An Examination of the New Teacher - Mentor
Matching Process for The School
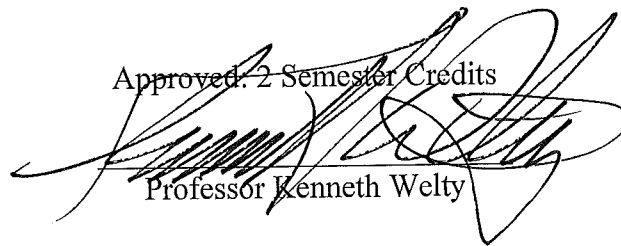District of Baraboo

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ABSTRACT

A traditional match between a protégé and mentor is formed when the protégé chooses a mentor based on her or his individual needs. This type of match is not practical in a K-12 educational setting. Therefore, when decision makers match a new teacher with a mentor teacher, the only factor a school district can control is the quality of the mentor. The goal of this evaluation study was to determine ways that mentors can be matched with protégé based on research. Questionnaires and structured interviews were used to solicit feedback about the mentoring program in the School District of Baraboo. The respondents suggested that questionnaires or rubrics could be helpful in assuring that the best matches are made for the sake of the protégé and mentor alike as both parties benefit from the relationship. The respondents also indicated that although there were no published tools used to match dyads, matches were consistently made either by building or based on the grade level or subject matter taught by the pair. The data collected suggested that the most important factor in the mentor-protégé match is the mentor. Lastly, the study indicated more attention could be placed on mentor training and support.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Background

By the year 2010, one-half of the public school teachers in the United States will retire.

Furthermore, one-half of the new teachers that are hired to replace them are leaving the

profession with in the first five years of employment (Johnson, 2004). New teachers entering the

field of education need extra support to address the educational needs of their students while

meeting the challenges of working in public schools today. "New teachers yearn for professional

colleagues who can help them acclimate to their school's unique culture, help them solve the

complicated daily dilemmas of classroom teaching, and guide their ongoing learning" (Johnson,

2004, p. 139, p. 63).

This evaluation study is focused on the New Teacher Program in the School District of

Baraboo. The town of Baraboo, Wisconsin, which the district serves, has a population of 10,711

as of the 2000 US Census. Baraboo is the largest town in Sauk County. Sauk County is a

predominately rural county in South-Central Wisconsin. The School District of Baraboo has five

elementary schools, one middle school and one high school with a total student population of

2,976. There are currently 195 certified teachers that are employed with the district.

The School District of Baraboo instituted a teacher induction program to address the needs

of new faculty. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction, now the District Administrator, Dr.

Crystal Ritzenthaler, developed the New Teacher Program in collaboration with the Instructional

Facilitator, Teresa Lien, in the spring of 2005. The Instructional Facilitator has run the program

from the fall of 2005 until the present time. In that time, 54 new teachers have been hired in

Baraboo. In the next three years, Baraboo will have more than 50 teachers, or nearly 25% of their

certified staff eligible for retirement. Baraboo's induction program was established to offer new teachers support based on current research and the Wisconsin Teacher Standards.

The Baraboo New Teacher Program has three strong components. First, each new teacher is matched with a teacher-mentor. The teacher mentor is assigned for a period of one to three years depending on the needs of the new teacher. Experienced teachers that are new to the district are assigned a mentor for one year instead of the two or three years for novice teachers (School District of Baraboo, 2007). The second component of the program is monthly seminars. Each program participant is required to attend monthly seminars that review the educator standards and provide specific support in areas such as parent-teacher conferences and classroom management to prepare new teachers for the challenges they face. The third component of the program is observations. New teachers and their mentors are encouraged to observe each other as well as other teachers at or near their grade level. The goal of the observations is to generate new ideas and management tools for the new teacher's classroom. The program is based on reflective practice to enhance collaboration and build collegial relationships. New teachers in the School District of Baraboo receive support in the classroom from the Instructional Facilitator as well. Demonstration lessons are taught for each new teacher to emphasize ways that student achievement can be increased across grade levels through research based strategies.

Teacher-Mentors in Baraboo receive support and compensation according to the Negotiated Agreement (School District of Baraboo, 2007). Mentors are required to take part in a district-sponsored training prior to being eligible for the position. Once the training has been completed the mentor's name goes on a master list of trained mentors that is accessible to all building administrators. Furthermore, when an individual is chosen to be a mentor, he or she

receives compensation at the rate of 2.5% of the base salary per protégé. Compensation for year two and three (if required) will be at a rate of 2.0% (School District of Baraboo, 2007).

Despite all of the support that both new teachers and their mentors receive the matching process of mentors with their protégés, is not consistent across the district. Mentors and administrators expressed concerns about the inconsistencies in the matching process due to the perception that it results in inequitable experiences for new teachers. Therefore Teresa Lien, Instructional Facilitator for the New Teacher Program, called for an evaluation of the processes used to match new teachers with mentors.

The primary audience for this evaluation study was Teresa Lien, Instructional Facilitator of the Baraboo New Teacher Program. She worked with the evaluator to ensure that the evalutation was responsive to the needs of the district and the New Teacher Program. The study was commissioned to inform stakeholders about the effectiveness of the mentor selection process. In addition to the Instrucitonal Facilitator, these stakeholders include the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Lynee Tourdot, Building Administrators, The Baraboo Education Association President, Dave Considine, as well as the District Administrator, Crystal Ritzenthaler. The findings of the inquiry have influenced the way that decision makers match mentors as well as the ways in which they support teachers who are new to the School District of Baraboo. Ultimately, the mentors and new teachers also benefited from this study as it strengthened the support that both groups receive in this important process. Additionally, the study has informed the district as a whole of procedures and the key research that supports the successful program which were already in place.

Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation was to provide the data and synthesis needed to accomplish the following ideas. First, the evaluation informed the parties responsible for choosing mentors of the effectiveness of their process. Second, the intent of the study was to inform refinements to the processes used to match mentors with new teachers based on best practices of other districts and current research. Finally, the evaluation was designed to inform stake holders about the use of tools in the matching process.

The Outlined Process

The objective of this evaluation was to examine the way that mentors are matched with new teachers in the School District of Baraboo. This examination included sending questionnaires to building administrators, the BEA President, the Instructional Facilitator and Director of Curriculum and Instruction and building mentors. The Instructional Facilitator along with available administrators and mentors were also interviewed to gather additional information about the process. Available research was examined along with other successful programs in the Badger Conference which Baraboo is a member.

Key Questions

The study addressed the following evaluation questions:

1. To what extent were best practices outlined by current research taken into account when matching new teachers with their mentors?

2. To what extent was grade level and subject matter taught taken into account when matching mentors with new teachers?

3. To what extent were mentors reflecting on their experience to ensure that matches are effective for both the mentor and the new teacher?

4. To what extent were other districts in the Badger Conference and across the country utilizing tools to help match mentors with new teachers?

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this evaluation study, the following terms were used based on the definitions given. The terms "new teacher" and "protégé" were used interchangeably to mean the same group of individuals who are new to the district/new to teaching and participating in the New Teacher Program.

Mentor: "defined as a guide, role model, counselor, coach, or sponsor. Mentoring in this definition is a one-way relationship in which the protégé is molded by one of greater wisdom or position that appears capable and complete (Kochan & Trimble, 2000, p. 21).

Mentoring: "is a deliberate pairing of a more skilled or more experienced person with a less skilled or less experienced one, with the mutually agreed goal of having the less skilled person grow and develop specific competencies" (Murray, 2001, p. 13).

New Teacher: Initial Educators or those teachers who have three years or less of teaching experience. Teachers who are new to the district or changing licensure areas, with more than three years of teaching experience also fit into this category according to the School District of Baraboo's Memorandum of Understanding in the Negotiated Agreement (2007) and are assigned a mentor for one year. For the purposes of this study, these teachers will also be classified as a new teacher.

Protégé: "one who is willing to assume responsibility for his or her own growth and development and who is receptive to feedback and coaching is a protégé (Murray, 2001, p. 14)." "A protégé is one whose career is furthered by a person of experience, prominence, or influence" (Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary).

Reflective Practice: " the thoughtful consideration of one's own experiences in applying knowledge to practice while being coached by professionals in the discipline" (Ferraro, 2000, p. 2).

Teacher Induction Program: "A systematic, organized plan for support and development of the new teacher in the initial one to three years of service" (Bartell, 2005, p. 6).

Limitations

This evaluation study was subject to the following limitations:

Limitation 1: This evaluation worked with a very small sample of mentor teachers and administrators in a rural setting. The size of the sample limits the amount of knowledge that can be gained about matching mentors with new teachers.

Limitation 2: The results of this evaluation study cannot be generalized to other districts, but rather is specific to the School District of Baraboo.

Limitation 3: Formal mentoring is not the traditional way of matching mentors and protégés. "Usually matches (are made with) mentors and protégé on the basis of self-diagnosed professional needs of the protégé" (Murray, 2001, p. 94). The inception of Public Instruction law 34 (PI 34) requiring all teachers with three or fewer years of experience to be assigned a mentor has changed this process in the state of Wisconsin.

Assumptions

The design of this study was based on the following assumptions:

Assumption 1: A formal process can be used to effectively match mentors with new teachers.

Assumption 2: Ideal situations for time, collaboration and planning exist to match new teachers with their mentors.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

New teachers today face many challenges that are critiqued in the work by Johnson, S.M., & The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers (2004), *Finders and keepers: Helping new teachers survive and thrive in our schools*. They often feel underprepared for the stresses of the classroom including working with parents, understanding the culture of the school, and managing the classroom itself. Often new teachers are also faced with less than adequate working conditions and long hours for entry-level salary, which barely pays their rent and loans. Coupled with all of the political and social challenges of schools today, are the sheer numbers of new teachers entering the profession. Across the country, by the year 2011 one-half of teachers will retire (Johnson, 2001, p. 9). "No matter how much preparation a new teacher has, starting a first teaching job or entering a new school can be mystifying and unsettling" (Johnson, 2001, p. 193).

How can a school help teachers to feel welcome, connected and validated in their new school? "A mandatory, structured induction program introduces new teachers to the culture, expectations, and vision of their district and school" (Scherer, 2003, p. 27). An induction program is part of "the career-long teacher-development continuum" (Bartell, 2005, p. 15). Bartell (2005) goes on to assert that creating an effective induction experience has proven to help retain promising teachers and help them grow as professionals. The characteristics of an effective program include, acquainting new teachers with responsibilities of teaching, helping them develop thoughtful practice and bringing them into a professional community that encourages and supports them.

It is the final characteristic, bringing them into a professional community that a mentoring program provides. The book, *Mentoring Programs for New Teachers: Models*

of Induction and Support (Villani, 2002), looks at various models of mentoring across the country. In these models, mentoring takes on different roles in different settings. Some schools have one full-time mentor to work with all new teachers. Other schools may share a mentor that travels between buildings but has no regular classroom responsibilities. School districts may even utilize retired teachers as mentors. Still other schools promote mentoring through the use of teacher mentors who are full time classroom teachers that volunteer to work with a novice teacher. These teacher mentors may or may not receive compensation for their work. The mentoring programs mentioned here are all facilitated or structured programs that are established by the school district or building administration. In most instances a committee, administrator or program coordinator matches the mentor with a protégé.

A structured or facilitated mentoring program is more than just pairing peers for mutual support. It involves "systematically developing the skills and leadership abilities of the less experienced members of an organization" (Murray, 2001, p. 13). A mentoring program that brings new teachers into the professional community of a school or district is often structured. In Wisconsin, a "qualified mentor for each initial educator who has been trained to provide input into the confidential formative assessment of initial educators" is a requirement of the Public Instruction law 34 (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2008). It should be a purposeful program, according to the Department of Public Instruction, that is designed to create effective relationships between the new teacher and the teacher mentor.

Murray (2001) describes the following components of the facilitated mentoring program:

- A design that reflects the needs and goals of the school district

- Strategies for developing the needs of the protégé

- Criteria for qualifying mentors

- Strategies for matching mentors and protégés based on skills to be developed and compatibility

- Orientation for both mentors and new teachers

Programs should also look at formative and summative evaluations to continually better the process and insure outcomes are met. A coordination team responsible for "maintaining the process and supporting the relationships" is necessary for the program to be successful (Murray, 2001, p. 119).

The mentor has four functions according to Portner (2003). These functions are: relating, assessing, coaching, and guiding. Through relating the mentor builds and maintains a relationship with their protégé. Relating behavior allows the mentor to develop a unique understanding of the new teacher's ideas, needs and experiences as well as helps the protégé to reflect on these things. Through the second function, assessing, the mentor gathers data about the school and community culture as well as the new teacher's way of teaching and learning. The mentor bases decisions on how to guide the new teacher and meet his or her professional goals through this function. Coaching allows mentors to serve as role models to their protégés and share experiences, examples and strategies to help the new teacher grow as a professional. The final task of a mentor is to

guide the new teacher away from dependence by reflection and encouragement to construct their own informed approaches to teaching and learning (Portner, 2003).

After all, "teachers cannot be thinking about the nuances of curriculum design and instruction until they know the protocols of their school and have established that their students are engaged and ready to learn" (Villani, 2002, p. 4). The five phases described by Villani (2005) are: anticipation, survival, disillusionment, rejuvenation and reflection. The anticipation phase occurs prior to the start of the school year. New teachers are idealistic, excited, and anxious. During the first month of school a new teacher is in survival phase, bombarded with a variety of problems and situations that he/she did not anticipate. The third phase, disillusionment takes place around November when new teachers begin to question their commitment and competence. After winter break, teachers feel rested and rejuvenated and with this comes a slow rise in the new teacher's attitude. Finally, as the school year comes to a close, the new teacher enters the reflection phase of the first year. During this time, curriculum and management strategies are reviewed as teachers think ahead to the coming year (Scherer, 1999).

"When new teachers are buoyed by a professional culture that encourages professional interaction, they are more likely to feel supported and successful in their work with their students and may be more likely to stay in teaching" (Johnson, 2001, p. 139-140). Despite the great things that induction and mentoring programs have to offer new teachers, the support does not always occur equitably for all protégés. One factor contributing to this disparity is that not all matches between mentors and new teachers are formed through similar criteria.

Matching Mentors With Protégés

"Mentor teachers have become known as occupational life savers known for offering technical, social, and emotional support" (Villani, 2002, p. 7). These supports are crucial to the development and retention of a new teacher. It is noted that new teachers who receive mentoring support of some kind are 70% more likely to return to the classroom the following year verses their peers who do not participate in a mentor program (Jones & Pauley, 2003, p. 23). The match between the new teacher and his/her mentor is the beginning of this essential process to foster a relationship based on mutual desire to grow as educators for both the protégé and master teacher (Johnson, 2004).

"Most important is the 'fit' between mentor and protégé" (Bartell, 2005, p. 79). In fact, it is so important to focus upon the matching process because a "mismatch may not only cause discomfort to the mentor, but, more importantly, may be disastrous for the protégé" (Fletcher, 1998, p. 116). A good fit on the other hand, gives a new teacher an important role model in a professional educator dedicated to supporting her or his success. "By identifying with role models, people experiment with their own identities" (Cox, 2005, p. 404). Additionally, the mentor should provide a positive attitude and approaches to difficult situations in the field while legitimizing aspects of the protégés self-image. The relationship is thus built and an emotional attachment is developed to the match (Cox, 2005). Of course, if the role model has not been carefully selected and matched the converse could occur. This possibility gives credence to the importance of a carefully chosen mentor.

"The ideal matching of mentors and protégés should always be based on an analysis of professional goals, interpersonal styles, and learning needs of both parties"

(Daresh, 2003, p. 41). However, matching according to homogeneous personalities is not optimal for learning (Clutterbuck, 2000, p. 100). Results from Cox's study confirm Clutterbuck's findings that when individuals are matched with similar personalities, fewer personal development opportunities are available (2005). Therefore, an ideal match should not only be based on analysis of professional goals and interpersonal styles but consideration must also be given to matches with differences in experience and personality to ensure the maximum learning for the protégé (Clutterbuck, 2000).

Administrators and other individuals or committees responsible for matching mentors with new teachers need to take these factors into careful consideration. Research conducted by Bouquillon, Sosik & Lee (2005) compared mentor matches in K-12 school settings with matches in other highly skilled settings. The researchers suggest that protégés in the K-12 settings reported, "significantly lower levels of identification" (Bouquillon, Sosik & Lee, 2005, p.240) with their mentors. Meaning that new educators had a difficult time relating and building relationships with their peer mentors. These lower levels of identification in close analysis were contributed to greater age differentials between mentors and protégés in K-12 settings verses other skilled work settings (Bouquillon, et. al., 2005). When careful matches are made trust develops and optimal learning can occur for both the new teacher and the mentor.

Careful matching benefits the protégé. Villani (2002) also suggests that the mentor benefits from a careful match. "Mentoring is often a powerful experience for master teachers who remain passionate about classroom teaching and are ready for an additional challenge" (Villani, 2002, p. 21). The act of mentoring gives a master teacher the chance to continue to grow and refine her/his skills through the relationship and reflection on

practice with the novice teacher. In this way, mentoring is a mutually beneficial relationship that should be fostered for the sake of the development of the mentor as well as the protégé.

Best Practice

In an ideal situation, "a mentor is tentatively matched with a specific protégé after consideration of the experience, skills and knowledge wanted by the protégé and the ability of the mentor to provide practice or guidance in those areas. Contrary to Clutterbuck's research, "compatibility of styles and personality can also be a factor in the selection" (Murray, 2001, p. 78). The resulting fellowship in the match is important because it enhances the emotional attachment to the mentor and engages the dyad to achieve the new teachers goals. The data collected by Cox (2005) also supports the importance of compatibility. Cox's study emphasized that two aspects of successful mentoring matches were serendipity and empathy. Mentors who display these qualities, "create situations in which fortunate discoveries happen" (Cox, 2005, p. 410). These aspects of quality mentoring help to illustrate the need for compatible matches to provide strong role modeling in the formal mentor setting (Cox, 2005).

When selecting a mentor the program coordinator or administrator typically asks for volunteers or refers to a list of individuals who have been trained and are willing to serve as a mentor to a new teacher (Villani, 2002). Occasionally, veteran teachers are also approached and encouraged to fill the role. "Although willingness is an important criteria, merely being willing and available is not sufficient" (Bartell, 2005, p. 77). Mentors need to be selected from a pool of candidates who are trained to assist the new teacher through the phases of development with an empathetic heart and a patient disposition. The

authority given to the mentor by the protégé is reliant upon four elements: interpersonal skills, relevant knowledge, shared experience, plus empathy. "The last of these is most important since the empathy built during the relationship is what persuades the protégé to give power, or what might be called, 'empathetic authority' to the mentor" (Cox, 2005, p. 411). This authority is what permits the learning relationship for the protégé to be optimal.

According to Murray (2001), there are eight characteristics of a master mentor in an educational setting that must be considered when selecting mentors to be matched with novice teachers. First, the mentor must possess strong interpersonal skills. Individuals making the selection should look for a person who talks and listens. Second, a mentor must have knowledge of the organization. One must look for a person with an extensive network of resources. Third, the mentor should be a person who has managed groups of people successfully, or who has chaired committees or taken up tasks where key mentoring skills have been demonstrated. When selecting a mentor, considering a person who is well respected by peers is key. Fifth, the mentor should have personal power meaning the individual is sought out for her/his opinions. Sixth, a mentor is an individual who is willing to be responsible for someone else's growth. Seventh, the individual must be collaborative and demonstrate teamwork. Finally, the quality mentor is a person who has demonstrated patience in risky situations. The mentor must be willing to say, "give it a try" (Murray, 2001, p. 118).

When matching a protégé with a mentor, it is also important to take into account any gender or cultural differences that could inhibit the relationship (Murray, 2001). The decision-maker must consider the prospective protégé's comfort level with a cross-gender

or cross-cultural match. In education it can be difficult to match a male teacher with a male mentor at the elementary level for example because the majority of teachers at that level are female. When matching across genders, it is important to leave the opportunity for switching the match if it is not working available to both the mentor and protégé (Murray, 2001). In these cases matching a protégé to a mentor who is male in a different school building may be necessary to build trust and empathy in the relationship.

Cross-cultural matches must also be carefully considered. Murray (2001) cites a protégé from an ethnically diverse background's statement as the heart of this issue, "it's not that people are prejudiced, it's just that they don't share a common experience" (p. 196). In a profession that is dominated by white teachers (Johnson, 2004), matches that must be cross-cultural should be made gingerly. Trust, which is basic to a solid mentor-protégé relationship can be difficult to build in a cross-cultural relationship. "What should be a simple matter of negotiations between two persons becomes arbitration between historical legacies, contemporary racial tensions and societal protocols" (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004, p. 11). To combat these issues an honest and ongoing discourse must occur about race and racism in cross-cultural mentoring situations. Another idea is to match protégés with a mentor who shares similar worldviews in order to increase the chances of success (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004).

Bartell (2005) states that a significant part of the mentoring experience is the promise of a collegial relationship that develops between the novice and master teacher. "Compatibility of the mentor and new teacher is important to developing a good

relationship" (Bartell, 2005, p. 79). However,

> "too often, mentors are chosen with out enough care and attention to who is best
>
> fit for the role. They are assigned to the role for the sake of convenience or
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> because it is their turn to be in the role. Or perhaps they take on the role simply
>
> for the extra stipend attached to it" (Bartell, 2005, p. 77).

Individuals who match mentors and protégés must also consider these other realities when making the match. A strong understanding that mentoring is ultimately a form of improvised practice because of the "personal characteristics and individual biographies of both mentors and protégés which profoundly influence the kind and quality of the relationship that develops" (Young, Bullough, Draper, Smith & Erickson, 2005, p 170) will also serve to pair individuals effectively.

Matches Made By Grade Level and Subject Matter Taught

One way to meaningfully match new teachers with a mentor in the K-12 school setting is to match one-on-one by grade level or subject matter taught. When matches are made by grade level and subject matter the dyad immediately has common ground on which to build their relationship. "Mentoring proved to be most useful to new teachers when their mentors taught the same subject as they did, had common planning time, and had a classroom close by" (Johnson, 2004, p. 196-197).

It is necessary to "look at the mentoring process as more than just a on-on-one relationship between mentor and beginning teacher" (Hicks, Glasgow & McNary, 2005, p. 9). Matching is a crucial part of the process. Cox (2005) expresses the concept of purposeful matching to allow the relationship to move beyond formalities into the previously described deep levels of trust where authentic learning begins for both the

mentor and the new teacher. This type of matching is based on commonalities between the pair with the purpose of enhancing the relationship. A purposeful match contradicts Clutterbuck (2000) who states that matching personality and experience will equal minimum learning for both individuals in the dyad. Nonetheless, Cox (2005) conveys the importance of the relationship itself, not whether the match is built on the actual personality of the individuals or their backgrounds. Researchers agree that the training and time allowed to the pair is important to their success. Training must be presented to both the mentor and the protégé to help the dyad recognize and build on the "serendipity, which ensures that rapport and empathy are generated in the relationship" (Cox, 2005, p. 412).

In their study with the Ohio Career Center Lynch, DeRose & Kleindienst (2006) also stress the importance of building trust in the mentoring relationship. "In order for the program to succeed, the mentors must establish a positive rapport and level of trust with their entry-level teachers" (Lynch, DeRose & Kleindienst, 2006, p. 25) The goals of the program they work with include enhancing the performance of all new teachers by helping them transfer the knowledge they gained in their pre-service experiences to the classroom. In order to do this productively in a mentoring relationship, "each mentor should teach at the same grade level and subject area as the protégé whenever possible, and that each mentor has one, and only one, protégé" (Lynch, DeRose & Kleindienst, 2006, p. 25).

Matching according to grade level and subject area taught is also a convenient way for busy administrators and program coordinators to make an effective match. The book, *Mentoring Programs for New Teachers: Models of Induction and Support* (Villani,

2002), highlights 16 programs across the United States that pair new teachers with mentors for the purposes of enhancing the first one to three years of the new teachers career and acculturate them to teaching. These programs were selected because they represent a range of possibilities in respect to what the programs could look like and how they can be funded. When examining each program carefully to gain insight into how new teachers were matched with their mentors, significant patterns emerged.

All 16 programs matched in some way to building, grade level and subject matter taught. Some programs provided less specific information than others because they employed one mentor serving many protégés. In these cases there may have been a mentor for the elementary level, one for the middle level and one for the high school. Programs that had one mentor for each new teacher exclusively matched dyads based on the specific grade level or subject matter taught. Interestingly, one program in St. Paul, Minnesota assigned new teachers to Learning Circles (where six to eight new teachers met with one facilitator) their first year based on building and sometimes job-alike groupings such special education teachers. Learning Circles occurred in the first year of employment only. For the two years following, the new teacher chose her or his own mentor thus giving each novice teacher three years of support (Villani, 2002).

Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is critical in refining the craft of education (Ferraro, 2000). Ferraro cites Schon (1996), as defining reflective practice "as the thoughtful consideration of one's own experiences in applying knowledge to practice while being coached by professionals in the discipline" (Ferraro, 2000, p. 2). Ferraro (2000) goes on further define reflective practice as a tool of development. Utilizing reflective practice in

the induction process means that new teachers are bringing their classroom experiences to sessions with their mentors and colleagues to discuss theories and practices and ultimately increase student achievement (Ferraro, 2000).

An effective match between a new teacher and a mentor teacher begins with careful reflection on the part of the person making the match (Udelhofen & Larson, 2002). In addition, the mentor teacher must demonstrate an ability to be reflective in her or his own teaching practice. Reflective practice is part of successful teaching. Ferraro (2000) expressed that the primary reason why reflective practice is so beneficial is that it fosters a deeper understanding of teaching style and ultimately fosters a greater effectiveness in instructional practices.

Udelhofen & Larson (2002) also stress the importance of reflective practice through out the mentoring year. "Thoughtful, reflective dialogue helps us see each other's point of view, become sensitive to each other's strengths and weaknesses, and act in each other's best interests" (Udelhofen & Larson, 2002, p. 26). Teaching by nature is solitary. Teachers spend their days working alone in their classrooms with their students rather than with other professionals, as is common in other comparable degree fields (Bartell, 2005). Through the mentoring relationship, the novice and master teacher work together to think and reflect through both guided and spontaneous means and improve their skills as educators in the process.

The art of reflective dialogue does not come naturally, but it is a crucial trait of a mentor (Udelhofen & Larson, 2002). Mentor reflection not only allows the protégé to see a role model of reflective practice, but it also ensures that the mentor will be continually evaluating the match and how it is working. Reflection allows the practitioner to "relate

to the identification of problems, the generation of solutions, the testing of solutions and learning" (Parsons & Stephenson, 2005, p. 96-97). Udelhofen & Larson (2002) assert that reflection is a crucial quality that enables new teachers to succeed on their own through the four phases of the mentor – protégé relationship.

Mentors who demonstrate reflective practice can assist their protégés as they move through the four phases of their relationship. The four phases of the mentor – protégé relationship are: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition (Bouquillon, et. al., 2005). These phases must be considered when matching dyads as well as reflected upon through out the relationship. Phase one, initiation, occurs at the beginning of the relationship. Here the mentor models and becomes a role model for the new teacher. Initiation and cultivation phases, in which career development, role modeling and psychosocial mentoring functions are at their highest (Bouquillon, et. al., 2005), are critical phases for modeling reflection by the mentor and assisting the new teacher to reflect on her or his practice. This type of collaboration between mentor and protégé "allows the new teacher to share their knowledge about their cognition and the importance of seeing experts reflecting on what he or she is doing and how well it has been done" (Parsons & Stephenson, 2005, p. 102). In the final two phases, the protégé puts reflection into practice on his or her own as she or he separates from the mentor establishing a reputation in the school. Finally, the relationship has matured and it is redefined as one between two professional colleagues (Bouquillon, et. al., 2005).

When the match is made with a mentor who is skilled at reflective practice and is able to think aloud for his or her protégé, the experience truly allows the new teacher to separate and redefine the mentor's role and the new relationship that forms. "The success

of most of these mentor matches was apparently left to chance, and rarely did they yield the level of support the new teacher needed" (Johnson, 2004, p. 145). Perhaps matching new teachers with a mentor who has demonstrated sound reflective practice in her or his own teaching is one way to take the chance out of the selection.

Utilizing Available Tools To Make Effective Matches

"The job of a mentor hinges upon the mentor's ability to find the strengths of the mentee and through mutual collaboration help guide his or her first year to foster high student achievement" (Lynch, DeRose, & Kleindienst, 2006, p. 27). Jones and Pauley (2003) suggest in their article, Mentoring Beginning Public School Teachers that the pairing itself if crucial. "Pairing an inexperienced teacher with a mentor of questionable ability or desire to mentor should be averted at all costs" (Jones & Pauley, 2003, p. 24) The question then must be asked, how does one determine ability or desire of a mentor?

Whether it is a building administrator or an induction program coordinator putting together mentor – protégé dyads, the authors agree it is helpful for the individual in charge of pairing to utilize current research and available tools to make an informed decision about the partnership to ensure it prospers. There are tools available for the mentor and protégé to guide their discussions. Tools such as "Assessing Your Mentor Preferences" (see Appendix A) can be used to help mentors reflect on their training and assist administrators in matching similar preferences when given prior to the match (Starcevich, 2007). This tool, (used with permission) is not evaluative in nature. Rather it gives the mentor and protégé a way to evaluate where their attitudes and preferences are prior to the onset of the relationship. If the individual making the matches looks at the

preferences of both parties prior to matching, potential problems could be avoided thus ensuring a favorable experience for both the new teacher and the mentor teacher.

Udelhofen & Larson (2002) utilize a rubric to conduct needs assessments that help mentors and protégés uncover their desires for learning within the relationship. This tool helps the dyad focus their ideas and make the most of their time together. The individual matching the new teacher and mentor use this tool to ensure that the needs of the new teacher are met through the relationship. It is designed to provide administrators with specific information that can be used to make informed matches. However, the possibility for mentor dishonesty must be considered, as it could be viewed as evaluative rather than simply assessing preferences as seen in Starcevich (2007).

One constant that continues to surface in the literature is time. Mentors and protégés must have sufficient time to make their matches work. Some authors argue that tools such as the above-mentioned are utilized not only by the individual who makes the match, but also by the dyad themselves. In order for the tool to be effective and the pair to build necessary trust into the relationship, there must be common planning time built into the mentor and protégé's schedule. "It is most important that regular meetings be scheduled and that teachers honor the established schedule" (Bartell, 2005, p. 80).

Matching in a formal mentoring program is a complex task. (Johnson, 2004). Despite the good intentions of all involved, a percentage of these matches will fail. "Some matches fail because the school structures do not support them with common planning time, and mentors rarely have time allocated to do this important work. Others fail because the individual's personalities are incompatible or teaching styles are

divergent" (Johnson, 2004, p. 196). It is important that mentors are given every tool and strategy possible to guarantee the match will flourish.

The literature agrees that matching new teachers with a mentor is not an easy task. The work, *Teachers Mentoring Teachers,* by Daresh states:

"It is nearly impossible in the real world to engage in such perfect matching practices. Most mentoring relationships will likely be formed as marriages of convenience and not as the ideal naturally developing partnership that are so often presented in the literature" (Daresh, 2003, p. 41).

Scholars agree on the importance of the mentor in the relationship. There are, however, various opinions about the best way to match dyads in a formal mentoring program. In the end, it may only be reasonable to carefully monitor matches to ensure a relationship is formed that will foster learning for the new teacher (Cox, 2005).

Chapter III: Evaluation Approach

At the time of this evaluation, mentoring was a significant part of a new teacher's experience with the School District of Baraboo. A new teacher was defined by the district as any teacher who is new to the district and/or a teacher who has fewer than three years of teaching experience. A mentor was assigned to the teacher for a period of either one, two or three years.

The process of matching mentors and new teachers was a joint effort between both the building administrator, the Director of Curriculum and instruction and the Baraboo Education Association (BEA) President as outlined in the negotiated agreement between the BEA and the Baraboo Board of Education. In the past four years, new teachers in Baraboo have experienced various levels of support by mentors potentially creating inequitable experiences. Therefore, Teresa Lien, Instructional Facilitator of the New Teacher Program, commissioned this study which examined the process of matching dyads. The goal of this evaluation was to determine ways that mentors can be matched with protégé based on research to create more consistent matches through out the district. Ultimately the way that matches are created also effects training for mentors and new teachers alike. The following questions were addressed in this study:

1. To what extent were best practices outlined by current research taken into account when matching new teachers with their mentors?

2. To what extent was grade level and subject matter taught taken into account when matching mentors with new teachers?

3. To what extent were mentors reflecting on their experience to ensure that matches are effective for both the mentor and the new teacher?

4. To what extent were other districts in the Badger Conference and across the country utilizing tools to help match mentors with new teachers?

Research Design

This evaluation used a management-oriented design. This design served both adminstrations decision making regarding the best practices for assigning new teachers to a trained mentor. The evaluation also served the mentors themselves in ensuring they are provided with specific materials to help them reflect on their own learning and ensure the match is successful. The current practices of matching mentors with new teachers were examined as well as the practices of other districts in the Badger Conference which Baraboo is a member. The evaluation used questionaires and structured interviews as well as current research to enhance the mentor – protégé matching process and the overall satisfaction with the experience of being a mentor.

This formative evaluation was primarily concerned with the established goals the New Teacher Program had to invest in the educators that help to make the district a community of learners. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected in effort to answer the four key questions and best serve the needs of mentors and their protégés in Baraboo.

Information Sources

The New Teacher Program for the School District of Baraboo at the time of the evaluation served an administrative team of six building principals, one Director of Curriculum and Instruction, one Director of Pupil Services and one District Administrator. There was also one individual who is the Instructional Facilitator in charge of the New Teacher Program and mentor training for the district. The final

respondents involved in the study were the 51 teacher mentors who have served since the inception of the program in 2005.

In an effort to include as many individuals in the study as possible, questionnaires were sent to each administrator, the Baraboo Education Association President, the Instructional Facilitator and all teacher-mentors. Out of the 61 questionnaires that were sent out, seven administrators and 32 mentor teachers responded. The questionnaires were anonymous and collected by a building secretary to give each individual the opportunity to express opinions in an open and honest fashion.

Instrumentation

Answering the first key question required reviewing the mission and goals of the School District of Baraboo New Teacher Program. The first question also required a review of the section on menotring and mentor matching in the Negotiated Agreenent between the Baraboo School Board of Education and the Baraboo Education Association. For the purposes of this study, this was any narratives that address the matching of mentors with new teachers. A questionnaire was sent to building administrators, the current and former Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the BEA president to gain insight into the current practices and how they matched the mission and negotiated agreement.

The next question addressed whether new teachers should be matched with a mentor based on grade level and subject matter taught through a questionaire and structured interviews. Current research that looks at this dilema on a broader spectrum was also examined. Additional interviews were generated by administering a questionaire and conducting interviews about mentors who have been matched to new teachers with

similar and dis-similar teaching assignments and personal interests to find out more about the success of their matches.

The third key question was addressed through a questionnaire and structured interviews focusing on how individual mentors view their matches and how they work in the best interest of both the new teacher and the mentor teacher. To answer the final question, the evaluator examined questionnaires and structured interviews that were conducted as well as research information from other successful programs in the Badger Conference and across the country.

Data Collection

In order to address the key questions, a questionnaire was sent through the Baraboo School District inter-school mail system. Each individual also received an e-mail from the Instructional Facilitator commissioning this study. This allowed all potential respondents to know that the questionnaires were pre-approved by Ms. Teresa Lien, the Instructional Facilitator of the New Teacher Program for the School District of Baraboo. The questionnaire focused on gaining an understanding about the process of matching new teachers with their mentors and how this process could be improved across the district. A second set of questions was derived from the responses to the questionnaire.

The first step was to send out the questionnaire to all teacher mentors and administrators. A building secretary collected these questionnaires in effort to maintain confidentiality. On the questionnaire, the respondent was given the option to participate further through a more in-depth, structured interview. These respondents were contacted via e-mail to set up a mutual time for the structured interview. All individuals

interviewed were assigned a letter known only to the evaluator, for the purposes of this study, to protect their right for privacy.

Data Analysis

The data in this project was primarily analyzed through qualitative means. A qualitative approach was necessary to this evaluation because the mentor-protégé relationship is, by nature, subjective. Administrator opinions were also analyzed to glean insight regarding procedures for creating matches that fit their individual style and building needs. These were analyzed based on information gathered in surveys and interviews to identify patterns.

In an effort to ensure that opinions could be quantified, a variety of question types were used in the questionnaire. Asking questions that were answered by ranking and multiple choice aided the analysis of the qualitative data to ensure accuracy. Short answer questions were also asked to help gauge the climate and attitudes surrounding the matches. Responses to short answer questions were examined immediately following each interview. A narrative was composed for each interview and themes reflecting the four key questions were highlighted. The data was also examined for patterns in decision-making when forming matches between mentors and their protégés.

Chapter IV: Findings

The purpose of this evaluation was to provide the data and synthesis needed to accomplish the following goals. First, the evaluation informed the parties responsible for choosing mentors of the effectiveness of their process. Second, the evaluation informed the process of matching of mentors based on best practices of other districts and current research. Finally the evaluation informed the Instructional Facilitator and other district administrators about the program successes and areas of improvement to help ensure that matches between mentors and protégés can be equitable and successful in the future.

The findings of this study illustrated the importance of the individual mentors skills in the success of the match between the new and master teachers. The findings were based on an initial questionnaire that was administered anyonymously. Additional structured interviews were conducted to collect information from individuals who match dyads. Those who have served as mentors were also interviewed to gain further insight. The data was gathered to address the four research questions:

1. To what extent were best practices outlined by current research taken into account when matching new teachers with their mentors?

2. To what extent was grade level and subject matter taught taken into account when matching mentors with new teachers?

3. To what extent were mentors relfecting on their experience to ensure that matches are effective for both the mentor and the new teacher?

4. To what extent were other districts in the Badger Conference and across the country utilizing tools to help match mentors with new teachers?

Respondents

The information sample used was the School District of Baraboo administrative team as well as current and past teacher mentors. In the district, there were six building principals, one Director of Curriculum and Instruction, one Director of Pupil Services and one District Administrator that made up the administrative team. There was also one individual who was the Instructional Facilitator in charge of the New Teacher Program and mentor training for the district. The Baraboo Education Association President was also involved in the collaborative team, matching mentors with new teachers per the negotiated agreement (School District of Baraboo, 2007). The respondents involved in the study were the 51 teacher mentors who had served since the inception of the program in 2005. These 62 individuals were contacted by the Instructional Facilitator to inform them of the evaluation study being conducted. Each respondent was then sent a questionnaire and given the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the ways that matches were made between mentors and new teachers in the district.

As a result of this small set of informants, 38 initial questionnaires were completed and returned. Those respondents making decisions about the mentor-protégé matches, such as administrators, completed seven of the questionnaires. Teacher mentors completed the remaining 31 questionnaires. This resulted in a total response rate of 61%. From the questionnaire, another ten respondents agreed to be interviewed further. These respondents included three administrators and seven mentors. The structured interviews allowed for more specific information to be gathered from a smaller sample.

All of the individuals who completed questionnaires had the minimum education of a Bachelor's Degree and held a current educator or administrative license in their area of

expertise. Many held a master's degree or higher. All mentors included in the evaluation study participated in the district's mentor training course. The interview respondents included one Elementary Principal, one High School Principal, and the former Director of Curriculum and Instruction who is now the District Administrator. The mentor respondents included three Elementary Teachers including one who worked for Pupil Services and three High School Teachers. Out of the ten individuals interviewed, only two were male. However, this is consistent with the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) report in 2003 that approximately 21% of educators are male compared to 79% percent who are female.

The Outlined Process

The first question addressed in this evaluation was, to what extent are best practices of matching mentors and protégés according to the strengths and weaknesses of both the mentor and the protégé taken into account when the match was made? This type of matching philosophy coincides with how a traditional mentor-protégé relationship was established where a protégé chooses his or her own mentor based on individual needs and desired growth of the protégé.

The initial question sought to analyze to what extent the strengths and weaknesses of the mentor and new teacher are taken into account when matching the dyads. As the practice of matching mentors and protégés is traditionally based on need, this was a logical first question. The individuals participating in the questionnaire answered three separate questions to uncover what was already occurring when matching. The process also revealed what mentors believed to be important. Table One addresses the importance of an individual mentor's strengths in the match. Table Two analyzes the significance of

the mentor weaknesses to the dyad. Finally, Table Three looks at the importance of the strengths and weaknesses that the new teacher brings to the match.

Table 1

Accounting for Mentor Strengths

	When matching a new teacher with a mentor, I take into account the strengths a particular mentor will bring to the relationship.			
	All of the Time	*Some of the time*	*Once in a While*	*Never*
Principals	*7 (100%)*	*0 (%)*	*0 (0%)*	*0 (0%)*
Mentors	*26 (83.9%)*	*5 (16.1%)*	*0 (0%)*	*0 (0%)*
Totals	*34 (87.2%)*	*5 (12.8%)*	*0 (0%)*	*0 (0%)*

Table Two

Accounting for Mentor Weaknesses

	When matching a new teacher with a mentor, I take into account the weaknesses a particular mentor will bring to the relationship			
	All of the Time	*Some of the time*	*Once in a While*	*Never*
Principals	*5 (71.4%)*	*2 (28.6%)*	*0 (0%)*	*0 (0%)*
Mentors	*13 (41.9%)*	*16 (51.6%)*	*2 (6.5%)*	*0 (0%)*
Totals	*18 (46.2%)*	*19 (48.7%)*	*2 (2.1%)*	*0 (0%)*

Table Three

Accounting for Strengths and Weaknesses of the Protégé

	When matching a new teacher with a mentor, I take into account the strengths and weaknesses a particular protégé will bring to the relationship.			
	All of the Time	*Some of the time*	*Once in a While*	*Never*
Principals	5 (71.4%)	2 (28.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Mentors	9 (25.8%)	15 (48.4%)	4 (12.9%)	4 (12.9%)
Totals	14 (35.9%)	17 (43.5%)	4 (10.3%)	4 (10.3%)

According to the questionnaire, a mentor's strengths are the most important factor in the match. The new teacher's strengths and weaknesses were not necessarily known prior to employment as several respondents pointed out. But, the mentor was known to the building and district that he or she worked in. The data also shows that the strengths of the mentor were cited as more important than the weaknesses the individual may bring to the match. Perhaps the most interesting finding was that although these characteristics were reported as important to matching the dyads, there were no universal published tools to help administrators match new teachers to a mentor. Respondents reported these matches were made primarily on hunches or past experience that the building administrator had with the mentor teacher.

Grade Level and Subject Matter Taught

The second research question was to what extent were mentors were matched according to the grade level and subject matter taught. This question was address to administrators who match the pairs. It was also presented to mentors to assess what individual thoughts and experiences were on the practice of matching dyads based on subject matter taught and grade level. Some of the school buildings in the School District of Baraboo are small, one-track schools where there was only one teacher at a given grade level. Taking this factor into account, the question addressed a same grade level to plus or minus one grade of the new teacher's assignment. The questionnaire also asked participants to rank the factors that were key in matching. Another question the respondents were asked was to rate the importance of sharing the same building with a protégé whenever possible.

All administrators who responded reported matching new teachers with a mentor teacher that did not share the same grade level and subject matter taught at some point in the four-year history of the program. There were a variety of reasons cited. The most common problem was that there simply was no mentor available at that grade level and subject area due to the building size, nature of the new teacher's position such as a new district media specialist for grades kindergarten through fifth grade, or due to available name on the existing list of trained mentors. Administrators as a whole expressed, in through the questionnaire and structured interviews, that the expertise and communication skills of the mentor teacher combined with their perception of the new teacher through the interview process were more important to their decision making than the grade level and subject matter match of the dyad.

The questionnaire asked both mentors and individuals responsible for matching to rank their thoughts on what factors should be considered when pairing. The results of this ranking are listed in Table Four. A ranking of one represents the first thing that should be considered when matching. A ranking of six represents the least important consideration.

Table Four

Factors to Consider in a Match

	Matching According to Sex	*Grade Level and Subject Matter Taught*	*Expertise of the Mentor Teacher*	*Communication Skills of the Mentor Teacher*	*Personality of the Mentor Teacher*	*Personality of the New Teacher*
When you are matching a new teacher with a trained mentor, rank the following considerations that you take in order of importance 1-6 (1 = most important):						
Principals						
Mean	5.85	3.57	3	2.43	2.43	3
Rank	6	5	3	1	1	3
Mentors						
Mean	5.48	2.35	2.58	1.84	3.06	3.84
Rank	6	2	3	1	4	5
Totals						
Mean	5.41	2.77	2.59	2.18	2.99	3.94
Rank	6	3	2	1	4	5

Administrators and mentors were also asked about matching mentors with protégés by building. This question was needed because of the lack of availability of mentors at a given subject matter or grade level in certain buildings through out the

district. The evaluation sought to determine if matching by building was more important than matching by grade level and subject matter.

Although research suggests that most educational mentoring matches are made based on grade level and subject matter taught (Villani, 2002), the surveyed population did not agree with the importance of this practice. The ranking of factors to consider in the match in Table Four clearly presents the feeling that the mentor is the most important factor in the match with numbers one and two being the communication skills and expertise of the mentor teacher. The third most important factor when matching according to the ranking was the grade level and subject matter of the dyad.

Table Five showed the majority of respondents endorsed the idea that protégé-mentor matches should be made within the building that they teach. While the majority of administration respondents only responded that this characteristic was important some of the time. Administrators cited reasons such as limitations of available trained mentors for matching with this criteria. An additional 25% of respondents stated that some of the time matches should be made within the individual building. Mentors emphasized that being matched with a protégé within their building was important. One mentor stated that knowing "building procedures is very important." Another stated, "Each building is different in regard to personality and style."

Table Five

Accounting for Matches Made By Building

| | *Mentor teachers should work in the same building as the new teacher.* | | | |
	All of the Time	*Some of the time*	*Once in a While*	*Never*
Principals	*2 (28.6%)*	*5 (71.4%)*	*0 (0%)*	*0 (0%)*
Mentors	*24 (77.4%)*	*5 (16.1%)*	*2(6.5%)*	*0 (0%)*
Totals	*27 (69.2%)*	*10 (25.7%)*	*2 (5.1%)*	*0(0%)*

Reflection on Matching

The extent to which mentors are reflecting on their experiences to ensure the pair is

effective is the third research question. The questionnaire addressed reflection tools that

are currently available for mentors. The interviews that were conducted followed up with

questions about tools and how the teacher mentor views the tools. The nature of this

question called for a qualitative approach that utilized a structured examination of

responses.

Administrators along with the Instructional Facilitator reported that they do not use

any published tools to assist the mentor in reflecting to help either the mentor improve

their skills or to help the team matching dyads make more informed decisions. The

Instructional Facilitator reported that mentors are currently requested to provide feedback

at the end of each year by responding to an e-mail sent by her to all participants.

However, no formal questionnaire completion has been requested. The limited response

to these e-mails was a concern of the Instructional Facilitator. The Instructional

Facilitator also contacts mentors at least once per semester. Administrators reported that the Instructional Facilitator was an important resource for making matches. Additionally she ensured that the relationship was working in the best interest of all involved.

Mentors agreed that a tool such as the one listed in Appendix A would be beneficial to assist them in preparing for their role as a mentor. All mentors interviewed expressed that they would complete and use such a tool along with a questionnaire that would provide feedback at the end of their first year of mentoring. However, providing feedback at the end of the second year was called, "busy work" by one mentor stating that it would not have value for her in improving the relationship with her protégé. Therefore, she was not in favor of completing a questionnaire at the end of year two.

The findings regarding reflection were mixed. Experienced teachers and administrators report their own ways of reflecting on matches. However, these reflective practices are not consistent among the respondents. Collecting specific types of reflection in the form of a questionnaire or universal tool such as listed in Appendix A or B for example, will give the reader a snapshot of the pairing that can be compared with another dyad that may not be as successful. Mentors did express a willingness to participate in this type of formal reflection process both at the end of their training as well as at the end of the first year of their experience if administrators or the Instructional Facilitator requested the process.

Utilizing Tools

Finally the questionnaire addressed the use of a tool such as the rubric in Appendix B or the mentor survey, Appendix A. This question asked the respondents to evaluate the usefulness of this type of tool in the matching of mentor-protégé dyads. The question was

divided into three parts. The first part was, what tools are currently used across the district. The second part was, what tools are used in the Badger Conference (which Baraboo is a member) and across the country that could be of use in Baraboo. The third part asked, if a tool were to be implemented as part of the matching process, would administrators utilize it and would mentors view the tool as too evaluative in nature.

None of the administrators who responded to the questionnaire reported using any type of standardized tool to assess the readiness of a potential mentor. All respondents cited prior experiences with a potential mentor such as formal evaluations, classroom newsletters and other forms of communication as ways that the mentor's readiness was considered. But other than formal evaluations, there were no reported consistencies from building to building within the district. Administrators also reported using information they recalled from prior observation of the mentor teacher rather than opening the staff file to look for collected pieces of information.

Across the Badger Conference, only five out of the 14 possible school districts responded to the questionnaire. This small sample was most likely due to the fact that communication was strained due to aggressive anti-spam filters on e-mail and lack of contact information that was available to the public. Two of the responding districts reported that their programs use release mentors. This is a practice where there is one mentor for many protégés. The release mentor is working full time on mentorship duties and is released from their individual classroom duties while participating in the program. The practice of release mentoring is vastly different from the teacher mentor program model that is used in Baraboo. Therefore, these surveys could not be used to compare processes because there is no matching procedure. The remaining three districts reported

that no tools were used in matching new teachers with mentors. One district utilizes an application process, however, the application was only filled out once the mentor had been assigned.

These findings were consistent with the programs across the country that Villani (2003) highlighted. None of these programs used tools to match mentors with new teachers either. Out of the 16 programs that were highlighted all 16 reported that they strived to match all mentors with protégés either by building or grade level and subject matter taught. Respondents reported efforts were made to form dyads within buildings even when trained mentors at the given grade level or within a given subject area were not available. When mentors cannot be matched by building, as in the case of the charter school in Baraboo where all the teachers were new, teachers were matched by subject matter or grade level to a teacher in another building. When mentors could not be matched by grade level or subject matter because there were no trained mentors at that level or department, the dyads were then matched according to buildings according to respondents of the questionnaire.

Finally, the question was asked, if a questionnaire or rubric were available to assist in matching new teachers with their mentors, would the decision makers utilize the tool? Table Six highlights the answers of the administration team as well as the responses from mentor regarding their perception of the tools. If the data is broken down further, only three out of the seven administrator respondents answered that such a tool would be useful all of the time. When questioned further in structured interviews, administrators stated that the tools are helpful to guide their thinking, but are not something that would be necessary to fill out and file. Perhaps, the tools are most useful, one principal

suggested, "for the personal use of the mentor only. This way the mentor is more likely to answer honestly."

Table 6

Accounting for the Use of a Survey Tool in Matching

	A survey (highlighting strengths and interests) that is completed by potent mentors upon the conclusion of mentor training would be useful to me in matching mentors with new teachers.			
	All of the Time	*Some of the time*	*Once in a While*	*Never*
Principals	*3 (%)*	*3 (%)*	*1 (0%)*	*0 (0%)*
Mentors	*10 (%)*	*16 (51.8%)*	*4 (12.9%)*	*1 (3.1%)*
Totals	*14 (35.9%)*	*19 (48.7%)*	*5 (12.8%)*	*1 (2.6%)*

Overall, all individuals involved in the survey expressed that tools would be helpful for background information, but may not be necessary to actually fill out and place in an employee's file, especially in the case of the rubric in Appendix B. The majority of both administration and mentor respondents stated that tools should be used with care because they can be seen as evaluative by their very nature as well as time consuming paperwork for all involved.

Chapter V: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Providing a new teacher with a mentor teacher has proven to reduce the rate at which new teachers are leaving the classroom (Jones & Pauley, 2003). This statement highlights the need to carefully match mentors and protégés. However, the need goes beyond simply assigning a new teacher a mentor. The "need to carefully match protégés and mentors using objective criteria based on the protégés developmental needs and the ability of the mentors to act as resources for fulfilling those needs" (Murray, 2001, p. 159).

The following questions were used to guide this evaluation:

1. To what extent were best practices outlined by current research taken into account when matching new teachers with their mentors?

2. To what extent was grade level and subject matter taught taken into account when matching mentors with new teachers?

3. To what extent were mentors relfecting on their experience to ensure that matches are effective for both the mentor and the new teacher?

4. To what extent were other districts in the Badger Conference and across the country utilizing tools to help match mentors with new teachers?

This evaluation used a management-oriented design. The summary of the study served adminstration in making decisions about the best practices for assigning new teachers to a trained mentor and the Instructional Facilitator in planning for mentor training. The study also served the mentors themselves in ensuring they are provided with specific materials to help them reflect on their own learning and ensure the match is successful. The current practices of matching mentors with new teachers was examined,

as well as the practices of other districts in the Baraboo area and around the country. Questionnaires and structured interviews were used coupled with current research to enhance the mentor – protégé matching process.

At the time of the evaluation, the School District of Baraboo had six building principals, one Director of Curriculum and Instruction, one Director of Pupil Services and one District Administrator who made up the administrative team. There was also one individual, the Instructional Facilitator, in charge of the New Teacher Program and mentor training for the district. The actual sample included responses from seven out of 11 administrators and 31 of a possible 50 teacher mentor-teachers who have participated in the program since 2005. Additionally, ten volunteers from those that completed questionnaire were interviewed for more information.

The questionnaire and structured interviews for the study were designed to solicit the experiences and perspectives of participating individuals in both qualitative and quantitative means to how new teachers are matched with mentors. The qualitative data was collected through the use of a questionnaire and through interviews based on the four key questions.

Questionnaires were sent out via the district's inter-school mail system after the Instructional Facilitator sent communication regarding her commission of the evaluation. Collection of the questionnaires took place through a building secretary, thus allowing respondents to remain anonymous. Those who wished to participate further in the process were asked to put their name on the questionnaire to be contacted by the evaluator. Interviews were conducted based on volunteers from the questionnaire. The interview data was complied in a narrative format based on the four key question categories.

Compilation was completed on the same day the interview was conducted to ensure all ideas and meaning was recorded.

Findings

The data collected shows that the most important factor in the mentor-protégé match is the mentor. When matches must be made for the protégé, because of the limitations of the educational setting for example, and protégés come to their positions with varied degrees of skills and experiences the only factor a school district can control is the quality of the mentor that is matched. The respondents stated no published tools were used to match new teachers with their mentors, but that both the strengths and weaknesses of the mentor were important to the match.

The data indicated mentors and protégés were matched either by building or grade level and subject matter taught through out the district. This practice provides some consistency in the matching process, though one factor was not preferred over the other. All but two mentors agreed that matching by building was essential. Building matches were necessary because it allows the mentor to be accessible to the new teacher and provide the physical proximity to allow regular face-to-face meeting times. Matching by grade level and subject matter taught was also helpful to new teachers who already had much to think about in their first years on the job. One mentor reported, "There is so much that has to be dealt with on the department level that the new person ends up needing two mentors, one official mentor and one who knows the workings of the curriculum and department or grade level." This potentially creates more work for the new teacher by forcing the protégé to establish two relationships.

Reflective practice was found to be valued by all respondents. However, the ways each individual practices reflection was vastly different. All of the administrators all reported reflecting on matches. Some administrators used formal evaluation data to reflect upon the matches they had made. Other administrators consulted the Instructional Facilitator and collaboratively made decisions. Still others thought about previous experiences and the written communication skills of potential mentors that had received district required training.

Mentor teachers reported using different ways to determine if their matches were successful. Some mentors relied on cues from their protégé. Other mentors looked to how often the new teacher was seeking their help. Still others collaborated with the Instructional Facilitator and fellow mentors when deciding if their mentor-protégé relationship was flourishing. All respondents agreed that collaboration is necessary in the reflection process.

According to the respondents, neither mentors or administrators used published tools to match the dyads or help the pair establish their relationship. Both administrators and mentors were presented with the self-assessment questionnaire in Appendix A and the rubric in Appendix B to determine if tools like these could to help the matching process. These tools solicited mixed perceptions. Some respondents felt that requiring the forms to be completed would encourage potential mentors to embellish their answers. Others felt that these forms were simply "busy work." About half of those interviewed considered the forms to be a resource to ensure that new teachers were best served through the matching process.

Perhaps the most useful tool in the School District of Baraboo was the Instructional

Facilitator. Nine out of ten individuals who were interviewed voluntarily cited the

importance of the Instructional Facilitator in the process, though this question was not

part of the interview questions. The judgment and expertise of this individual who, unlike

the others surveyed, has a unique position within all the district's buildings, was not only

respected but also sought out by many. The importance of this individual surfaced

repeatedly in interviews and questionnaires. As one of the building principals stated, "I

do not see tools such as the rubric or questionnaire as valuable because collaboration with

the Instruction Facilitator is the best available resource." A teacher mentor added, "She is

a consummate professional and I have confidence in her guidance and her judgment."

This importance was highlighted despite the fact that the Instructional Facilitator does not

have an official say in the matches according to the negotiated agreement (School District

of Baraboo, 2007).

Conclusions

According to Murray (2001), there is a "need to carefully match protégés and

mentors using objective criteria based on the protégés developmental needs and the

ability of the mentors to act as resources for fulfilling those needs" (p. 159). However, in

an educational setting all mentors and protégés already begin on common ground.

Furthermore, mentors already possess a necessary skill set, as they are classroom teachers

themselves. Despite the fact that common ground exists, there are still discrepancies in

individual matches. These discrepancies can be resolved in part through the training

mentors receive and the process through which they are selected. The findings of this

study have yielded the following conclusions:

1. Currently, mentors and protégés are not matched on any research-based criteria that are consistent across the School District of Baraboo. Questionnaires or rubrics could be helpful in assuring that the best matches are made for the sake of the protégé and mentor alike as both parties benefit from the relationship.

2. New teachers in the School District of Baraboo are matched with a mentor either by grade level or subject matter taught or by building when there is no one available at their grade level or subject matter. There were no instances where dyads were not matched by either grade level or subject matter or buildings. This type of matching supports practices in the other mentoring programs that were examined.

3. Mentors as a whole are relying on their protégés for feedback about how they are performing their duties. While the protégé should clearly be the first source for information, using tools, such as the survey in Appendix A, could enhance these conversations and ensure a more open and purposeful dialogue about the mentor-protégé relationship itself. Focusing on the relationship will build the "two aspects of successful mentoring matches - serendipity and empathy" (Cox, 2005, p. 411).

4. A consistent use of published tools and research to match mentors in educational settings was not found in surrounding communities and across the country. The only criterion that has been applied is the matching of new teachers to their mentor-teachers based on either building or grade level and subject matter taught.

Implications

The need for a new teacher program is dictated by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction in their PI 34 code, which applies to all teachers, licensed after August 31, 2004. The indent of this policy is to provide novice teachers with an orientation, extra support regarding curriculum standards, administrative support regarding their Professional Development Plans, and a qualified mentor (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2008). The result of this study, has found implications for the practices used to match new teachers with mentors. They also have implications for the overall program.

1. The most significant implication is time. Administrators and other decision makers need time to consider the most effective matches. Mentors need time to be effective in their own classrooms and additional time to guide new teachers. Mentoring is a skilled and a necessary component in schools today. "Most effective programs offer time for mentors to meet and discuss to focus on their own development" (Bartell, 2005, p. 81).

2. Through the process of collecting and analyzing data, it became clear that not all respondents understood the process that has been established in the district for matching new teachers to mentors. There is a need for information to be presented to all staff in the School District of Baraboo. There are many avenues the district has to share information effectively such as the New Teacher Program website which can reduce misunderstandings and support the implementation of the program.

3. Another implication to consider is the use of tools and practices that are based on research to match dyads. The processes and criteria used to match mentors with protégés are not uniform across the district. The utilization of published tools inform and standardize the process all program participants.

4. The final implication of this study is that more emphasis should be placed on the importance of the mentor itself. The evidence collected shows how significant the mentor is in the matches made in Baraboo. Given their importance, more attention could be placed on the mentor through additional training and support.

Recommendations

The process of matching new teachers to a mentor in an educational setting has not been widely researched. The current research regarding the matching of mentors with protégés is somewhat contradictory. Matching dyads is an area where more specific research could help develop criteria and procedures to inform the process. Informed pairings of mentors and protégés can reduce the likelihood that new teachers leave education due to feelings of isolation or a lack of support.

1. Further research comparing and contrasting the success of matching mentors with protégés by grade level and subject matter taught using Clutterbuck's (2000) optimal learning guide would be beneficial. His similarity and difference model proposes that optimal learning occurs when matches are made based on individuals who do not share similar experiences or personalities.

2. The use of published tools for matching mentors with new teachers in the k-12 school setting needs to be researched. A variety of tools including ones similar

to those in Appendix A and Appendix B could be examined to determine their effectiveness and utility in administering mentoring programs.

3. The final recommendation for further research is tied to the importance of the mentor in the match as the study illustrated. More work needs to be done in the area of professional development for mentors to increase the success of new teachers.

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Appendix A: Mentor/New Teacher Survey Tool Sample

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Assess your Mentoring Preferences

Mentors and Partners bring their own preferences into the mentoring relationship. Having different preferences is neither good, nor bad -- its just diversity, so long as both parties are aware of the differences and how they may impact the mentoring relationship. This instrument is intended to let mentors and partners get a fix on their own preferences.

Question/Preference Statement	Choice A	Choice B
1. Are you more:	A. Respectful	B. Evaluative
2. Do you want things:	A. Planned	B. Spontaneous
3. Teachers Should:	A. Generate choices	B. Provide answers
4. Mentors Should:	A. Provide answers	B. Ask questions
5. Which is the greatest error, to be:	A. Only concerned for your own goals	B. Overly concerned for the goodwill of others
6. Would you rather work in an office:	A. With only one other person	B. With many people
7. In approaching others your inclination is to be somewhat:	A. Unimposing	B. Commanding
8. What is more frustrating for you:	A. Structured and scheduled events	B. Unstructured and unscheduled events
9. Learning should be:	A. Self-directed	B. Disciplined and sequential
10. The purpose of questions is to:	A. Share information	B. Gain insight
11. Do others find you:	A. Predictable/reliable	B. Capricious
12. You find your most satisfying time when:	A. You are alone	B. When you are with others
13. Do you place more value on:	A. Collaboration	B. Independence
14. Is it harder for you to be:	A. Dispassionate	B. Compassionate
15. Lessons are best learned by:	A. Facilitating discovery	B. Transmitting knowledge and information
16. Which is more admirable:	A. Teller	B. Listener
17. Are you:	A. Trusting of others	B. Suspicious of others
18. Do you prefer being with:	A. A few people for long periods of time	B. Many people for short periods of time
19. Do you treat others as:	A. Allies	B. Competitors
20. Which situation appeals to you:	A. Black and white	B. Conjectural and tentative
21. Do you like to learn from:	A. A catalyst	B. An instructor

22. Which seems the greater error:	A. Paraphrase	B. Draw conclusions
23. Which is more admirable:	A. Integrity	B. Doing what it takes to get the job done
24. What bothers you when a supervisor:	A. Talks to you about everything	B. Only talks to you when needed
25. Is it better to be:	A. Modest	B. Assertive
26. Do you like events that are:	A. Definite	B. Open-ended
27. You learn best by:	A. Experiencing and reflecting	B. Lecture and reading
28. Would others say you:	A. Advocate	B. Listen
29. Are you known as a person who:	A. Keeps commitments	B. Is more concerned about what others think
30. At work you prefer:	A. People talk to you only when they need help or information	B. High levels of social interactions
31. Do you value more:	A. Interdependence	B. Individuality
32. Which person is more to be complimented, one who is:	A. Judgmental	B. Understanding
33. In learning are you attracted to:	A. Problem-centered discussions	B. Subject-centered discussions
34. Is it worse to:	A. State your position	B. Empathize
35. Would others say you are:	A. Loyal	B. Political
36. What is more important:	A. Personally knowing you have accomplished something	B. Constant recognition from others
37. Decisions should be made:	A. Jointly	B. Unilaterally
38. Do you value:	A. Conformity	B. Diversity
39. A teacher is a:	A. Guide	B. Wizard
40. Are you attracted to others who:	A. Share information	B. Allow you to develop your own insight
41. Is it hard for you to be:	A. Honest	B. Sensitive to other's feelings
42. Do you like to keep informed:	A. On a need-to-know basis	B. Just about everything
43. Others would describe you as:	A. Opinionated	B. Open-minded
44. Teachers:	A. Help others learn	B. Teach others what they know
45. Which is more admirable:	A. To be principled	B. To be flexible
46. Do you tend to choose:	A. Achievement of goals	B. Affiliation with others

Appendix B: Administrative Rubric Sample

Collaborative Work Skills: Mentor Matching Rubric

Category	3	2	1
Working with Others	Almost always listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Tries to keep people working well together.	Usually listens to, shares, with, and supports the efforts of others. Does not cause "waves" in the group.	Often listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others, but sometimes is not a good team member.
Attitude	Never is publicly critical of the project or the work of others. Always has a positive attitude.	Rarely is publicly critical of the project or the work of others. Often has a positive attitude.	Occasionally is publicly critical of the project or the work of other members of the staff. Occasionally has a negative attitude.
Time-Management	Routinely uses time well to ensure things get done on time. Others do not have to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities because of this person's procrastination.	Usually uses time well, but may have procrastinated on one thing. Others do not have to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities because of this person's procrastination.	Tends to procrastinate, but always gets things done by the deadlines. Others do not have to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities because of this person's procrastination.
Agenda	Routinely works for the greater good of the school/district. Looks out for the best interest of staff and students rather than furthering personal agendas.	Usually works for the greater good of the school/district. Looks out for the best interest of staff and students most of the time, rather than furthering personal agendas.	Sometimes works for the greater good of the district/school. Often spends time furthering personal agendas rather than looking out for the best interest of staff and students as a whole.
Patience	Always displays patience in difficult interactions with students and staff. Never belittles others because of misunderstandings or miscommunication.	Usually displays patience in difficult interactions with students and staff. Rarely belittles others because f misunderstandings or miscommunication.	Occasionally displays patience in difficult interactions with students and staff. Occasionally belittles others because of misunderstandings or miscommunication.
Geographic Location	Mentor is in the same buildings and classroom is in close proximity to the new teacher.	Mentor is in the same building but classroom is at the opposite end of the building.	Mentor is more than 20 minutes away from the protégé.
Grade Level/Subject Area	Mentor teaches at the same grade level (+/- one grade) as the new teacher and in the same subject area.	Mentor teaches at the same grade level (+/- one grade) as the new teacher but not in the same subject area.	Mentor does not teach in a grade level or subject area that matches the new teacher in any way.