Barbara, she would have given up and planned something else. Instead,
Melissa persevered and finally described the game to Barbara in a way she understood. According to Melissa, “I guess you could say like because we get along, um, like personally it, it makes it so much easier to get along like teaching wise . . . you know what I mean? ((laughs)). They had developed a relationship in which both Elizabeth and Melissa were willing to take the risks that were necessary for learning.

**Communication: Mentor and Mentees as Colleagues**

Finding time for mentoring proved to be a much easier task for this group as they had forty-five minutes of planning time each morning they were together. Barbara’s evaluation of their daily opportunities for dialogue and reflection first positioned Elizabeth and Melissa as pre-interns who needed specific feedback and an occasion to ask questions, but then repositioned them as co-teachers, whose observations of the third graders provided Barbara with a more elaborate understanding of her third grade students’ needs:

And it’s [the daily planning period] wonderful, because it allows them to ask questions about what they’re doing in classes or what their lesson plans are going to be and that sort of thing. It allows me to give them feedback. It allows me to ask them questions about what they’re seeing with the kids.

Moreover, these daily conversations provided a place in which they could discuss their differing ideas about teaching. Both Melissa and Elizabeth appreciated Barbara’s acceptance of these differences. In a series of realist statements and evaluations, they related how they positioned Barbara as an expert they could depend upon to evaluate their ideas and plans, and to offer feedback that was meant to challenge, support, and encourage:

Elizabeth: If we have an idea and we go to her and she just, “Yeah, that’s great.” And, and if, and if she does find something in it, something, you know, she rather us not do or that the kids wouldn’t respond to because she knows the kids better than we do

Sharon: Mm hmm

Elizabeth: So if she knows that we’re going to do something that they wouldn’t respond as well to she would give us a suggestion of something else to do instead . . . um, but, for the
most part she’s very encouraging about our ideas which, which is very . . . uh, you know, I, I was worried . . . . that she would, you know, be set in her ways and, you know, and just, and like, “No, this is how it needs to be done.” . . . And she even said ((Melissa laughs)) um, she enjoys getting to hear us cause it helps her to stay on top of things . . . . I like how she just encourages us to, to be, you know free with, you know, if we want to introduce a new, new way of doing something she’s very for it and, um, I, I know that, that . . . I, the fact that I know that she is for us.

While Melissa and Elizabeth positioned themselves as novice teachers who, in certain circumstances, needed some specific direction, they were, with Barbara’s encouragement and acceptance of their differing beliefs and practices, repositioning themselves as practitioners whose ideas were relevant and valuable and would benefit student learning. Because of the trust and rapport they had developed with Barbara, Elizabeth and Melissa freely shared their ideas with Barbara. This provided Barbara with another opportunity to know her pre-interns, which she felt was a necessary condition for fulfilling her responsibilities as a mentor, especially with regard to the tasks of providing feedback and constructive criticism. In a hypothetical statement, Barbara illustrated how a lack of familiarity and rapport might have hindered her ability to mentor:

> If I don’t know them [the pre-interns] well . . . I would be very hesitant to criticize . . . . I mean I don’t want to squash someone’s teaching. I don’t want them to become . . . you know . . . afraid to try anything. But it you criticize someone it can come across the wrong way and, you know, you have to know them . . . before you can offer constructive criticism or they . . . might really hurt their feelings.

Effective teaching required a critically reflective stance (Brookfield, 1995; Schön, 1987) and Barbara was aware of the necessity of creating an environment in which Elizabeth and Melissa felt safe to experiment with their nascent teacher identities, as well as to develop and maintain a relationship in which they felt that any critique was offered to benefit, rather than to denigrate or demean them. Both Melissa and Elizabeth immediately provided their own evaluations of this aspect of Barbara’s mentoring in short narratives that were complementary and focused on the commonalities of their experiences. They also described some of the very
different experiences of their peers. This accentuation of the differences among members of their cohort seemed to provide Elizabeth and Melissa with a more elaborate understanding of how their relationship with Barbara was influencing their development as teachers. The following excerpts combined realis statements and evaluations to convey the perspectives and emerging insights of Melissa and Elizabeth:

Melissa: We know that . . . that she cares enough to think about something like that, where our other teachers may not . . . . ((laughs)) we’re, we’re not scared of her telling us that was bad. So we’ll try new things or come to her with ideas.

Elizabeth: Yeah, there are some, some of our peers were talking, just talking about how their teacher when she does criticize them, it’s it, it does, it breaks them . . . . Like she [Barbara] . . . she is . . . has let it be known from day one that she cares about us. That, you know, that she is here to help us. That, you know, she respects us as, um, adults, you know, and I think that, that’s, that’s really huge . . . . cause I see how that’s not being done in other classes and how it really affects the way that the pre-interns are teaching and, and their attitude toward teaching and that kind of thing.

Melissa: Um, just to add to that. Yeah, I think it’s like she lets us know that, um, we’re not just in the classroom to help her out. It’s also, she’s helping us become teachers. And I think some of the other teachers are like, oh good. I get interns. They can, you know, teach certain lessons for me that I don’t feel like teaching or they can, you know, do all the grades and stuff. That’s not the only reason we’re here. Sure it’s nice, but . . . like we’re also in here, she, she has us in here to help . . . create future teachers . . . . rather than just have Elizabeth: Make her workload easier ((laughs)).

Melissa: Yeah

Barbara: Oh, is that why you’re here?

Melissa and Elizabeth: ((laugh)).

Melissa’s and Elizabeth’s experiences within their situated mentoring relationship have resulted in their co-construction of an understanding of mentoring that embraced both career and psychosocial functions (Kram, 1986, 1988). For these two young women a caring, familiar relationship was a necessary precursor for their learning about and becoming part of a particular community of practice. The respect with which Barbara treated Elizabeth and Melissa validated
their personal power, and the ways in which she positioned them as novice colleagues enabled
the pre-interns to remain open to her mentoring and her critique. Even when there was a
recognition of their differences (e.g., in their choice of particular learning activities or their
teaching styles), Melissa and Elizabeth remained open to these differences and benefited from
considering what might be learned from Barbara’s professional knowledge and teaching
practices, even as they were aware of the diversity among their approaches. For instance,
Elizabeth noticed how Barbara treated her third graders with the same respect she showed adults
and often injected humor and personal references in an attempt to engage her students with the
learning. Although Elizabeth might have chosen a different instructional strategy for the lesson,
she would emulate the ways in which Barbara developed and maintained a caring and authentic
rapport with her third graders. In these ways, Melissa’s and Elizabeth’s current experiences
added another layer to their relational histories and would most likely provide a lens through
which they would evaluate future mentoring relationships.

Their positive expectations for this mentoring relationship, their acceptance and
appreciation of their differences, as well as their search for the commonalities among their
perceptions and experiences, and the personal connection that they continued to nurture may
have become a self-fulfilling prophecy for the ongoing development of an effective mentoring
relationship. Through dialogue, the women accepted the different perspectives that each of them
provided on how they had established rapport, as well as the importance of doing so, and this
layering of their perspectives provided a richer story of how their relationship began and
evolved. Additionally, the mentoring relationship they constructed was a fluid and inclusive one,
which respected and valued their differences, and seized any opportunity for collaboration,
discussion, and reflection. Learning was the goal – for the pre-interns, for Barbara, and for the third grade students in their classroom.

Co-Constructing Knowledge of Teaching and Learning

The co-construction of knowledge about teaching and learning was a fundamental part of Elizabeth’s and Melissa’s placement in this third grade classroom. Through their university coursework, they had been exposed to and grappled with some of the theoretical perspectives in which specific educational practices were grounded, and they had also experienced, albeit very peripherally, the practical consequences of implementing these practices in the classroom. Now Melissa and Elizabeth were ready to further develop their knowledge about teaching and learning through more contemplative and continuous participation in a real world classroom.

Developing Background Knowledge: Mentor as Knowledgeable Facilitator and Mentees as Novice Colleagues

Since this was a spring placement, Barbara had already established a level of rapport with her third grade students and had taught them the routines and procedures of her classroom. Therefore, her early conversations with Elizabeth and Melissa were a series of knowledge exchanges in which Barbara provided them with the information they would need to make instructional decisions suited to the needs and abilities of the third grade students. Melissa and Elizabeth were surprised by, but appreciative of Barbara’s open and welcoming stance and developed an understanding of a mentor as one who shared power through providing necessary background knowledge about the students and the classroom. In realis statements, which ended with a one word evaluation, Melissa summarized her experience of their first few days in the classroom:

I feel like the first couple days we didn’t have any kind of schoolwork to worry about so we just like talked . . . a lot and like the first day she went and told us . . . every single kid, he’s got this problem. He’s on this medication, like, very open, like I didn’t even know we
were gonna know if the kids were on medication or not . . . . Like pointed at each desk and told us every single kid in the class, like, I thought that was really . . . good.

At the time Melissa made this statement, she and Elizabeth had already spent a month in the classroom; therefore Melissa had learned how important it was to have relevant information about her students in order to create meaningful lessons and manage students’ behavior. In their early conversations, Barbara positioned Elizabeth and Melissa as new colleagues who needed specific information about each of the third graders in order to become effective in the classroom. It was interesting to note that in Melissa’s recollection of these conversations, the information Barbara provided seemed to focus on students’ problems. Although Barbara might also have discussed the students’ talents and strengths, it was the students’ shortcomings that piqued Melissa’s interest. Possibly Melissa perceived teaching to be a problem-solving endeavor and believed that she must become aware of and overcome any obstacles to student learning.

Barbara also chose to immediately involve Melissa and Elizabeth in classroom activities. In a realis statement she recounted how she had involved the pre-interns on the very first day they were in the classroom. She said, “You know, the very first day they were here they [the third grade students] were doing some kind of test and I said, ‘Would you take Robert and do it with him?’” In asking Melissa and Elizabeth to provide support for individual students with specific learning needs, Barbara positioned them as co-teachers, whose skills could be used to encourage student learning.

Additionally, some of the assignments for their university coursework provided Melissa and Elizabeth with opportunities to acquire information necessary for successfully planning and presenting instruction. In a knowledge exchange, Melissa described the classroom profile they were required to complete:
We’re required to do certain things like a classroom profile so that requires us to sit down and ask her [Barbara], you know, how many ESE kids are in the class? Like how do you talk to parents? Um, just get to know how she does things in the class.

Melissa positioned Barbara as an expert with regard to her classroom routines and procedures and recognized that she and Elizabeth needed this information if the third grade students were going to position them as competent and effective teachers.

Elizabeth and Melissa also learned the value of some of the more mundane aspects of becoming a teacher. Barbara had asked them to grade and file the homework that students turned in each morning. In realis statements and evaluations, Elizabeth and Melissa shared what they had learned from engaging in this necessary part of teaching and how it benefited their ability to design lessons and provide support for student learning:

   Melissa: Oh, like that’s [grading papers] part of the job. You [Barbara] do that, too . . . Like that’s just part . . . you’re always gonna have to do that as a teacher.

   Elizabeth: I learn . . . oh man, I learn, I love, I love to . . . I don’t love grading papers, but I love seeing where the students are . . . through grading their homework and um, it really helps me get an idea . . .

   Melissa: We wouldn’t know as much about them if we didn’t see their grades.

The pre-interns had learned that assessing assignments provided them with important knowledge about their students’ learning, as well as their misconceptions. The homework assignments were a form of data that provided Melissa and Elizabeth with an opportunity to learn more about their students and to design lessons that would meet their learning needs. Barbara concurred and in knowledge and activity exchanges, they all shared what their experiences had taught them and how they made use of what they learned:

   Elizabeth: Yeah, this was kind of my, my first glimpse into grades aren’t . . . I mean, you’re, you’re not doing it just to give a number. Like you really are looking to see where they are

Elizabeth: Yeah . . . yeah

Barbara: We’ve got to go back and re-teach this because they don’t understand it.

Elizabeth: Right

Melissa: For instance, we usually do [grade] the homework and I’ll be like, Barbara, they really didn’t understand number two, like I’ve only seen two people get it right in the whole math class. Like I don’t think they’re getting that concept and so we’ll re-teach it the next day because no one got it right on their homework, you know?

Barbara was once again aware that as a mentor she needed to do more than simply talk about how instructional decisions were made. She also needed to model how the data gathered from a variety of assessments could be used to teach effectively and to ensure student learning.

**Planning and Co-Planning: Mentor as Model, Provider of Feedback, and Co-Planner and Mentees as Instructional Designers and Co-Planners**

The information that Elizabeth and Melissa gained from their discussions with Barbara about individual students, as well as from their university assignments, enabled them to begin to plan and present lessons, a requirement of their teacher education program. In a series of realis statements Melissa and Elizabeth described how Barbara facilitated their planning:

Melissa: We have to do a certain amount of lessons so that requires us to say, “Okay, when is it gonna be good for us to teach a lesson? She actually even asks, “Would you rather plan this lesson on, by yourself or do you want to do it from the book?” So we get a choice, which is good and then, um . . . we talk about the lesson that we’re gonna do and then she evaluates us and . . . we talk about it ((laughs)).

Elizabeth: She allows us a lot of freedom, which is good and she allows us a lot of time in front of the class.

The interrogative mood of their planning dialogues, which was created by the questions Barbara asked her pre-interns, seemed to indicate an openness to difference. Barbara embraced her position as a facilitator and provided Melissa and Elizabeth with choices. Ultimately, she was positioned as an evaluator, although it seemed that she shared power with her mentees and discussed her feedback, rather than simply offering prescriptive solutions.
In our fifth dialogue session, Melissa and Elizabeth previewed a lesson they would be teaching and explained the game they had developed to teach fact families. Melissa and Elizabeth expected Barbara to comment and provide feedback that would enable them to modify and refine their lesson before they actually presented it to the students. Melissa had made a number of triangles and had written numbers in two of the corners of each triangle. Students would be asked to calculate the number for the third corner so that the three numbers in the corners of the triangle were a fact family. For instance, one triangle had a three in one corner and twenty-four in another corner. In an activity exchange, Elizabeth and Melissa positioned each other as collaborators and co-planners and made decisions about how to explain this activity to their students:

Melissa: Um . . . either you know, you can multiply two numbers . . . you have to either multiply or divide to find the missing number. I guess that’s how we can explain it. So, in this one we go, 3 and 24 . . . um . . . so the answer is . . . is 8, cause 8 times 3 is 24 . . . . I’m trying to think how I can ((laughs)) . . .

Elizabeth: Well, you, I was even gonna say what can you do with 24 and 3 to find this missing answer?

Melissa: To find the answer . . . Okay . . . Something like that.

Barbara remained silent as they began their discussion and provided Melissa and Elizabeth with a space in which they could discover how to provide specific directions that would be understood by the students. However, Barbara joined their discussion as they considered how to group students for this activity. In knowledge and activity exchanges that contained evaluations, Melissa, Elizabeth, and Barbara positioned each other as co-planners who, through evaluating each other’s perspectives and ideas, made decisions about the grouping strategies that would be used for this lesson:

Melissa: I was thinking I would do partners, but I made so many of these [the fact family triangles] I think we don’t have to, um . . . we can pass these out . . . so each kid gets one. Tell them to figure out the missing answer on their triangle and just raise their hand and sit
quietly when they’re done. And it’ll be team 1, team 2, and team 3 ((Melissa pointed to
the three groupings of desks in the classroom as she named each team)) and we’ll just go
around and simply say . . . yes or no. And so if team 1, four out of five of them [the
students] get it right, then team 1 gets 4 points. Team 2 however many get it right and team
3.

Barbara Well, that’s not fair cause team 2 is way bigger.

Elizabeth: Yeah . . . it has more kids.

Barbara: Do boys against girls.

Elizabeth: Okay. That always works.

Melissa: Boys against girls. That’s fine . . . They don’t have to actually . . . do, do we give
them anything if they actually win or . . .

Barbara: No

Elizabeth: No

Melissa: Okay, well then, that’s fine.

Elizabeth: Just knowing that they’re better than the boys is enough.

Barbara positioned herself as a critical friend and suggested how Melissa’s strategy for
grouping the students should be changed, thereby normalizing the differences in their
perspectives. The mood of their discourse was declarative as Barbara provided a specific
strategy to be used, and Melissa and Elizabeth incorporated her feedback and redesigned this
particular aspect of their lesson.

As a result of listening to Melissa’s description of the learning activity, Barbara devised
another way in which the students could use the fact family triangles to practice multiplication
and division facts. She shared her insights with Melissa in the following activity exchanges:

Barbara: What you can do is show them how . . . when they . . . have . . . the certain
number filled in…

Melissa: Mm hmm.

Barbara: They can cover any corner . . . ((She held up a fact triangle and covered one
corner with her finger.))
Melissa: Mm hmm.

Barbara: What goes on this corner? ((She covered a different corner of the triangle with her finger.)) What goes on this corner? ((She covered the third corner of the triangle with her finger.))

Melissa: Mm hmm.

Barbara: What goes on this corner? You know, and have them do it with a partner.

Melissa: They can do it, take the ones that they have filled out already and do it with a partner.

Barbara: Yeah. And cover up different corners.

Melissa: Yeah. That’s what the other activity was . . . . Or they could even like . . . that sounds good . . . and another thing you could even do is have them . . . you know, they have 18, 9, and 2. Flip it over and write the four facts that go with 18, 9, and 2.

Barbara: Good idea.

Melissa: Okay ((laughs)).

Barbara and Melissa positioned each other as collaborative instructional designers, extending the learning activity in ways they had not envisioned before this discussion. Their differing perspectives resulted in elaborating and extending the original learning activity. In addition, Barbara identified some of the glitches that could have occurred during instruction and provided solutions. Both Melissa and Elizabeth positioned Barbara as an experienced teacher and teacher educator, and her feedback enabled them not only to design a more effective lesson, but also to elaborate their professional knowledge base.

Providing Feedback: Mentor as Evaluator and Facilitator and Mentees as Novice Colleagues

Barbara also provided Elizabeth and Melissa with feedback regarding their classroom management strategies. The pre-interns had taught a lesson the day before our second dialogue session in which many of the third grade students had called out answers, rather than following the established convention of raising one’s hand and waiting for the teacher to choose someone
to answer the question. In a realis statement Melissa described the strategy they were going to use for today’s lesson. She said, “Today we’re trying to do the popsicle stick thing where you cannot talk unless your popsicle is called and if you are continuously calling out there will be some sort of consequence ((laughs)).” When I asked her how they had made a decision to use this strategy, she recounted Barbara’s feedback on their lesson. In a realis statement that described Barbara’s evaluation Melissa stated, “We talked about it yesterday, um, after when she, when she observed. She was like everything looked pretty good, but the calling out was awful ((laughs)).” In this way Barbara positioned Melissa and Elizabeth as classroom managers, who were responsible for upholding the established standards of behavior and providing consequences for inappropriate student behavior. She identified an aspect of their teaching that needed improvement and encouraged Elizabeth and Melissa to find a means for becoming more effective in managing student behavior that distracted from learning.

However, there were also instances in which Melissa and Elizabeth were providing Barbara with feedback about specific students, information that she needed to plan for student learning. According to Barbara, “They [Elizabeth and Melissa] see so much more . . . . you know they can give me a lot of wisdom about my kids.” Barbara positioned them as co-teachers, whose insights enabled her to be more effective as a teacher. Melissa and Elizabeth gained confidence in their ability to make judgments about what they were observing in the classroom and how their observations might affect their instructional decisions.

**Behavior Management: Mentor as Model and Collaborator and Mentees as Decision-Makers and Collaborators**

Classroom management was discussed in almost all of our dialogue sessions. In the beginning of March, Elizabeth admitted her feelings about managing students’ behavior. She stated, “I hate thinking about the discipline aspect.” Her feelings were due, in part, to her
previous experiences as a resident assistant in college, and Elizabeth evaluated the trauma of that
eyear experience and predicted how her experiences might affect her classroom management:

Elizabeth: Cause I feel, I feel like I’m gonna struggle the most because I hate . . .
disciplining. Like I was an RA [resident assistant] in my sophomore year.

Sharon: Okay.

Melissa: I think it would be harder though, cause like college kids.

Elizabeth: It . . . I didn’t do it the next year because of the discipline.

Melissa: Of course.

Elizabeth: I, I was like I, I can’t do this. This is . . . this is not what I was made for.

Even though Elizabeth felt some trepidation with regard to behavior management, Barbara
continued to position her as a co-teacher and co-manager. She told Melissa and Elizabeth that
she depended on them to intervene in classroom situations in which students were inattentive or
distracting other students. In fact, the three of them had been trying to decide what kind of
intervention would be appropriate for two of the students in their classroom, Julie and Robert. In
the following knowledge exchange, Elizabeth positioned herself as a reflective practitioner and
assessed her knowledge of these students and how this knowledge might assist her in becoming a
more effective manager of student behavior:

Elizabeth: Well, I get frustrated with Julie. And . . .

Barbara: Yeah, me too.

Elizabeth: Because I don’t really, I don’t really know . . . how to get through to her.
Whereas Robert . . . I’m around him a lot more because he’s in homeroom.

Sharon: Okay.

Elizabeth: And so I, and I’ve learned how . . . to interact with him in a way that . . . is
helpful to both of us. I haven’t reached that point with Julie. And so, um . . . and she was
causing trouble and I, and I, I didn’t know . . . the best way . . . to deal with her. But I did
know how to deal with him. So . . . that’s why I went over to him and turned his feet and
then I made eye contact with her and she was not gonna break it.
Although classroom management still engendered a certain amount of discomfort and was a less integral part of Elizabeth’s identity, in accentuating the differences between her relationship with and knowledge of these two students, she was beginning to problematize the situations in which the students’ inattentive and off-task behaviors negatively affected their learning, as well as to develop ways in which she might encourage them to engage in more appropriate behaviors. She was learning that good classroom management involved more than a set of classroom rules and that detailed knowledge about her students was necessary for making decisions about behavior management.

Moreover, in Barbara’s estimation, Elizabeth was capable of effectively managing behavior, as evidenced in this knowledge exchange in which Barbara evaluated Elizabeth’s intervention with Robert. “Your intervention was perfect. ‘Robert, turn around. Be quiet.’ . . . you know and . . . unfortunately he didn’t heed it.” According to Elizabeth, Robert does not like to face forward no matter where he is seated, but because she has taken the time to develop a rapport with him and to understand the idiosyncrasies of his learning style, she knew that she could physically turn his chair around and he would not be upset or distract other students. Elizabeth was beginning to recognize that her knowledge of particular students enabled her to choose appropriate strategies for managing behavior, and Barbara’s feedback reinforced the effectiveness of her choices.

Still, Elizabeth questioned how she would be able to discipline these two students while continuing to present instruction and to maintain her own sanity. Barbara positioned herself as an experienced teacher and offered her own solution to this dilemma – flipping cards, a behavior management system that she used in her classroom. This system made use of a pocket chart and each student had a pocket in which there were several colored cards. The first card was green for
appropriate behavior. The second was yellow and indicated that the student had been warned about his behavior. The third card was orange and resulted in more serious consequences, such as losing recess, and the fourth one was red, which usually meant a phone call home to the student’s parents. In the excerpts that follow Barbara explained the benefits of her behavior management system in a knowledge exchange, “Flipping cards . . . . .is a way, you know, that . . . you can . . . literally . . . continue to talk and teach at the same time you’re disciplining the kids . . . . You walk over and flip their card without saying a single word about why.” In a knowledge exchange, Melissa, Elizabeth, and Barbara continued their dialogue, problematizing their practices, accentuating the differences between various behavior management strategies and evaluating their effectiveness:

Melissa: I think I still feel too bad, too. It’s always, ‘Do that again and I’ll flip your card.’ But I never actually flip the card.

Elizabeth: Oh, yeah.

Melissa: I think I need to ((laughs)).

Barbara: Every now and then you’re gonna have to, you know?

Elizabeth: Follow through.

Melissa: Yeah.

Barbara: At least, if it’s your own class, you’re gonna have to follow through.

Melissa: Oh, yeah.

Melissa was experiencing some dissonance as she attempted to develop an identity as a classroom manager. While she problematized her own practices, she had yet to implement practices that demonstrated her developing awareness of the need for consistency in reinforcing the consequences for inappropriate behavior. Barbara recognized the dissonance that Melissa was experiencing and continued their conversation in a knowledge exchange that evaluated the efficacy of a different orientation to behavior management:
Barbara: Um . . . but the positive reinforcement always works so much better. I kind of hate flipping cards.

Elizabeth: Yeah.

Barbara: I really . . . would much rather give stickers. But . . . it’s not as obvious, you know?

Elizabeth: Yeah.

Barbara: You can’t ( ). And, and you can’t be writing on an overhead and going around and giving stickers.

Melissa: ((laughs)).

Elizabeth: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Barbara: So it’s a dilemma.

Melissa: I like the points still . . . that works pretty well, like, um…

Barbara: Mm hmm.

Melissa: They just talk and talk cause all they’re doing is writing, so

Barbara: Mm hmm.

Melissa: And, but if I go and stand up there and like . . . give group three a, a . . . point

Barbara: Mm hmm.

Melissa: Then they all kind of

Barbara: settle down . . . Yeah, yeah . . . Definitely worthwhile.

Barbara emphasized the differences between the strategies for managing student behavior and provided Elizabeth and Melissa with an opportunity to evaluate them and consider the advantages and disadvantages of particular strategies in specific situations. Additionally, she provided them with a number of strategies they could add to their growing number of behavior management strategies. Melissa was already making judgments about which approach suited her particular teaching style, as well as specific situations in which behavior needed to be managed. Elizabeth’s and Melissa’s interactions with students in this classroom, as well as their dialogues
with Barbara, were providing them with an extensive professional knowledge base, which now included a number of diverse management practices they could employ in creative and appropriate ways in their future classrooms.

**Concluding Thoughts**

The analysis of the dialogue in which Barbara, Elizabeth, and Melissa engaged indicated that the mood of their discourses, which resulted in the co-construction of their identities and practices, was predominantly declarative, and even though they all posed occasional questions, especially during their collaborative efforts, much of their dialogue was composed of realis statements, or statements of fact, and evaluations of those statements or their experiences. Barbara shared how being positioned as a mentor and model shaped her teaching practices and how she positioned the pre-interns as co-teachers. In a knowledge exchange she related how mentoring had contributed to her becoming more reflective about her own teaching practices:

I think . . . you know I have a hard time sometimes with my young students . . . being patient with them. And understanding that they don’t understand. And trying to . . . a lot of times I think they don’t understand because they haven’t been listening. They’re doodling. They’re drawing. They’re playing with pencils or pens or just plain not paying attention. And . . . I get frustrated with that and I lose patience with the kids. And I may even get real snippy with them. And then I think, I can’t do that. That’s not encouraging. That’s not promoting learning. That’s not . . . and if . . . the interns are here . . . number one, there’s two more people that hit some of those kids that aren’t paying attention and therefore need the extra help. They’re here to help. They’re also here to remind me ((laughs)) that I’m supposed to be a model . . . and I need to be modeling good teaching behaviors so I’d better not yell at these kids ((laughs)).

The experience of mentoring had enabled Barbara to transform her behavior, which benefited the learning of Melissa and Elizabeth, as well as her third grade students. Additionally, Barbara shared how her positioning of the pre-interns had been transformed from students to co-teachers.

In realis statements and evaluations, she described not only how her perceptions had changed, but also the reasons for this change:
I look at them now . . . as . . . cooperative teachers, rather than, I’m the mentor and they’re the students . . . Because, frankly they know how to handle . . . a couple of the students better than I do because you’ve worked with ‘em so much on a one to one basis . . . You can get them to do stuff I can’t. And so in some aspects . . . they’re more qualified than I am . . . to do stuff. So it’s more of a cooperative thing now, I think.

Barbara now positioned Melissa and Elizabeth as colleagues and collaborators, as full-fledged members of the Allenton community of practice. Barbara’s collaborative spirit was further evidenced in her relationships with other teachers at Allenton Elementary and this had an influence on both Melissa’s and Elizabeth’s fledgling identities. In evaluative statements, they revealed how their interactions with Barbara had shaped their understanding of collaboration and how it might benefit them in their future classrooms:

Elizabeth: In order to be the best teacher that you can be to your students . . . to get, you know, other teachers involved. Figure out how they’re teaching it and to work with them, um . . . I think is, is very huge . . .

Melissa: You’re gonna have to rely on the other, the other teachers because you don’t have . . . like other people watching and giving input in your classroom, so you’re gonna have to say I don’t, you know, think this necessarily worked. How did you teach it? . . . And they may come to you for help.

Barbara explained that collaboration among teachers was part of the Allenton school culture and advised Melissa and Elizabeth that this was not the case in every school. However, Barbara’s willingness to collaborate had made a profound impression on the pre-interns. They had benefited from their opportunities to work cooperatively with Barbara and would be seeking opportunities to collaborate with other teachers in the future.

While Elizabeth definitely appreciated and benefited from Barbara’s approach to teaching, she was unequivocal in her identity as a special educator. Her strong beliefs about her teacher identity and practices were illustrated in the following evaluation, in which she described how the discipline in a special education classroom differed from that of a regular education classroom:
And so . . . I feel like the discipline in that arena is different from the discipline in this
arena because I want to do either . . . full out resource or secluded classroom . . . . So . . .
um . . . I feel like in that sense it’s gonna be on an individual basis as opposed to the class .
. . room-wide way of disciplining. So . . . yeah. That’s kind of my thoughts on it right
now, yeah.

Elizabeth recognized, even accentuated the differences in classroom management between
special and regular education, and her beliefs about special education were reflected in the ways
in which she approached instruction and discipline in a regular classroom. For instance, she had
learned how to manage Robert’s behavior because she knew him and had developed a
relationship with him. Thus, her identity as a special education teacher shaped the ways in which
she related to students in a regular education classroom.

Elizabeth also described how her observation of Barbara further influenced her identity as
an observer of students and a teacher who focused on the learning needs of individual students
when making decisions about teaching. In a number of realis statements she shared what she had
learned from Barbara about meeting the needs and addressing the learning styles of individual
students:

And if you let him express himself in the way that he needs to be expressed . . . you’re
gonna have a good relationship with him. If you stop him every single story that he starts
to tell, if you, you know, say stop drawing . . . . you shut him down constantly . . . you’re
gonna hit a brick wall with him. But I, I’ve, I’ve even seen from you . . . that you
allowance of, of certain things . . . his drawing . . . . And so, um . . . just, you know,
learning from you and watching you and how you allow him to do things . . . . . that he
needs to do in order to continue functioning ((laughs)).

Elizabeth’s philosophical beliefs and her own experiences with this student were corroborated
and reinforced by her observations of Barbara’s teaching and classroom management practices.
She had gained confidence in her own decision-making skills, and her understanding of the
effects of her own teaching behaviors on particular students had also been elaborated. In other
words, Barbara’s modeling had played a significant role in Elizabeth’s learning.
Even though Melissa was also getting her Master’s degree in special education, she did not wish to teach in a secluded special education classroom. Thus, her understanding of classroom management differed from Elizabeth’s and was conveyed in the following activity exchange:

But I think I’m just gonna have to see what classroom I’m in, um, like assess them during the first week or two and see what I think. Like obviously I’m gonna have a plan to come in with, but I might be changing it completely, like depending on the group of kids, I think.

Melissa had begun to realize that she needed to know her individual students in order to develop an effective plan for managing her classroom. It seemed that she was integrating what she had learned in her special education coursework with what she was learning in this third grade classroom.

In addition, Melissa’s attitudes about teaching had undergone a transformation. Until her placement in Barbara’s classroom, Melissa had been very frustrated by some of the coursework and her previous experiences in schools. She admitted that while she wanted to be a teacher “it wasn’t like what I really, really wanted to do, like I was just gonna be okay with it.” However, her experience with Barbara and the third grade students had changed her perceptions. In realis statements that described her new perspective, she evaluated her present feelings:

This has totally changed my view on teaching. Like now, I’m actually excited about it. Cause now I feel like I finally learned, learned how to teach. Like being those classes [at the university], if I were, I, I’m still, I’m glad I have an extra year to actually be in the classroom cause, um . . . this has made me extremely more confident as a teacher . . . . I felt this helped sooo much more than anything you actually do at like on the university’s campus. So it’s totally changed my view on teaching and I like it now ((laughs)).

It seemed that Barbara served as more than a model of teaching behaviors; she had also facilitated a change in Melissa’s dispositions toward teaching. It seemed Melissa craved the experiential learning that this pre-internship placement provided and it had affected not only her developing teaching skills, but also her motivation to engage in teaching. Barbara had created an
environment that welcomed Melissa into the profession and profoundly changed her self-confidence and affect.

Additionally, the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), the state achievement test, played a role in how Barbara, Melissa, and Elizabeth constructed their identities before and after the test. Melissa believed that teaching was hard work, although it was not often viewed that way by the public, and that teachers were blamed for shirking their responsibilities when their students did not perform well on the state test. The three of them engaged in a dialogue about the FCAT and the ways in which it influenced and shaped their teaching practices. In a series of knowledge exchanges that evaluated the influence of the FCAT, they described the kinds of learning activities that had taken place before the test, as well as the lessons they would be free to teach after the test:

Melissa: I see how it influences . . . . Like I feel like they’re really not learning. They’re just learning how to pass that test, like . . . and, but you have to do it . . . These kids [low ability third graders] need so much practice and so you, like we had to completely cut out spelling, grammar, and reading for an entire week before FCAT just to practice that test. And I’m sure they still don’t all . . . do that good ((laughs)). . . . So instead of learning how to spell another group of fifteen words and learning a whole new grammar concept and things that actually might help them . . . pass it in the future you had to just sit and okay, read this story. Answer these questions ((laughs)) you know? But it seems that’s what you have to do, hmm.

Elizabeth: Yeah . . . um, it’s sad because . . . I have all of these . . . ideas and . . . creative things going on that can be . . . fun for the kids to learn and . . .

Melissa: You can do them in the two months after the test.

Elizabeth: Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

Barbara: You know all the teachers are saying save the fun lessons for the quarter after FCAT . . . .

Elizabeth: It doesn’t allow . . . the FCAT doesn’t allow you to teach . . . the way you want to, you know? I mean everyone teaches differently and they have different styles and the FCAT just seems to . . . just carbon copy.
Melissa and Elizabeth accentuated the difference in their teaching practices before and after the FCAT, but were unable to resolve this tension. Instead, it seemed as if they suppressed their beliefs about teaching until after the FCAT had been administered. This bracketing of their differences led to a superficial consensus that in the future they might wish to problematize. An exploration of the differences in their teaching practices before and after the FCAT might ultimately lead to a resolution that would result in lessons and learning activities which would motivate and engage their students, as well as ensure high test scores.

Like Kenneth, Barbara believed it was necessary to know her pre-interns in order to be able to mentor them in a way that was appropriate for their interests and needs. She used dialogue to engage Melissa and Elizabeth in discussions about instruction and classroom management and she provided them with information, often in the form of declarative statements, which enabled them to extend and elaborate their professional knowledge bases. She also believed that her role as a model of good teaching behaviors was a significant aspect of her mentoring responsibilities. Additionally, the trust and rapport that Barbara developed with her pre-interns created an environment in which Melissa and Elizabeth were comfortable exploring the facets of their teacher identities and identifying some of the classroom issues that required critical reflection and creative solutions. In a knowledge exchange that occurred during our fifth dialogue session, Elizabeth evaluated her mentoring experience in this poignant excerpt:

To be in this relationship where she is encouraging and when she does have, um, criticism, it, it always is constructive. I’ve never felt like when you’ve give, um, feedback it’s been negative and just hurtful. I’ve never felt like that. Um . . . and also, um, how you have allowed us to . . . um . . . be our own person. Like and, and take charge in certain situations like, for instance, um, in disciplining. In some cases you have allowed us to, to do that. Um, that’s been a big help for me because discipline is a hard thing for me to do. And so when I, when I actually take the initiative and do it ((laughs)) it’s good to know that you’re backing me up . . . backing me up is very helpful . . . and not just in discipline areas, but in other places where we’ve taken initiative. She’s always backed us up and it’s just a really good thing, so . . .
Barbara’s mentee-centered mentoring encouraged both Elizabeth and Melissa to develop unique identities. Like Kenneth, Barbara did not wish to clone herself. Instead she created a supportive and nurturing environment which fostered the development of their teaching practices. The pre-interns ended their relationship with Barbara as colleagues, who were able to articulate, through dialogue, the ways in which their identities and practices had been shaped by their active engagement in the classroom and the mentoring that Barbara provided.
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CHAPTER 6
USING DECLARATIVE STATEMENTS TO PROMOTE MENTOR-CENTERED MENTORING

Mentoring Group 3: James, Amy and Jessica

This mentoring group was situated in a fourth grade classroom at Allenton Elementary School and was composed of a classroom teacher, James and two pre-service teaching interns, Amy and Jessica. James, Amy, Jessica, and I conducted seven dialogue sessions, which took place during their planning period on Thursdays.

The Participants

Amy was a twenty-two year old Caucasian female. She was a gymnast and planned to coach gymnastics at a high level institution after graduation. She may return to a career in education later and believed that she had learned a lot about child psychology and working with children that will benefit her, whatever her career choice. She will graduate with a Bachelor’s degree in elementary education.

Jessica was a twenty-one year old African-American female. She has wanted to be a teacher since she was five years old. As a young student, Jessica was often paired with students who were struggling and she felt that she “could make a difference in their lives. I could make learning fun for them. I could show them, um . . . that, I could give them my passion for learning was always my goal and . . . by doing that I could be a teacher.” Jessica will graduate with a Master’s degree in elementary education and dual certification in special education with an endorsement in ESOL. She plans to move to Miami and teach third, fourth, or fifth grade in a school that has received a D or an F on the state test for the past three years. This desire may be due, in part, to her experience with helping struggling learners when she was an elementary, middle, and high school student herself.
James was a twenty-seven year old Caucasian male and has been teaching fourth grade at Allenton Elementary School for four years. He has a Master’s degree in elementary education and will finish his Specialist’s degree during the summer of 2007. James has always wanted to work with children, especially those who were not as fortunate as he has been. He believed that he could be a positive role model for boys and girls who might not have a father figure at home. James has mentored pre-interns for the past three years and has appreciated having other adults (i.e., the pre-interns) in the classroom believing that “by observing them I see some things I can improve in myself.”

The Context

James, Jessica, and Amy were responsible for 24 fourth grade students and their class reflected the demographic makeup of the school. At the beginning of our dialogue sessions, student desks were arranged in a large horseshoe with several of the desks positioned within the horseshoe. There was a whiteboard and screen on the front wall, and an overhead projector and chair were situated in front of the whiteboard. The teacher’s desk and computer were located at the front of the classroom. A classroom library was located in the back of the room along with a couch for student seating, an aquarium for the pet lizard, and a kidney-shaped table. Jessica and Amy were able to spend from 7:15-1:40 in the classroom on Mondays and Thursdays, which ensured that they were in school during James’s planning period. They spent from 7:15-11:15 at school on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Overview of James’s, Amy’s, and Jessica’s Discourse

The purpose of this chapter was to investigate how James, Amy, and Jessica utilized discourse to negotiate their relationship and what role their relationship played in their co-construction of knowledge of teaching and learning. Hence, I sorted their discourse into two categories relative to the purposes of my study: “relationship development” and “co-construction
of knowledge.” Table 6-1, which is found at the end of this chapter, utilizes these two categories to summarize the ways in which I made use of aspects of Gee’s and Fairclough’s discourse analysis to understand James’s, Amy’s, and Jessica’s co-construction of the activities of their mentoring relationship, as well as their identities as mentor and mentees.

As I analyzed the data in each of these categories, a number of distinctive activities emerged that characterized the nature of their discourse. These activities included developing an understanding of mentoring, establishing and maintaining rapport, developing background knowledge, developing a professional knowledge base, planning, providing feedback, and managing behavior (See Column Two). Each activity resulted in the construction of specific identities such as mentor and mentee as partners/adversaries; as expert and novice colleagues, and as provider of feedback and instructional designers (See Column Three). Table 6-1 also reflects the ways that these activities and subsequent identity formations were situated within three distinct discourses as discussed in Chapter 2: (a) the discourse of mentoring, (b) the discourse of classroom management, and (c) the discourse of instruction (See Column 4). Finally, the table indicates the ways in which these activities and subsequent identity formations emerged through a textual analysis, as well as a consideration of how they used dialogue to negotiate their differences as described in Chapter 3 (See Column 5). In the remainder of this chapter, I utilize excerpts from the data to illustrate how each activity and identity summarized in Table 6-1 contributed to James’s, Amy’s, and Jessica’s relationship development and co-construction of knowledge.

**Developing and Maintaining a Mentoring Relationship**

As with the other mentoring groups, James, Amy, and Jessica brought their previous experiences and understandings with them. Therefore, the unique relationship that developed
and evolved among them was influenced and co-constructed by events from their past, as well as by their current interactions and emerging perceptions and interpretations.

**Developing an Understanding of Mentoring: Mentor and Mentees as Co-Constructors of Meaning**

While Amy had fully expected to develop a relationship with the teacher with whom she was placed for her pre-internship, she had not considered that it would be a mentoring relationship. In a realis statement, Amy maintained that ProTeach presented this relationship as:

> Here’s your teacher. You’re interning for this person and it’s not presented as . . . a fostering, nurturing thing. It’s you’ll report here in the morning and this is who you’ll be under and this is who, who’s, who will tell you what to do

In fact, Amy had expected to spend most of her time sitting in the back of the classroom taking notes and only occasionally teaching a specific lesson. In a realis statement she described her expectations for this relationship, “Well I mean I knew we would have assignments to complete and we’d have to teach certain lessons and stuff, but I didn’t expect to teach every day or to be as involved in the classroom as we are.” However, James positioned her as actively involved in constructing an identity as a teacher through providing her with opportunities to engage in the practices of teaching. She began to understand their mentorship as a relationship in which power was shared, creating an environment in which Amy was able to experiment with and construct her teaching practices and identities.

Like Amy, James had a number of expectations for this mentoring relationship that were based on his previous relational history and experiences with mentoring. He had completed his own internship in the same school district only four years ago, and his relationship with his former mentor teacher influenced his understandings and interpretations of mentoring. In a realis statement he related his experiences with his mentor teacher, “Number one when I was an intern . . . I was involved in the classroom. I could not stand to sit. I’d fall asleep if I had to sit in the
back of the room.” He positioned his previous mentor as a model for the mentor he was becoming. In addition, while James understood that observation was a necessary and worthwhile aspect of learning to teach, he believed that legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) should provide the foundation for an effective mentoring relationship. James shared his nascent philosophy of mentoring in a series of realistic statements and evaluations that conveyed his expectations for their relationship and his rationale for these expectations:

James: I’ve never had any complaints about my interns being too involved in the classroom.

Amy: ((laughs))

James: . . . You know, their job as interns or student teachers, yes, is to observe me. But . . . it’s also to actively participate in what’s going on in the classroom because you learn by doing. That’s how I learn. And different people have different learning styles. But if I just sit here and tell you to do something . . . and don’t give them the opportunity to do it . . . well, then, you know, and it’s just . . . techniques I mean.

James believed that his pre-interns needed to experience teaching and working with students firsthand in order to understand the complex nature of teaching and to begin to make sense of who they were as teachers. As a teacher educator, he felt a responsibility for facilitating his mentees’ learning process by creating conditions, giving instruction, modeling, and providing feedback (DeJong, Korthagen, & Wubbels, 1998). Similar to Barbara, James also recognized and benefited from opportunities for learning from his mentees. He noted the importance of the mentoring relationship for his own professional development:

I think that once you become complacent you’re not good anymore and I think having interns, student teachers in your classroom, using fresh ideas . . . which I can learn from and implement into my curriculum. And it’s fun to have people in the classroom. And I can make jokes with them. You know . . . and it’s . . . by, by . . . observing them I see some things I can improve in myself, too.

James believed that engaging in the mentoring activities prescribed by the university (i.e., conducting observations and post conferences) was an ideal opportunity for his own, as well as
his mentees’ learning and professional growth. The context of their new relationship provided James, Amy, and Jessica with a situated space in which to modify and elaborate their understandings of mentoring and teaching and learning.

**Establishing and Maintaining Rapport: Mentor and Mentees as Partners and Opponents**

This mentoring group had what might be considered a rather inauspicious introduction to each other and their relationship. Amy and Jessica were aware that they were supposed to schedule a meeting with their mentor before the spring semester began. However, the mentor they were originally assigned decided to withdraw from the program, and James was not assigned as their mentor until a week before the semester began. Thus, they did not have the opportunity to meet with their mentor in order to begin the process of establishing rapport before they actually entered the classroom and met their students. Additionally, James was absent on the first day of school after the Christmas break; therefore, Amy and Jessica did not have an introductory conversation with James until the planning period of their second day in the classroom.

Despite these obstacles, they managed to begin to develop a relationship in which each of them felt comfortable. When asked about the rapport they had established, James, in a realis statement, which defined the nature of their relationship and his evaluation of it said, “it’s just that camaraderie that you, that you form when you have a class full of kids and you can talk about this afterwards . . . it’s just neat to do that.” Amy also believed that they had established a relationship that was supportive and trusting, although she could not recall any specific instances of how they had accomplished this. Instead, she said, “It’s that . . . he made us feel comfortable. Or he, he’s easy to be around. He develops a rapport with people just by . . . who he is.” James then chose to speculate as to why establishing rapport with his pre-interns seemed so effortless and natural. In a series of evaluations he suggested several reasons why this might be so:
I think part of it . . . might be the fact that I’m twenty . . . seven. You know we have more things in common than with somebody who’s . . . But I mean we see life . . . in more similar ways than somebody who’s married with five kids and four grandkids . . . . You know and I understand . . . their life right now because I was in college three years ago.

However, James also wondered if there were disadvantages to being close in age and sharing similar life experiences. He posed a question, “Is there such a thing as being . . . like too friendly?” He paused and then emphatically answered his own questions in a realis statement that summarized his own experience, “But I haven’t had that problem.” Indeed, because of the rapport they had already established, Amy expected their relationship to last beyond the semester of their pre-internship. In a hypothetical statement she mused, “Hopefully when I graduate if, if I’m teaching . . . I’ll feel comfortable enough to . . . to call James and be like, ‘Hey, I have this kid who is a lot like . . . the one that was in this class. What did we do?’”

James also believed that it was important to share the expectations he held for his mentees’ behavior, and he did this in the first few days they were together. His straightforwardness created a strong foundation for the development of their relationship. In a combination of knowledge and activity exchanges James described his expectations for the nature of Amy’s and Jessica’s participation:

First of all, you guys are old enough to understand what’s expected of you. It’s not my job. I have to teach my kids. And the second thing I said is the only thing that’s gonna annoy me is if you sit down ((laughs)). I said other than that, we’re gonna get along get. Just don’t sit in the back of the room.

James’s expectations positioned Amy and Jessica as active participants in the classroom, and he expected them to work with individual students and to manage behavior when necessary.

Moreover, James declared that he wished to share power with his mentees, and he positioned the pre-interns as colleagues with whom he would collaborate. He believed in discussing and considering a variety of options that might be appropriate for a specific situation, and he valued the knowledge and understandings of his mentees. He stated:
I don’t like spitting out commands. I’m not gonna say, go do this, go do that. I’d rather do it . . . together . . . with you . . . and, you know . . . maybe when I get older and have been teaching forty years I’ll change. Hopefully, not but . . . you know, it’s . . . important that you . . . form relationships I think with . . . the people you’re working with. Or else it’ll be miserable.

Thus, James maintained that he did not wish to assume an authoritarian stance. In fact, he not only believed in sharing teaching responsibility with his mentees, but also in positioning them as experts, who might provide a window into his own shortcomings and failures. In fact, he often turned to them for advice and support. Amy related one such instance in an activity exchange that included her evaluation of being able to actively participate in the classroom, “He turns lessons over to us and . . . that’s good, I think, and we’ll get emails that say . . . you guys weren’t here on Friday and I’ve really screwed up area and you have to come fix it ((laughs)).”

According to James, his lesson on how to calculate the area of specific shapes had confused their students, and he contacted Amy and Jessica, explained his failed lesson, and asked them to design a lesson that would provide their students with a clear understanding of calculating the area of squares and rectangles. He admitted, “I’m not perfect” and he told his pre-interns “I need you guys to help me on Monday.”

However, their relationship also experienced some conflict, which began when they were planning for a fourth grade field trip to St. Augustine. Nine parents had volunteered to be chaperones on this trip, and James, Amy, and Jessica had discussed dividing the students into manageable groups for these chaperones. Jessica approached James at the beginning of the week in which the field trip was planned and asked him when he wanted to sit down with them and divide the class into groups. James insisted that there had been no time for that discussion when Amy and Jessica were in the classroom. Instead, he decided how the students would be grouped on Wednesday, when Jessica and Amy were not in the classroom. Jessica and Amy shared their
initial impressions of the groups James had decided upon in a knowledge exchange, in which several evaluations were framed as realis statements:

Jessica: And we talked about wanting to do the groups together. I, I actually expressed to him who I wanted.

Amy: So he divided the class up into these groups. And some of the groups have four kids and some of them have one kid and it’s really erratic. There are nine parents . . . going with us on this trip. So he gets to the end of the list and he has two kids left over. And he gives Jessica one of them. And he gives me the other one. These kids make no sense. Like there’s no reason that we have these kids and Jessica gets the behavior problem in the class and I get the child who doesn’t . . . shut up . . . ever. The new student. Who I have not bonded with . . . I’m gonna document that face (James had closed his eyes and shook his head) on here [the audiotape of the session].

Because they had established a relationship with James in which power had been shared, Amy and Jessica believed they would be positioned as co-planners and decision-makers with regard to this field trip, and they interpreted the fact the James had assumed sole responsibility for planning the student groups as an exercise of his power over them. James gave his list of students groups for the field trip to Jessica on Wednesday at noon, and he asked her to share the list with Amy. He told Jessica he wanted them to look at the list and then discuss it with him later. In a knowledge exchange, Amy shared her reaction to James’s plan, and how she repositioned herself as a decision-maker using a series of realis statement that described how planning for the field trip was proceeding:

So, it’s his, it’s his class. And however he wants to divide up his class for his field trip is fine. That’s his decision. It’s my decision whether or not to go on this twelve hour field trip that I paid seventy dollars for. So my solution to the problem is just that okay, I won’t go. That, I . . . I, I don’t wanna go and baby sit this one child and be miserable for twelve hours. That’s not gonna make me happy. It’s not gonna make Justin [the fourth grade student] happy. So . . . he [James] made his decision. My decision was . . . not to go on the field trip. Since then we have reworked the groups probably six or seven times. Jessica and I no longer have students . . . that we’re responsible for . . . on our own at all . . . So today my idea was to just have six groups of four and then if we have to put two chaperones with some groups that’s what we do. But they need to be in groups of four, at least four.
Their differing perspectives on grouping strategies for the field trip had been accentuated, although it seemed as if they were now engaged in attempting to resolve their differences in a way that enabled them to share in the decision-making. Up to this point in the dialogue session, Jessica and Amy had dominated the conversation. James then requested an opportunity to state his perspective and in a knowledge exchange, composed of realis statements and evaluations, he positioned himself as an expert on the St. Augustine field trip and provided his perspective on their interactions that had occurred the previous day:

James: They have no idea how tomorrow works. Which is not . . . an insult. They don’t. They haven’t done it. This is my fifth time doing it. Okay? I understand . . . that yes, they’re chaperones, but our whole class is together with Mr. B’s class tomorrow. I know that. I know how it works when you get there. Yes, you’re in charge of one kid. No longer they are . . . But it’s not . . . to walk around and baby sit that kid. It’s when we walk from . . . the fort across the street to make sure the kid doesn’t get hit by a car. When you get to the next place, that kid can go wherever he wants as long as you, you know . . . know that he’s still with the group. I don’t think they understood that. I also think that they thought . . . I had planned on having them take that kid to lunch with them . . . or to free time with them and no. I was gonna put that kid in another group during that time because I wouldn’t want to take a kid around. That’s our free time . . . And I never, ever said that you were gonna take him to lunch and . . . I will swear on it. I never told you guys that. That you were gonna take, I said the kid was your responsibility to watch during the day. But I never told you you were gonna take him to lunch. I even told you guys we were gonna lunch together . . . And you were like, ooooh.

Amy: ((laughs)). All of a sudden we’re going to lunch together.

Jessica: Okay. He never said that. He never said that.

James: I said that yesterday.

Jessica: He never said that.

Amy: You said it yesterday after we were upset

James: No

Amy: You were like, we’re gonna go to [lunch together].

Jessica go to [lunch together]. Oh my

Amy: This is the first spat we’ve had. I feel like we’re having a spat.
Amy characterized their discourse as one which accentuated their differences and resulted in a struggle over meanings and power. Jessica and Amy wanted to participate in every aspect of their trip to St. Augustine and felt as if they were no longer positioned as co-teachers and collaborators. Instead, they felt as if James was positioning them as inexperienced pre-interns and that he had assumed a more authoritarian role in planning the trip. Their conflict escalated as Amy and Jessica attempted to overcome these differences. James had given Jessica his list of groups for the field trip and asked her to share them with Amy. Jessica did so and Amy confronted James and shared the decisions she had made as he stood talking with another fourth grade teacher. James recounted their interaction in realis statements and evaluations, in which he shared his recollection of their experience and his feelings about it:

Yeah, you don’t walk up to me in front of other teachers and say, “I’m not going on the field trip.” It wasn’t professional, I didn’t think. So it, it irritated me . . . And then . . . then they’re like, let’s do this, this, this, and this. And at that point, I’m already annoyed. And I’m like, you know, you don’t come up to me in front of another teacher and do that. If you have problems, we talk about it . . . in here . . . you know. So it annoyed me.

James also shared that the other fourth grade teacher had been surprised by the way in which Amy had expressed her disagreement and dissatisfaction. Possibly James perceived Amy’s behavior as an attempt to exercise power over him. Ultimately, he characterized their conflict as a miscommunication and believed that Amy and Jessica would understand his actions and decision-making after they had gone on the field trip. Whether this would be accomplished through an exploration or a bracketing and normalization of their differences was unclear.

I asked the three of them, “So, did you learn anything about your relationship?” Their discourse in response to my question included a number of realis statements, which restated and summarized their perceptions, as well as their evaluations of the struggle over power and norms.

James: Nah, I knew girls get . . . very angry ( ).
Amy: Every once in awhile James likes to . . . likes to exert his power and show us that he’s teacher and that it’s his classroom and that’s fine.

James: The only thing that really annoyed me yesterday was the way you approached me outside.

Amy: The only thing that really annoyed me yesterday was when I was honestly upset about it for the rest of the day and you thought it was funny . . . . And I told him I was upset and he laughed at me.

James: I didn’t laugh at you. I was laughing at the situation.

Amy: Okay, you laughed.

Jessica: Honestly, I think we approached the situation like that because we’re comfortable with him. And so we, when we, I, honestly, like I don’t think that we were outlandish . . . or I don’t even think we were rude. He just felt like we were, I think, I at least my perception he felt like we were undermining him in front of his . . . um . . .

Amy: Team leader.

Jessica: After that I was just like, you know what? It’s his classroom. And at the end of the day he’s gonna do whatever he wants. And if he tells me that I have to be with this student, what am I gonna do? I’m just gonna have to be with that student . . . But I did see it taking a toll on our relationship because I was like, I don’t even want to talk to him. I don’t want to see him. Like I was just really upset because of the situation and how he handled it . . . But we’re getting upset because this is a total change in everything that’s ever happened. Like for the first time I felt like . . . oh my gosh, he’s my mentor teacher. He, this is his classroom.

Amy: He’s the boss.

Jessica: Let me stop doing. Let me stop even trying to put my input into anything.

It seemed that Jessica had redefined a mentor as one who assumed power over his mentees and she had reconstructed her position in the classroom as one of conformity and capitulation. Her orientation to their differences had moved from an acceptance and exploration of their differences to an accentuation of them, which resulted in her nominal compliance with the norms she inferred from James’s behaviors and statements. Their individual understandings of the effects of this disagreement on the nature of their relationship ranged from James’s interpretation that they had not clearly communicated their intentions and had misunderstood each other to
Amy’s and Jessica’s belief that the fabric of their relationship had been irreparably changed in a way that no longer supported their development as teachers.

Thus, their contrasting perceptions of and disagreements over Amy’s and Jessica’s responsibilities for the class field trip to St. Augustine negatively affected their rapport and ability to learn from and co-construct knowledge with each other. The following exchange took place in our final dialogue session when they were asked to reflect on their relationship over the course of the semester:

Amy: ((laughs)) Um . . . well, obviously the way he runs his classroom has, has kind of defined our relationship. And what he allows us to do and what . . . the way he wants things done and that kind of, I mean, the first day we walked in here he was like . . . this is your classroom. This is your class. This is your desk. We’re gonna share this and you’re gonna be a part of this and, from the beginning . . . I remember being really excited, in the car on the way home, we’re like . . . he’s awesome. This is gonna be so much fun.

James: How has that changed . . . since the beginning? ((laughs)).

Amy: Well it has changed because you’re mean now ((laughs)).

James: ((laughs)).

Jessica: I think he’s a little bit less free.

James: They’re not happy about the three [from his final evaluation of their teaching].

James attributed his mentees’ current perceptions of the nature of their relationship to his final evaluation of their teaching, which consisted of a checklist of teaching behaviors (see Appendix G) that were rated: 1 - does not meet expectations; 2 – meets expectations at minimal level; 3 – meets expectations at satisfactory level; and 4 – exceeds expectations. The tension created by the university’s positioning of James as a mentor and evaluator may have contributed to the devolution of their rapport. As Nolan and Hoover (2005) have suggested, “supervision [or mentoring] are separate but complementary functions that should provide the cornerstones of a comprehensive system of professional growth and accountability (p. 6), but as Cogan (1973)
maintained the positioning of a mentor as an evaluator is patently incompatible with the supportive and collaborative activities of mentoring.

However, Amy and Jessica maintained that there was a more gradual change in the climate of their relationship and they believed that the issues that contributed to their diminished rapport were more complex and could not be accounted for by a single event. Jessica attempted to describe her feelings of discomfort through a series of evaluative knowledge exchanges:

Jessica: I don’t feel comfortable . . . like I did before. I don’t feel comfortable doing the same things that I was doing because of . . . the relationship has changed. It’s not that he’s been . . . oh well, you’re just gonna sit in the back of the classroom and grade papers and not do anything. It’s not that. I just don’t feel comfortable . . . stepping forward and stepping out.

James: I haven’t notice that . . . at all.

Sharon: Okay.

Jessica: It’s not affecting you.

Amy: ((laughs)).

James: Well, why wouldn’t you say something to me about it?

Amy. We did. The last time, the last time we sat down and did this [had a dialogue session].

James: Well, you were upset about St. Augustine which I understand.

Jessica: But that . . . you keep bringing it back to then, but it’s not just that. It’s the fact that . . . and it’s our relationship wasn’t the same. It was now . . . you’re my interns. You listen to me. And you’re gonna do what I say. And this is how it should be done. And it hasn’t changed since then.

Jessica perceived a power shift, believing that their relationship had been transformed from one in which power was shared to one in which the mentor exercised power over his mentees. Amy and Jessica were no longer positioned as colleagues and decision-makers and their co-construction of teaching practices and identities suffered. The differences among them were accentuated with no attempt to resolve them.
Amy and Jessica speculated that this change in their relationship began when they implemented cooperative learning in the classroom and grouped the students in teams of four or five. James admitted that he was not comfortable with this instructional strategy. He believed that the groups generated noise that distracted some students from the task at hand. However, Amy and Jessica maintained that instead of problematizing cooperative learning, James’s concerns and desire for a quiet classroom were manifested in his attempts to exercise his power over them:

James: Am I more strict now?
Amy: No ((laughs)).
Jessica: I think you have less control and you don’t like it.
Amy: Over the class. It’s not us.
Jessica: Yeah.
James: Well I told you that going into this grouping thing. I don’t like it.
Jessica: Well it changed everything when you lost control ((laughs)).
Amy: ((laughs)).
James: Well I haven’t lost control.
Jessica: Well…
Amy: Well you haven’t lost control, but you perceive it as . . . chaos.
James: Right
Amy: All the time.
James: Which is something, that’s what I need to work on is that.
Amy: And it, and it makes, it makes you . . . it makes you a different person.
James: I don’t agree with that.

Their dialogue accentuated their differences and created conflict which remained unresolved. They struggled over the meaning of certain events and were unsuccessful in their
attempts to resolve these differences. While James had not been aware of the change in their relationship, the mentees had been affected by what they perceived as a diminishing of their rapport, and the ways in which this change affected their learning and their practices were not fully explored. In a series of evaluations James suggested some of the ways in which his mentoring practices might need to change:

Maybe from the start I needed to be a little more . . . not as friendly and more . . . authoritative . . . So no . . . it comes back . . . when I try to do something . . . and I’m glad they feel comfortable to say what’s bothering them. That’s important that they’re able to do that.

He seemed to believe that they had developed a relationship in which there was an openness to difference while, at the same time, he suggested that perhaps he should have positioned himself as a mentor who, at least in some instances, positioned himself as an expert, director, and decision-maker in the relationship. It seemed Jessica’s and Amy’s orientation to difference was now one of consensus and acceptance of the difference in power between a mentor and his mentees. However, they still owned their personal power and freely expressed their dissatisfaction, albeit at a late date, when there was no time to address and possibly resolve the power and positioning issues that were proving disruptive and divisive to the previously promising evolution of their relationship. Ultimately, these experiences became part of their individual relational histories and the influence of these experiences on future relationships was hypothesized, but not explored.

**Co-Constructing Knowledge of Teaching and Learning**

The ways in which power was shared among James, Amy, and Jessica, as well as the ways in which they positioned and repositioned themselves and each other indicated tremendous variation. Power sharing and positioning both affected the nature of their collaboration and the knowledge they were able to construct and share.
Developing a Professional Knowledge Base: Mentor as Expert and Co-Constructor and Mentees as Novice Colleagues and Co-Constructors

During our second dialogue session, James shared some of his philosophies concerning teaching and learning. In an evaluation, James described his perceptions of teaching:

A lot of stuff we teach is boring. I mean I don’t like teaching a lot of stuff because it’s boring but I have to find a way to make it fun. And that’s part of the challenge of being a teacher.

According to Amy, James modeled how to engage their students in learning and devised games and provided extrinsic incentives when necessary. Amy and Jessica also learned that what their fourth graders considered engaging and fun did not always match their ideas of captivating, interesting instruction. For instance, James used the competitive game “Around the World” to reinforce his students’ mastery of the multiplication facts. Amy stated, “They [the fourth graders] look forward to something like ‘Around the World’ which . . . I wouldn’t count that as fun if I were a fourth grader, but they do . . . Then they get through it better.” Amy now understood that she will need to know her students in order to make instructional decisions that will motivate her students and support their learning.

Planning: Mentor as Provider of Feedback and Mentees as Instructional Designers

Planning was an important aspect of teaching and essential for an effective lesson. James expected his mentees to spend some time and effort planning their lessons and in an activity exchange he stated, “You need to make an effort to stay an extra twenty-five minutes cause I’m not just gonna tell you at 7:15 in the morning what you’re gonna teach . . . . take it [the teacher’s manual] home. Plan.” He positioned his mentees as novice colleagues and made his expectations for Amy’s and Jessica’s planning clear. Amy concurred with her positioning and stated that James would “go over what we’re doing for the next day. And . . . how he wants it done.” James was positioned as the expert whose feedback shaped their lessons in what seemed
to be a prescriptive way. In fact, James would suggest specific strategies for Amy and Jessica to use when planning instruction. Early in the semester he asked them to use choral reading as a strategy for reading a story with the students. In a knowledge exchange, Amy shared how she was able to extend her understanding of a specific instructional strategy:

I wasn’t sure . . . what they [the students] were used to as far as, so when I heard, when I heard you [James] do it the first time, then I was like oh, okay, well I can do this, but . . . when he was just like choral read, I was like . . . I know what that is, but I’m not sure how it works in here.

Thus, she positioned James as an expert and model and repositioned herself as someone who possessed the necessary expertise, but needed to construct a more situated understanding that would not only prove beneficial for the students’ learning, but would also expand her repertoire of instructional strategies and techniques. Observing James broadened her understanding of choral reading and its uses.

Amy also actively sought James’s advice when she was planning a lesson. As she engaged in planning lesson, Amy was also constructing an identity as a teacher and positioned herself as a reflective practitioner, who identified potential problems and issues that needed further development or modification before the lesson was presented. Ultimately, her identity as a novice prevailed, and Amy related how she sought James’s advice in a series of realis statements that described her lesson and the questions she had about its implementation:

We have a writing prompt today and I was worried about the writing prompt last night and I called Jessica and we were like . . . “Uh, it’s not exactly what we want them to write, but we can’t figure out how” . . . And I called James ((laughs)) and he was like, “Well you’re gonna have to model,” like he told us what we’re gonna have to do today.

Amy first sought the advice of her partner, Jessica, positioning her as a collaborator and problem solver. Ultimately, they both positioned James as an expert and engaged him in the activity of coaching, asking him to provide specific ideas and strategies for accomplishing their lesson. For Amy and Jessica, these positionings proved invaluable as James’s advice enabled
them to make changes in their lesson and develop a plan for modeling their expectations for their students and for providing more explicit instructions. In an activity exchange, Amy relayed the benefits of her mentor’s coaching for student learning in several realis statements that revealed what Amy now planned to tell her students:

Pretend you’re an explorer and write about how your actions affect other people. But I’m gonna like give an example and explain it further and . . . if I was writing about this explorer this is what I might say . . . kind of deal and we want it in like diary form . . . and I’ll model that.

Jessica also described how she relied on James’s expertise and experience in order to ensure that her lessons were appropriate and relevant and would promote student learning. In an evaluative statement she said:

I think it’s good for me to be able to ask him, you know, what he thinks . . . . and because he knows the kids, um . . . for he’s been with them for longer than we have and he’s been, um, a teacher for longer than we have . . . it makes me feel better to know that . . . somebody more experienced has seen what we’re trying to do and might give feedback on how we can make things different or change things.

Thus, James’s experience influenced his pre-interns’ understanding of teaching and was used to elaborate their professional knowledge bases. Amy also seemed to believe that these experiences informed her teaching practices and positively influenced her students’ learning.

**Providing Feedback: Mentor as Evaluator and Mentees as Novice Colleagues**

During our first dialogue session, James conducted a post conference following his observation of one of Amy’s and Jessica’s lessons. In this lesson, Amy and Jessica had provided some direct instruction and modeled how to calculate the perimeter of an object. They divided the students into groups and gave each group a number of shapes cut out of construction paper. Students were assigned jobs and asked to work together to calculate the perimeter of each of the shapes. During the post conference, James first positioned himself as an expert, who provided feedback with regard to aspects of the lesson that were effective, as well as constructive criticism
regarding aspects of the lesson that could be improved. In a realis statement that described his observation notes and clarified his intentions for his feedback he said, “One side says keep doing and one side says things to ponder, which should be things to think about doing better next time. Constructive criticism is good, okay?” At the same time he repositioned himself as a learner stating, “I also learn from the notes I’m taking when I’m writing them down for you, things that remind me of what I could do better.”

James also described the aspects of the lesson that he characterized as “good,” which included their review of the students’ homework, their use of peer modeling, their use of proximity to manage behavior and their use of popsicle sticks to maintain fairness and promote students’ participation. He suggested that they provide scaffolding for students who needed individual help and devise more open-ended questions for use during instruction.

In an activity exchange James reminded Amy and Jessica of the importance of making their expectations clear. He said:

Model what you expect the kids to do on the overhead before you have them separate into groups. Because once they’re in groups they’re talking. And they’re not gonna be focused as they would be if you have them sit down in the desks . . . . when it gets a bit loud, remind them of inside voices. Again that’s a thing that . . . I . . . like. When you have your classroom, if you’re okay with noise, it’s fine. But when it gets loud, I get distracted, so I feel like some of the kids are getting distracted.

Thus, James positioned Amy and Jessica as teachers who would be making their own decisions about instructional and management strategies. James encouraged his mentees to consider that, while they might wish to use cooperative learning as an instructional strategy, this method might not be suited for all of their students’ learning styles, and they might have to provide accommodations for these students.

Jessica and Amy were developing skill as reflective practitioners and had already determined that their introduction of cooperative groups needed more explicit instruction and
modeling. Jessica said, “I was thinking . . . how we should of went over what’s proper, you
know, while working in groups. Can they switch their jobs? Can they . . . help each other out . . .
. . And if we had gone over that probably would have gone a lot smoother.” Jessica also
recognized the need for more clarity with regard to the job descriptions, and Amy suggested that
if they had taught their students the procedures and routines of cooperative learning they might
have increased the chances for students’ successful use of this strategy for learning. The four of
us brainstormed ideas for teaching students how to work as a group and co-constructed various
ways of modeling the expectations. Because the students were asked to calculate the perimeter
of several shapes, we also discussed the possibility of having students switch jobs so that each
student would have an opportunity to measure and to record the perimeter. This collaboration
provided everyone with an expanded understanding of how cooperative learning might be taught
to and enacted by students.

Managing Behavior: Mentor as Model, Decision-Maker and Collaborator and Mentees as
Decision-Makers and Collaborators

Classroom management was another important aspect that affected teaching and learning
and Amy and Jessica were keenly aware of how their management strategies influenced their
students’ learning and their developing teacher identities. Once again, in an early dialogue
session, James shared some of his experiences and philosophies regarding classroom
management. He believed that some of the strategies he was taught in his university classes
were not always applicable in the real world. For instance, James employed realis statements
and evaluations to describe his beliefs about managing student behavior. He said, “They say
never single out a kid . . . I’m real big on self-esteem. But there are certain times when you need
to single out a kid . . . I think.” He disagreed with this philosophy and maintained that his
students understood that he was singling them out because he cared about them and wanted them
to become good citizens. However, he did not believe in yelling at students. He said, “Number one I think it’s a sign of weakness. Number two, I’d probably cuss ((laughs)) . . . . you know, yelling scares kids and . . . I don’t think kids learn out of fear.” According to James, a teacher’s classroom management strategies had implications for student learning, and his beliefs may have been understood by his mentees as a set of expectations for his own, as well as for their behavior in the classroom.

Amy agreed that the information provided in her university classes did not always seamlessly transfer to the real-world of her fourth grade classroom. In a knowledge exchange that included an evaluation of what she had learned in her coursework she said:

We took a classroom management class and it’s so much different when you’re there. When you’re in it and they can tell you all they want to. Use marbles and use popsicle sticks and do this and do that but it . . . it’s so different for each class. And it’s good for us to . . . see this class and how he does it . . . . you know there are things that…both of us would say we do different but, it works for the class and that’s a real world thing you just can’t get in a class and . . . classroom management [the university course] was quite the waste this semester ((laughs)).

Thus, while Amy and Jessica deferred to James’s expertise in the management decisions he made regarding their students, they also acknowledged that they were developing their own identities as classroom managers and that, indeed, their future classrooms might be managed in ways that differed from those employed by James. They seemed to respect James’s authority and willingly abided by the decisions he made for his classroom; yet, at the same time, they were developing their own, independent ideas about how they would manage their future classrooms.

**Concluding Thoughts**

Due to the dissolution of the rapport they had with James and their differing stances with regard to teaching, Amy’s and Jessica’s construction of their practices and identities was not as collaborative as it might have been. The pre-interns did adhere to James’s expectations for
instruction and behavior, but they tended to accentuate their differences without an accompanying attempt at resolution.

However, as Jessica reflected on our dialogue sessions, as well as her observations of students, she realized that both had influenced and transformed her practices and identity. In an evaluative statement Jessica said:

With a lot of kids who are low in academics, the first problem is their behavior. And once you can modify the behavior, you can usually address the academics, but if you don’t address the behavior then it’s hard to, you know, figure out... um, how to help them with their academics.

Jessica incorporated this insight into her identity as a teacher and asserted, “I’ve taken this whole stance with my teaching in, in that looking at the student, past everything else that’s going on with them, with their home life or even the school environment... just looking at the student for who they are.” She recognized that knowing her students was an important first step in becoming the teacher her students needed her to be. She further acknowledged that becoming this teacher might be neither comfortable nor uncomplicated. In an activity exchange she said:

I have to look at him [the student] as somebody who does know the information or has the ability to learn the information instead of looking at him, like, oh, he’s a bad student, which is my tendency sometimes... I don’t want to deal with the behavior, but I have to look at the student and be like, okay, you know what. You can learn this. I just have to... get around whatever you’re showing me.

Moreover, Jessica was developing a sense of efficacy with regard to her students’ learning. She accepted her responsibility for knowing her students and believed that they were all capable of learning. As a teacher, she then had to “figure out how to... get them [the students] to learn,” and in order to do this she might have to adjust her expectations, “I need to modify in my mind what ‘on task’ is for him.” Jessica believed she needed to differentiate instruction, which would provide her students with alternate means for learning and for providing evidence of their learning. Additionally, although James seemed to hold very clear ideas about classroom
management, his mentees appeared to be refining, and even modifying, albeit independently, their understandings of what classroom management entailed and the practices they would adopt and implement.

Amy, who was not necessarily committed to pursuing a career in education, seemed to believe that one is born to be a teacher. She said to James,

You were born to be a teacher. And that, and that scares me cause I don’t know that I was and . . . if you’re not, if you don’t belong in the classroom or you’re not that passionate about it . . . am, am I gonna . . . hurt twenty-five kid like, am I gonna ruin their futures?

Amy’s beliefs might be due to the fact that teaching, when performed by experienced teachers, often looks effortless (Meijer, Zanting, & Verloop, 2002). Fortunately, her fears did not keep her from actively participating in the classroom. Perhaps, James’s positioning as a mentor provided reassurance for Amy. It seemed she was secure in the knowledge that he would intercede if necessary, as well as provide her with feedback that would not only enable her to meet the needs of their students, but also assist her in making a decision about pursuing teaching as a career.

James positioned himself simultaneously as mentor and learner within their relationship. In our first dialogue session he characterized their mentorship as a “good working relationship.” However, he also had some concerns about the nature of their camaraderie. He said:

Sometimes I wonder whether or not I’m too friendly, but I don’t think that’s an issue because . . . you know, it’s important that we feel open to talk to one another because if we don’t, if there’s an issue bothering me and I don’t feel like I can talk to them then I’m, I’m not doing my job as a mentor. And if there’s an issue that you guys need to talk about and they don’t feel like they can approach me about it then they’re not . . . gaining from . . . my knowledge as an educator.

From the beginning James was concerned about nature of their relationship and whether or not it was appropriate for mentoring. According to Barth (1990), collaborative relationships among teaching colleagues should be collegial, as well as congenial. Congeniality referred to the friendly relationships that developed among colleagues, while collegiality described a kind of
collaborative practice among colleagues in which teachers talked about their practice, observed each other teaching, worked on planning, designing and evaluating curriculum, and taught each other what they knew about teaching, learning, and leading (Barth, 1990). Thus, while the relationships between mentors and mentees needed to be congenial, they needed to be collegial as well. Indeed, James believed that it was necessary for Jessica and Amy to feel comfortable engaging in critical, and perhaps, uncomfortable conversations when necessary and that maintaining their collegiality was necessary for their ongoing professional development. However, a congenial relationship provided an important foundation for collegial collaboration, and it seemed that the congeniality that characterized their initial relationship had diminished and was now negatively affecting their ability to collaborate and to engage in collegiality.

James also admitted that it was hard for him to be silent if he saw something happening during a lesson that he believed needed to be corrected. In realis statements he described and evaluated his mentoring practices:

I’m not set in my ways by any means, but if I see something that I think should be done right now then I have a hard time not saying, do this . . . But I look at it as an opportunity for me to develop my practices.

He also described how he learned new strategies and was introduced to new learning activities through observing his mentees. In a number of realis statements he described what he had learned from Amy and Jessica:

But . . . observing them, I mean there’s things that I see that I could help them with, but not only that, there’s things that I see that…They did, they did geoboards two weeks ago. I haven’t done that. And I saw the kids, the excitement on the kids’ faces when they brought those into the classroom, I mean. And it inspired me to go do more stuff like that, you know? It got me out of my element a little bit, so it . . . it’s good to have fresh ideas because I think once you become complacent then . . . you know, then you lose . . . you just, there’s no point in even doing it . . . you know?

Amy and Jessica inspired James and it seemed that he wished to integrate other learning activities and instructional strategies into his classroom. Unfortunately, the experience of
integrating cooperative learning was not successful and did not result in a transformation of his teaching practices.

Amy, Jessica, and James developed a mentoring relationship in which the mood of their discourses tended to be declarative, in which James provided specific feedback and shared his beliefs, rather than engaging Amy and Jessica in critical reflection. This stance benefited the elaboration and extension of his mentees’ repertoire of strategies and techniques, and Amy and Jessica were provided with many opportunities to develop their teaching practices. Jessica was appreciative of these opportunities and said, “I know that a lot of people have not gotten that opportunity to just do what they wanted to. Plan their lessons and implement them. That is awesome.” However, the dissolution of their rapport led to an accentuation of their differences which they were unable to explore and resolve. Thus, their relationship ended with questions about boundaries and the negotiation of power and left each of them struggling to understand the meanings and norms of mentoring. Their struggles were poignantly illustrated through Jessica’s words, “The same freedom isn’t there anymore.”
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CHAPTER 7
DISCUSSION

In chapters 4, 5, and 6, I presented my findings for each of the three mentoring groups, which were related to my research questions. In this chapter I consider how discourse was used by the participants as a context for the construction and negotiation of identities and practices within a mentoring relationship. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to look across the three mentoring groups and discuss how the discourses shaped the sociopolitical context in which the mentors and mentees were situated and influenced their co-construction of knowledge, the development of their relationships, and the ways in which their identities and mentoring activities were enacted and transformed. I shall also discuss possible implications of my situated findings for mentoring, as well as for teacher education.

Discourse as a Context for the Construction and Negotiation of the Identities and Practices of Mentors and Mentees

“Discourses, through our words and deeds, have talked to each other through history, and, in doing so, form human history” (Gee, 2005, p. 27). Thus, the Discourses that we recognize and use play an important role in constructing not only our individual lives, but also the larger social worlds in which we are situated. However, these Discourses have contestable boundaries and because we are members of multiple Discourse communities, we are able to weave the strands of our multiple Discourses together, creating contexts in which some Discourses die, new Discourses emerge and others are transformed. According to Gee (2005):

Discourses are out in the world and history as coordinations of people, places, times, actions, interactions, verbal and non-verbal expression, symbols, things, tools, and technologies that betoken certain identities and associated activities. Thus, they are material realities. But Discourses exist, also, as work to get people and things recognized in certain ways and not others, and they exist as well, as maps that constitute our understandings. They are, then social practices and mental entities, as well as material realities (p. 32)
In this way, our membership in various Discourses influences and limits our understandings, affects the identities we are able to construct and assume, and shapes the activities in which we engage. The mentors and mentees in my study performed, negotiated and recognized a number of Discourses and in that process created, sustained, and transformed them (Gee, 2005). Hence, my analysis of the texts of their dialogues has led to a number of conclusions about the Discourses in which they were situated and the ways in which they used them to engage each other in the work of mentoring, teaching, and learning. I will now share a number of assertions (Erickson, 1986) and attempt to situate them in the larger contexts of schools and scholarship.

*A number of Discourses shaped the sociopolitical context in which the mentors and mentees were situated and influenced their co-construction of identities, as well as their enactment of the activities of mentoring.* Some of the Discourses that shaped the sociopolitical context in which the mentors and mentees were situated were more broadly recognized, as they were constructed and defined at the level of federal and state governments, while others were created by teacher education programs and individual schools and therefore, more local. These Discourses included: (a) No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and high stakes testing, (b) the Discourse of “best practices,” (c) the Discourse of national and state instructional standards, and (d) the Discourse of Proteach, a teacher education program.

NCLB is one of the Discourses created by the federal government. It is now the law of our land and part of the public’s lexicon about education, and its effect on the Discourses of local schools is extraordinary. According to the U. S. Department of Education, the four pillars of NCLB are: (a) stronger accountability for results, (b) more freedom for states and communities, (c) proven education methods, and (d) more choices for parents (Retrieved from
Thus, all school in Florida now administer the FCAT once a year, and students’ scores on this test are used to grade the schools as to their ability to encourage and support their students’ achievement of adequate academic progress in reading/language arts, math, and, in the fifth grade, science. In addition, these same test scores often determine teachers’ merit pay. This Discourse has also created a number of sanctions and rewards based on students’ test scores. In this sense, the government is exercising a form of disciplinary power and teachers have become acculturated through this new discourse and are now complicit in its maintenance (Foucault, 1990). As Barbara discussed with her mentees, her teaching practices and identity were influenced by the state test and, in many ways, she felt that resistance was futile. Consequently, mentors are welcoming pre-service teachers into communities of practice that must now consider the influence of NCLB and state tests on the curriculum that is taught, the pacing of instruction, as well as their design of specific lessons and learning activities.

Moreover, NCLB is currently touting “proven education methods,” which are identified as educational programs and practices that have been proven effective through rigorous scientific research, as the instructional best practices that teachers should adopt. In this instance, the authority of teachers to make instructional decisions has sometimes been appropriated by outsiders, and mentees are learning that classroom instruction is often shaped by prescriptive programs and publishing companies, whose textbooks are designed to meet the learning objectives tested on the FCAT. While the mentors teachers often created spaces in which they encouraged their mentees to implement some of the instructional practices promoted in their university coursework, the mentees also learned that the teacher’s manual often determined their lesson plans and their identities as teachers were confounded by the perception, fostered by these
outside agencies, that they were presenters, rather than designers of instruction. For many mentors and mentees their identities as teachers before and after the FCAT were vastly different. Direct instruction and paper and pencil learning activities were most often the instructional choices of teachers before the FCAT was administered; whereas, after the FCAT, teachers, such as Barbara, Melissa, and Elizabeth engaged their students in guided inquiry or cooperative learning, and the learning activities they planned for those lessons were often hands-on activities that were designed to accommodate a number of learning styles.

Additionally, national organizations, such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), as well as state departments of education have developed standards that identify learning goals for each content area of the curriculum. The Florida Department of Education’s standards for student learning are called the Sunshine State Standards and are described as “World Class Education Standards that prepare Florida’s students to effectively engage, communicate, and compete globally with students around the world. Florida’s standards incorporate important skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, innovation, collaboration and communication” (Retrieved from http://www.fldoe.org/bii/curriculum/sss/). However, these standards, while providing learning goals and the parameters by which student learning can be assessed, do not prescribe the methods or the pacing of instruction. Nor do they empower mentors and mentees to develop identities as instructional decision-makers whose expertise is considered valuable for designing lessons and assessing student learning.

Finally, the Discourses that influenced the sociopolitical context were not all constructed by federal and state governments and organizations. The Discourse of ProTeach, the teacher education program in which all of the mentees were enrolled, intermingled with the other
Discourses that shaped the context at Allenton Elementary School. ProTeach espoused a Discourse that valued inclusive teaching practices and the creation of learning environments that supported the learning of diverse populations of students (Ross, Lane, & McCallum, 2005). Pre-service teachers were encouraged to work collaboratively with their mentor teachers and the person with whom they had been partnered. Cooperative learning, alternative assessments, and learning activities that embraced diversity were prominent aspects of this Discourse and significantly contributed to the mentees’ initial constructions of their teacher identities and teaching practices.

However, many mentees experienced a profound disconnect between the Discourse of the university and the Discourse(s) that operated within the real world classrooms in which they had been placed. Some found that direct instruction was the predominant instructional strategy and pull-out programs were the preferred way of accommodating students with special needs. Additionally, assessments tended to take the form of paper and pencil multiple choice tests that mimicked the FCAT, which students were expected to take in the spring. Although the mentors often provided their mentees with sporadic opportunities to develop lessons that used cooperative learning and hands-on learning activities, the mentees were often unable to construct the teacher identities they had envisioned for themselves. The reality that awaited them in the classrooms of Allenton Elementary created some consternation and apprehension about whether or not they would be able to find a context in which they could become the teachers they were meant to be. However, in their own situated Discourse(s) of mentoring that the mentors and mentees constructed, they were able to consider how the larger sociopolitical context might influence their future identities and practices and to question whether or not there were ways in which the current practices of schooling might be changed and transformed.
Mentors constructed their identities within the tensions created by competing Discourses of mentoring – the historical Discourse(s) of mentoring and the emerging Discourse of educative mentoring. Historical understandings of mentoring have been constructed, reconstructed, discarded, and transformed many times since their mythological beginning in ancient Greek poetry, and “as these understandings were transported across boundaries of use, they brought with them relational remnants, fragments of meaning, and accompanying implications” (McNamee & Gergen, 1999, p. 26). The historical understandings of mentoring have been translated, in contemporary times, by the business world, which incorporated mentoring into their cultural practices. Mentoring in a corporate setting was often characterized as a means of providing a role model for younger associates in an effort to teach them the skills necessary for career advancement, as well as socializing them into a professional community. This business model of mentoring was transferred to the educational community and mentors who implemented this model in an educational context often focused on the novice teacher’s situational adjustment, as well as providing technical advice and emotional support (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Wang & Odell, 2002). Mentors who are situated in an historical Discourse of mentoring develop identities as models, experts, and providers of corrective feedback. They share their professional knowledge and provide their mentees with examples of best practices. In other words, mentors, such as Barbara and James, enculturate pre-service teachers into the current system and help novices fit into their new environments (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006).

While evidence has suggested that this traditional approach to mentoring does improve teacher retention, job satisfaction, and teacher quality, which, in turn, positively influences student learning and achievement (Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), some scholars have begun to question this conception of mentoring and have suggested that mentors
encourage their mentees to critique and challenge the existing practices of schooling (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006). Feiman-Nemser (2001) has named this new Discourse of mentoring, educative mentoring. This emerging Discourse of mentoring encourages mentors and mentees to engage in critical reflection about their current understandings and practices in an effort to foster reform in schools, as well as their individual classrooms. Mentors, like Kenneth, who are situated in an educative Discourse of mentoring, construct identities as facilitators and collaborators. They engage their mentees in co-planning, co-teaching, and co-reflection. Their mentoring relationship is a collegial one and both participants accept and explore other perspectives and understandings that support constructive change and the transformation of their practices and identities. Mentoring is no longer a means of knowledge transmission; instead it is a means of knowledge transformation (Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995). However, even mentors who embrace an identity as an educative mentor often find that the nature of their situated mentoring discourse melds aspects of the historical Discourses of mentoring and the emerging, educative Discourse of mentoring, in order to meet the specific needs of their mentees.

*Mentors’ and mentees’ identities were interdependent and influenced the nature of their situated mentoring Discourse.* The identities of the mentors and mentees were constructed within their mentoring relationships, and these constructions of identities and relationships were interdependent (McNamee & Gergen, 1999). In this way, the construction of the mentor’s identity required a mentee and conversely, the construction of a mentee’s identity required a mentor. Additionally, the dialogues of the mentors and mentees were always affected by the identity and positioning of the person with whom they are interacting (McNamee & Gergen, 1999).
Moreover, the mentees, as well as the mentors, determined the nature of their situated mentoring Discourse through the identities they constructed and the fluid ways in which they positioned each other, and each Discourse supported multiple identities (Gee, 2005). Sometimes the mentors positioned themselves as models and experts and their mentees as novice colleagues, who often felt obligated to adjust their understandings and practices so that they conformed with those of their mentors. At other times, it was the mentees who positioned their mentors as experts and models because they required specific direction or feedback in order to engage in the practices of teaching. In both of these instances, the nature of their Discourse was situated in an historical understanding of mentoring.

However, there were also instances in which the mentors constructed identities as facilitators and collaborators and encouraged their mentees to critically question their own practices and to construct identities as reflective practitioners, as was the case with Kenneth and Susan. These identities located the mentors and mentees within an educative Discourse of mentoring and created opportunities for engagement in reform-minded practices and the transformation of teacher identities.

*Mentors’ and mentees’ identities and the nature of the Mentoring discourse in which they were situated shaped the ways in which the activities of mentoring were enacted.* According to Mc Namee and Gergen (1999), the actions of a mentor or mentee are always for each other, and are shaped by the ways in which they position each other as they engage in the practices of mentoring or teaching. Therefore, although the activities in which the mentors and mentees engaged were remarkably similar, the ways in which those activities were enacted often demonstrated considerable variation. Mentors who situated themselves in an historical Discourse of mentoring, such as James and Barbara, tended to use dialogue that was declarative
in mood and their identities as models and providers of feedback were accomplished through
statements of fact and evaluations of their mentees’ practices. The mentees were often expected
to adopt and then demonstrate their mentors’ suggestions as they planned and taught lessons and
engaged their students in learning.

In contrast, mentors who situated themselves in an educative Discourse of mentoring
created an interrogative mood for their dialogic interactions. They constructed identities as
facilitators and collaborators and used questions to encourage their mentees to engage in
planning, teaching, and reflection, as well as to ask questions of their own regarding the current
practices and understandings of teaching. These mentors and mentees constructed identities and
practices that they continually questioned as they engaged with each other in mentoring and
teaching, as was the case with Kenneth and Susan.

Mentees negotiated their identities within the tensions of the predominant Discourse(s) in
their teacher education program and the predominant Discourse(s) of their real world schools.
In addition to understanding and negotiating their identities and activities within the situated
Discourses of their mentoring relationships, the pre-service teachers had the added challenge of
navigating between the Discourse(s) of ProTeach and the situated Discourse(s) of Allenton
Elementary School. As discussed previously, the Discourse of ProTeach was one in which
collaboration, inclusive teaching practices, and differentiation was embraced. The mentees
arrived in their classrooms at Allenton with a desire to engage in these kinds of practices and to
develop the concomitant identities. They often found it difficult to implement these practices in
their real world classrooms and to realize their own identities. In fact, mentors who were
situated in an historical Discourse of mentoring tended to encourage their mentees to transform
their practices and identities in a way that was complementary to the mentors’ understandings of
teaching and learning. Conversely, mentors who were situated in an educative Discourse of mentoring, because they continually and critically reflected on their own practices, encouraged their novice colleagues to construct their own practices and identities and to engage in a critically reflective stance. As uncomfortable as negotiating and reconciling the tensions among these Discourse(s) might have been, at times, for these mentees, in many ways, this experience provided them with a more authentic understanding of teaching and the kinds of challenges they would face as they enacted their own philosophies and identities and attempted to reform the taken for granted practices of schooling. In fact, educative mentoring would promote these productive tensions as a means of supporting teachers in reframing their thinking and reconsidering their own practices and assumptions.

**Situated Understandings of Mentoring and Their Implications for Teacher Education and Mentoring**

The findings of my study revealed the complexity, diversity, and situatedness of the mentoring relationships that developed among mentors and mentees, and a number of issues emerged, which might be worthy of consideration as teacher education programs make decisions about the opportunities they provide their pre-service teachers in real world classrooms. First, it seems that both mentors and mentees need an elaborated understanding of mentoring and mentoring relationships. Currently, two Discourses of mentoring are predominant in educational contexts – an historical Discourse of mentoring and an educative Discourse of mentoring. I believe both are important in the development of pre-service teachers’ identities and practices. The pre-interns, who participated in my study, and who are at the beginning of their teaching careers, clearly encountered situations in which they needed an experienced mentor, who was able to provide information, resources, or direction regarding the specifics of any of the myriad responsibilities that educators assume. I would suggest that are various stages in our
development as educators and relational partners, when we might all benefit from mentoring that was more traditional in nature. However, there were also instances in which the mentors were able to engage their mentees in a critical reflection of their practices and beliefs, and it is important to move in this direction of problematizing our individual and collective practices and transforming our knowledge of teaching and learning. Thus, I would suggest that mentors and mentees need to develop an understanding of both mentoring Discourses and to border cross between the Discourses when appropriate.

Additionally, effective mentoring relationships should be both congenial and collegial, and it is important for mentors and mentees to develop a relationship that fosters collaboration. Participants must have opportunities to share their relational histories and forge the connections that will be necessary for the collegial work of mentoring. In fact, as they share their unique perspectives and understandings, they might consider how their diversity will support and challenge them as they develop a relationship that will benefit the growth and transformation of both participants. However, collegial relationships often require uncomfortable conversations, which might create dissonance and productive tensions that challenge each of the relational partners to question their beliefs and assumptions and to consider new perspectives that broaden, deepen, and renew their understandings of teaching and learning. In fact, mentors’ and mentees’ orientation to difference seems to be a decisive and critical factor in the nature and effectiveness of their relationships. Participants who are able to remain open and accepting of difference, who are willing to explore, negotiate, and even resolve their differences, find that the diversity among their perspectives benefits their learning and development as practitioners. Those who accentuate or suppress their differences are unable to benefit from the productive tensions created by the dissonance between their disparate beliefs and practices.
Mentors and mentees must also understand the ways in which they position themselves and each other and how their positionings are often determined by the specifics of a situation. Both mentors and mentees must realize that any positioning is fluid and situation specific, and mentors and mentees must be able to shift their positions when necessary. An instance of this kind of shift occurred when Kenneth began his post conference by positioning himself as a facilitator and Susan as a reflective practitioner. However, later in their conversation Susan repositioned Kenneth as an expert and relied on his assessment and understanding of some of the facets of her lesson. Kenneth understood Susan’s need to reposition him and he easily slid into this other identity, which Susan “requested.” Furthermore, mentors and mentees need the skills necessary for negotiating power and positioning and for exploring their differences in an attempt to reach new understandings and to create new realities. It seems that both mentors and mentees would benefit from training or workshops or the opportunity to engage in communities of practice that would provide a context, in which they could discuss and critique their understanding of mentoring, as well as their mentoring practices and identities.

It might also prove beneficial to provide mentors and mentees with a more elaborate understanding of how dialogue is employed to create a relationship and a context for learning. Words matter and the ways in which they are used influence the development and transformation of the teaching practices and identities of mentors, as well as mentees. It was also apparent that the mentors and mentees are members of a number of Discourse communities and that some of their discursive memberships are relatively invisible within the mentoring relationship – that is, until the relationship encounters a crisis. The mentoring relationship of James, Amy, and Jessica revealed that a number of discourses were influencing their relationship in tacit and possibly indirect ways. Some of these same invisible discourses could also have been influencing the
relationships of the mentors and mentees in other mentoring groups, albeit in unacknowledged ways. Perhaps, aspects of our discursive natures are not revealed unless we encounter a predicament that we are unable to resolve. It might be worth exploring how these silent, seemingly invisible discourses that shape us, might be used to raise questions that would have been left unvoiced and might promote a fuller understanding of who we are as teachers, as relational partners, and as human beings.

Engaging in mentoring has the potential for supporting all teachers in making their practices problematic and supporting them as they create alternative strategies and opportunities for transformation and reform. Many times it is only the mentees’ practices that are problematized, but mentors’ would benefit from problematizing their own practices as well. Indeed, the dialogic nature of mentoring could provide an ideal context in which mentors and mentees collaboratively use critical reflection to envision and enact teaching practices that benefit student learning.

This research revealed some of the tensions inherent in constructing and negotiating a mentoring relationship that benefits all participants and how our sociohistorical conceptions of Discourse and education, as well as our understandings of the relational aspects of power and positioning, might be used to encourage critical reflection and reform our educational practices in ways that benefit teachers, students, and society. Mentoring involves a relationship that a mentor and mentee co-construct, trouble, and transform as they engage in teaching, inquiry, and critical reflection. The nature of specific relationships is influenced by the participants’ relational histories and prior experiences, as well as the visible and invisible Discourse communities of which they are members. The implications for teacher education include providing opportunities for mentors and mentees to better understand mentoring and the ways in
which it might be enacted, as well as the challenges it will present as a partnership is formed that will influence its participants.

**Concluding Thoughts**

Although I will bring my research journey to a close in this section, it is hardly a final or complete pronouncement on mentoring in general, or even my study in particular. I have sat with my data for months, have returned to it again and again, and each time I have understood it differently. The data I collected have provided me with snapshots of specific mentoring relationships as they were constructed and transformed at particular points in time, and while I was privileged to be exposed to the perspectives of these mentors and mentees, I have to agree with Thayer-Bacon (2003) that I will never be able to gain a complete understanding. Therefore, my findings and assertions are open to further interpretation and the construction of new understandings.

Finally, it seems that mentoring is about relationship – a dynamic, reciprocal, and personal relationship. Mentoring is not something that is done to the mentee; rather it is something that the mentor and mentee construct, negotiate, and do together. It is about taking risks that result in learning and being open to the possibilities for transformation. Mentoring is complex and multi-dimensional and affects our personal, as well as our professional identities and lives. Ultimately, “mentoring is a mutuality that requires more than meeting the right mentor; the mentor must meet the right mentee” (Palmer, 1998).
**APPENDIX A**  
**TIMELINE OF THE STUDY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October, 2006</td>
<td>Proposal Defense and Approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November, 2006</td>
<td>IRB Submission and Approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December, 2006-January, 2007</td>
<td>Solicitation of Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February –April, 2007</td>
<td>Data Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May-June, 2007</td>
<td>Transcription</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July-August, 2007</td>
<td>Multiple readings of data; Open coding of data; Decisions about final data analysis methods made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September-October, 2007</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November, 2007-February, 2008</td>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 2008</td>
<td>Revision of writing; Submission of dissertation to committee members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April, 2008</td>
<td>Defense of dissertation; Final revisions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX B
### DIALOGUE SESSIONS: ACTIVITIES/TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentoring Group</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity/Topics Discussed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring Group 1: Kenneth and Susan</td>
<td>2/05/07</td>
<td>Parent conference took precedence over our dialogue session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12/07</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-conference for Kenneth’s observation of Susan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/19/07</td>
<td></td>
<td>Co-planning a math lesson on probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/26/07</td>
<td></td>
<td>Post-conference. Kenneth observed Susan teach a science lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/5/07</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion of the needs of some individual students. Kenneth shared his philosophy of mentoring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/12/07</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kenneth facilitated Susan’s planning of a reading lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/19/07</td>
<td></td>
<td>Co-planning a math lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/26/07</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussed future social studies’ lessons. Discussion of their communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/2/07</td>
<td></td>
<td>Influenced FCAT on teaching and mentoring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/9/07</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reflected on entirety of relationship and how they had been transformed by it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring Group</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity/Topics Discussed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring Group 2: Barbara, Elizabeth, and Melissa</td>
<td>2/6/07</td>
<td>Discussed previous experiences with mentoring. Recalled how their relationship began and developed in the early weeks. Discussed what they had already learned from each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/13/07</td>
<td>FCAT—No dialogue session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/20/07</td>
<td>Elizabeth and Melissa discussed a lesson they had planned. Discussed influence of FCAT on teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/6/07</td>
<td>Discussed strategies for managing students’ behavior/feelings about classroom management. Discussed the learning needs of individual students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/13/07</td>
<td>University’s Spring Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/20/07</td>
<td>Elizabeth and Melissa shared a math lesson they would be teaching and Barbara provided feedback. Discussed the appropriateness of various instructional strategies. Discussed the importance of constructive criticism for mentees’ learning and growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/3/07</td>
<td>Allenton’s Spring Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/10/07</td>
<td>Reflected on entirety of relationship and how they had been transformed by it. Discussed benefits of mentoring for the mentor and mentees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring Group</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity/Topics Discussed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring Group 3: James, Amy, and Jessica</td>
<td>2/8/07</td>
<td>Post-conference. James had observed Amy and Jessica teach a math lesson. Discussed implementing cooperative learning. Discussed the beginning of their relationship and what they were learning from each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/15/07</td>
<td>Reflected on how their relationship began and developed in the first weeks. Discussed issues of classroom management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/22/07</td>
<td>Discussed how this experience was transforming their identities as teachers. Discussed what they were learning from each other. Discussed needs of individual students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/29/07</td>
<td>FCAT— No dialogue session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/15/07</td>
<td>University’s Spring Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/22/07</td>
<td>Discussed planning lessons that made use of cooperative learning. Discussed classroom management/communication with parents. Discussed importance of cooperative learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/29/07</td>
<td>Discussed field trip to St. Augustine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/5/07</td>
<td>Allenton’s Spring Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/12/07</td>
<td>Reflected on entirety of relationship, how it had changed and how they had been transformed by it. Discussed James’s final evaluation of their teaching.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C
MEMBER CHECKING

Initial Interpretations of the Mentoring Relationships

Mentoring Group 1: Kenneth and Susan

- Kenneth and Susan became acquainted in a series of informal meetings (going to events, playing games, going out to eat) before the semester begins.
- Kenneth and Susan established a personal connection through sharing personal information and experiences.
- It is important to establish a personal connection before beginning the tasks of teaching and mentoring.
- Knowing Susan enabled Kenneth to tailor the mentoring he provided to her specific needs.
- Kenneth and Susan used the phone, emails, and meetings before and after school, as well as during lunch to strengthen their personal and professional connection.
- Kenneth and Susan co-planned and co-taught lessons.
- Kenneth facilitated Susan’s reflection on her lessons through his use of open-ended and probing questions.
- Kenneth often shared his expertise and experience to provide scaffolding for Susan.
- Susan also shared her expertise and experiences when they were relevant to the lesson or discussion.
- Susan was often able to use what she had learned in her university coursework in this real-world classroom.
- FCAT affected the time available for mentoring and the pacing of instruction.
- Kenneth believes his role as a mentor is to help his mentee become the teacher she envisions—it is not to clone himself.
- Kenneth’s feedback has helped Susan to clarify her beliefs about teaching and learning and to refine her practice accordingly.
Mentoring Group 2: Barbara, Elizabeth, and Melissa

- Barbara, Elizabeth, and Melissa had a lot of time for talking and getting to know one another the first week of the semester.

- They felt that it was important to establish a personal connection.

- Barbara also shared information about each of the students with Elizabeth and Melissa the first week of school. This background knowledge made it easier for Melissa and Elizabeth to provide support for individual students and to plan lessons that were appropriate for all their students.

- Barbara also provided constructive criticism and feedback on Elizabeth’s and Melissa’s lesson plans, as well as their teaching. They felt that the establishment of their personal relationship was an important first step in being able to do the work of mentoring.

- Melissa and Elizabeth felt very comfortable bringing new ideas to Barbara.

- They all shared their expertise and previous experiences with each other.

- They communicated before school and during their planning period every day.

- Barbara, Melissa, and Elizabeth discussed a number of classroom management issues and strategies. Melissa and Elizabeth shared their feelings about classroom management.

- Barbara, Elizabeth, and Melissa felt that the FCAT affected their identity as teachers. There was more direct instruction before the FCAT and more creative lessons after the FCAT.

- Melissa and Elizabeth felt that Barbara’s role, as a mentor, was to help them become teachers.

- Barbara believed that Melissa and Elizabeth had become colleagues and cooperative teachers, who were sometimes better able to handle a specific situation than Barbara was.
Mentoring Group 3: James, Amy, and Jessica

- James, Amy, and Jessica did not begin to get to know each other until they met on the second day of their placement.
- James shared his expectations (he expected them to always be involved) with Amy and Jessica.
- James provided constructive criticism and feedback on Amy’s and Jessica’s lesson plans, as well as their teaching.
- James, Amy, and Jessica communicated before school and during their planning periods, as well as by phone and through email and instant messaging.
- James, Amy and Jessica had different teaching styles. Amy and Jessica implemented cooperative learning, but James was distracted by the noise during lessons.
- James believed that the FCAT affected the pacing of instruction.
- Amy and Jessica believed that some university assignments constrained their ability to be actively involved in the classroom.
- Amy did not always see the connections between her university coursework and the real world classroom.
- James, Amy, and Jessica disagreed over their chaperoning responsibilities for the St. Augustine trip. Amy and Jessica believed that this disagreement negatively affected their relationship. Neither felt as free to express their opinions as they had before.
APPENDIX D
RESEARCHER’S NOTEBOOK: REFLECTION AFTER DIALOGUE SESSION

Reflection after Dialogue Session 3/29/07: James, Amy, and Jessica

Today the entire dialogue session was devoted to a discussion of a disagreement they had over the chaperoning responsibilities for their St. Augustine trip. Amy and Jessica dominated the beginning of the conversation and presented their perspectives and reasons for their feelings—they had not wanted to be responsible for only one student. Then James presented his perspective. However, they did not seem to be listening to each other, as they tended to repeat their stories and defend their positions, rather than to attempt to negotiate an agreement and understanding. And at times I felt as if they were each trying to present their case so that I could decide who was right and who was wrong. That was definitely a position I was not willing to assume.

I’m wondering why James didn’t sit down with Amy and Jessica to discuss the field trip and to plan for it. It seems that such a discussion would be a part of the work of mentoring. James said there had been no time for it that week—but it does seem that the lack of a discussion has had a negative effect on their relationship.

Amy and Jessica believe that their relationship has changed. They seemed hurt that James hadn’t involved them in planning for the field trip. As they said—they had been involved in everything else prior to this. Amy and Jessica also seemed to believe that James is trying to assert his power over them. Amy’s new perception of a mentor is one of a boss. They have moved from sharing power to struggling over it.

This spat, as Amy called it, seemed to have come out of the blue. I’m wondering what might have precipitated it. Are there other unresolved issues that have built up over the course of the semester that were never resolved? I know that they have very different teaching styles and could this have contributed to the diminishing of their rapport? Or did they never fully establish the rapport they needed? It seems congeniality is a necessary foundation for collegiality. I would also suggest that those involved in a relationship need some communication or relational skills that enable them to disagree with each other and to negotiate a resolution. You can disagree without being disagreeable.

James also suggested (several times) that this disagreement had something to do with gender. I believe that attributing their differences to gender is too simplistic. I think it is due to a number of factors—what they might be is not as clear—although gender could certainly be one of those factors.

I asked them twice to consider what they had learned from this experience, but they reverted to retelling their stories and restating their positions. How could I have facilitated a negotiation of their differences? Are their some cases in which negotiation is impossible? And why is that?

It may be a good that Amy’s and Jessica’s placement is almost over, as I’m not sure how much meaningful learning and mentoring will occur after this session. I will be interested in hearing about their trip after it happens. And it is probably a good thing that Spring Break is next week.
Maybe it will give them all time to cool off and reconsider. I’m wondering what their relationship will be like after they return to school. And will they be able to reflect on this session, the field trip, and the consequences of their interactions in a way that recognizes and values all perspectives. It was a very tense session—even though there was some laughter and some attempts at humor.
Before the first bell rang for the day, a mother walked into the classroom with her son and stayed to help him organize his desk. Barbara told the mother that they had moved her son’s desk back by the interns so that they would be able to keep tabs on him and help him. This is a way in which Barbara is making use of the pre-interns to benefit her third grade students. I wonder what kind of conversations they have or have had about this student. Do they discuss what kinds of prompts/help to provide? At 7:30 the bell rang and students walked into the classroom, emptied their bookbags, and sat at their desks. They worked on completing a worksheet of two-digit addition problems that had been placed on their desks before they entered the classroom. How does Barbara make decisions about the worksheet that is placed on the students’ desks? Do Elizabeth and Melissa take part in that decision? Students placed their homework in a basket on the pre-interns’ table. They also sharpened their pencils. Barbara called the names of students who were following the classroom rules and the noise level in the room abated. I helped one student, who was seated near me in the back of the room, with the worksheet. Elizabeth and Melissa were discussing their upcoming summer and fall schedules in the back of the room. Barbara sat on a stool at the front of the room. School wide announcements were made over the PA at 7:45 am. At this time Barbara was sitting at her desk in the back of the room and Melissa and Elizabeth were seated at their table in the back of the room.

At 8:00 am, Barbara dismissed the students to their reading classes. Students in the third grade are grouped homogeneously for reading, so some students leave the classroom and have reading with another third grade teacher. I’m wondering if Barbara, Melissa, and Elizabeth have problematized this practice. Some students entered the classroom and sat down at their assigned desks. All students turned in their homework. Elizabeth was filing papers in the back of the classroom. There was a writing prompt projected on the screen in the front of the classroom. “Imagine you have a pen pal who lives far away. Think about how you could describe your community for your friend. Now write a paragraph describing what your community is like for someone who has never seen it.” Another adult came into the room and sat on the couch to observe. Barbara walked among the students as they worked. Some students got up to get a sheet of notebook paper from the back of the room so that they could write a response to the prompt. Elizabeth explained to one student what a pen pal was. She also connected the prompt to the story that students were reading that week and discussed how the author had described the setting and told the student to describe Allenton in those terms. Barbara was also prompting students for the details they could use in describing their community. A student asked how to spell “especially.” Barbara spelled it for her. I’m wondering—what do these prompts tell them about student learning? How do Barbara, Melissa, and Elizabeth make use of them when planning instruction?

At 8:15 Barbara tells the students to put away their pencils. Barbara gave a mini lesson on the tenses of verbs. Students were already familiar with the present tense and Barbara asked them what they would add to a regular verb to make it past tense. Barbara used an overhead to provide students with some guided practice in identifying verbs in the present and past tense.
She asked students to read the sentences on the overhead, to identify the verb, and to tell her the tense of the verb. Barbara underlined the verb in each sentence and pointed out the “ed” when it was present. The next section on the overhead provided a verb in the present tense and students were asked to change it to the past tense. The final section of the overhead asked students to use the past tense of certain verbs (i.e., follow, skip) in a sentence. Melissa and Elizabeth were grading homework at their table in the back of the room as Barbara conducted this lesson. I’m wondering how they might co-teach during this lesson in order to better monitor student understanding or how they might make this lesson more relevant for their students.

Barbara got out two fly swatters (One was red and the other was blue.) and called on two students to come to the whiteboard at the front of the classroom. She gave each student a fly swatter. On the front board were several insects made from construction paper. A vocabulary word from the week’s story was written on each of the insects. Barbara pointed to each insect and pronounced each vocabulary word. She then stated a definition. The students swatted the insect on which they thought the vocabulary word Barbara had defined was written. Once these two students had had a turn, she asked them to hand their swatters to two other students. Barbara awarded points for each correct answer, based on the color of the fly swatter. Once all the words had been defined, Barbara read a number of sentences with blanks in them and students swatted the insect on which the word that belonged in the blank was written. During this activity, Melissa was observing her inquiry student and recording instances of inappropriate behavior. Elizabeth was writing a reflection for one of the lessons she had taught. This game ended in a tie score. I’m wondering what the pre-interns are learning. Could they be more involved in the lesson, in a way that would benefit student learning?

Barbara then told the students that they would be buddy reading the story and would be answering a long list of questions. She called on students one at a time and asked them to pick their partner for the buddy reading. Melissa and Elizabeth worked with some of the partnered students. Barbara had a whispered conversation with the observer who had walked into the room at the beginning of reading. I also worked with a student group. Many of the students did not finish the comprehension questions, so the worksheet was assigned as homework. Barbara dismissed the students to their homerooms at 9:25 am.

Some of their homeroom students returned to class from their reading groups. Melissa passed out a snack to each student. Elizabeth helped one student who had lost something look for it. Barbara demonstrated how to write “Y, y and Z, z” in cursive. She used the overhead projector for this demonstration. Students practiced writing these two letters on a worksheet.

At 9:40 students were called to line up and Melissa and Elizabeth walked them to their special. Dialogue Session 9:40-10:25.

Barbara walked the students back from their special at 10:30. She conducted a lesson on dividing by 1 and 0. Barbara wrote $3 ÷ 1 = 3$. She told the students that 1 can be a divisor, but not a dividend. She then wrote $0 ÷ 15 =$ and she asked how many would be in each of the 15 groups. A student answered, zero. Barbara told the students that 0 can be the dividend, but not the divisor. She asked, “If you see 0 as the dividend, what will the answer be?” Students
answered chorally, “Zero.” Barbara wrote $9,156 \div 1 =$ and asked student what the answer would be. They answered chorally. She told students that any number divided by 1 would be that number. Melissa and Elizabeth sat in the back of the classroom as Barbara taught the lesson. Barbara then passed out a worksheet for students to complete independently. Barbara, Elizabeth, Melissa, and I walked around the room to monitor student work and provide help when necessary. I’m wondering if they discuss this the next day. How do they make use of what they learn from observing students and from providing help to individual students that is useful in planning instruction or interventions for particular students.

At 11:05 Barbara asked the students to clear their desks and she called their names to line up to go to lunch. We all left the classroom.
APPENDIX F
TRANSCRIPTION WITH NOTATIONS

Interviewer: Sharon Hayes
Interviewees: Kenneth, Susan
Date: February 26, 2007
Time: 2:20-3:00 pm
Location: Kenneth’s classroom, Allenton Elementary
Topic: Post conference after mentor observed lesson

Kenneth: So I want to start by asking you how you thought your lesson went today.

Susan: ((laughs)) Sharon already asked me that.

Kenneth: I figure.

Susan: I think it could have gone a lot better.

Kenneth: What particular things are you thinking about? Cause like every time I am gonna be coming back and giving ( ) every time the teaching I know, and I noticed you did this throughout your lesson, your thinking about, okay, what do I need to do next, what do I need to do next?
And so at the end when I’m done I always think about okay, if I did this again . . . what would I do? And ( ) tomorrow. So, that’s kind of what I’m asking you.

Susan: Yeah ( ). Um . . .it seems like no matter how prepared I am, like I told Sharon, I had note cards up there. Things that I wanted to say. Do you think I said what I wanted to say off ((laughs)) my note cards? No. I looked at ‘em for two seconds and the . . . eh, there went that idea. And I’m not, I don’t know, I guess . . . I’m normally . . . I, I don’t know, I don’t think they got it.

Kenneth: And what are you . . . what do you think . . . um will change in order, like, to help that? What do you think’s gonna happen to where you’ll be able to focus on your note cards or how much you’ve prepared? How’ll you be able to change? Why do you think you didn’t do it in other words?

Susan (009): Um . . . I don’t know that I didn’t do it.
Kenneth: Mm hmm

Susan: But I feel like . . . hopefully, eventually I won’t need note cards. Because it becomes intrinsic and I won’t have to, you know

Kenneth: Mm hmm . . . Mm hmm

Susan: but . . . I feel like, I write down the steps then…I say them, but then like I forget one or something. You know what I mean? Like I talk to you, co-teaching, how I really liked it because…it gave you a chance to fix ((snaps fingers)) everything the second time that you knew you messed up on or you knew you needed to change. That’s

Kenneth: Right . . . Right. The different stations and things

Susan: Yes

Kenneth: Yeah

Susan: ((laughs)) It’s just like, oh, I, I wish I would of done that differently. So things like . . . um, transitions . . . I’m not, I don’t know, I can’t seem ta . . . get them to go the way I want them to go.

Kenneth (015): Well, to me, just from what I was, I mean, who am I? I’m just an observer. But it looked to me like . . . you had your plan. And you wanted to follow your plan. But at the same time you were trying to respond to what the students were doing. So sometimes when you do that, it kinda, it’s hard to go back to your plan when you’ve got so many other things going on.

Susan: Right.

Kenneth: And I think the only way that’s gonna change is just with experience of doing more. I don’t think there’s anything that you can do right now…to change that, you know ((laughs))
APPENDIX G
FINAL EVALUATION FORM

TEACHER EDUCATION INTERN RATING SHEET

INSTRUCTIONS: Please check (√) rate the intern at the level best representing your estimate of competence and potential as compared to other interns. Use the following ratings as a guide: 1 – Does not meet expectations; 2 – Meets expectations at minimal level; 3 – Meets expectations at satisfactory level; 4 – Exceed expectations. This information comes under Board of Regents student records policy. As such, access (beyond required handling) will be limited to the intern and those designated by him or her on a need to know basis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating Criteria</th>
<th>Not Observed</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Uses assessment strategies (traditional and alternative) to assist the continuous development of learner. Collects and uses data from a variety of sources.</td>
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<td>2. Uses effective communication techniques with students and all other stakeholders. Recognizes the need for effective communication in the classroom. Appropriate use of English, suitable voice quality.</td>
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<td>3. Engages in continuous professional improvement through lifelong learning, self-reflection, work with colleagues and teammates, and meeting the goals of a professional development plan.</td>
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<td>4. Uses appropriate techniques and strategies which promote and enhance critical, creative, and evaluative thinking capabilities of students. Is building a repertoire of realistic projects and problem-solving activities designed to assist students in demonstrating their ability to think creatively.</td>
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<td>5. Uses teaching and learning strategies that reflect each student’s culture, learning styles, special needs, and socioeconomic background. Creates a climate of openness, inquiry, and support by practicing strategies of acceptance, tolerance, resolution, and mediation.</td>
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<td>7. Uses an understanding of learning and human development to provide a positive learning environment which supports the intellectual, personal, and social development of all students. Students are actively engaged in learning, social interaction, cooperative learning, and self-motivation.</td>
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<td>8. Demonstrates a basic understanding of the subject field and is beginning to understand that the subject is linked to other disciplines and can be applied in real-world situations.</td>
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<td>9. Plans, implements, and evaluates effective instruction.</td>
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<td>10. Communicates and works effectively with families and colleagues to improve the educational experiences at the school.</td>
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<td>11. Uses appropriate technology in teaching and learning processes where available.</td>
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<td>12. Creates positive and productive learning environment; is able to care for students, motivate them, and show interest in them; adapts and changes instruction in unpredictable, dynamic classrooms.</td>
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<td>14. Is punctual, uses mature judgment, provides accurate reports and records (professional responsibility).</td>
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<td>15. Demonstrates enthusiasm for teaching.</td>
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<td>16. Demonstrates responsiveness to supervision (ability to accept constructive criticism and incorporate suggestions into teaching performance).</td>
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<td>17. Presents a professional appearance in dress, grooming, attitude, and demeanor.</td>
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<td>18. Demonstrates initiative and self-reliance.</td>
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SUMMARY: Please add any additional information you consider pertinent to your professional evaluation of this student.
### APPENDIX H

**EDUCATOR ACCOMPLISHED PRACTICES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accomplished Practice</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP 1: Assessment</td>
<td>The pre-professional teacher collects and uses data gathered from a variety of sources. These sources include both traditional and alternate assessment strategies. Furthermore, the teacher can identify and match the students’ instructional plans with their cognitive, social, linguistic, cultural, emotional, and physical needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AP2: Communication</td>
<td>The pre-professional teacher recognizes the need for effective communication in the classroom and is in the process of acquiring techniques which she/he will use in the classroom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AP3: Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>The pre-professional teacher realizes that she/he is in the initial stages of a lifelong learning process and that self-reflection is one of the key components of that process. While her/his concentration is, of necessity, inward and personal, the role of colleagues and school-based improvement activities increases as time passes. The teacher’s continued professional improvement is characterized by self-reflection, working with immediate colleagues and teammates, and meeting the goals of a personal professional development plan.</td>
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<td>AP4: Critical Thinking</td>
<td>The pre-professional teacher is acquiring performance assessment techniques and strategies that measure higher order thinking skills in students and is building a repertoire of realistic projects and problem-solving activities designed to assist all students in demonstrating their ability to think creatively.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AP5: Diversity</td>
<td>The pre-professional teacher establishes a comfortable environment which accepts and fosters diversity. The teacher must demonstrate knowledge and awareness of varied cultures and linguistic backgrounds. The teacher creates a climate of openness, inquiry, and support by practicing strategies such as acceptance, tolerance, resolution, and mediation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AP6: Ethics</td>
<td>The pre-professional adheres to the Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida</td>
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<tr>
<td>AP7: Human Development and Learning</td>
<td>Drawing upon well established human development/learning theories and concepts and a variety of information about students, the pre-professional teacher plans instructional activities.</td>
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<td>AP8: Knowledge of Subject Matter</td>
<td>The pre-professional teacher has a basic understanding of the subject field and is beginning to understand that the subject is linked to other disciplines and can be applied to real-world integrated settings. The teacher’s repertoire of teaching skills includes a variety of means to assist student acquisition of new knowledge and skills using that knowledge.</td>
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Continued Appendix H

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<tr>
<th>Accomplished Practice</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP9: Learning Environments</td>
<td>The pre-professional teacher understands the importance of setting up effective learning environments and has techniques and strategies to use to do so including some that provide opportunities for student input into the processes. The teacher understands that she/he will need a variety of techniques and work to increase his/her knowledge and skills.</td>
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<td>AP10: Planning</td>
<td>Recognizing the importance of setting high expectations for all students, the pre-professional teacher works with other professionals to design learning experiences that meet students’ needs and interest. The teacher candidate continually seeks advice/information from appropriate resources (including feedback), interprets the information, and modifies his/her plans appropriately. Planned instruction incorporates a creative environment and utilizes varied and motivational strategies and multiple resources for providing comprehensible instruction for all students. Upon reflection, the teacher continuously refines outcome assessment and learning experiences.</td>
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<td>AP11: Role of the Teacher</td>
<td>The pre-professional teacher communicates and works cooperatively with families and colleagues to improve the educational experiences at the school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AP12: Technology</td>
<td>The pre-professional teacher uses technology as available at the school site and as appropriate to the learner. She/he provides students with opportunities to actively use technology and facilitates access to the use of electronic resources. The teacher also uses technology to manage, evaluate, and improve instruction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LIST OF REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Sharon Hayes completed her undergraduate degree in English and elementary education at the State University of New York College at Brockport. She raised two children and taught elementary and middle school in Tennessee, Ohio, New Jersey and Alabama over the course of the next twenty years. While teaching third grade in Spanish Fort, Alabama Sharon completed her Master’s degree in elementary education at the University of South Alabama. She then enrolled at the University of Florida and received her doctoral degree in 2008. Her focus was on Curriculum and Instruction. Sharon’s research interests include mentoring, discourse, the relationships that are constructed between universities and schools. She has two grown children, Megan and Matthew, and enjoys reading, cooking, and needlework in her spare time.