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## An Analysis on the Experience of Mentoring Support in a College Alternative Teacher Certification Program

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An Analysis on the Experience of Mentoring Support in a College

Alternative Teacher Certification Program

by

Debra V. Kilgore

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Adult, Career, and Higher Education  
College of Education  
University of South Florida

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. My loving mother, Kathleen Voutsinas, gave 100% encouragement and support to me along the journey. She was there every step of the way, as a savvy business woman teaching me persistence, and offering pep talks when needed. I will always be grateful to her. My late father, James Voutsinas, provided great inspiration in the pursuit of this doctoral degree. He instilled in me a passion for learning. As a writer, he constantly inquired about my progress, and became a driving force in my efforts to complete the dissertation. I am eternally grateful to the two angels in my life, my dear husband, William Kevin Kilgore and our beautiful and bright daughter Kaydee Kilgore. They gave me tremendous inspiration to complete this task in pursuit of dreams. They surrendered many weekends, evenings, and social time together while I completed the dissertation. They stood by me with patience and honored this endeavor. Many times my husband put his legal work to one side to discuss my research and my daughter went on endless trips with me to meet people related to this study. I also wish to thank my father-in-law, William Enloe Kilgore, MD., for being a role model to me with his high caliber of hard work and excellence. I want to acknowledge, in loving memory, my late mother-in-law, “Gator Bowl Queen” Carole Wallis Kilgore. Lastly, I want to thank Margaret Fay Gladkowski Buhr for being my sister. Without these people in my life, the birth of this project would not have been possible.

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## Abstract

The purpose of this research study was to explore how college alternative teacher certification (ATC) participants experience mentoring support. The goal was to obtain a rich and deep understanding of the nature of the mentoring experience in a college ATC program through the perspectives of mentees and their mentors. The ATC program was the Educator Preparation Institute (EPI).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted. Eight individuals participated in the study, four were mentors and four were EPI students. A triangulated set of research methods for data collection and analysis was used, including member checks, validation forms, and peer reviews. All the interviews were transcribed; data was subsequently analyzed for patterns.

The findings indicated that students believed, while the course work was clear and well structured, the fieldwork aspect of the program was not. The topic of fieldwork disconnect between the college and the host schools was repeatedly observed as a challenge by the EPI students and identified as lack of support. All eight of the EPI study participants discussed lack of time and span of control issues in their interviews.

Some implications that surfaced from this study included the desire for more one-on-one time, eliminating confusion in arranging field experiences, and assistance in learning to direct their own experiences. Other implications that emerged from this study included offering diversified instruction to college EPI students, such as different courses depending on the intended grade level, and building a working relationship with the host

schools that would expedite the training of the EPI students. Finally, more in-depth knowledge, and hands-on practice in the field was a perceived need by all the EPI students which calls for alterations in the EPI program design and number of faculty to operate each EPI program.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

There has been a growing movement in the United States concerning the route teachers take to obtain certification. According to Feistritz (2007), a substantial number of these teachers are receiving credentials through alternative teacher certification (ATC) programs. One of the challenges facing this trend is keeping the newly trained teachers in the field. Professional literature in the teaching field often identifies mentoring as a tool in retaining teachers.

The Florida State Board of Education (2008) released an executive summary of teacher preparation programs in the state and this summary recommended further study of teacher training programs and mentoring. The recommended in-depth studies on teacher preparation programs include determining the specific aspects of these programs that are helping new teachers and investigating the effects on teacher performance and retention. Discussing the task of designing and implementing programs in alternative certification, May, Katsinas, and Moore (2003) recognized that an understanding of the challenges and successes of program participants provides practitioners with a tool, which can help with identifying key issues to consider in designing programs that will promote the longevity of alternatively certified teachers.

Therefore, the results of this study may provide information that will help ATC leadership create a supportive environment that best prepares and retains new recruits.



Jorissen (2003) stressed the need for listening to the voices of teachers in developing models for teaching programs. In a study of ATC teachers, Uttley (2006) discovered that “the role of the mentor is often an overlooked critical factor in the war on attrition” (p. 23). Also calling for more research in the field, Johnson and Reiman (2006) urged, “developing high quality mentors is imperative as high quality mentoring is a prime factor in teacher retention” (p. 146). For a number of years there has been a call for more research in the area of ATC, and the demand remains strong. Darling-Hammond (1997) was another proponent for more research in ATC and mentoring. The author asserted it has been recognized for some time that the U.S. has a need for systematic inquiry into beginning teachers’ mentoring experiences. She also contended, “in order to strengthen the link between pre-service and classroom realities, educators have identified a need for more mentoring or induction programs” (Darling-Hammond, p. 1).

Teacher shortages in many areas of the United States have been linked to the major reason for the increasing popularity of alternative teacher certification. Ignash (2006) recognized that the teacher shortage experienced in 2003 continues. Ignash also cited the shortages as a driving force to the movement that allowed for 2-year colleges to offer 4-year degrees and pointed out that the teacher deficit in many areas of the United States is also the result of population growth. Projecting to 2010, Townsend and Ignash (2003) estimated that the United States would need between 2 and 2.5 million more teachers to fill classrooms. Offering further insight into this problem, Felter (1997) cited reasons for teacher shortages: “the teacher shortage is readily apparent, driven by several forces, including growth in public school enrollment, reform efforts to lower class sizes,

instability of the teaching workforce, and the impending retirement of many current teachers” (p. 1).

Providing additional information on this subject, Steadman and Simmons (2007) noted that, during the Florida 2006-2007 school year, districts expected a shortfall of 32,000 teachers. Looking forward, they projected that by the year 2016, California would experience a teacher shortage of 100,000. Identifying alternative certification as an answer to the shortfall, Feistritz (2007) asserted, “[A]lternative routes into the teaching profession are becoming more and more attractive to policymakers and teacher-educators as strategies for recruiting potential teachers and tackling teacher shortages” (p. 1).

School systems are learning that finding educated professionals and training them only works if these programs are retaining recruited individuals. Experts in the field second this idea: “retaining teachers is a far larger problem than training new ones, and a key to solving teacher shortages” (Darling-Hammond, 2003, p. 4). Professional literature in the teaching field repeatedly points to social support, or mentoring, as one of the top concerns for beginning teachers and one of the most effective strategies to help retain them.

The sections in this chapter include the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, background of the study, definition of terms, study limitations, followed by summary and organization of study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

There are a limited number of studies in the area of ATC, and even fewer that focus specifically on the mentor-protégé dynamic. Mentoring for teachers can be

powerful enough to make or break their decision to remain in the field. The problem is that it is rare to find detailed focused studies that ask ATC beginning teachers, their mentors, and program coordinators questions that give them a voice in how this process should be conducted. Furthermore, teacher attrition affects student achievement, which in turn, can impact society as a whole. As teachers quit the profession, there is the possibility that students will be neglected, possibly negatively affecting their future lives and ability to be contributing citizens. The University of Chicago (2009) examined the effects of high teacher turnover in the city's lower income areas and found (a) lack of ongoing professional development, (b) inexperienced and ineffective teachers, (c) shortages in main subject areas, (d) teacher leadership issues, and (e) extremely low levels of student achievement.

A review of literature in the field revealed a domino effect of teacher attrition on students: "the high turnover of teachers in schools does not simply cause staffing problems but may also harm the school environment and student performance" (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003, p. 2). The authors further noted that "the turnover problem, although high for the entire teaching occupation, affects beginning teachers more than others" (p. 2). Facing the challenge of retaining newly trained teachers, the alternative teacher certification field needs research on how induction programs are training teacher candidates. The time, resources, and funds allocated toward recruiting and training teachers are often wasted because a great number of candidates pass through a revolving door and leave the field as quickly as they entered.

In relation to business and industry organizations, Blakesley (2006) recommended improving employee retention by creating a mentoring environment as part of a hiring

strategy which would result in reduced hiring costs. Mentoring can have a profound impact on various organizational environments; this example can be translated into teacher training programs signaling a call for more studies on this topic.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research study was to explore how college ATC participants experience mentoring support while at the college and also during their field experiences. The goal of the research study was to obtain a rich and deep understanding of the nature of the mentoring experience in a college ATC program through the perspectives of mentees and their mentors. The type of college ATC program examined for this research study was the Educator Preparation Institute (EPI). In addition, the research results are directed towards promoting the retention of ATC teachers by providing training programs with information on mentoring support from the perspectives of the actual participants. Adding to the richness of this information, the participants in the research study were also given the opportunity to elaborate on any concerns or suggestions for the program.

People who switch to teaching in mid-career are viewed as a rich resource to the teaching profession. Fawcett (1997) described the entry level alternatively certified teacher as typically having rich life experiences to integrate with the new information they receive. Further supporting this concept, Haberman (2005) stressed that having been immersed in family, work, and life challenges, experienced adults may reach higher levels of personal development in the teaching field. Viewing the benefits of ATC teachers, Steadman and Simmons (2007) noted the significant amount of work experience and content area knowledge they often bring to the classroom.

The driving force behind this study was to investigate how mentoring may promote the retention of beginning teachers. It is common to find alarming statistics throughout professional literature on teacher deficits in the United States. A news article by Lambert (2006) reported on the astounding finding that about half of all teachers leave the profession during the first 3 to 5 years of teaching. The University of Chicago (2009) study was conducted on the retention rates of beginning teachers from Chicago lower income area public schools. The researchers surveyed and checked the records of 35, 000 teachers and found that 67% of elementary beginning teachers and 76% of high school beginning teachers left the profession within the first 5 years. The researchers pointed out that the schools in the study did not lose many more teachers as the typical schools in cities across the nation.

Adding to the challenge of operating induction programs is the consideration that, while alternatively certified candidates may have similar needs as traditionally certified teachers, they may also have many different needs. To begin to uncover these needs it will be helpful to interview participants in a program to get their perspectives first hand. Researching ATC teachers in training should provide an opportunity for individuals to engage in reflection and examine the nature of support and mentoring taking place in the program.

This study used mentoring experiences that evolved from Danin's (1998) University of Denver study on provisionally licensed teachers participating in an alternative certification program, along with mentoring themes from the literature review. These mentoring experiences and themes were used to generate the questions that guided the interviews with the EPI program participants. In addition, this study examined

documents describing the college EPI program structure, and EPI student activities. The program structure and activity descriptions were triangulated with the information obtained from the interviews with the EPI participants to provide a broader view of the program.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were derived in part from Danin's (1998) study (see Appendix A), and the literature review for this study (see Appendix B). To answer the research questions, themes from Danin's study and the literature review were also consulted in designing the schedule of questions for the interviews (see Appendix C).

1. How do EPI students describe the mentoring support provided by their EPI instructor mentor, field mentors, and program coordinator?
2. How do the EPI instructor mentor, field mentors, and program coordinator describe the mentoring support they provide to EPI students?
3. What is satisfying about the mentoring relationship?
4. What is challenging about the mentoring relationship?
5. What themes and perceptions reflect the EPI student's decision to complete the college teaching program?

### **Significance of the Study**

Through participants' responses in this study, college programs may find it useful to learn first-hand about the needs of those involved in the process. Additionally, this information may be beneficial to state and local educational leaders involved in regulating, designing, coordinating, and administering programs with the goal of retaining teachers.

Knowing more about ATC participants can assist educational leaders in successfully supporting them. Convinced from personal research studies in the field, R. Danin (personal communication, April 27, 2008) supported the significance of studies conducted involving ATC program mentor or instructors and mentees. Danin views the connection that mentors have to pre-service and novice teachers as paramount to their success. There are so many different types of ATC programs operating that conducting a qualitative study that is descriptive, comprehensive, and heuristic on a select group can provide more intensive insight, rather than looking at the broader spectrum of programs with a less intensive analysis. Recognizing potential benefits of an in-depth analysis with a qualitative investigation at a single location, Merriam (1998) explained the process as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit” (p. 34).

Acknowledging a need for more ATC studies on the different types of programs, Uttley (2006) called for additional studies, indicating “for this reason additional studies and comparisons of different programs would be beneficial” (p. 80). Uttley further noted “the ability to compare teacher responses from these different programs will allow further insight into the needs of alternatively certified teachers” (p. 80). Soliciting the perceptions of both the mentor and mentee is desired among researchers in the field. Uttley backed this idea explaining, “It is important to do this comparison to see if there is an equal perception of success and needs or if there is a difference in the perceptions of the two groups” (p. 80). Further advocating these types of studies, Uttley (2006) suggested, “[T]his type of research would allow for a further refinement of the mentoring practices that should occur” (p. 80).

Offering insight on ATC and mentoring, Danin (2008) noted that these teachers need a great deal of support because they typically do not come from formal training programs or internships and, in most cases, have not stepped into a K-12 classroom since they graduated high school. R. Danin (personal communication, April 30, 2008) viewed studies in this area as vital. Establishing greater need for ATC teacher support, Danin pointed out that more online ATC programs are being developed and these programs will also be in demand for even more support than the original ones. Working with alternatively certified teachers for several years, Danin found that it was difficult to find good mentors for this group of teachers and emphasized the demand for more research on this topic.

Also explaining the need for more research in mentoring of teachers, Tissington (2006) reported that, “while mentorship models have existed for decades, typically these models regarded business or youth programs” (p. 37). Following the idea of more studies in educational induction programs, Davis (2001) specifically noted that, until recently, mentoring was not as common in educational settings as it was in industry. Looking for a solution to reduce teacher attrition, Ingersoll and Smith (2004) reviewed national data and found that, in the area of professional growth, the retaining and supporting of new teachers begins with mentorship. The authors also “found that beginning teachers who were provided mentors for the same subject field and who participated in collective induction activities, such as planning and collaboration with other teachers, were less likely to leave the teaching profession” (p. 37).

President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Center for Alternative Certification (NCAC) E. Feistritzer (personal communication, March 7, 2006)



acknowledged that there is a paucity of research on alternative teacher certification. Feistritzer targeted the biggest reason for this as the lack of a clear-cut definition of alternative teacher certification. Feistritzer also noted that another reason is that there are hundreds of different types of programs for the preparation of persons who already have at least a bachelor's degree and want to become teachers. Yet another researcher, Achinstein (2002) identified this void in mentoring research across and within programs and backed the popular conclusion that most of the research found is on traditional teacher programs rather than the ATC programs.

### **Background of the Study**

To provide a foundation for the understanding the context of this study, information on the college EPI program, the mentoring team, and the relationship between mentoring and alternative certification are discussed in the following sections.

**College EPI programs.** The state of Florida answered the calling for recruiting and training applicants for the teaching field by designing college accelerated teaching programs. These programs are called Educator Preparation Institutes (EPIs). They are a type of alternative teacher preparation program used in community colleges in the state of Florida. EPI is an accelerated training program that provides the necessary training for teacher certification and also basic field experiences. The field experiences are provided generally before the teacher candidates are hired. However, some of these programs may also allow their teachers to begin teaching in the classrooms full-time as provisionally licensed teachers while they complete the program and become certified. According to the Education Commission of the States (ECS; 2008), district alternative teacher certification programs have been operating since the mid-1980s. Demonstrating the

young nature of EPI programs, the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE; 2008) reported that Florida college EPI programs were state approved in 2004 and implemented during 2005-2006. According to the FLDOE, 24 of the 28 Florida community colleges have established EPI programs.

The Florida college EPI programs use seven comprehensive courses that develop teacher candidates for entering the field of teaching by demonstrating knowledge in the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices, along with student teaching experiences (North Florida Community College, 2008). The college also pointed out that the EPI program prepares the students to pass the Florida Professional Education and General Knowledge Tests. The courses in the EPI program include classroom management, instructional strategies, technology in education, teaching and learning process, foundations of language, professional foundations, diversity in the classroom, and field experiences (North Florida Community College, 2008).

Instructors, mentors, and coordinators. This study uses the term *mentor* interchangeably with *EPI instructor*, *field mentor*, and *program coordinator*. The EPI instructors are typically seasoned veteran teachers serving as mentors to the EPI student teachers and beginning teachers. The instructors may follow the student teachers out into the field for observations, coaching, checking progress, and collaborating with program coordinators. The type of mentoring examined for this study was not the mentoring carried out in the schools while the beginning teacher is on the job. It involved an alternative use of the word *mentor*. The type of mentoring in this study was the combined efforts of the mentoring team, which included the EPI instructor, the field

mentors, and the program coordinator in providing support to EPI teacher trainees as they proceeded through the college teacher training program.

To give a brief overview of the interactions, a few program leaders were asked to describe the types of support college EPI programs may offer to trainees. Former Florida Education Director of Community College Academic Programs for Teacher Preparation, I. Newhard (personal communication, April 25, 2008) viewed field experience as a vital part of the EPI program and described the mentoring functions of typical EPI instructors. Newhard explained that instructors often lead support groups, coach pre-service teachers before entering the classrooms, observe teachers taking over classrooms and teaching lessons, and talk about issues protégé teachers may face. Newhard indicated that the EPI instructors must meet the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation standards and have a minimum of a master's degree in their content area. The EPI college instructors are typically active senior members in their work place, are certified in the state, and are actively working in the public K-12 school system.

Further identifying the EPI instructors' role in mentoring teacher candidates, community college Vice President of Academic Affairs, H.S. Bynum (personal communication, April 28, 2008) noted that the instructors also may schedule private consultations, hold rap sessions or meetings, and workshops. Bynum further reported that the faculty builds rapport with student teachers from the field experiences and participation in classes with a cohort. These groups become very cohesive. When program participants enter the teaching profession, Bynum emphasized, they feel most comfortable asking their program peers and instructor mentors for assistance.

College EPI program coordinator, D. Edwards (personal communication, April 24, 2008) views the role of the program instructors as advisors and mentors to the program participants. Edwards highlighted the similarities between district and college alternative certification programs as having the same course curriculum, desired outcome, and student goals. Edwards explained that EPI programs require 30 hours of field experience while the district does not require field experience because its participants are already teaching in the field. However, both types of programs provide training and support and monitor and mentor the participants while they are working with students in classrooms. Often, field mentors are working as veteran teachers in the school where the EPI student teachers are assigned for their hands-on training. The field mentors collaborate with the college EPI program coordinators (C. Jones, personal communication, February 25, 2009).

College EPI program coordinators are involved in many support areas with college EPI students. Some program coordinator duties may include interviewing students before entering the program, developing an education plan with the students, advising them, addressing issues on job attainment and security, working on their field experience and professional development review, meeting with the EPI instructors, and observing the EPI students teaching in the field (C. Jones, personal communication, February 25, 2009).

**Building a foundation on mentoring and ATC.** A literary overview of mentoring in established programs for traditional teachers and other mentoring programs in various fields provides a foundation for mentoring in alternative teacher certification programs. Researchers Colky and Young (2006) carried out a similar approach. In an

effort to create a platform for mentoring in virtual organizations, these researchers examined successful examples of mentoring in programs of traditional organizational structures. Likewise, due to the paucity of research in the specific area of ATC and mentoring, the literature in traditional mentoring regimens was examined to create a foundation for this study.

There is a great deal of literature on the topic of mentoring in general, along with a myriad of literature on mentoring in business and industry. It is also easy to locate literature focusing on the mentoring of traditional teachers. Considering the diverse paths of training, it is believed that ATC teachers have different concerns and needs from traditionally trained teachers. Therefore, another objective of this study was to extend the literature in the area of alternative teacher certification and mentoring while discovering what the actual concerns and needs are of this specialized group.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following operational definitions are provided for use in interpreting this study.

*Alternative Teacher Certification (ATC):* This term refers to alternative avenues to becoming licensed to teach individuals who already have a bachelor's degree and considerable life experience and want to become teachers (Feistritz, 2004) and is used in the present study to represent all types of alternative teacher programs.

*College:* Public institution offering two-year and four-year academic degrees, including certification programs.

*Coordinator mentor:* This term refers to the person who coordinates EPI program activities and mentors EPI students.

*Educator Preparation Institute (EPI):* EPI is a type of college ATC program that provides certification for mid-career professionals and college graduates who are not education majors (FLDOE, 2008). EPIs typically provide basic field experience for candidates not already teaching in the schools or those who do not have prior teaching experience. The participants generally complete EPI training before they are hired as teachers. These programs can vary in length depending on the college and can range from 3 to 6 months or last a year.

*EPI student:* The participants in the EPI certification program.

*Field-based mentor:* This term refers to the mentor who monitors the EPI students' field experience.

*Field experience:* Teaching experience in host schools is field experience. EPI programs generally use this period as an abbreviated internship.

*Instructor mentor:* College EPI Instructors who mentor EPI students are instructor mentors.

*Mentee:* This term refers to an EPI student who works with EPI program mentors.

*Mentor:* This inclusive term describes three categories of mentors interviewed in this study: the coordinator mentor, field-based mentor, and instructor mentor.

*Mentoring support:* This term is used in this study to refer to support provided by EPI—instructors, field mentors, and program coordinator—to EPI students.

### **Study Limitations**

Relying on self-report and disclosure by study participants for data collection may be susceptible to dishonest or bias responses. A second limitation will be the use of one community college for the case study; doing so will limit the generalizability of the results. Another limitation may be the use of the long interview as a means of data collection. Although the researcher is trained as an interviewer, it is likely that some participants will be more articulate than others, thus presenting limitations with comparing data from those able to communicate more information with those who are less able to express themselves. There were four groupings of participants (mentee, instructor, coordinator, field mentor) in the study as well as a triangulated method of data collection and analysis. The interrelatedness of these parts contributes to the shape of the complete study (Creswell, 2009).

When interpreting the results of this study, possible threats to the internal and external validity were considered before drawing any conclusions. The study in this proposal may face some issues related to these areas of validity. For the internal validity of the study, extraneous variables may have an effect on the outcome, and the observed effects may not be attributed solely to the mentoring program itself. These extraneous variables may include using self-reported information which can result in respondents providing answers they believe the researcher desires (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). The Hawthorne effect may also have had an impact on the results of the study (Gall et al.,

2003). The individuals' awareness of the research project may have influenced their interview, rather than the actual mentoring experience.

Additionally, self-reporting may not give an accurate description of participants' actual learning but provides a description of their perception. To encourage honest feedback, the researcher and program coordinator briefed the subjects prior to the interviews, stressing the privacy of identity and the fact that answers are not part of an evaluation of individual abilities.

The subjects in this study were all located in Florida and were from diverse areas in the local cities surrounding the community college. The study participants were selected from an experimentally accessible college population (Glass & Hopkins, 1996). The study used a limited sample of convenience and is not generalizable to the population of the United States. Steps were taken to help account for this limitation by selecting a sample of participants who had varying abilities, cultures, backgrounds, and genders and were preparing for different areas of teaching.

It is noted that other variables may have had an impact on the responses of the participants rather than the teacher training program. The researcher constructed, interpreted, and analyzed interview questions and responses, keeping the possibility of these limitations in mind. Other possible extraneous variables that were considered include characteristics of the field school involved, climate conducive to instruction, field school leadership, college leaders, personal lives of novices, inherent ability, and personality traits of individual mentors, instructors, and the researcher. These variables may have had an effect on the perceptions of the respondents rather than the ATC



program itself. Two interview sessions for each respondent were held to help account for some of these outside influences that may have had an impact at any given time.

### **Summary and Organization of Study**

The purpose of this research study was to explore how college ATC participants experience mentoring while at the college as well as in their field experience participating in the college program. The goal of the research study was to obtain a rich and deep understanding of the nature of the mentoring experience in a college ATC program through the perspectives of mentees and their mentors. In addition, the research study results were directed towards promoting the retention of ATC teachers through successful mentoring in teacher induction programs.

This research is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides the introduction, problem, purpose, research questions, as well as the background and significance of the study and the definition of terms. Chapter 2 discusses the literature related to this study. Chapter 3 presents the methods used to conduct the study, including the selection of study participants, the instrumentation, data collection and data analysis. Chapter 4 contains the results of the study and includes a profile of the study participants. The information contained in Chapter 5 presents the summary, conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for further research.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

The purpose of this research study was to explore how college ATC participants experience mentoring support while at the college and during their field experiences. The goal of the research study was to obtain a rich and deep understanding of the nature of the mentoring experience in a college ATC program through the perspectives of mentees and their mentors. In addition, the research study results were directed towards promoting the retention of ATC teachers through successful mentoring in teacher induction programs. The participants in the research study were also given the opportunity to elaborate on any concerns or suggestions for the program.

There are a vast number of ATC programs operating in the United States. This literature review sought to investigate various aspects from a number of these programs in order to provide a rich background on alternative certification. Also investigated were various theories, strategies, models, domains of learning, and dimensions of support in teacher education programs. Through the literature found, researchers' recommendations were instrumental in guiding, organizing, and analyzing this study. Armed with a strong knowledge base on the topic of study, in addition to experience in the field, a researcher is better equipped to comprehend the situations that may be presented by educational participants in the study. The compiled review of studies and articles may also serve as a resource of information for practitioners in ATC in higher education, school districts, and governmental agencies. The guiding premise behind this study was that there are many

influences on teacher retention, but one of the main influences is the mentoring support a pre-service or novice teacher receives during training.

### **Background on ATC**

Alternative teacher certification has been given many definitions and has been widely debated by educators for years. The debates are generally focused on whether the alternative route to teaching is as adequate as the traditional route and whether such teachers' students' grades are competitive. For instance, studies have been conducted to compare student achievement scores on tests in various subjects that were taught by alternative teachers and traditional teachers. The studies on this topic have generally found little if any difference in students' scores based on comparison of the two types of trained teacher. There have been, without doubt, some ATC programs that did not hold to the high standards needed to produce good teachers. This failing may have been due to lack of funds, urgency needs, poor administrative decisions, or any number of other explanations. However, these programs need to be differentiated from the quality ATC programs that produce and support well-trained teachers.

Literature in the field suggested that it may be helpful to review various definitions of ATC in order to appreciate the nature of this type of training and understand how it has been molded through the years. The Florida Department of Education defined *Alternative Certification Programs* as serving the purpose of supporting teacher candidates in obtaining the required teacher competencies and highlighted the mentor as a vital participant in helping with this process. More specifically, ATC was also defined as a nontraditional avenue to license teachers and a growing trend to address the teacher shortage (Mickulecky & Wilner, 2005). Providing a

historical look at teacher certification, authors May et al. (2003) reported, “[F]or many decades a degree in teacher education has meant four years of undergraduate study” (p. 67). They continued, “[I]n some cases education students completed some core education courses at a community college and then completed the major in teacher education and student teaching at a university” (p. 67). Moreover, according to Feistritz (2004),

The term alternative teacher certification historically has been used to refer to every avenue to becoming licensed to teach, from emergency certification, to very sophisticated and well-designed programs that address the professional needs of the growing population of individuals who already have at least a bachelor’s degree, considerable life experience, and want to become teachers. (p. 5)

Feistritz also noted, “The most dramatic change in education in the past few years has been a shift toward people beginning their preparation to teach later in life, and later in their academic careers.” (p. 6).

Observing the growth of ATC through the years, Feistritz noted, “In 2006, the National Center for Alternative Certification highlighted 48 states, plus the District of Columbia, report having some type of alternative to the traditional approved college teacher education program route for certifying teachers” (p. 5). Furthermore, the author found, “this compares with only 8 states that said they had any kind of alternative route to teaching in 1983” (p. 5). The author also surmised that as more states pass legislation for alternative teacher certification, more higher education institutions have also initiated programs to accommodate this growing trend.

In the United States, each individual state has its own responsibility to certify its own teaching force. As E. Feistritz (personal communication, March 7, 2006) explained, the licensing or certification of elementary and secondary teachers in the United States is a state responsibility. Feistritz continued that the regular route for

licensing teachers is the approved college teacher education program route. Furthermore, this process means that a college or university submits a plan for a teacher preparation program for each discipline or grade level, following state-established guidelines, which the state approves. After doing so, a candidate needing a teaching license applies directly to a college or university, takes the required courses, and meets other specified requirements, such as student teaching, passing tests, and meeting any other requirements specified by the college's approved program.

Reviewing literature in the field of ATC provides an idea of how the various routes to obtaining a license to teach vary, not only from state to state, but from institution to institution. Some states require passing different tests and spending differing lengths of time student teaching. Some require observation in the school before student teaching. In addition, some institutions of higher education have added a fifth year to their teacher education programs while others have added internships.

Examining a number of new alternative certification programs, Feistritzer (2004) recognized the similarities of these programs and noted that they all reported requiring teacher candidates to work closely with mentor teachers and meet high performance standards for completion of the program. The programs examined are job-specific, Feistritzer further explained, which means that “rather than training people to teach who may or may not ever go into teaching, alternative route programs recruit individuals for specific teaching positions and place prospective teachers in those jobs early in their training programs” (p. 7). The researcher added that programs also require prospective teachers to work with mentor teachers while teaching. Feistritzer indicated,

Most of these programs are collaborative efforts among state departments of education whose responsibility it is to license teachers, colleges and universities

that historically have had the responsibility for educating and training teachers, and school districts that actually hire teachers. (p. 7)

Feistritzer further noted that “one of the reasons given for the high attrition rate of new teachers in their first few years of teaching is that they receive very little support and professional development as beginning teachers” (p. 8). In addition, Feistritzer explained that “alternative education does move prospective teachers into the classrooms too early and thus has addressed this issue in the design of the preparation programs” (p. 8).

Reports address various types of programs that exist, ranging from “emergency certification to very sophisticated and well-designed programs that address the professional preparation needs of the growing population of individuals who already have at least a bachelor’s degree and considerable life experience and want to become teachers” (Feistritzer, p. 5). Alternative certification coordinator for the state of Texas, V. Dill (personal communication, February 17, 2005), further defined the process of alternative certification by explaining the professional development of AC teachers ultimately lies with the school district, mentor teacher, and teacher in training. V. Dill (personal communication, February 17, 2005) noted that AC programs view institutions as potential partners and providers in training teachers. Higher education institutions can provide AC programs, for example, “courses, seminars, curriculum materials, supervision, and diagnostic evaluation” (Dill, 1996, p. 934).

A school in southwest Florida extended the notion of this type of partnership in pointing out the arrangement between the county and a local university in providing professors to conduct seminars for teacher trainees. The FLDOE (2008) also provided a general definition of the program in a progress report. The FLDOE described alternative

certification programs in Florida as “providing competency-based, on-the-job, professional education preparation to newly hired teachers who have demonstrated subject area expertise, but who have not graduated from a traditional teacher preparation program” (p. 1).

### **ATC as a Higher Education Issue**

As community colleges have taken on the role of offering baccalaureate degrees, they have also been establishing accelerated alternative certification programs for teaching. It was reported in *The Inside Higher Education News Journal* (2007) that “nontraditional routes to teacher certification have expanded rapidly over the past 10 years, with about half of the programs now administered by colleges and universities” (Powers, 2007, para. 4). *Higher education* and *professional development* have become synonymous as adult learners are turning to institutions of higher learning for certification, and these institutions are realizing their potential in this market. The relevance of this issue may be apparent to higher education practitioners experiencing the growth of ATC programs in their institutions.

Observing the community colleges’ increasing role in providing short-term certificates, Kasper (2003) discovered an 85% increase over a decade in these types of programs that quickly train people to enter the workforce. Further emphasizing this trend, Durdella (2003) commented on the growth in community colleges: “[C]ommunity colleges have expanded their programs in the field of teacher education in recent years to provide additional options for teacher training” (p. 1). Durdella (2003) also noted efforts in supporting greater access to teacher training have included building partnerships with 4-year colleges and universities and central to community colleges missions are transfer

curriculum for teacher education programs. As Durdella pointed out, “[I]n responding to the need for more teachers, community colleges have begun to experiment with degree programs that provide students with new options” (p. 2). The author further explained that these programs typically include the specialized associate degree that transfers education majors to universities, the 4-year bachelor’s teaching degree, and alternative teacher certification programs.

Providing another example of the expansion of roles for community colleges, T. Furlong (personal communication, October 2004) explained that St. Petersburg College in Florida received state approval to provide 4-year degrees in teacher education in 2001. This service provides an option to individuals wanting to change careers and enter the teaching field. Explaining the capability of community colleges to rise to the challenge of providing these expanded services, Townsend and Ignash (2003) noted the following attributes community colleges possess: location, accessibility, affordability, and open-admissions policy. These attributes position the community college as a major player in the arena of higher education and work-force development as it helps facilitate transition for individuals. Shedding more light on ATC and the connection to community colleges, the National Center for Education Information (NCEI) (2008) noted that more than 250,000 teachers have become certified through ATC and thousands more post-baccalaureates are certified through ATC programs at colleges.

Furthermore, the NCEI (2008) elaborated, “[N]ot only have more and more states instituted legislation for alternative teacher certification, but also, more and more institutions of higher education have initiated their own alternative programs for the preparation of teachers leading to a license to teach” (p. 3). Also connecting ATC to



higher education is the unique type of collaboration that is carried out between college, university, online, and district programs. Districts often use the resources of universities and colleges to conduct their programs. For example, a district ATC program may use the college campus to conduct a course in education for their teacher candidates, and it may also hire professors from the university to teach these courses and consult on program design.

Reporting that most of the recent growth of ATC is happening in colleges and universities, the NCEI (2008) indicated, “[Almost] every alternative route to teacher certification is, in fact, collaboration among the state licensing authority, institutions of higher education and local school districts” (p. 3). Identifying the significant role community colleges play in ATC, the National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs (2004) noted, “[C]ommunity colleges are responding to the new federal mandates through innovative programs across all content areas, as well as teacher education certification programs” (p. 1). ATC must be considered a higher education issue, as well as a K-12 and school district issue, because these areas all interact with one another and this relatively new higher education role requires careful study and planning.

### **Community Colleges and ATC**

Observing the evolving system, it can be helpful to review the history of community colleges and their role in teacher education. Hutchenson (2002) reviewed the history of community colleges, explaining that, before World War II, some community colleges were created for the purpose of preparing teachers. Furthermore, Hutchenson (2002) looked at the metamorphosis of colleges: “[I]n the 1940’s early junior colleges

were squeezed out of their role in teacher education by the acceptance of the baccalaureate degree by normal colleges” (p. 645). Hutchenson further described this action as the beginning of “a lively debate among leading community college scholars about the community college’s future role” (p. 645).

In more current times, a movement demonstrating the responsiveness of the evolving community college as it meets societal challenges is the offering of baccalaureate degrees on many campuses throughout the country. Governmental leaders have identified a virtually untapped resource in turning to community colleges to provide extended higher education to citizens. There are many benefits for the economy in expanding the missions of community colleges. “When it comes to meeting workforce needs that impact the economy, community colleges are increasingly sought for the development of cost-effective, flexible, fast-track, high-quality programs” (Milliron & Wilson, 2004, p. 53). Milliron and Wilson also reported that community colleges were responding to the economic challenges of occupational shortages in such areas as, teachers, nurses, biotechnology, and homeland security. Community College ATC programs continue to grow and will be a major interest in this study.

Alternative Certification in the State of Florida has been handled by the districts under the direction of the Florida Department of Education. With fairly recent legislation granting post-secondary schools the authority to provide alternative certification training these institutions are faced with the challenge of designing and maintaining young programs. The challenge is for ATC coordinators and administrators in districts and community colleges to create programs that place teaching candidates in good mentoring

situations. The outcome of good mentoring situations would be the successful retention of quality teachers, and this activity would directly impact school children.

Examining the community colleges' dual role of providing teacher training in traditional 4-year programs and also alternative certification abbreviated programs brings to mind the heated controversial argument. This is the topic of traditional-versus-alternative teacher training. Mentioning the two routes to teaching in academic environments can often generate a great deal of passionate debate in favor of one side or the other. Kwiatkowski (2000) explained that debates have become entwined with the mention of alternative teacher certification.

Reflecting on the community colleges' role in alternative certification, Ignash (2006) described this route of training as drawing the most controversy. Ignash linked the wide variety of programs available to the cause for so much disagreement. The author credited the quality ATC programs while acknowledging the "rubber stamp" approach of certifying people without providing them with any teaching skills. Looking at how some programs move teachers through, support for mentoring can be inferred from Ignash's statement: "[T]hese people are then thrown into the classroom without either the knowledge or support that promotes good teaching" (p. 3).

Drawing attention to the urgent need of ATC programs in colleges and districts alike, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES; 2006) predicted that, by 2008, more than 2.7 million new teachers would be needed. Further establishing this urgency, Felter (1997) reported on the teacher shortage: "the teacher shortage is readily apparent, driven by several forces, including growth in public school enrollment, reform efforts to lower class sizes, instability of the teaching workforce, and the impending retirement of

many current teachers” (p. 1). It is helpful to look at existing alternative certification programs to plan and implement new ones or to revise existing ones. May et al. (2003) examined the factors contributing to the successful planning and implementation of ATC programs.

The program of study is located in one Texas community college district. “Community College involvement in teacher certification is a relatively recent phenomenon, but not unprecedented” (May et al., 2003, p. 67). The researchers provided an interesting look at how this Texas Community College operates its teacher-mentor program. The authors explain, “Collin County Community College District officials developed what they believe to be the nation’s first ATC program at a community college” (p. 68). This program singles out mentoring as a key feature of the beginning teacher experience. The school’s individual sites coordinated the college’s mentoring program activities. May et al. continued, “[U]nlike ‘universities’ that can spread the costs of student teaching supervision on the backs of faculty members who have both field supervisory responsibilities and teaching loads, community colleges generally lack personnel with such flexibility” (p. 68).

The authors further explained how the Collin County Community College District assigned its scarce resources of mentors. The program has six part-time mentors, augmented by on-line communications to promote the development of teaching portfolios. The college had each teaching participant develop a teaching portfolio that demonstrated the candidate’s professional development in the program. May et al. (2003) suggested, “community college practitioners thinking about developing new ATC (alternative teacher certification) programs should proceed with caution” (p. 70).

To help expedite the process, May et al. (2003) provided the following questions for colleges to ask and key areas to consider prior to the establishment of ATC programs:

1. Is the college's involvement requested by the local school districts?
2. Are local school districts willing to mentor and hire well-prepared candidates?
3. Does the college employ adequate staff with the knowledge and initiative to begin the ATC program?
4. Are there other educational providers that might directly suffer as a result of this institution's starting an ATC program? (p. 70)

Furthermore, the authors noted, "The National Center for ATC Information (2002) produced the following list of factors that contribute to successful planning and implementation" (p. 71): (a) labor market assessment (planning to avoid duplication); (b) networking with local k-12 districts (investment of time and personnel); (c) mentoring (crucial to success of new teachers); (d) establishment and supervision of quality mentoring components however, is costly and labor intensive); (e) operational cost building an overall budget (long-term commitments from the college for ongoing costs); (f) federal and state support advisory committees (continued partnerships with K-12 districts/collaborative designs); and (g) community support.

Offering an example of the establishment of a new program, May et al. (2003) reported that the Texas Collin County Community District (CCCD) "considered its ATC program part of its broad workforce development mission, and subsequently applied for U.S. Department of Labor funds" (p. 71). Explaining the results May et al. continued, "[B]y the end of the ATC program's first year, CCCD had secured direct and indirect grant funding for ATC from federal Perkins and PT3 funds, offsetting student and institutional costs significantly" (p. 71). The authors concluded by mentioning a special quality of community colleges: "the crucial advantage of community colleges in teacher certification lies in the streamlined function that these colleges have always enjoyed; their

speed in responding quickly and nimbly to local need, and their flexibility in overcoming bureaucratic involvement” (p. 71).

### **The Growth of ATC**

Providing evidence for the urgent need of ATC programs in colleges and districts alike, the NCES (2006) predicted that, by 2008, more than 2.7 million new teachers would be needed. To convey the increase in ATC, it is helpful to examine the growth of the ATC trend in the United States. The alternative certification trend has been booming. Demonstrating the rapid growth in ATC, Feistritzer (2007) revealed that, in the year 2005-2006, approximately 59,000 individuals received teaching certificates through ATC. Feistritzer compared this number to the 2004-2005 year with approximately 50,000 being certified through alternative routes and extended this comparison by looking back to the 2003-2004 year with approximately 39,000. Going even further back, Feistritzer noted, “[A]pproximately 25,000 teachers nationwide were certified through alternative routes each year between 1999 and 2001.” Putting these numbers in perspective, “[A]lternative teacher certification programs now contribute about one-third of the 75,000 new teachers certified annually nationwide” (Feistritzer, 2004, p. 11).

### **Variance Between ATC Programs and Florida’s College EPI Programs**

ATC programs vary within and between states. District programs within states, as well as college programs, can vary from one another in many areas, such as degree of study involved, length of time for completion, title of program, and requirements. The programs also may vary on method of delivery. Feistritzer (2004) reported some interesting facts on the different models used in alternative certification among the various states. In her state-by-state analysis, Feistritzer found that “states have designed

many different alternative routes for certifying individuals who want to obtain a license to teach” (p. 3). The author further noted, “[I]n 2003 states report a total of 144 routes other than the traditional approved college teacher education program route for certifying teachers” (p. 3).

The program models used in Texas provide unique examples of various routes to certification. As director for the Roundrock School District in Texas, V. Dill (personal communication, February 17, 2005) explained these various routes. Dill pointed out that Texas does not use a state model like Florida. The researcher also highlighted seven different alternative certification models used in Texas at the time of the study: district based; regional based; traditional teacher programs in higher education institutions privately run, not-for-profit, for-profit programs (similar to tutor companies); online programs that are college based and contracted out; and Texas temporary teacher certification.

Discussing the state of Virginia’s credit hours to teaching plan, Dill (2005) focused on a common theme of accommodating mid-career switchers: “Although the legislation was originally designed to broaden the pool of secondary teachers in particular, it was expanded to include; kindergarten through grade 12 areas of certification” (p. 932). Dill mentioned that Virginia’s goal was to accommodate mid-career switchers.

Some programs provide training and mentoring through online services while others require participants to attend classes for training and provide face-to-face mentoring and teacher support. Florida’s Pasco County ATC coordinator, T. Brown (personal communication October 10, 2006), explained that Pasco County School District

offers a state-approved online training program while Pinellas County School District offers a state-approved program consisting of evening and Saturday courses to attend, with school site mentoring.

Ingersoll and Smith (2003) discussed the amount of variance between induction programs. The authors indicated that “the overall objective of teacher mentoring programs is to provide new-comers with a local guide, but the particulars in regard to character and content of these programs themselves widely vary” (p. 30). An example of how these programs may differ is provided by Ingersoll and Smith:

duration and intensity are one set of variables; mentoring programs can vary from a single meeting between mentor and protégé at the beginning of a school year, to a highly structured program involving frequent meetings over a couple of years between mentors and protégés who are provided time away from their normal teaching schedules. (p. 30)

Programs can also vary according to their purpose; some are designed simply to get people certified. Other programs are primarily focused on fostering the growth of new teachers while assessing and weeding out candidates ill-suited for the work. Programs may also vary in terms of the extent of training the mentors receive and how much attention is given to matching mentors and beginning teachers. The National Center for Alternative Certification (NCAC; 2008) provided a national list of accelerated routes to teacher certification: Path Way Program (PWP), Alternative Certification for Teachers (ACT), Alternative Certification Program (ACP), Alternative Teacher Certification (ATC), Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP), Transition to Teaching Program (TTT), Alternative Preparation Program (APP), Troops to Teachers (TTT), and Educator Preparation Institutes (EPIs). The programs may differ in terms of their content, but they all have a unified mission of offering abbreviated programs to train and certify individuals to work in the school system.



Florida's district programs require the teacher participants to be employed as provisionally licensed teachers while they go through the induction process. The Pinellas Transition to Teaching Program provides course work on professional teaching areas, prepares applicants to take the state certification exams (general knowledge, subject area, and professional education), requires competency on the educator accomplished practices, and conducts observations of teaching under the supervision of a support team and mentor. The Pinellas Transition to Teaching Program is a 2-year process.

The state of Florida's district ATC programs have been in operation since the mid-1980s while the community college programs have only been developing since the year 2005. Florida has a unique system of community college alternative certification programs. Community College Vice President of Academic Affairs, H. S. Bynum (personal communication, April 27, 2008), advocated a comprehensive unified system of alternative certification throughout Florida state community colleges. This program is called the Educator Preparation Institute (EPI). Specific Florida statutes addressing EPI were implemented and § 1004-85 (Postsecondary Educator Preparation Institutes, 2004) was enacted in accordance with Senate Bill 2986 (2004) to provide for the authority to accredit postsecondary institutions to establish EPI programs that offer alternative teacher preparation. The statutes for colleges in Florida offering EPI programs are further discussed within the legislation in Florida section of this chapter. According to the FLDOE (2008), 24 of the 28 Florida community colleges and several universities have implemented EPI programs.

The Florida EPI programs do not require participants to be employed as teachers while they go through the induction process. However, participants may be employed

provisionally while they go through the program. The FLDOE (2008) explained that EPI programs consist of competency-based instruction that prepares teacher candidates to take the Florida Teacher Certification Exam (FTCE). The FLDOE also noted that teacher candidates must demonstrate general knowledge and subject area competence and indicated that the EPI program requires participants to engage in a number of field experiences in which they are observed on areas such as quality of instruction, classroom management, and interaction with students. The FLDOE also described field experiences as providing opportunities for participants to observe classes and to demonstrate teaching ability under the supervision of the program leaders and instructors.

Offering more specifics on the content of EPI programs the FLDOE (2008) required programs to provide instruction in professional knowledge and subject matter content that includes the educator accomplished practices and competencies. In addition sessions on field experiences with supervision and collegial support from experienced teachers are required. Participants must fully demonstrate ability to teach and achieve a passing score on the professional education competency examination required by the state board. The department further explained that EPI programs consist of four modules with segments addressing topics related to standards: the instructional process, reading fundamentals, the teaching profession, and diversity in the classroom. The modules also include a total of 30 hours of field experience.

Providing an example of how the programs are outlined, Hillsborough Community College (2007) requires 21 credit hours in the four modules and a series of field experiences to help participants gain insight into the instructional process and perspective on the varied backgrounds of students in the public school system. The

college EPI programs can vary in length of time for completion. Some programs are one year long, while others may be 6 months or only a 6-to-8 week summer boot camp. The FLDOE (2008) reported that EPI programs are not mandated and, therefore, have the option to operate on their own. Thus, the college EPI programs have a collaborative partnership; however, they have the ability to diversify their programs while following the same conceptual framework.

To provide more detail on EPI programs, the FLDOE indicated that the program requires participants to engage in a number of field experiences in which they are observed on areas such as quality of instruction, classroom management, and interaction with students. The FLDOE also outlined field experiences as providing opportunities for participants to observe classes and to demonstrate teaching ability under the supervision of the program leaders, instructors, or school assignment mentors.

Engaging in some of the following activities, the program coordinator has an active mentoring role in the program: interviewing students before entering the program, developing an education plan with the students, advising them, addressing issues on job attainment and security, working on their field experience and professional development review, meeting with the EPI instructors, and may observe EPI students teaching in the field.

The instructor mentor teaches the EPI students; may hold discussion sessions, coach, or discuss issues teachers may face; and collaborates with the program coordinator. The field-based mentor models teaching to the EPI students, observes EPI students teaching, provides feedback on field assignment, and discusses observations

with EPI students and the program coordinator. Instructor mentors, the coordinator mentor, and field mentors may also address any concerns student teachers have.

### **Differences Between Traditional and Alternative Teacher Candidates**

There are enough perceived differences between ATC and traditional teacher candidates to warrant a closer look at alternative certification rather than simply using research from the traditional sector on operating training programs. Some of the ATC candidates have switched careers later in life and thus have varying needs from the traditional-route teachers. One area that emerged from the literature as needing extra emphasis for alternative candidates relates to having resources and support systems in place; this can be important enough to make or break a new career. The resources and support systems in place refer to mentors, administrators, peer teachers, cohorts, and an overall sense of community.

Jorissen (2003) conducted a study on the developmental needs of people in career transitions to teaching. The results of this study highlighted the importance of addressing the transitional needs of alternate-route teachers. The researcher found that effective programs encourage teachers to work in close professional relationships with their mentors as well as with other members of their cohort. Jorissen's goal was to find characteristics of effective alternate-route models that may improve teacher-retention rates in urban schools.

The Uttley (2006) study on ATC participants found that certain areas of need were magnified for this group compared to those traditionally taught. Uttley reported that the sample of teachers in his study seemed "unfamiliar with policies, procedures, students, and curriculum" (p. 19). Another area of adjustment for ATC teachers that

training programs should keep in mind was highlighted by Resta, Huling, and Rainwater (2001). The authors warned that “although many mid-career changers have extensive experience working in bureaucracies, they have limited patience with bureaucratic procedures and paperwork that they perceive as barriers to their work with students” (p. 62).

### **How ATC Needs May Differ From Traditional Needs**

Alternatively certified teachers generally enter the classroom without any student teaching experience. This situation has led many professionals in the field to believe that these individuals will often need more attention than traditionally trained teachers, who typically engage in extensive internships that can last over the course of two years. Also recognizing this situation, Simmons (2004) suggested that “it may be reasonable to assume that mentoring is of the utmost importance to alternative certified teachers in the absence of prior experience or prior student teaching” (p. 149). However, there are a variety of types of ATC programs. Although many ATC programs train teachers while they are already hired in the schools, some ATC programs, while still abbreviated, actually provide some type of field-based experience for the teachers in training prior to their employment as full-time teachers.

Viewing the mentoring process as potentially more important for ATC individuals than those traditionally certified, Simmons (2004) further explained that the ATC participant generally lacks prior student teaching, which the traditional teacher candidates receive, and therefore has a unique challenge of acclimating to the classroom. There are many benefits of putting alternative certification teachers into classrooms; however,

doing so can also present a number of obstacles, and this is a good reason to investigate the most efficient ways to train these teachers.

Steadman and Simmons (2007) studied Non-University Certification Programs (NUCP), which is another way of referring to alternative certification programs. The authors pointed out that as NUCPs grew, the traditional view of mentoring has been altered. Making a major distinction between the routes to teaching, Steadman and Simmons also contended, “NUCP teachers require more intense mentoring than traditionally trained teachers” (p. 365). Elaborating on this, Steadman and Simmons explained that new pressures are placed on the mentor teachers in meeting the needs of this group, due to their lack of professional knowledge and practitioner experience. Steadman and Simmons also pointed out that, “when supervising student teachers from formal teacher education programs, mentor teachers could assume that their charges came with certain prior academic and professional experiences” (p. 365). However, with ATC individuals, although they may bring significant work experience and content-area knowledge to the classroom, this group often needs significant professional support.

In reference to ATC individuals, Steadman and Simmons (2007) listed areas that generally need close attention. Steadman and Simmons found that the NUCP teachers needed urgent assistance in the areas that included “struggles with such unfamiliar issues as classroom management, planning, assessment, human development, diversity, and learning styles” (p. 365). Sharing responses from NUCP participants, the authors stated, “[S]ome of them report that when they are assigned the duties of a classroom teacher without a clearly articulated support system, they feel overwhelmed, set adrift in chaotic environments where no one helps them learn to manage” (p. 365). Understanding the

importance of ensuring these teachers are receiving necessary support is a positive step toward action that can result in lower attrition. Whether teachers are taking on a full teaching load or experiencing the classroom through a set of clinical experiences, either group can lose interest in the field if not provided adequate preparation and support.

Another consideration in bringing outside talent into the classroom centers on an old societal myth. Darling-Hammond (2000) explained: “One of the great flaws of the ‘bright person myth’ of teaching is that it presumes that anyone can teach what he or she knows to anyone else” (p. 171). The author continued, “people who have never studied teaching or learning often have a very difficult time understanding how to convey material that they themselves learned effortlessly and almost subconsciously” (p. 171). The key that is often overlooked in teaching is that just because individuals have experience and knowledge in a learning discipline does not necessarily mean those individuals will be able to help others to learn. Addressing this subject, McKibbin and Ray (1994) explained that teachers must be able to make the material they are teaching meaningful and engage the students in the process of learning, in addition to having content knowledge.

A wealth of information on novice teachers can often be found among school principals. Cordeau (2003) conducted a study on principals’ perceptions of alternative certified teachers and mentoring. The research found significant differences between principal responses based on teacher certification route. Cordeau reported,

[T]hese differences occurred in areas related to instructional techniques ( $t(79) = 2.976, p < .01$ ), and personal coping skills ( $t(79) = 5.062, p < .01$ )” (p.91). The study discovered that “in both instances, principals indicated these factors were more important for the supervision of alternatively certified teachers. (p. 91)

Furthermore, Cordeau (2003) specified “that providing information on up-to-date instructional techniques was more important for alternatively certified than for traditionally certified teachers” (p. 91). Looking at a unique aspect of adults transitioning into classrooms, Coudeau uncovered an isolation theory:

Alternatively certified teachers often experience a number of changes as they enter the teaching profession, because many of these individuals have previously worked in an all-adult environment, they may be unprepared for the isolation and stress created by long term contact with children and young adults. (p. 91)

Providing further insight into how traditional teacher needs may differ from alternatively certified teacher needs, Cordeau’s (2003) survey rated school principals’ perceptions of the importance of various types of support for ATC candidates. The outcome found the areas of appraisal support to be more important for alternatively certified teachers. Some key attributes of appraisal support included performance standards, guidelines, communication of expectations, and feedback regarding performance. The researcher surmised that the principals surveyed may have perceived appraisal support as more important for alternatively certified teachers because they tend to be more limited in their knowledge of job expectations. The higher appraisal-support need may be attributed to a lack of intense student teaching experiences or internships before beginning to teach in the classrooms.

### **Legislation in Florida**

At the onset of this analysis, the Florida Department of Education announced that legislation was moving to authorize ATC programs in the colleges. Feistritzer’s state-by-state analysis (2004) provided support for proposed legislation on alternative certification. In this analysis, Feistritzer pointed out that approximately 200,000



participants had been certified through alternative means since 1985 and 25,000 since 1998.

The Florida Department of Education (2008) reported that the need for additional teachers has led to recommendations for additional options for training non-education majors. Furthermore, “the number of graduates of Florida approved teacher preparation programs that are offered by four-year institutions do not meet the yearly vacancies in Florida’s school districts” (Florida Department of Education, 2008). This situation was true in 2005 and was also true in 2009. Proposed legislation and recommendations on certification were presented to the House and Senate and had passed. Representatives for The Florida Division of Community Colleges announced that legislation had moved to authorize community college alternative certification programs in the state. The division listed various bills presented by House Education K-20 Representative Fiorentino and Senator Atwater. It was further noted that this legislation authorized community colleges to offer alternative certification programs for baccalaureate degree holders to become teachers. This legislation created a new role for most community colleges in 2004-2005.

The Florida Senate proposed bill by Senator Atwater, §1804, HB 471, authorized community colleges through teacher institutes to offer competency-based ATC programs that require DOE approval. To successfully complete a community college alternative certification program, called an Educator Preparation Institute (EPI) program, teacher candidates must meet certain educator certification requirements. The bill proposed that these competency-based programs are intended for mid-career professionals, dislocated professionals, and other baccalaureate degree holders who want to become teachers in the state of Florida.

Furthermore, college leaders would be required to develop programs with approval of the DOE, or they may implement a previously approved program by the DOE. The bill proposed by Fiorentino, H471, provided for postsecondary institutions to offer Alternative Certification Programs (ACPs) and for participants to receive credentials signifying mastery of professional preparation and education competence. Additionally, the bill authorized school districts to use alternative certification programs at college institutes to satisfy certain requirements.

### **Status of ATC for Florida EPI Programs**

Florida Statute Title 48, Chapter 1004 § 1004.85 (2004) provided insight into the current status of Florida postsecondary institution EPI programs. This statute regarding EPIs states that the DOE develops and each college provides a collaborative program. This statute established EPIs to provide four types of teacher training: (a) professional development for in-service teachers, (b) assistance to paraprofessionals in meeting education requirements, (c) instruction for substitute teachers, and (d) instruction for baccalaureate degree teacher graduates wanting to become certified as teachers. This present research study focused on the fourth type of teacher training, the alternative teacher certification program, which the colleges call Educator Preparation Institutes.

The Florida Department of Education identified some of the objectives each college EPI program must meet under the state appointed statutes (Postsecondary Educator Preparation Institutes, 2004). Some of these areas that relate specifically to the EPI program include:

1. collaborating with local school districts;
2. offering a modular competency-based alternative certification program;

3. providing certification of completion for teacher candidates that have satisfied all competencies and recommend completers for certification once they have passed the certification exams; and,
4. providing an ombudsman to work with the local school districts and teacher candidates to facilitate and coordinate Educator Preparation Institute activities. The ombudsman is the liaison between the community college and the local school districts.

A vital part of the EPI program is the field experience. The FLDOE identified this activity as guided observations that are followed by hands-on teaching. Furthermore, the teacher trainees will be observed by qualified instructors or certified teachers when teaching actual lessons in the classrooms. The EPI programs will also provide preparation courses to practice for the state certification exams. The courses required in EPI are listed by the FLDOE (2005) as follows:

#### Module 1-The Instructional Process

Segment A-Classroom Management

Segment B-Instructional Strategies

Segment C-Technology

Segment D-Teaching and Learning Process

#### Module 2-Reading Fundamentals

Segment A-Foundations of Language and Cognition

#### Module 3-The Teaching Profession

Segment A-Professional Foundations

Segment B-Field Experience.

## Module 4-Diversity in the Classroom

### Segment A-Diversity

### Segment B-Field Experience

### **Status of ATC for Florida District Programs**

Florida Statutes, § 1012-56, provided insight into the current status of alternative certification in the state of Florida (Educator Certification Requirements, 2003). This statute regarding alternative certification stated that the FLDOE develops and each district provides a collaborative program. The participants in alternative certification must hold a temporary certificate. The district shall provide the competency-based training developed by the FLDOE. A certification program may also be developed by the district as long as it is approved by the FLDOE.

Some of the various components included in the program are:

1. initial preparation prior to actively teaching,
2. working with experienced mentors,
3. undergoing competency evaluation,
4. professional education preparation,
5. implementation of the educator-accomplished practices,
6. methodologies,
7. techniques for effective classroom management,
8. passing professional competency exams,
9. demonstrating a mastery of educational competencies required by law through classroom application and performance.

Further information on the status of alternative certification in Florida was provided by the FLDOE. The state board confirmed there was only one alternative certification program authorized by section 1012.56 (Educator Certification Requirements, 2003). This program is a competency-based, on-the-job training program designed to provide professional preparation to non-educational majors who are hired as teachers of record by Florida public school districts. The board further explained that successful completion of an approved program satisfies the professional preparation and competency demonstration requirements for the professional certificate. It is interesting to note that, at the time of this study, the only other option available for non-education majors was completion of 20 hours of education courses, as specified in the State Board of Education Rule 6A-4.006.

### **Background on Mentoring**

Understanding the activity of mentoring in the traditional sense, Colky and Young (2006) defined this learning tool as “a process that brings together the inexperienced and the experienced in the hope that the former gains knowledge, skills, self-confidence, and other benefits” (p. 437). After experiencing the teacher mentoring process as the protégé on the receiving end, the researcher of this study acknowledges that these gains are only accessible when mentoring develops a trusting bond, and the mentor does not serve as a judge. Furthermore, the process works best when it encourages openness with the mentor not serving as a direct reporter to the administration. Mentoring provides a collaborative atmosphere in which questions and concerns are objectively welcomed.

Additionally, the mentoring relationship needs to practice andragogy (adult education), rather than pedagogy (child education). Writing about andragogy from the

humanistic perspective, Knowles (1980) explained this type of learning as a process used by adults for self-development. The adult education theorists have referred to pedagogy as teacher-directed learning and andragogy as student-directed learning. However, some professionals in the field of adult education have altered this idea to being situation specific and not unique to adults (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). For the most part, adults possessing college degrees and work experience generally enter the teacher mentoring relationship with a good deal of life experiences to work from. These individuals would naturally require interaction that uses a different approach than the one used for teaching children.

Representatives from Benedictine University in Illinois presented the results of their study at the 2006 NAAC conference on mentoring of ATC candidates (Benedictine University faculty, personal communication, March 2006). The researchers suggested mentor-protégé relationships establish trust and act as a nonjudgmental resource, having no evaluative responsibility. Furthermore, the presenters suggested that training programs must remember that many of the candidates are coming from successful career fields. These fields are usually highly differentiated from the teaching environment, and when problems occur, they need to know there is someone to turn to who will support them and not evaluate them. In this type of environment, the relationship resembles an adult education approach, in which collaboration is the key element.

Further defining mentoring, Caffarella (1993) explained, “[T]he process is an intense caring relationship in which persons with more experience work with less experienced persons to promote both professional and personal development” (p. 38). Adding to the understanding of this process, Ingersoll and Smith (2004) defined

*mentoring* as “the personal guidance provided, usually by seasoned veterans, to beginning teachers in schools” (p. 29). The Alief Independent School District of Texas (2007) defined a teacher mentor’s role as including guiding, assisting, supporting, and befriending a colleague. Pinellas County School Board (2008) describes these mentoring activities as instrumental in helping teachers gain and improve their skills for becoming fully effective classroom teachers.

The National Association of Alternative Certification (NAAC, 2005) advocated the requirement that alternatively certified teachers be assigned experienced mentors as part of their first year. The NAAC described a mentorship model that involved matching the mentor and protégé through a review of essays written by the protégés and evaluated by a selection committee or school principal. The NAAC highlighted the issue of establishing an accountability system as a contrast within the many types of mentorship models in operation.

The NAAC (2005) described the accountability process as deciding who will be involved with initiating the mentorship and deciding if it is successful. This decision process was identified as an issue in the field teaching and mentoring. Nemser-Feiman, Parker, and Zeichner (1993) observed an issue endemic to teacher mentoring programs. According to the authors, this issue provided clarity on the purposes of mentoring that matches the enthusiasm for this concept.

### **A Call for More Research in the Field**

Pointing specifically to ATC individuals, Pfister (2004) asserted,

although a significant number of studies have investigated the effects of mentoring, very few studies have targeted the development of a theory that provides the intellectual foundation to explain why mentoring is often successful in assisting individuals through times of transitional stress. (p. 43)

Alternatively certified beginning teachers can fall under the umbrella of needing mentoring to successfully navigate through transitional stress because these individuals often transition from other fields that differ greatly from school environments.

Adding to support for more research in the field by discussing ATC candidate needs, Grossman and Thompson (2004) noted that “research illustrates the importance for mentors to understand the needs of teachers who are not traditionally trained and feel vulnerable” (p. 44). Detailing some of the elements involved in mentoring, the authors further stated that providing teachers with positive mentors, nurturance, and support can help to promote a sense of well-being and self-confidence. Entering a new field, ATC individuals are most likely to need special attention in these categories. Grossman and Thompson also identified the need for more attention in this area of study, noting the overwhelming shortage of teachers across the United States. The authors cautioned that stakeholders acknowledge that mentorship in alternative certification programs for beginning teachers is an important phenomenon.

Providing more support for further analysis of the specialized area of ATC and mentoring relationships, authors Ragins and Cotton (1993) noted that, “although research has identified outcomes of mentoring, we know very little about the initial formation of mentoring relationships” (p. 2). Induction programs truly begin to initiate a teacher in a way that will not only affect the person’s decision to stay in the classroom, but also impact his or her students’ achievement. Adding more support for the need of studies on ATC mentoring, Odell and Ferraro (1992) noted that the “major component” of teacher induction programs has been found to be the area of mentoring. The first year of a beginning teacher’s experience has a heavy influence on whether or not he or she will



continue in the profession. Therefore, the level of support these teachers receive during this formative time is crucial to their future and, in turn, impacts the system.

Also addressing the crucial aspect of the first year for beginning teachers, Odell and Ferraro (1992) asserted that “the first year of teaching is critical for success and long-term retention in the profession” (p. 200). “No matter how effective teacher education and student teaching have been, the new teacher can feel isolated and unequipped to handle the many issues that arise” (p. 200). Moreover, “among the approaches to support, develop, and maintain new teachers; peer mentoring shows particular promise in making a decisive difference in whether a new teacher continues in the profession” (p. 200). Understanding that new teachers from 4-year traditional education programs need support and mentoring in the classroom, it is evident that these tools are needed by ATC candidates entering the profession from vastly different fields.

Another supporter of the growing need for analysis of alternative certification programs, Doerger (2003) acknowledged that,

as induction becomes increasingly mandated, there is greater need to reflect on the quality of such programs, the one-size fits all models of the past are no longer useful and cannot begin to address the wide array of cultural contexts in which beginning teachers will find themselves. (p. 9)

Doerger also raised the question about acculturation in each individual teaching environment: “current programs must take into account these differences and be based on the premise that induction does far more than simply orient someone to a building” (p. 9). Doerger continued, “[I]nduction should be the vital link between the transmission of a specific educational culture and the success of the beginning teacher in that culture” (p. 9). The researcher also specified the need for a closer look at ATC and novice teachers and called for more research in the area of mentorship.

Adding to the call for further investigation on ATC mentoring, Schatz (2006) explained, “what is needed is a more micro look at the important variables that influence mentoring within individual mentoring programs” (p. 4). The researcher further noted that “it is important for the mentoring research community to better understand how mentors and mentees describe mentoring and the variables that have an impact on it” (p. 4).

### **Mentoring in Traditional and Alternative Teacher Training Programs**

Offering further insight into mentor roles, Stroble and Cooper (1988) studied beginning teacher assistance programs for traditionally certified educators. The authors found mixed expectations about mentors’ roles. The authors found that, when mentors are placed in the role of formally evaluating, appraising, and judging, the most beneficial aspects of a mentor-novice relationship are strained. Furthermore, “confusion of helping and evaluating roles places disparate demands on the mentor and erodes the beginner’s trust” (p. 233). The article further established that “surveys of those who have been mentors reveal these problems and, by example, point to the need for more productive role definitions for induction year support staff” (p. 233).

Authors in the field also advocated for school support to be either primarily assistance or primarily assessment, providing a different individual to carry out each activity. Driscoll, Peterson, and Kauchak (1985) continued with this thought: “[T]hose who have studied the Utah Teacher Evaluation Project suggest that the formative help and feedback provided by mentors be clearly differentiated from any type of formal evaluation” (p. 115). Furthermore, “the openness and trust engendered by successful

mentor systems is not possible when mentors are also asked to serve as evaluators” (p. 116).

The evaluation factor also stood out as a troublesome area in Hertzog’s (2002) study. The teachers reported that the mentoring relationships felt evaluative, although they had all been advised that it was not. Hertzog explained; “[I]t seems likely that it would take time to build the trust necessary for a formal observation/feedback cycle to feel comfortable to an unprepared novice who may be already feeling inadequate” (p. 32). Hertzog speculated that a written pre-conference/observation formal cycle may have affected the novice’s initial perceptions of the mentor relationship.

Hertzog also suggested; “programs of support should investigate how observation/feedback cycles could be used to help novices investigate their teaching and become reflective practitioners in the context of a trusting environment” (p. 32). He also recommended “participation in a guided peer-coaching program between peers, facilitated by mentors, might better promote teacher learning in the context of community engagement” (p. 32).

Also emphasizing a need for clarification of mentors’ roles, a study by Hamdan (2006) revealed some of the difficulties in this area. Hamdan found that candidates received so much information from transition to teaching coaches and supervisors that it was not systematic, and therefore expectations became confusing. The teaching candidates suggested that, rather than having so many different instructions from different sources, someone take the lead on support. Providing further input on elements in effective programs, Hayes (2006) advocated training for the mentor, along with establishing structure and accountability. No matter how much experience mentors may

have as teachers, they can benefit from mentor training programs that focus on teaching adults. The suggestion of having structure in place so participants know what is expected of them is crucial, along with evaluating the progress of learners and holding them accountable for their training.

Following this train of thought, Simpson, Yocom, and Blum (2005) described the functions of the Wyoming Collaborative Mentorship Academy (WCMA), which recruits and certifies teachers working in special education, but not certified in that field. They explained the need for the program was due to the shortage of qualified special education teachers in the state. Simpson et al. reported that postsecondary institutions in Wyoming rushed to create programs for training and preparing fully qualified special education teachers. The need for structure and accountability also stood out in the WCMA program. Simpson et al. emphasized the importance of clarifying; “[M]entor teachers need structure and mentees need direction, and the relationship is greatly enhanced if the participants are fully aware of the expectations of their respective roles” (p. 16).

### **Mentoring and ATC**

Expanding on the potential benefits of ATC programs, May et al. (2003) explained; “[D]uring the current severe teacher shortages requiring the completion of a four-year program does not adequately meet the hiring needs of public schools” (p. 67). May et al. addressed an issue potential teacher candidates in the United States often face: “nontraditional teacher candidates and mid-career professionals often balk at the notion of starting over in full-time university courses with students half their ages” (p. 67). Furthermore, “an alternative approach to certification has become a necessity for providing qualified teachers for the nation’s schools” (p. 67). Therefore, alternative

teacher certification has been utilized to help recruit talent into the classroom and alleviate the shortage crisis in America.

Many have wondered how the system can benefit from requiring less time to train and certify teachers. Several advantages can be found in utilizing the ATC path to certification as long as proper training is provided. This path often finds individuals from other professions who bring a great deal of experience to the classroom and help meet public school hiring needs. There are adults that have already been through the 4-year college system who may have already worked in a profession and, therefore, are usually just as capable as traditionally prepared trained teachers. In some instances, they are more capable of taking over a classroom than the traditionally prepared teacher.

However, the mentoring of beginning teachers has been shown to play a significant role in whether these teachers remain in the field. ATC individuals can replenish the teacher supply and add to the wealth of knowledge and expertise in subject areas, and in certain instances, these adults are also believed to be economically comfortable enough to devote their future to teaching.

### **Mentoring and Teacher Support**

Once the ATC teacher has been hired, the next step is to work on keeping the teacher in the classroom. Although the focus of this study was to gain insight into mentoring from alternative teacher certification participants in a program from a Florida college, it was also helpful to review the mentoring process from traditional teacher settings. The literature revealed several elements tied to mentoring that were found as essential to promote teacher retention. Successfully integrating teachers into the system can be achieved with careful implementation of certain elements. Some of the elements

suggested in to literature to promote teacher retention include helping teacher candidates understand that schools' have unique cultures and procedures while making sure they feel part of the school community, build teaching skills, and understand faculty and student morale.

Self-confidence is another area identified as needing support from mentors or instructors working with ATC participants. According to Simmons (2004), self-confidence building can be accomplished by providing ATC program participants with a sense of accomplishment and recognition. This element in training programs was viewed as essential in a study conducted by Simmons (2004). The researcher discovered that “developing over time, these alternatively certified teachers’ professional identities were related to their sense of efficacy in the classroom and affirmation from their peers” (p. 141).

Other important elements found to help retain new teachers is their ability to understand a school’s unspoken society and feel a sense of community. The social climate within a school can generally be understood in a short period of time. The principal is usually the major regulator of a school’s climate. Simmons (2004) conducted a study on ATC participants and found “the major factor contributing to their success and perseverance was school climate, specifically collegiality and administrator support” (p. 146). Pointing to school climate as a key factor in teacher retention, Simmons (2004) further noted that “principals, partnering with their professional teaching staffs, create the professional culture in their schools” (p. 146). Principals may have the power to set the climate of a school; however, mentors and ATC instructors have the ability to help individuals acclimate to the environment. ATC programs must realize how vital this role

is in helping new individuals begin enculturation into a particular institution.

Glazerman, Seif, and Baxter (2008) concurred that teacher integration involves an understanding of school procedures and school cultures. The researchers additionally advocated that teachers must feel invested and involved in the school in which they teach.

Often, the ATC individual is in a second career, and financial rewards are not always the driving force to keep him or her in the classroom. Glazerman et al. (2008) also emphasized the need not only to work on teaching skills but also to integrate new teachers by creating a sense of community among them and staff, which can influence retention in the field. The authors further explained that proper induction for teachers can have the power to raise faculty morale, reduce behavioral problems in students, motivate students, improve student attendance, and foster positive attitudes about the students they teach. These areas are crucial when considering their impact on student academic outcomes which is, of course, the ultimate goal of teacher induction programs in the first place.

Mentoring is one of the methods of providing these necessary elements to ATC participants. Backing this stance, Johnson and Reiman (2006) proclaimed, “developing high quality mentors is imperative as high quality mentoring is a prime factor in teacher retention” (p. 23). There can be an unhealthy cycle in how inexperienced teachers attempt to adapt to classroom situations. Noting the potential for this cycle, Uttley (2006) warned, “Often the new teacher will revert back to the practices that he/she knows best; the practices that they witnessed their teachers utilize as they matriculated through the school system as students” (p. 24). The researcher explained that, when these teachers are put in a situation where they have no other solutions, they simply resort to their past

experiences. “A strong mentoring program can help the new teacher overcome these obstacles” (Uttley, 2006, p. 24).

Calling for further discovery in the area, Uttley (2006) warned that “[M]entoring is not the single solution to teacher shortages or teacher quality; however, it can be a major player in the solution” (p. 24). Uttley also noted, “[F]ocus on this area has not necessarily led to the desired improvement” (p. 24). The author continued, “[S]imply providing a new teacher with a mentor does not provide the magical solution to teacher dissatisfaction” (p. 23). Wong (2004) concurred: “[T]he problem with many school districts is that their mentors are not part of a mentoring program, much less an induction program” (p. 43). Conveying the message of an unproductive method in partnering teachers, Wong described the act of principals simply assigning veteran teachers to beginning teachers without considerations.

Induction programs, or initial training programs, that provide training for their mentors and instructors before they guide beginning and student teachers are more likely to see positive results. It is a matter of school leaders recognizing the impact of this action and having the means to implement it. Schools can benefit from recognizing that effective mentoring relationships are one of the tools for helping their institutions hold on to beginning teachers. Recognizing and prioritizing mentoring as a force in retaining beginning teachers creates a need for further attention and research in an effort to develop and maintain quality programs.

The induction year for teachers can make or break their decision to continue teaching. Looking at organizational features of schools, Ingersoll (2001) discovered that quality mentoring has been documented as having a major effect on a teacher’s decision



to remain in the field. The author also found that the induction year was instrumental in such decisions. Also supporting the position that mentoring and teacher retention are highly interrelated, Lal, Blackaller, and Esposito (2006) proclaimed; if beginning teachers receive support, they will remain in the field of teaching, no matter how rough it gets.

Furthermore, quality mentoring and teacher retention are reported by the authors to be interrelated in both ATC programs in which participants work full time in classrooms and take ATC courses, and ATC programs where the program students are obtaining field experience and taking courses before they work full time in the classrooms. Both ATC paths will have beginning teachers deciding whether to continue in the field, and the support they receive can be the determining factor. The researchers also added that, if mentoring and support taper off, protégés tend to leave. Nugent and Faucette (2004) found that “often a problem facing new teachers is lack of support during their transition from pre-service to first-year teaching” (p. 53). With regard to support, the authors pointed out that teachers often become frustrated due to the inability to implement practices they have learned in training programs.

More specifically, in researching the needs of beginning teachers, Doerger (2003) found the area of emotional support to be one of the greatest needs. Doerger explained that trust must exist between mentor and mentee, and emotional support plays a major role in establishing this trust, thus contributing to the success of the relationship dyad. The Alliance for Excellent Education (2004) agreed that emotional support is important but added rigorous guidance about how to teach and deemed this a major priority. On the other hand, Odell and Ferraro (1992) found that “teachers who were still teaching after

four years most valued the emotional support they received from their mentors in their first year of teaching” (p. 203).

Other researchers have found additional interesting elements that may have a significant impact on teacher retention. In presenting these elements, researchers also look at the different needs of traditional and alternative certified teachers. Odell and Farraro (1992) pointed out that, in the decision to continue in the teaching profession, differences were found between traditionally and alternatively certified teachers on three factors. The researchers discovered that these three factors for alternatively certified teachers were availability of a mentoring program, sense of accomplishment, and recognition and support from a supervisor. Searching for an explanation, Odell and Farraro attributed these differences to the possibility of a lack of self-confidence on the part of the alternatively certified teachers as they enter the teaching professions. Therefore, Shen (1997) and Ingersoll (2003) suggested that appropriately supporting these areas of entry-level teacher needs would help to increase the chances that both traditional and alternatively certified teachers view the field of teaching as a “lifelong career.”

### **Hiring Teachers**

Before interviewing beginning teachers, it is helpful to have a basic idea of the teaching job market. This information can assist in understanding the responses study participants provide regarding their perceptions and attitudes towards the profession. Despite teacher shortages reported in many areas of the United States, during the course of this study, many states and their school districts were experiencing dramatic education budgeting crunches that prevented the hiring and contract renewals of new teachers.

During this time of global market turmoil and economic uncertainty, the direction of public education will be determined by the extent of these conditions. The Associated Press (2008) referred to the state of the economy as a global meltdown. Housing markets have a profound impact on the broader economy. ATC college collaborative district coordinator, E. Wetmiller (personal communication, April 28, 2008), offered further explanation of the sudden educational budget crunch in Florida and how a portion of this is tied to turbulence in the housing market.

Wetmiller (2008) further explained that the state budget crunch has forced many families who relied on income from the housing industry to move out of state where they can find jobs, and it has also caused some teachers to rethink retiring at this time. Economic difficulties have a domino effect on the education system as monetary allocations are redirected and limited. Other areas impacting education and adding to the economic slow-down include decrease in property values, growing inflation, the credit crisis, and fuel and food prices. Fluctuations in the state of the economy were taken into consideration while conducting this study.

It is also interesting to note that, during this study, Florida's Pinellas County Schools were cutting 147 jobs in the system and closing more schools (Tobin, 2008). Plans that were created to increase financial allocations to educational causes, such as teaching bonuses, awards for A+ schools, contracts for agencies to provide educational services, student scholarships, hiring teachers to fill empty classrooms, and so on, have been followed by severe job cuts, hiring freezes, and school closings. Although this study will be carried out during a time when the U.S. economy is struggling, as long as there is population growth, there will be a need for qualified school teachers. Class sizes

may increase, and schools may have fewer resources, but the goal of quality education must continue.

At the same time of education budget cuts, there is still a shortage of qualified school teachers. Higher education ATC coordinator E. Wetmiller (personal communication, April 28, 2008) explained this paradox. Wetmiller declared that Florida still needs to train new teachers to enter the field to replace those who retire, along with those in high need areas such as math, science, and teachers for exceptional students. The ATC coordinator noted that not all districts are facing the same crunch; for example, smaller rural districts have not felt the same direct effects as the large urban districts where the housing impact has been the greatest.

College EPI coordinator, L. Coughlin (personal communication, October 16, 2008) stressed that ATC programs will continue to be in high demand once the hiring freeze ends and there are openings for new teachers. As the population continues to grow and more teachers reach retirement age, there will be a need to fill classroom vacancies. Coughlin acknowledged that a large number of new teachers are angry over lost jobs and hiring freezes, but foresees a time of budget turn-around and job openings. The coordinator also explained that many students in her college program are already employed as teachers and need the EPI program to complete their certification. Coughlin pointed out that traditional colleges of education will not be able to supply the need schools will have for teachers, nor the need individuals have for accelerated certification. The coordinator also mentioned that school principals tend to prefer hiring teachers that are already certified or in the process.

Coughlin noted that many of Florida's colleges are operating pilot college of education bachelor-degree programs; however, these programs do not deflate the value of EPI alternative teacher certification programs that typically train older students more likely to be certain of their career choices. At the time of this study, there were 22 new applicants entering Coughlin's College EPI program, and 40 new applicants total for the semester. EPI programs are predicted to remain strong at community colleges.

### **Mentoring and Retention of Teachers**

In an assessment of teacher retention, Kritsonis (2007) reported that "nearly 50% of teachers in the United States leave teaching in the first five years of their profession" (p. 8). In some school districts, the attrition rates are even higher. Further emphasizing the problem, Kritsonis (2007) contended that "the positions the school worked hard to fill one year are open again prior to or at the end of the next year" (p. 8). Also addressing this trend, Steadman and Simmons (2007) asserted, "[A]cross America today, school districts face a problem of numbers: too many students, too few educators" (p. 364). The authors elaborated on this by cautioning "in some areas the shortage of classroom teachers is approaching crisis proportions" (p. 364).

Further noting the growing deficit, Uttley (2006) looked at the Teach for America (TFA) organization that helps eligible military personnel become teachers. Uttley reported that of the TFA recruits that began teaching in 1990, 58% quit prior to the third year of teaching. Darling-Hammond, Berry, and Thoreson (2001) reported that at least 15% of New-York's ATC participants quit their positions within the first 2 months of starting.

There has been a preponderance of evidence identifying mentoring as a powerful tool in helping to lower attrition rates. After conducting a quantitative analysis on teacher retention, Uttley (2006) echoed this concept as the researcher found mentors to be a key component in successful programs by helping to reduce attrition rates. Surveying participants in ATC programs, Uttley (2006) discovered that 72% of the variation in their success rates in the field could be attributed to the perceived quality of mentoring.

Literature in the field emphasized the impact of teacher attrition and that it can be felt throughout the educational system as school funds are wasted on training and school performance is hindered by turnover rates. Motivation for keeping teachers in their careers may be gained by observing the funds involved in training and losing teachers. Considering that a portion of national, state, and district allocations are earmarked for ATC through grants and funds, it may be worth the time to investigate measures that help ensure they are put to use in the best possible manner. Losing newly recruited teachers in large numbers can result in wasteful state spending and can impact State Boards of Education throughout the United States as they direct funds toward state-sponsored programs of ATC training and assessment. In the United States, the cost of teacher turnover was estimated to be 2.6 billion dollars a year.

Providing more evidence for the urgent need of quality ATC programs in colleges and districts alike, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) predicted that, by 2008, more than 2.7 million new teachers would be needed. Further establishing this urgency, Felter (1997) reported on the teacher shortage: “[T]he teacher shortage is readily apparent, driven by several forces, including growth in public school enrollment, reform efforts to lower class sizes, instability of the teaching workforce, and the impending

retirement of many current teachers” (p. 1). Some alternative certification beginning teachers have labeled teaching as a “sink or swim” profession. This perspective of the profession signals a need for stronger teacher support systems in an effort to keep teachers in the field. It is not uncommon to find news articles on teachers leaving the profession and law makers trying to find new ways to solve the problem.

Reporting in a 2006 news article, Solochek provided data on the retention issue: “Florida needs 32,000 teachers; studies show that about 7,000 Florida teachers quit the profession in one year, and about 40% of all teachers leave in less than five years.” Backing these figures, Uttley (2006) noted that school officials nation-wide often find themselves scrambling to fill the same teacher classroom vacancies every year. The researcher also pointed out that after only one year in the classroom new teachers often leave the profession. Addressing a possible solution, Ruhland and Bremer (2004) explained that “understanding the factors underlying teacher attrition and retention will help assure quality of teaching in our educational systems” (p. 5). Expanding on this problem, Matus (2005) noted that Florida needed 30,000 new teachers in (2006) and will need approximately 20,000 each year after that for the following 10 years.

Teacher induction plans are credited throughout the literature as having the ability to help retain teachers in the positions they enter. Teacher retention affects many areas of a society; one of the most vulnerable is the student. Doerger (2003) noted this powerful influence: “[I]nduction plans truly begin to initiate a teacher in a way that will not only affect the person’s decision to stay in the classroom but also impact their students’ achievement” (p. 9). Student success or failure is the main reason for concern in retaining teachers in the first place.

Many educational leaders are concerned about students becoming victims of novice teachers. Discussing this concern, President of the Haberman Educational Foundation, D. Stafford (personal communication, April 8, 2006) mentioned that it would be interesting to know how much support mentors provide to alternative certification teachers in terms of ensuring student achievement. Ensuring that mentors carry out this function, Stafford believed, will result in marked improvement in student achievement. Stafford also emphasized that the goal of mentoring needs to be directed towards ensuring that students are not missing critical knowledge and learning time in the training of teachers. Adding to the concern for students, Uttley (2006) warned that, “while new teachers are in need of support, there is a larger need to know if they are being effective in the area of classroom instruction” (p. 23). Uttley continued, “[S]ome mentors meet with new teachers regularly for encouragement but never observe or evaluate them in the classroom” (p. 24).

A major significance of providing studies in this area is also brought forth by Haberman (2005), as the author examined the rationale for recruiting and preparing adults as teachers in urban poverty areas of the country. The author cautioned, “[S]uccess in school is a matter of life and death for children and youth in poverty” (p. 24). Many proponents of alternative certification for teachers magnify the benefits of finding mature professionals who not only are ready to commit to the profession of teaching but also may be more able to relate to various social economic populations than the young graduate from a prestigious university. Haberman explored this perspective: “[T]raditional university programs are able to continue training the wrong population for



teaching because neither they nor the general public really believe that success in school for diverse children in poverty is a matter of life and death” (p. 24).

Supporting the urgency to recruit, prepare, and retain adult teachers, Belmonte (2006) warned that “in working with students from challenging schools, the stakes are truly life and death” (p. 4). Belmonte explained, “[T]he toxic quality of poor teaching brings generations of students to the outer edges of society, and closer to the alternative society, where business acumen of the street is valued and the rewards of mainstream society, material and financial, are possible through other paths” (p. 4). Retaining quality teachers through effective mentoring programs may help in this area and can have far-reaching consequences because these teachers may benefit from several mentoring functions, including emotional and stress support. Belmonte also noted an interesting finding: “[I]n Chicago, authorities have examined the failure rate of Chicago Public Schools third grade children on an Illinois’s reading exam to predict what percentage of that population will require incarceration” (p. 4). The connection made here is that “reading test failure rate equals prediction of incarceration rate” (p. 4). These children need stability in their lives, and it may be possible to provide such stability for them through efforts to support and retain teachers in the classroom.

Jorissen (2003) also provided insight into this issue: “[P]reparing highly qualified teachers who feel competent and who have a commitment to remain in teaching is an imperative that teacher educators and policy makers must continue to address” (p. 7). The author concluded that “the challenge will be to build effective models that respond to market needs while not compromising quality” (p. 7). Mentoring is not the cure-all for

teacher attrition; however, there is strong evidence that, if this activity is part of an induction program and carried out effectively, retention rates are more likely to increase.

Offering a closer look at an induction program, the NCES (2000) provided data from a retention study. The focus was on teachers who participated in induction programs, and the study asked questions addressing the degree of helpfulness of the mentor provided and frequency of scheduled collaborations with teachers on issues of instruction. The data showed the number of teachers who participated in a formal induction and mentorship program and the numbers have greatly increased in recent years. During the 1999-2000 school year, participation rates in induction programs rose to 8 out of 10, and approximately two-thirds of beginning teachers reported that they worked closely with a mentor. Teachers were reported to be less likely to leave their schools if they were provided with some of the following factors: having a mentor from the same subject field, having regularly scheduled collaboration with other teachers, and being part of an external network of teachers. The findings illustrated the intense need for such programs that include quality mentoring and relationship building.

Examining teacher retention efforts, Ingersoll and Smith (2003) attempted to determine whether support programs for beginning teachers had a positive effect on their retention in the field. The results indicated that teacher candidates who were given a support system were less likely to change schools or leave the profession of teaching after the first year. The researchers also reported that “well conceived and well-implemented teacher mentoring and induction programs are successful in increasing the job satisfaction, along with efficacy and retention of new teachers” (p. 30).

Ingersoll and Smith (2003) focused on induction programs for teachers who have already been through basic training of pre-service programs and are working in the field. They noted that there is a history in this country of high attrition rates among new teachers. In addition, within their first five years of teaching, 50% of new teachers leave the occupation. Moreover, the authors indicated that, with the Federal No Child Left Behind Act that passed in 2002, which emphasized the importance of new teacher induction, these programs expect to receive substantial support from legislation.

### **Retention Strategies**

Pointing to the need for further exploration in the area of teacher retention, Ruhland and Bremer (2004) suggested that “understanding the factors underling teacher attrition and retention will help assure quality of teaching in our education systems” (p. 5). Researchers have found various needs in the induction years of teaching that stand out. Marlow, Inman, and Betancourt-Smith (1997) concluded “that beginning teachers need opportunities to interact with colleagues who have similar ideas about teaching and working cooperatively, administrators who encourage and promote teachers’ ideas, and a community that feels positively about the education system and people in it” (p. 213).

Once again, highlighting the significant role quality mentoring plays in helping to retain teachers, Kirby and LeBude (1998) identified retention strategies for beginning teachers. They found two main retention strategies for beginning teachers. Assigning a support team to a new teacher was the first strategy: “The support team would include a mentor teacher, and or subject area teacher, administrator, state staff, and teacher educator” (p. 13). “The second strategy was to provide assistance to new teachers such

as; adequate resource materials, facilities to support curriculum, continuing education reimbursement, and positive work climate” (p. 13).

In the college induction program process, these strategies would translate to providing support to the teachers while they take the mandatory course work and as they begin their field experiences or begin their actual teaching jobs. Some college induction participants are hired during the training process and need support from their programs in making this transition. When teachers in training have completed their ATC or EPI induction program requirements and receive permanent certification, the schools that employ them are expected to provide further mentoring. In the Florida traditional beginning-teacher training process, a beginning teacher is typically monitored for 3 years after being hired and before receiving a permanent teaching certificate. The protégés are issued temporary certificates until they complete the beginning teacher evaluation process.

Also investigating ways to retain teachers through an analysis of their needs, Uttley (2006) looked at the impact of mentoring experiences on attrition rates. Uttley surveyed first year ATC program trainees from the Education Career Alternative Program (ECAP). The researcher found two of the most cited reasons given for teachers leaving their positions were lack of support and job dissatisfaction. One major element of the study was to see whether there was a relationship between the degree of importance of various mentoring activities and the activities being included in the participant’s induction program. Uttley tabulated a Pearson correlation coefficient using mean responses. Uttley uncovered three experiences that had no notable difference in the degree of importance and noted whether the activities were included in the induction

program. The three experiences that obtained the highest mean rating of importance were motivating students, developing effective instructional strategies, and establishing effective class routines.

Uttley (2006) found “these experiences occurred in 75.9%, 83.3%, and 92.6% of the mentoring programs respectively” (p. 45). Uttley also found that “a majority of the responses to the question of whether or not mentoring would play a role in the decision to return to their current assignment for a second year were yes” (p. 58). Other interesting results from this study may help in understanding inductee needs and developing retention strategies. In some of the areas that occurred in the mentoring programs, teachers felt they did not occur often enough and gave them a low rating. For example, Uttley found “time to observe and consult with other teachers was the lowest rated activity, with 83.3% of the teachers stating this was a necessary activity” (p. 61). Uttley provided other examples; “[H]elp in the area of conducting parent conferences was rated as being necessary by 90.7% of the teachers, while it was reported as occurring in only 42.6% of the programs” (p. 62).

### **Mentees and Adult Education**

The Mentoring Leadership and Resource Network offered suggestions for working with adult learners that may have a profound impact on mentoring relationships in ATC programs and will be a consideration in this present study. Fawcett (1997) posed the question: Is a good teacher always a good mentor? This question establishes the need for knowledge in adult education when designing and implementing induction programs for the alternatively certified teacher. Fawcett noted; “[B]eing a good teacher does not automatically mean one will be a good mentor; working with adults is not the same as

working with children” (p. 1). Furthermore, “it is imperative that those responsible for working with adults be aware of the special characteristics of adult learners” (p. 1). The author emphasized the adult learning theories of Knowles in explaining how adults need to be guided.

The theories indicate that learning is based on four assumptions. These assumptions, according to Knowles (1980), are (a) adults need to be self-directed learners; (b) adults’ experiential base is a rich resource for learning; (c) adult learning is linked to what they need to know or do in order to fulfill their roles and responsibilities; and (d) adult learners are problem-centered, rather than subject-centered.

Fawcett (1997) continued on the subject by cautioning, “even though the principles of learning (can be used for both children and adults) are the same, mentors must deal with their entry year teachers very differently than they deal with children” (p. 1). The author furthered this notion: “[M]entors who are chosen because of their success with children are cognizant of children’s needs and intervene with direct instruction when necessary” (p. 1). Furthermore, “they may be surprised when this direct approach (here is what you need to do) is not well received by entry-year teachers” (p. 1). The entry year alternatively certified teacher typically has rich life experiences to integrate with the new information they are receiving.

Fawcett (1997) suggested that “mentors find out what the entry years teachers’ educational experiences have been and help them to build on that and respond to questions by asking for protégés opinions first” (p. 2). Fawcett also added that the best way to help protégés become problem solvers is through questioning. It was further suggested that, when beginning teachers are looking for answers, they become actively

involved in the discovery process. Fawcett concluded, “[W]hen good teachers consider the special characteristics of adult learners and adjust their interaction styles accordingly, they will also be good mentors” (p. 2).

Kilgore (2003) advocated a holistic approach to planning programs for adults. While Kilgore’s article was mainly written for working with adult college students, much of the information can also be applied to on-the-job training for beginning teachers in alternative certification. A holistic approach views “program planning as a continual and constantly changing collection of social interactions that take place in a web of interrelated people, activities, and administrative functions” (Kilgore & Rice, 2003, p. 91). To work from a holistic approach in adult education, mentors must be willing to be flexible enough to meet the variety of needs of adult students. Discussing the holistic approach to working with adults, Kilgore explained, “[T]hey bring with them infinitely unique combinations of experiences, skills, and perspectives” (p. 91). The author also emphasized the importance of not only flexibility but also accessibility and availability in working with the adult population.

The FLDOE (2008) identified adult education as an important part of its training program for mentors of alternatively certified teachers. The FLDOE adult education topics include giving developing teachers control over their own learning, reducing the fear of judgment during learning, and giving opportunities for practicing new concepts while providing helpful feedback. Some other repeated themes found in the FLDOE training program that focuses on adult learners are providing opportunity to share, reflecting on and generalizing experiences, encouraging self-directed learning, providing follow up support, and allowing for the learning to be practiced so that it is sustained.

Haberman is an educational leader often called upon in the field of ATC.

Haberman (2005) highlighted some benefits of bringing experienced adults into the classroom to teach. Among these were the ability to engage in higher level thinking on human development, subject matter, and issues of social justice and equity infused with school curricula. It was also noted that the majority of undergraduate pre-service teachers about to graduate from their education programs are often in the childlike stage in which there is little concern with higher levels of thinking in the field and greater focus on fears and apprehensions regarding classroom discipline and control. Furthermore, the experienced adult may be able to reach higher levels of personal development having been immersed in family, work, and life challenges. Haberman pointed out the benefits of these experiences in that they contribute to educators' ability to integrate material into their cognitive and emotional development.

Offering advice to ATC programs, Simmons (2004) cautioned, “[T]he staff developer must ensure that the learner’s beliefs and prior experiences are acknowledged and engaged at some point in the learning process” (p. 145). Haberman expanded on the benefits of this practice as he noted that reflection is more likely to be of greater value to mature adults because it requires meaningful life experiences to draw upon. The author cautioned that, in many urban school districts, instruction is being done by reading from scripts and that these schools have given up trying to find teachers who can think on their own. Haberman stated, “[I]f we believe teaching requires higher-order thinking skills, advanced knowledge of subject matter and ability to apply abstract concepts such as equity and justice, then the teachers’ cognitive and affective development becomes the crucial determinant of success” (p.22). Additionally, Haberman shared results of



numerous studies that found four general developmental abilities that relate to success in all fields: (a) empathy, (b) autonomy, (c) symbolization, and (d) commitment to democratic values. Haberman concluded that all of these abilities correlate with greater maturity.

A study by Hertzog (2002) also investigated the area of adult education. The author stressed the distinction between having an andragogy (adult) approach and a pedagogy (child) approach in mentoring teacher trainees. Beginning teachers are adults and need to feel that their opinions and concerns are approached by professionals who keep in mind these teachers are not children and, more often than not, bring a great deal of life experiences into the setting. It can be difficult to wear two different hats, one of teaching children and one of mentoring adults, because each group requires a different approach for learning. Adult learners do not want to feel they are being talked down to, and mentors may be more successful by keeping this in mind during their interactions. Looking further into this tendency, Little (1990) identified collaborative behavior as a major aspect of collegiality. Hertzog provided input on building a collaborative relationship, reporting that “collaboration around similar experiences, shared meaning, and expectations builds collegiality” (p. 32). It is concluded that novices are likely to seek relationships that are collaborative and supportive. Mentor programs may benefit from keeping this conclusion in mind while designing support programs.

### **Mentor Qualifications**

Before induction programs begin their activities, it is crucial to give careful consideration to the selection of mentors. The activities referred to here are largely directed towards district type programs in which the participants use mentors from the

schools in which they teach, but can also apply to college programs in the selection and preparation of instructors who will serve as mentors. Offering insight into this process, Steadman and Simmons (2007) listed mentor qualifications in an article on the cost of mentoring non-university-certified teachers. These qualifications are general and followed in most programs. The qualifications listed are for mentors to have a specified number of years of successful teaching experience, a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution, a solid record of performance and professional behavior, a principal's recommendation, and a stated willingness, even enthusiasm, for assuming such duties. The fifth qualification is very influential in determining the success of a mentor. If a teacher has a solid record of teaching and is recommended by the principal, it would not be sufficient unless there is willingness and motivation to serve in the role.

While learning about the mentoring processes in K-12 schools, it may also be interesting to understand how mentors are trained and compensated. Providing further insight into these processes, Steadman and Simmons (2007) explained that

some districts also demand that those who wish to become cooperating teachers successfully complete a course in the supervision of student teaching either by district personnel or offered at a nearby college or university, and cooperating teachers are commonly evaluated on their performance and are almost always compensated for their involvement, monetarily or otherwise, also cooperating teachers are almost without exception held in high esteem. (p. 365)

There are exceptions to the compensation factor; however, most programs report offering some type of incentive to mentors for their service.

### **Study: Why ATC Teachers Leave and ATC Inductee Needs**

An article that focused on alternatively certified teachers examined the perceptions of problems and the assistance that novices need. Hertzog (2002) provided a perspective from the beginning teacher's point of view. Hertzog reported that "while

some alternative permit teachers have had varied school based experiences as teachers' aides, or volunteers, they represent essentially a population of teachers who are highly inexperienced" (p. 25). The author expanded on this notion: "[T]hey have not participated in formal training prior to classroom experience and most have little knowledge about how to structure a classroom so that it leads to student achievement" (p. 25).

Hertzog (2002) also acknowledged that alternative permit novices bring a variety of experiences to the classroom, along with a unique variety of needs. For this reason, "in many states, during an initial induction period, these teachers are required to concurrently enroll in a teacher education program, administered either by a school district, a teachers' union, or an institution of higher education" (p. 25). "In addition they are usually required to participate in some form of mentor teacher support program, usually implemented by the school district and funded by the state" (p. 25). The argument here typically focuses on the quality and extent of these programs designed to train teachers in less time than traditional programs.

A number of inductees, questioned in various studies previewed for this literature review, stated that they needed more on-the-job support, although they were assigned mentors. In a sample of beginning teachers who left the field, researchers found lack of support on the job as one of the primary reasons. In this study, Ingersoll and Smith (2003) examined the reasons beginning ATC participants left the profession and found that 39% left to pursue a better job, 42% responded that they left for personal reasons, 19% said they left the profession as a result of school action (cutback, layoff, termination, school closing), and 29% left due to job dissatisfaction. The researchers further studied

the 29% who listed job dissatisfaction as the reason for leaving the profession. The areas teachers listed under job dissatisfaction were working conditions, student discipline problems, lack of support from school administration, lack of teacher influence over school-wide and classroom decision making, and poor student motivation. Job dissatisfaction issues ranked higher as a problem than low salaries.

Examining the mentoring process of alternative certification more closely, Bey and Holmes (1990) noted that mentor teacher programs usually included an observation/replication/feedback cycle similar to that of a traditional student teaching experience. The difference that stood out, however, was much less frequency and less opportunity for the novice to observe effective teaching. Many educators believe that one of the best ways to learn is by observing the desired behavior in action. Therefore, it is crucial for beginning teachers to observe classrooms with effective role models demonstrating various techniques. For an idea of what techniques mentors may need to demonstrate, Perez, Swain, and Hartsough (1997) reported that some of the technical assistance sought by novices included classroom management, behavior management, resources and materials, planning, instruction and assessment.

### **Models for ATC and Mentoring**

**Engestrom CHAT model.** Using a conceptual framework to investigate mentoring in induction programs helps to provide an understanding of the elements involved in the process and how they interact with one another. Looking at human behavior through an activity system or a systematic model provided a clearer understanding of the connectedness between elements and their combined impact on the outcome. Engestrom (1987) designed the Cultural Historical Activity Theory Model

(CHAT). According to Cole and Engestrom (1996), the guiding premise of the CHAT model was that all human behavior takes place in an activity system. Cole and Engestrom provided an example of the contextual influences that labeled each interaction of the mentoring process. The philosophy behind the model was distributed cognition, which was informed by modern cognitive psychology, anthropology, and sociology. The modern cognitive approach taken by Cole and Engestrom was basically that human knowledge is socially constructed through collaborative efforts to achieve shared objectives, rather than the traditional belief that cognition exists solely in a person's head.

Focusing on the idea of sources outside individuals, which play a role in their experience, the Cole and Engestrom (1996) referred to the model as a “mediational triangle”: “The mediational triangle included a community of people, and all of the components in the model, each interacting with one another” (p. 8). In discussing the model, Cole and Engestrom reported that analysis of a system “reveals that transition and reorganization are constantly going on within and between activity systems as part of the dynamics of human evolution” (p. 8). The authors further described an activity system as operating with equilibrium as an exception and tension along with disturbances and local innovations being the norm and resulting in evolution. In other words, activity systems are expected to have an element of friction and keep developing and metamorphosing along the way.

**Schatz study using the CHAT model.** Schatz (2006) used the CHAT activity model in a study on teachers and mentors to find the important features in the setting of mentoring. The CHAT model components are subject, object, community, rules, division of labor, and instruments. Schatz (2006) provided a summary description of each

component, with mentoring as the activity in the system. Schatz described the activity under analysis as mentoring: “[S]ubject is either a group or individual whose perspective is taken in the analysis, in this study the subjects are the mentors and mentees” (p. 6). Schatz continued, “The subject is motivated by some object to participate in the mentoring” (p. 7). Presenting an idea of the interaction, Schatz explained, “the object for a mentor, for example, might be to provide emotional support to a first year teacher, and this object is eventually transformed into the outcome” (p. 7). Furthermore,

The outcome could be a mentee who feels supported and therefore doesn’t leave the teaching profession . . . . The community refers to all of the individuals or groups who share the same general objects as the subject, and in the case of mentoring this includes the mentor, other teachers, administrators, and professional organizations. (p. 7)

Progressing through the model system to the rules, Schatz (2006) reported, these rules can be “informal cultural norms, as well as formal rules, that govern the activity system, and mentoring rules include the paper work requirements that mentors’ and mentees’ must complete” (p. 8). The next component in the activity system, at the base of the model, was the division of labor. Schatz explained that *division of labor* “refers to how tasks are divided between the subjects and the community, and in mentoring this includes whether it is the mentors’ or mentees’ responsibility to make and maintain contact” (p. 8).

The component of instruments was located at the top of the activity model. Schatz (2006) identified this component as “other artifacts such as concrete tools (a computer) or ideological ones (a belief in constructivist teaching) that impact the other components of the system” (p. 8). The author noted that constructivist teaching is achieved by guiding learners in constructing their own knowledge by making connections

between new information and prior experiences or knowledge. Providing some examples of instruments, Schatz noted, “[I]n mentoring important instruments include the communication logs and action plans mentees and mentors are required to turn in” (p. 8). Describing the interaction among the various components within the system, Schatz explained that it “is dynamic and the components can’t be fully understood in isolation from the others” (p. 8).

Examining other components of the model, Schatz (2006) explained the tenet of contradictions or tensions, which are noted as promoting change and evolution in activity systems. The researcher provided a summary of the two branches of contradictions or tensions, which are primary and secondary. Schatz explained the two areas and provided examples of each. The primary contradiction is explained as possibly being a conflict between mentors’ and mentees’ in the area of objects. The example given by Schatz was: “a mentor may engage in mentoring to provide his mentee with help solving specific problems, when the mentee might be looking for a more comprehensive type of support, including instructional support with modeled lessons” (p. 9). A secondary contradiction, Schatz explained, “could be between a mentor’s object to provide non-threatening support to a mentee, and a rule that says the mentor must complete formal evaluations of the mentee” (p. 9).

Furthermore, “a secondary contradiction can also involve just two components or all components of the activity setting” (Schatz, 2006, p. 9). Schatz presented an example of a contradiction between four components: subjects, tools, rules, and community. Schatz plugged mentoring elements into four model components to portray the model in action in the educational setting. The examples provided by Schatz were a mentee’s

(subject's) educational beliefs (instrument) that may conflict with the way the school's principal (community member) has defined and enforced rules at the school. A specific example would be if the mentee believed that a particular language program would be best to teach reading but the school principal established a rule to use a different language program. This would be considered a contradiction or tension occurring between components in the activity system.

Using the CHAT activity system model, Schatz (2006) conducted a qualitative study on unlicensed teachers and their mentors. The study investigated reasons for participating in mentoring. Four reasons for participating in mentoring emerged from the study. Schatz found that mentors and mentees describe engaging in mentoring in order to provide or receive "instructional support, help solving specific problems, local guidance, and/or emotional support" (p. 69). The researcher explained that local guidance may involve "helping mentees get along with their administration, complete paper work and become aware of special challenges faced by their student population" (p. 70). Schatz found an interesting example from a teacher training program in England in which beginning teachers were having a great deal of difficulty with the curriculum and felt they were in relative isolation; relating this to the CHAT model, they lacked supportive community for their mentors.

Schatz (2006) used the CHAT activity model as a lens. Schatz expressed that "this helps us to get an overall sense of how various parts of the mentoring activity setting work together to influence mentoring" (p. 41). Links between the model as a guiding framework and the actual research, for example, finding the component of division of labor, then presenting the question, what tasks the mentor and mentee take



part in and how the tasks are divided. For the area of contradictions, the researcher looked for answers to what primary and secondary parts are found in the mentor's activity system.

In addition, Schatz (2006) found that mentors chose addressing specific problems their mentees encountered to be an object of their mentoring. Schatz found a response from one of the mentors indicating that addressing specific problems of mentees was his primary mentoring object. It is interesting to note that when a mentor and mentee have different objects or objectives as their goals, the situation will fall under the contradiction branch of the activity model.

A few additional factors that emerged as having a strong impact on the teachers in the Schatz (2006) study were for both the mentor and mentee to have a clear comprehension of the main expectations of the training program and areas of instructional support, especially observing experienced teachers while they are teaching. One other area that stood out in the results of the study was making careful decisions in matching the mentors and mentees. One example given on this topic was the contradiction of matching an older beginning teacher with a relatively younger mentor, which Schatz warned is "described by some as being less than ideal" (p. 266). Because many alternatively certified teachers may come from other careers and tend to be older than the traditionally certified teachers just-out-of-college programs, the task of pairing these people needs careful consideration.

Schatz also made recommendations for the improvement of mentoring of beginning nontraditionally trained teachers. Among these suggestions are themes that have emerged throughout many of the studies found in this literature review. Schatz

(2006) found it essential to define roles clearly and make certain that all parties involved understand the mentoring purpose as well as the expectations. Schatz also advocated obtaining mentor and mentee input and the establishment of a training program that takes the student population into consideration. Doing so included making time and opportunities for new teachers to observe their mentors or other experienced teachers and making certain that mentors have time and opportunity to observe their mentees' classroom practice.

A unique suggestion found in Schatz (2006) was that “mentors should help new teachers connect what they are learning in their continuing education classes to their classroom practice” (p. 257). One idea for helping to transfer new knowledge into practice could be to have mentors model lessons and provide observations. The teachers surveyed in this study also expressed a strong desire to receive this type of instructional support, which could be in the form of modeled lessons and observations.

### **Support Program Model for Teacher Training**

**Anderson and Shannon model of mentoring.** Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1996) designed a model to improve the quality and retention of new teachers. The support program model suggested working with beginning teachers for 1 to 2 hours a week and offering a monthly seminar to the group. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin described the mentoring roles that should be covered in the seminar: “mentors observe instruction, provide feedback, demonstrate teaching methods, assist with lesson plans, and help analyze student work and achievement data” (p. 202). Highlighting the success of this program, the authors explained that “intensive support is

possible only because participating school districts release veteran teachers to serve as full-time mentors for two or three years each” (p. 202).

Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1996) further added that the rigorous assignment of mentors and the professional development process add to the success of the support program model. This was a model in which teachers “confront research and theory directly, are regularly engaged in evaluating their practice, and use their colleagues for mutual assistance” (p. 3). Some of the professional development strategies of this program that Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin highlighted were: experiential focusing on the process of learning and development; being attentive to questions, inquiry, and professional research; being collaborative; being connected to their work with students, examination of teaching methods; and being supported by modeling, coaching, and problem solving of specific trouble areas in practice. This approach was viewed as a shift from the old models of teacher training.

Mentoring researchers Anderson and Shannon (1995) recognized the vital role of mentors as schools and colleges design induction programs for teacher candidates. Providing a model on the mentoring process, Anderson and Shannon presented five essential attributes necessary for a successful mentoring relationship: process of nurturing, act of serving as a role model, five mentoring functions (teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counseling, and befriending), focus on professional or personal development, and an ongoing caring relationship.

The Anderson and Shannon (1995) model of mentoring contained components that are based on a set of dispositions or patterns of innate characteristics and dominant qualities displayed by mentors. Breaking down the mentoring model, Anderson and

Shannon identified three dispositions essential to mentoring situations: “a) mentors should have the disposition of opening themselves to the protégé by, for example allowing their protégé’s opportunities to observe them in action and conveying to them reasons and purposes behind their decisions and performance; b) mentors should have the disposition to lead their protégés incrementally over time; and, c) mentors should have the disposition to express care and concern about the personal and professional welfare of their protégés” (p. 32). The model diagram was divided into mentor roles, functions, and activities.

The mentor roles in the Anderson and Shannon (1995) model were role model, nurturer, and care-giver. The function of sponsoring includes protecting, supporting, and promoting while the function of encouraging includes affirming, inspiring, and challenging. The function of counseling includes listening, probing, clarifying, and advising, and finally, the function of befriending includes accepting and relating. The mentoring activities described in the model were demonstration of lessons, observations, feedback, and support meetings.

Researchers Anderson and Shannon (1995) warned that program developers run the risk of operating programs that are not complete, lack integrity, and may even duplicate unsuccessful programs, if careful analysis of the concepts of mentoring is not carried out. Guiding such an undertaking, Anderson and Shannon advised developers to decide what the essential functions of mentoring are and identify possible mentoring activities that express these functions. Furthermore, the authors warned that program leaders “must develop the dispositions that mentors are to exhibit as they carry out the functions and activities” (p. 33). Anderson and Shannon concluded, “[O]nly when a

strong and clear conceptual foundation of mentoring is established can effective mentor programs for beginning teachers be constructed” (p. 33).

Often new teachers revert to the practices that they know best; along with the practices that they witnessed their teachers utilize as they matriculated through the school system as students. They may draw from their past experiences when they are put in a position where they have no other choices (Anderson & Shannon, 1995). A strong mentoring program can help the new teacher overcome these obstacles.

**Utsumi’s domains of teacher learning.** Instructional domains can help gauge the progress of teacher learning. Domains of teacher learning or the set of actions that define teacher functions serve as a guide to administration, mentors, and teachers. A study by Utsumi (2002) on the perceptions of support for alternative certification teachers used the Domains of Teacher Learning to guide the questionnaires. The questionnaires focused on the support received in six support domains of teacher learning. Reviewing these domains and study results provided a better understanding of what mentoring components were of priority. The six domain areas used in this study were (a) emotional support, (b) planning and implementing lessons, (c) content knowledge, (d) classroom management, (e) discipline, and (f) analyzing teaching as well as learning, along with non-instructional duties.

The results of Utsumi’s (2002) study allowed the researcher to uncover differing perceptions of support between the ATC teachers or pre-interns and their mentors. Through the study findings, Utsumi (2002) found that the working dyads needed better communication, “training of mentors that focuses on moving beyond emotional support into the instructional domains, and modification of the current mentoring design to

provide more time for mentoring” (p. 1). After further analysis of the results, Utsumi also found that mentors responded that they supported the teachers in all domain areas except for lesson planning. The researcher also reported that “the results are significant because they strongly demonstrate that current mentoring practices are not working to support instructional effectiveness” (p. 104).

Looking at additional study results may be interesting to see the differing perceptions of support. Utsumi (2002) found it surprising that there were “44% of never responses for assistance in classroom management and student discipline” (p. 91). The author further noted that “44% represents over 200 teachers” (p. 91). The researcher clarified that more than half of the beginning teachers in the study put help with classroom management as a priority. Furthermore, “large numbers of pre-interns report, never, for mentor support in three (instructional domains of teacher learning): planning and implementing lessons, observing, analyzing, and assessing student work; and content knowledge” (p. 91).

Interpreting these results, Utsumi (2002) warned, “these results imply that mentors are not moving from emotional support and non-teaching responsibilities into pedagogical support” (p. 91). Positive results were reported by mentors in the area of ongoing support in five of the six domains. Planning and implementing lessons were the exception to these positive results. Also, the perceptions of high levels of support by mentors contrasted measurably with the pre-interns’ perceptions of mentor support.

Through the results of this study, Utsumi (2002) showed that the participants had differing perceptions of support, and the system had an inadequate supply of mentors. Further discoveries were that the mentors’ focused largely on emotional and non-

instructional supports and the support scales that measure the domains of teacher learning provided keys for improving the support of the pre-interns. Finding areas needing improvement, Utsumi reported that the mentoring goals were vague and non-specific.

The tendency among the participants in this study was to view mentoring as a buddy system directed towards teacher retention through survival strategies. Utsumi (2002) suggested, “[T]he umbrella of strong psychological supports need to remain, but with a major shift to the teaching and learning domains” (p. 105). Utsumi planned to use the results of this study to develop professional development training for mentors, and coaches, along with a coaching guide for schools.

### **Factors That Contribute to ATC Success**

**ATC study on inductee needs.** Also cataloguing the needs of teacher inductees, Nias (1989) found that “throughout their careers teachers have one over-riding concern; the preservation of a stable sense of personal and professional identity” (p. 1258). Drummond (1996) and Gold (1996) have found the repeated result that novice teachers have needs for emotional support. Looking at this perspective, Nias (1989) suggested that emotional support could include the desire for an on-campus reference group to reinforce and sustain their view of themselves.

Inquiring about issues teachers highlight as major concerns, researcher Hertzog (2002) also gathered information on the needs of teacher inductees. Uncovering some of these issues, Hertzog conducted an interesting study on how beginning alternative certification teachers handle classroom situations. In 2003, Hertzog was one of the few researchers who had specifically investigated the needs of alternative certification teachers.

The purpose of Hertzog's (2002) study was to investigate how unprepared alternative certification novices participated in problem solving regarding classroom problems. All of the novices in this study participated in district-based, state-sponsored mentoring programs, and each teacher was assigned a mentor. This study uncovered various problems beginning teachers experienced in the mentoring program. One of the reported weak areas was that most problems were reported after they had already occurred. The study also noted that "the majority of the teachers reported the highest number of problems with classroom management, behavior management and curriculum planning" (p. 27).

Another need that stood out for inductees was that of having enough experience to determine the disposition for the classroom environment. Coordinator for a college/district collaboration ATC program, E. Wetmiller (personal communication, August 5, 2008), reported that, in the EPI college programs, the participants must be in a classroom until a portion of their course work is complete, but doing so can be a challenge for career changers. A college director of 4-year programs and university partnerships, A. Odutola (personal communication, April 25, 2008) also identified the possibility of this challenge in pointing out that pre-service teachers do not know whether they have the disposition to be a teacher until they spend time in a classroom with students.

**Trusting relationships.** The literature review for this study found that, often, mentor teachers were not the first choice for the protégés in soliciting assistance. The mentors were sometimes approached after the problem was discussed with another new teacher. Teachers most frequently turned to peer-teachers whom they were building an



interpersonal relationship relation with rather than a mentor teacher. Physical proximity and accessibility were also reported as deciding factors in the choice of selected assistance. Typically, teachers need solutions to problems as they occur and in a timely manner. Therefore, mentoring assistance from within the school would offer this help. In regard to teachers seeking assistance from peers, the grade-level teachers were reported to have less experience than mentors and had been teaching less than 3 to 5 years. Hertzog (2002) pointed out that novices sought assistance from those with whom they had trusting relationships. This fact emphasizes the value of establishing trusting relationships in mentoring dyads. Furthermore, trusting relationships can impact a school's community identity.

Literature on mentoring often placed emphasis on the significance of trusting relationships in carrying out successful teacher/mentor collaboration. For example, Hertzog (2002) found that novice teachers sought help from others they felt close to and established trust within mutual relationships. Hertzog warned that "it may be that mentor teachers, by virtue of their higher levels of experience, and therefore, their higher position in the political structure of the community, would need to work harder to gain the trust of novices" (p. 31). As a result of this study, the author recommended that "programs of support should acknowledge that the need to develop mutual relationships is important to a novice's need for emotional support while he or she engages in learning" (p. 31).

In addition, "programs should systematically create opportunities for the development of novice selected mutual relationships to happen within the context of their school-based community" (Hertzog, 2002, p. 31). Recognizing the influence of power structures, Hertzog stressed that negotiation of power structures in the community is an

important issue for novices, and the designing of support programs should take this fact into consideration. One of the main themes resulting from Hertzog's study was that beginning teachers chose to seek assistance from those experiencing similar problems rather than turning to assigned expert mentors, and the author viewed this as a crucial component and a quest for collegiality.

**Community identity.** Community identity is a powerful force in school environments, powerful enough to make or break an individual's career. Wenger (1998) held that, because membership in the school community was an important part of the experience for alternatively certified novices, community identity affected decision making and had the potential to elevate problems. The results of Hertzog's (2002) study provided strong support for attention to meaningful roles and a sense of membership in the community. Membership and roles in a workplace community transcend across the board to most organizations in and out of the field of education. Hertzog surmised that "the complexity of the process must be acknowledged when considering how to support novices as they negotiate meaningful roles in the community and improve their practice" (p. 30). The author also cautioned that the impact of this process must be taken into consideration when creating support programs directed at improving the novice's practice. Community identity was directly related to a school's climate or environmental characteristics.

The prevailing mood of a school is often set by the principal and administration. This powerful influence on the school community can be felt by student teachers, and this is an area where mentors can often assist in helping them to navigate in these unfamiliar climates, making it easier to acclimate to the work place. The climate of a school was

seen by Zeichner and Gore (1990) as having a profound influence on beliefs, attitudes, and dispositions of the student teacher. Renzaglia, Hutchins, and Lee (1997) identified school climate as part of a school's culture, along with administrative styles, educational philosophies, and personalities. All of these areas coexist, influence one another to some degree, and play a role in the formation of a school's community. A student teacher may decide to leave a position if he or she does not understand the climate or culture of a school and is unable to acclimate to the particular society.

**Hierarchy of needs.** Conducting a study of principals' perceptions on supporting alternatively certified teachers, Cordeau (2003) uncovered factors that stood out as contributing to the success of these beginning teachers. Cordeau found the principals' responses supported the idea to maintain frequent contact with alternatively certified teachers. A mentor's visible presence in the classroom and acting as a sounding board for teacher reflection were perceived as important factors by the principals in adding to the success of alternatively certified teachers.

Through a survey instrument administered to school principals, Cordeau (2003) identified five major factors or attributes of alternatively certified teachers that may predict their success: (a) desire to be a teacher, (b) willingness to learn, (c) commitment, (d) perseverance, (e) having an understanding of teaching as a profession, and (f) prior experience with children. An attribute that also stood out in this literature review and may be added to the list of factors in contributing to the success of the ATC individual was the teacher's willingness to learn. Beginning teachers need to be willing to accept suggestions and act on these suggestions to be successful in their training.

Providing additional edification on this subject, Simmons (2004) uncovered factors that successful teachers attributed to their achievement and retention in the field. Simmons focused a study on teachers whom school principals identified as being successful with integrating into the system. In the process, one of Simmons' goals was to find out what kept ATC individuals committed to the teaching profession. Simmons identified an area that many new teachers found as troublesome: "staff developers and school administrators must also be aware of alternatively certified teachers' unfamiliarity with jargon that is used in the education profession" (p. 146).

The results of Simmons (2004) indicated that "many of the teachers did not understand the jargon in the education field, nor did they understand the organizational cultures of the schools in which they taught" (p. 148). Simmons suggested that ATC programs include "an orientation of terminology, curriculum, and materials to be utilized, as well as an overview of school policies and procedures to include disciplinary procedures and grading and assessment practices" (p. 146). Another area that stood out in Simmons' study was the importance of a good match between new teachers and mentors. Simmons stressed that "mentors must not only be interested and committed to the mentoring process but also have the time to observe and meet with the first-year teacher" (p. 146).

A final result in Simmons (2004) emphasized the importance of meeting the immediate needs of beginning teachers. These needs, Simmons explained, would be day-to-day survival needs that may include "knowing what materials to use, understanding the school's policies and procedures, and generally becoming familiar with working in a school setting" (p. 145). While these needs seem obvious, they often can be over looked.

Simmons noted that “these immediate needs must be dealt with before the newly hired teacher will be ready for any staff development that is of a more theoretical nature” (p. 145). In other words, the teachers will not be ready for areas of professional growth until their basic needs are met, similar to moving up the well-known pyramid of Maslow’s (1970) Hierarchy of Needs.

In 1954, humanistic psychologist, Maslow, published his theory on human potential. Connecting this theory to a teacher’s basic needs, it may be helpful to envision the Maslow pyramid, with the most basic survival needs at the base. As an individual moves up through the sequence pattern of needs, self-actualization is reached at the top. Likewise, beginning teachers need to have their most basic needs met before advancing to higher levels on the pyramid, such as integrating knowledge and implementing teaching techniques.

**Self-efficacy.** The low self-efficacy novice teacher facing a failed situation in the classroom or school environment may have a greater tendency to simply capitulate and quit the profession; as a result, attrition rates of ATC participants rise. Therefore, school teacher induction programs must consider working with a novice teacher’s self-efficacy in the induction and mentoring process. In a study on certification routes and novice teachers’ sense of self-efficacy, Zientek (2006) found a big difference between non-traditionally and traditionally trained teachers in the area of promoting student learning. Zientek explained that “the biggest differences existed on promoting student learning. Regardless of certification route, prior classroom experience was a strong predictor of overall preparedness and teacher’s perception of his or her ability to be an effective teacher” (p. 326). Furthermore, “for ATC teachers, positive mentoring experiences were

a strong predictor of teacher's perception of overall preparedness" (p. 326). It is, therefore, imperative that program leaders take into account the idea that mentoring has the ability to positively impact a teacher's sense of self-efficacy.

Through a mixed-methods assessment on improving self-efficacy and retention of alternatively certified teachers, Kritsonis (2007) uncovered key areas for consideration in mentoring. Kritsonis also found that self-efficacy beliefs have a positive impact on attrition of alternatively certified novice teachers:

Prior studies and various research show consistent patterns in alternatively certified novice teachers with higher self efficacy are more likely to be effective in their classrooms by illuminating an enthusiastic attitude towards teaching, they are open to students' ideas, they use innovative instructional methods that exhibits in their instructional practices, and they possess the ability to provide an environment that promotes and fosters motivation for students to learn. (p. 2)

This assessment supports the idea that building teachers' self-efficacy should be a goal of induction programs.

There can be a chain reaction stemming outward from a teacher with positive self-efficacy to the school environment and then to the students. When novice teachers are confident in their abilities, the odds of remaining in the classrooms will increase. Kritsonis (2007) backed this belief: "positive self-efficacy within alternatively certified novice teachers will provide a rippling effect in which it will create and provide an atmosphere that will be geared towards positive student achievement" (p. 5). The author also contended that this rippling effect "will lead to lowering the attrition rates among alternatively certified novice teachers" (p. 5).

The following formula was devised by Kritsonis (2007) to illustrate a path towards better ATC teacher retention: Alternatively Certified Novice Teacher Self Efficacy + Self-directedness/Strategic Mentoring or (E-Mentoring) = Increased Retention

Rates. Kritsonis described this as a “rippling effect” descending from the administration to the educator and then the student. On the other hand, “novice teachers who possess a low sense of efficacy tend to hold a custodial orientation which causes a pessimistic view of student’ motivation” (p. 6). Emphasizing the significance of efficacy, Moran and Hoy (2001) surmised that educators gain positive self-efficacy from positive relationships between mentors, teaching support, and administrators.

When a novice teacher with low self-efficacy approaches students, Kritsonis (2007) revealed that they often will display low aspirations and a weak commitment towards goals. It was also noted that these individuals have a high tendency to give up quickly when faced with difficult situations. Even more problematic, the author reported that “the alternatively certified novice teachers are slow to recover their sense of efficacy following failure or setbacks” (p. 7). Kritsonis suggested that one method of building efficacy would be through recurrent communications, and as a result, “mentors will foster trust by making mentee’s feel their questions and concerns are carefully considered and they are warranted” (p. 8).

**Functional feedback from mentor to mentee.** A recurring theme in mentoring literature was the important role of providing feedback to the novice teacher. It is essential that the feedback be specific in order for the beginning teacher to grow and improve as a professional. Garza (2001) found that “when mentors provide beginning teachers with written feedback about their teaching behaviors, a concrete image becomes known” (p. 324). Further emphasizing the importance of this concept, Garza continued, “[T]his gives beginning teachers an opportunity to decide about the modifications necessary for effective classroom performance” (p. 324).

Demonstrating these concepts, Garza (2001) conducted a study entitled *Functional Feedback: A Cognitive Approach to Mentoring*. The purpose of this study was to examine the written feedback mentors and supervisors provided to beginning alternative certification teachers. To do so, data were collected from 20 beginning alternative certification teachers enrolled in a training program in Texas. Garza used a mixed-methods approach with data collection and focus groups. One of Garza's goals was to determine the components needed for an effective mentoring program. The researcher found the following five major categories of emerging themes and patterns: (a) classroom management; (b) positive reinforcement; (c) rules, procedures, and routines, (d) classroom management; and (e) instructional strategies.

Garza (2001) also looked for critical attributes that were most obvious as having the ability to contribute to the beginning teacher's growth and professional development. Garza found that it is crucial to recognize the potential of precise and accurate feedback in facilitating the growth of beginning classroom teachers. Another goal of the researcher was to identify the characteristics that effective mentors possess. Effective mentors provided classroom observations and feedback sessions. Through the focus group interview, Garza discovered that not all the mentors and mentees may have met with each other on a regular basis. Garza shared a response from a mentee who reported there was no chance to meet with the mentor as originally planned; furthermore, "the beginning teacher and mentor agreed to meet twice a week but that never materialized, after two formal meetings, both parties rarely sat down together again" (p. 323).

Providing more detail on the experiences Garza (2001) reported, "[O]ne beginning teacher perceived her mentor to be an ineffective teacher, besides regarding the



mentor as incompetent, there existed a conflict between the mentor's teaching philosophy and the beginning teacher's view about good teaching" (p. 323). The needed trust for a reciprocal relationship could not be established in this situation. Some of the other situations beginning teachers reported as impeding their relationship with mentors included (a) a mentor not choosing to be a mentor, (b) a mentor not proceeding in a friendly manner, and (c) a mentor being resentful whenever he or she was asked for help. This researcher highlighted the importance of rapport between mentor and beginning teacher as a critical element that promotes a willingness in the trainee to accept suggestions for improvement. Garza concluded with research implications by identifying a serious concern regarding the role of feedback in developing beginning teachers. Garza further noted that "without feedback from classroom observations, beginning teachers may lack the resources necessary to resolve classroom difficulties" (p. 326).

### **Mentor Qualities**

The variety of traits, strategies, and roles that researchers and professional organizations in the field have outlined as part of successful mentor-protégé relationships is part of the mentoring process. The first part of this section covered necessary qualities for mentors to have so as to promote successful mentoring of beginning teachers. The professional organizations consulted in this section were the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE), FLDOE, and the Mentoring/Coaching Association of Canada (MCAC), along with leaders in the education profession. The areas addressing qualities of good mentors included the ATE's mentor characteristics, assignment of mentors, the importance of mentors acting in nonjudgmental roles, and essential core themes in ATC and mentoring. Other areas covered included promoting self-efficacy, taking the lead on

support, and the main functions for effective mentoring relationships. These topics were followed by discussions of five conjunctive activities, MCAC's suggestions, and finally, the FLDOE's online mentor training program, which covered steps in conferencing with trainees, collegial coaching, sharing backgrounds, sensitivity to cultural backgrounds, and interpersonal communication skills.

### **Protégé Qualities**

The qualities of mentors have been discussed, but it is a dual partnership, and the qualities of the protégé or mentee in the mentoring relationship is also worthy of consideration. Dougherty and Turban (1994) identified successful protégé qualities. These areas addressing the qualities of good protégés included personality traits, self-directed learners, confidence, adaptability, advocating needs, and acting on advice. Personality traits were found to correlate highly with successful protégés. The authors reported that, “[T]hese personality traits included an individual's belief that he or she could influence his or her own success, sensitivity to social cues, and one's overall level of self-esteem” (p. 688).

Therefore, a developing educator is more likely to have a successful mentoring experience if he or she is a self-directed learner with a strong sense of self-efficacy, confidence, and the ability to be receptive and adapt to the culture of the school. Backing the theories of adult education, Roed (1999) suggested that protégés claim responsibility for their own professional growth and development while being dedicated to improving their own knowledge level. Furthermore, Marshall (2001) added, “[I]t is also important for protégés to be able to clearly articulate their needs” (p. 2). Other elements adding to a successful mentoring relationship are cited by Wickman and Sjodin (1997) as respecting

the mentor's time, taking action on advice provided by the mentor, showing respect for the mentor's efforts, and eventually passing on the gift of mentoring to a new protégé.

### **Reflection on Practice**

**Three knowledge domains.** Another characteristic to consider in the study of mentoring is reflection on the profession. Zimpher (1988) promoted the idea of inquiring and reflective professionals consisting of both mentors and beginning teachers. Howey (1988) reported on a successful training program for teachers that used three knowledge domains. According to Howey, "the conceptual framework for this program drew upon three distinct but related knowledge domains" (p. 211). Called *Zimpher's domains*, they included (a) research supported classroom processes, (b) multiple means of classroom observation and analysis, and (c) instructional peer supervision (p. 17). Howey concluded that "disposition toward further learning and continued growth is promoted by the ability to engage in systematic inquiry into classroom practice" (p. 212). This concept encouraged reflection on practice and professional development, a theme found throughout teacher induction literature. It also required the new teacher to continue asking questions and seeking improvement.

**Six dimensions of teacher support.** Investigating the needs of ATC participants, Cordeau's (2003) survey of school principals used six dimensions of support for alternatively certified teachers. The six dimensions of support that measured the perceptions of principals were:

1. Emotional support (includes showing appreciation for the teacher's work, showing concern, considering teacher's ideas, and being friendly);

2. Instructional leadership (includes serving as resource for teacher reflection and deliberation on instructional issues, supporting teacher's decisions, and maintaining a visible presence);
3. Instrumental support (includes helping teachers during conferences when needed, establishing channels of communication between teachers, and helping teachers with classroom discipline problems);
4. Appraisal support (includes offering constructive feedback after teacher observations and providing standards for performance);
5. Information support (includes providing suggestions for instructional improvement, identifying resource personnel to contact for specific problems, and providing information on up-to-date instructional techniques);
6. Moral responsibility (includes clarifying expectations on a set of clear and consistent values, modeling universally held values and beliefs, and helping teachers develop a sense of social and civic responsibility).

The results of Cordeau's (2003) study found that paired *t* tests revealed significant differences in the perceptions of the importance of the six dimensions of support provided for alternatively certified teachers and traditionally certified teachers.

Furthermore, significant differences were found within each of the six support dimensions for one or more items. The results of this study suggested ATC programs make changes in three areas specifically: (a) candidate selection, (b) course requirements and scheduling, and (c) field experiences. Significant differences were found based on the certification route in two of five informational support descriptors.

Providing more detail on these findings, Cordeau (2003) reported, “These differences occurred in areas related to instructional techniques ( $t(79) = 2.976, p < .01$ ), and personal coping skills ( $t(79) = 5.062, p < .01$ )” (p. 91). Furthermore, “in both instances, principals indicated these factors were more important for the supervision of alternatively certified teachers” (p. 91). Cordeau’s study also “indicated that providing information on up-to-date instructional techniques was more important for alternatively certified than for traditionally certified teachers” (p. 91). The author noted that alternatively certified teachers may experience various changes as they begin the teaching profession. Cordeau further explained that most of these “individuals have previously worked in an all-adult environment and they may be unprepared for the isolation and stress created by long term contact with children and young adults” (p. 91).

Cordeau (2003) additionally found specific descriptors that were a priority and reported that “respondents stressed the importance of the following descriptors in supporting alternative certified teachers: a. maintaining a visible presence in the classroom, and serving as a resource for teacher reflection and deliberation on instruction issues” (p. 95). The responses on the survey instrument suggested that principals believed it was necessary to have frequent contact with ATC participants, a suggestion that was also under the category of appraisal support.

**Seven mentoring roles: Business and industry.** Often business and industry can serve as role models to education in operations and training. Therefore, it may be helpful to observe how training and development take place in the business sector. Geiger (1992) created a list of seven mentoring roles in career development from business and industry. The explanations of each mentoring role were selected as they best fit into

teachers' educational environments under analysis for this present ATC study. The seven mentoring roles were communicator, counselor, coach, advisor, broker, referral agent, and advocate.

To provide a better idea of each of these seven roles, Geiger (1992) presented a brief description of each. The role of communicator involved listening to career concerns, encouraging two-way exchange of information, promoting open interaction, and setting aside uninterrupted time to meet with protégés. The role of counselor was explained as the mentor helping the trainee plan strategies to reach agreed-upon goals. The role of coach required the mentor to clarify performance goals, reinforce effective performances, and offer suggestions for improvement while serving as a role model by demonstrating desired behaviors. The next role was the advisor, which involved the mentor recommending training opportunities and strategies for career direction, reviewing developmental progress regularly, and helping to identify career obstacles and ways to solve them. The role of the broker was to help expand the trainees' professional contacts, bring together trainees that may benefit from helping one another, and help link individuals with appropriate educational opportunities. The role of referral agent involved identifying resources to help with specific problems and following up on effectiveness of these resources. Last, the advocate intervened on behalf of the trainees, represented their concerns to higher level administration, and arranged for trainees to get involved in institutional activities both professional and social.

Geiger (1992) further discussed a mentoring evaluation tool using questions that quantify the satisfaction levels in mentoring relationships. Types of questions covered included how often the pair met and how committed the mentor seemed to the time spent

together. Geiger also reported that the evaluation tool was designed around the concept of the variety of roles a mentor plays and measured the kind of help protégés received from their mentors.

**Eight qualities of mentoring.** Doerger (2003) provided a summary of eight qualities of mentoring in induction programs:

1. focus on helping novices learn to teach in accordance with professional standards;
2. are responsive to the evolving needs of individual novices and their students;
3. view becoming a good teacher as a developmental process;
4. view mentoring as a professional practice that must be learned and developed over time;
5. include careful selection, preparation, and ongoing development for new mentors;
6. involve experienced teachers as mentors and include mentors in design and evaluation;
7. are collaboratively planned, implemented, and evaluated by key stakeholders; and
8. contribute to improving teaching, learning, and learning to teach.

**Thirteen characteristics of a good mentor.** Teacher training program coordinators reported that, as a rule of thumb, teacher mentors are generally those who have taught for 5 or more years. Developing an understanding of the mentoring process requires a basic overview of highlighted areas and characteristic traits required of participants. One of the key qualities of successful mentors highlighted through reports

and in Wildman (1992) was the willingness of the experienced teacher to be a mentor in the first place. A list of mentor qualities was compiled by Wildman (1992); Abell; (1995); Huling-Austin, (1992); and Schaffer, Stringfield, and Wolfe (1992). These characteristics of a good mentor included the following:

1. having willingness to be a mentor,
2. having sensitivity to the needs of new teachers,
3. being helpful but not authoritarian,
4. being diplomatic,
5. having ability to anticipate problems,
6. being encouraging,
7. keeping beginner's problems confidential,
8. having enthusiasm about teaching,
9. being a good role model at all times,
10. having an understanding of school district policy, needs, and priorities,
11. being skilled in classroom observations,
12. having experience working with adult learners, and
13. having ability to provide timely feedback to keep new teacher apprised of successes.

### **Aspects and Benefits of Mentor-Teacher Relationships**

**Attributes of effective mentoring.** It has been established that conducting a study on the mentoring components of induction programs and providing an understanding of these elements can be a useful tool for improving overall teacher retention. This literature review was directed towards gaining a foundation for the study



of mentoring of beginning teachers, along with a review of the various activities that are involved in this process. Various types of programs were also studied in addition to the effects they have had on participants. The mentoring relationship has been found to be significant for both traditionally and alternatively certified teachers. In an article on teacher mentoring, Alderman and Milne (1998) discussed aspects and benefits of mentor teacher relationships. The authors reported that “the mentoring relationship is usually organized around supportive activities, such as: a) observation (visiting each other’s classroom), b) demonstration (coaching), c) conferencing (feedback), and d) joint preparation” (p. 229). Additionally, Alderman and Milne (1998) emphasized that a valuable skill in these relationships is interpersonal communications. More specifically, “through communication, mentors and protégés can develop along the three phases of the mentor/protégé relationship: 1. establishing the relationship, 2. getting to work, and 3. evaluation and follow-up” (p. 657).

Gratch (1998) and Hawkey (1998) also studied the mentor student teacher relationships and drew similar conclusions. Elaborating on more attributes of effective mentoring, Smith (2002) reported that “the trained mentor is able to observe, analyze the teaching in light of the criteria, and provide the protégé with substantive and specific feedback and coaching as part of the mentoring process” (p. 47).

**Tissington on ATC mentoring and coaching.** Shedding more light on the role of mentoring, Tissington (2006) studied a group of beginning teachers in an alternative certification program in an effort to understand the participants. This study was one of the unique studies that specifically looked at ATC participants and mentoring. Tissington found various suggestions from the protégés on mentoring that provides insight for this

study, including (a) teacher candidates do not want to feel they are being judged, (b) mentors are there to offer advice and guidance, and (c) close proximity is important in the mentor-protégé relationship.

The researcher also found that some participants expressed that assigned mentors made them feel safe (L. D. Tissington, personal communication, March 12, 2006). A mentoring/coaching association also found these results in their studies. The association stressed that mentors should “be able to provide constructive criticism in a non-judgmental fashion and establish an environment where the protégé feels free to make mistakes without losing self-confidence” (Coaching Association of Canada, 2001, p. 2).

The other areas that stood out in Tissington’s (2006) study as needing attention were relationships, classroom management, and someone to take initiative to ask and keep tabs on a new person (personal communication). Negatives in the mentor-protégé relationship occurred when mentors felt things had to be done their way and mentors were friendly with administrators. The situation of working with mentors who are close with administrators was discussed by Tissington as being a part of school politics.

Also mentioned in the results of Tissington’s (2006) study was that mentoring is more effective when the mentors volunteered for the task and were not assigned by administrators. Tissington additionally noted the importance of beginning teachers knowing that their mentors are not judging or evaluating them (L. D. Tissington, personal communication, March 12, 2006). This was a recurring theme throughout the literature review on mentoring. Tissington concluded that the essential core themes in exploring the meaning of mentorship are (a) school politics (culture of the school), (b) proximity

(mentor and protégé locations convenient to one another), (c) relationships (between the dyad), and (d) classroom management (observations, questions, techniques, reflections).

**Danin's ATC mentoring study.** The focus of Danin (1998) was to investigate provisionally licensed teachers' perceptions of alternative certification induction programs. Through this study, Danin asserted that successful induction programs promote teacher mentorships. Danin found that "many teachers base their initial professional achievements on their mentor's help in solving problems" (p. 120). Furthermore, Danin discovered that "several teachers who participated in this study based their satisfaction with their induction program on the quality of the mentorship experience" (p. 120). More specifically, Danin explained that those who viewed their mentor relationship positively generally gave higher ratings to the quality of the program than those who viewed their mentor relationship negatively.

Danin (1998) developed his survey instrument from common elements found in various teacher induction programs. Danin's survey was developed using criteria from research representing critical factors present in successful induction programs for teachers. Danin examined many factors in teacher training with a main focus on the area of mentoring. A common finding in Danin's study was that "having a skillful mentor can be the difference between a productive school year or one full of frustration and failure" (p. 102). Danin's research question pertaining to which activities participants believed led to their success generated a high level of support for mentors being the key contributor and a low level of support for factors such as parent conferences, pacing lessons, assessing student work, sequencing activities, and so on. Equally of interest for

mentors was the link Danin found between the opportunity to practice teaching skills while still involved in an induction program and success as a teacher.

**Uttley's ATC mentoring study.** Uttley (2006) used Danin's (1998) survey instrument to conduct a study on an ATC program and the component of mentoring. Analyzing the impact of beginning ATC teacher's mentoring experiences on attrition rates, Uttley found results that may prove useful for program leaders and researchers. Among the results in the study were some areas that received a lower rating than most. The researcher attributed lower scores in these areas to a maturational period with certain activities taking a longer time to develop. Uttley explained that "instruction skills (planning lessons, keeping students involved, and dealing with discipline issues) tend to take longer to develop than the skills above 4.0. (showing care for students, locating materials, and working with supervisors)" (p. 60).

Another aspect of the Uttley (2006) study involved asking participants to rate their level of success with various tasks and the quality of mentoring in those same areas. The study found that teachers' overall success was consistently rated higher than the quality of mentoring. Uttley responded to these results by stating that they

could be attributed to a lack of recognition of the impact that mentoring had on the level of success, specifically in those areas that are isolated to teaching where there would be a lack of prior experiences that would lead to success. (p. 61)

Uttley further explained that "an additional possibility was that the teachers over rated their perceived success level" (p. 61). Among the activities listed in the survey, the lowest rated ones were time to observe and time to consult with other teachers. The results indicated that 83.3% of the teachers rated these as necessary activities.

A different research question in Uttley's (2006) study investigated how ATC participants perceived the importance of various components of mentoring. The results

of this portion of the survey revealed that 90.7 % of the beginning teachers rated conducting parent conferences as a necessary area needing mentoring. It was interesting to find that this activity was reported as taking place in only 42.6% of the induction programs. The area of pacing lessons was rating by 92.6% of the beginning teachers as being necessary for assistance from mentors, and this activity was reported to happen in only 57.4% of the induction programs. Uttley concluded that “the evidence points to the need to include all of these activities for a mentoring program to be successful in meeting the needs of first year alternatively certified teachers” (p. 62).

Other areas that stood out in the results of the study were expectations for students and understanding the influence of the physical environment. All of the respondents in the study rated these as areas they would like help with from their mentors. Further interpreting data results, Uttley (2006) reported that “there was a correlation coefficient of .70 between the mean, perceived quality of mentoring, and perceived levels of success” (p. 72). Furthermore, “an r-squared of .71 indicated that nearly 72% of the variance in success could be attributed to the perceived quality of mentoring” (p. 72). “A significant finding of this study suggested that quality mentoring leads to high levels of perceived success” (Uttley, 2006, p. 72).

### **Florida Department of Education Online Mentor Training Program**

Since the FLDOE (2008) regulates alternative certification programs in the state of Florida, it may be beneficial to examine some of the segments from its online alternative certification program mentor training lessons. One aspect of this online program listed the steps for mentors to follow in the process of conferencing with trainees about their performance: (a) pre-observation; (b) observation (collection of data); (c) data

analysis and strategy session, including identifying patterns of behavior and making comparisons with previous observations; (d) determining whether criteria for success were satisfied, and (e) planning for post observation. Post observation and the post observation conference included (a) reviewing agreements, (b) discussing data, (c) analyzing patterns, (d) identifying behaviors to maintain, (e) increasing, (f) reducing or eliminating, and (g) scheduling the next observation or conference. Post observation analysis included (a) reflecting on performance, (b) specifying and documenting each person's responsibility, and (c) developing an overall strategy.

Another area of training for mentors by FLDOE (2008) introduced a different concept in the activity of ACPs, that of collegial coaching. Using the term *collegial* or *shared responsibility* helps establish an interactive relationship. It was reported that the term *coach* tended to be more user friendly than referring to the mentoring process as *directing, training, or evaluating*. Collegial coaching was described by the FLDOE (2007) as giving the teachers data in a supportive climate and providing them the opportunity for skill development. The FLDOE listed a variety of ways in which the mentor interacts with the new teacher in a collegial coach role: (a) pre-conferencing to determine objective strategies and observer role, (b) helping the developing teacher to analyze and evaluate work performance decisions, and (c) enabling the developing teacher to select topics for discussion. The FLDOE also listed a range of coaching skills needed by mentors: (a) interpersonal communication skills, (b) ability to observe and collect data related to specific teaching, (c) ability to provide feedback and reinforcement, (d) broad observation and data collection techniques, and (e) ability to facilitate in depth.

The department informed mentor trainees that “new teachers can experience a sense of isolation and remoteness from peer teachers” (FLDOE, 2008). It was suggested that mentors help developing teachers “identify and feel involved with the learning community” (FLDOE, 2008). In the FLDOE mentor training program, a section focused on the alternative certification participant’s progress. It was suggested that when mentors take on the role of monitoring and assessing, they “exhibit a climate conducive to change, and be positive, genuine, and authentic to build the rapport needed to work successfully with the developing teacher” (FLDOE, 2008).

Some other areas of importance mentioned were that mentors need to be emotionally and intellectually supportive while being careful to allow the new teacher to keep self-esteem while looking at areas that need improvement. Some of the listed items describing the role of the mentor that stood out were that mentors should learn about the new teacher’s background and share their own background or experiences. This area stood out because it helps humanize mentors who may be hesitant to get too personal in an effort to maintain professionalism. The list also included being sensitive to the various cultural backgrounds or communication styles of developing teachers, and letting them know it is crucial to take an active role in their own learning.

The FLDOE additionally reminded mentors in training that the teacher’s growth process is highly vulnerable to nonverbal and verbal communications. The mentor training expanded on the area of interpersonal communication skills (ICS). The ICS portion of the program addressed four communication skills:

1. Clarification (questions used to gain more information about the teacher’s thinking);

2. Perception checking (questions used to gain information about how the new teacher is feeling);
3. Empathy (statements that identify with and express an understanding of the trainee's position);
4. Concrete examples (statements that refer to actual events and behaviors of the new teacher during observations).

In summary of the FLDOE mentor training program, the process of mentoring involved “diagnosing professional performance for improvement, conferring with professionals about their performance, and monitoring and assessing the process” (FLDOE, 2008). The areas of observation and data collection for diagnosing the new teacher's performance were deemed necessary to be an effective mentor.

**Self-reported description of the mentoring experience.** Studying the activities of successful mentoring programs and looking for traits that stand out can be an effective tool in creating and maintaining other programs. It is also useful to solicit input on what teaching participants are having negative experiences with, in an effort to focus more attention on those areas. Darling-Hammond (2003) explained that “[R]ecruits from alternative certification programs tend to have difficulty with curriculum development, teaching methods, classroom management, and student motivation” (p. 13).

Distinguishing between these types of programs and quality programs, Darling-Hammond compiled a list of traits that successful ATC programs implement.

The list, referred to as the characteristics of exemplary preparation programs, contains the following: “such programs last from 9 to 15 months, provide an intensive extended field experience of at least 30 weeks in the classrooms of expert teachers, and



integrate these internships with corresponding strong academic and pedagogical course work” (Darling-Hammond, 2003, p. 13). The population in the study described was from two Midwestern urban school districts. The school district staff collaborated with faculty from an urban university on the design and delivery of the alternate route programs. The study found that the beginning teachers’ reflections on learning indicated that their learning involved observation, practice, and application with feedback from their mentors. The teachers reported that their learning was further facilitated by their mentors, who assisted them with curriculum design and modeled effective planning.

Jorissen (2003) further discovered,

[W]hat the participants in the study remembered most about their mentors was that their mentors were approachable, knowledgeable about educational theory and practice, respected by parents, energetic, concerned about diversity, innovative, organized, and most importantly, skilled and caring in working with students. (p. 4)

Jorissen noted that the relationships between mentors and novices were a most crucial element in the program and were essential for competence and professional identity.

Looking further into Jorissen’s study, “an analysis of the interviews revealed that mentoring served multiple purposes for the interns” (p. 5). Jorissen found, “The support of expert mentors mediated the development of competence and identity through improvement of teaching performance, the facilitation of transfer of knowledge from teacher education, the promotion of personal and professional well-being, and socialization to the institutional culture” (p. 5).

Jorissen (2003) also provided a self-reported description of the interns’ relationships with their mentors: “My mentor helped just by being there to let me share things, we talked through things, it gave me a feeling of security, she gave me freedom to make mistakes, worked with me as a partner, valued the experience I brought” (p. 6).

Jorissen also noted that “in addition to practicing the role of teacher; interns observed their mentors, which assisted in acquiring a new identity” (p. 6). The author found that within one year, beginning interns’ concerns shifted away from self and toward student outcomes. Jorissen concluded that “daily contact with an experienced teacher mentor provided the emotional and technical support essential for the development of competence and professional identity, as the teachers applied their operational knowledge in a realistic setting” (p. 6).

### **National College and District Program Recommendations**

#### **Benedictine University seminar on successful ATC mentoring relationships.**

Presenting results of a study on mentoring of ATC candidates, Benedictine University in Illinois, conducted a seminar on mentor training. The university representatives provided suggestions for successful mentor protégé relationships at the 2006 National Association of Alternative Certification seminar. Among these suggestions were diagnosing problems, providing on-site help, establishing trust, acting as a nonjudgmental resource, being on site, writing a reflection to detect needs for help, having no evaluative responsibility, and observing and modeling teaching. The presentation also indicated that, in efforts to retain new alternative certification teachers, the training programs must remember that many of the candidates are coming from successful career fields. These fields were usually highly differentiated from the teaching environment. It is crucial that the alternative certification teacher knows how to find help when needed and feels secure in asking for assistance.

Further stressing this idea, the Benedictine University researchers (Benedictine University faculty, personal communication, March 2006) found that, when problems

occur, newly trained ATC teachers need to know there is someone to turn to who will support them and not evaluate them. Considering attributes from the other side of the mentor and protégé relationship to be successful, the beginning teacher must exhibit a willingness to learn. The presenters warned that, if a candidate is not having any problems at all, something is wrong. It is desirable for beginning teachers to collaborate with mentors and seek assistance. Additionally, the Benedictine University representatives suggested, in working with nonresponsive protégés or interns, the mentors share personal experiences of what worked for them in similar situations.

**Wisconsin Education Association task force.** Examining the traits of successful mentoring dyads further, the Wisconsin Education Association Task Force (2005) suggested that mentors have a minimum of 3 years teaching experience; however, 5-plus years of experience are preferred. Another recommendation for mentoring programs was the importance of clarity and consistency in communicating expectations to both mentors and protégés. Other recommendations included commitment (from pairs for a minimum of a year), safeguarding continuity through schedule of communication, contact negotiated and structured at the start, and a site visit by the mentor to the protégé's classroom early in the year (to move the relationship beyond the theoretical to the actual).

**Logistics and support from school principals.** The task force also discussed the logistics aspect of mentoring programs. The logistics are reported as a crucial component of a successful mentoring program because busy professionals are expected to add more duties to their already full workdays. Also referring to this component, Monsour (2003) emphasized that mentors and protégés work in close proximity to facilitate frequent communication. The ideal time for the mentoring assignment and meeting is believed to

be in August during orientation, before teacher workshop days begin. Securing support from school principals is viewed as a crucial element that adds to the success of a mentoring program. Such support would include involvement in classroom management training (Stallion & Zimpher, 1991).

More specifically, Stallion and Zimpher (1991) strongly advised that principals help to create a supportive environment for protégés, including insulating them from evaluation. The authors reported that requiring a mentor to evaluate a protégé would not be appropriate. This non-evaluative role is emphasized throughout mentoring literature. Placing a mentor in a role of an evaluator can undermine trust and openness between mentor and mentee. Once mentors are evaluators, it is virtually impossible to continue the mentoring relationship in an honest and productive manner. Stallion and Zimpher suggested other ways for principals to support mentoring programs.

For programs to be successful Stallion and Zimpher (1991) reported that school principals need to do the following:

1. Openly commit to the idea of mentoring as a priority in retaining quality teachers and providing ongoing staff development;
2. Attend the same training that orients the mentors and protégés to the program and gain an understanding of processes and goals, then match mentors with protégés carefully (taking into account such factors as learning styles);
3. Anticipate the opportunity to request a different mentor and schedule time for mentors and protégés to meet, such as common lunch or prep time;
4. Provide release time for the pair to attend training sessions and required workshops;

5. Handle the logistics early in the school year to allow the mentor to observe in the protégé's classroom and the protégé to observe in the mentor's classroom;
6. Communicate to staff, community, and district administrators about the mentoring program's rationale and the activities and achievements of its participants; and
7. Provide public recognition for program participants, such as awards, a lunch, and articles in the local newspaper.

### **California District's Support Programs**

**Guidelines for mentors.** While many induction programs have similarities, they also have variations that are worth examining more closely. Some of the literature in the area of mentoring described the actual training mentors receive, aside from their teaching experience, and also provided a type of guideline to assist mentors. Moir and Bloom (2003) described the fostering of leadership through mentoring in their article, which covered a study that examined California districts' support programs. As a result of the study, Moir and Bloom found that "effective mentors must be able to observe and communicate; track a new teacher's immediate needs and broader concerns; and know when to elicit a new teacher's thoughts and when to provide concrete advice" (p. 58). The mentor training included such "topics as creating a vision of quality teaching, identifying new teacher's needs, understanding the phases of new teacher development, selecting support strategies, assessing a beginning teacher's practice, and reaching professional standards in mentoring" (p. 58).

According to Moir and Bloom (2003), other mentor training required participation in 2-day training sessions on coaching and observation. These sessions focused on

specific techniques for observing new teachers, collecting classroom performance data, using the data to assist beginning teachers develop improvement plans, relating classroom observations to the California Standards for Teaching Profession, and establishing trusting professional relationships. Mentors also participated in forums that provided them with ongoing professional development. The mentoring program in this article was in its 15th year of operation when the study and analysis were conducted. The success of this program has led it to be adopted in many other states around the country. The program has served more than 9,000 new teachers and trained more than 90 full-time

### **Recommendations for Mentor Programs**

**Michigan school districts.** Some unique recommendations for mentor programs found in the literature are provided by Conway (2003), as the result of an inquiry of 13 school districts in Michigan. The researcher found that many new teachers reported that mentors were often not assigned until the school year was well underway. The participants in this study suggested that early identification of mentor scheduling take place and opportunities be provided for mentors and protégés to get acquainted in their roles and relationships. The researcher also found that the participants in the inquiry highlighted the need for their mentor programs to provide social opportunities to get acquainted with one another. Conroy found that “teachers’ perceptions of the value of the program appear to be connected with the degree and type of contact with the assigned mentor” (p. 7). Additionally, “teachers who had opportunities for getting to know one another outside of the mentor relationship felt that these more social opportunities helped the mentor relationship” (p. 7).

**Cincinnati peer assistance and evaluation program.** Several researchers throughout educational literature on teacher induction programs discovered that formal programs produce dramatic changes for new teachers. Some of these changes included higher retention rates, improved attitudes, feelings of efficacy, greater sense of control, and utilization of a wider range of instructional strategies. The term *formal* is used here to differentiate from certification methods that do not contain carefully planned objectives and support. Smith (2002) discovered that “among districts with programs involving mentoring and other support, findings suggest reduced attrition compared to “national standards (7 percent compared to national estimates showing 9.3 percent)” (p. 47). Furthermore, “The U.S. Department of Education has found that formalizing the mentor role for experienced teachers creates another niche in the career ladder for teachers and contributes to the profession of education” (p. 48). Smith also highlighted the Cincinnati Peer Assistance and Evaluation Program (PAEP) for mentoring. The PAEP seeks to address problems in school districts, including how to gain adequate time to evaluate teachers, how to help inexperienced teachers, and how to help improve teachers at risk for dismissal. Furthermore, PAEP mentors are given two years off from their classroom duties in order to supervise beginning teachers and evaluate and support veteran teachers who are experiencing difficulties in their classrooms.

**University of Wisconsin-River Falls’s study on beginning teachers.** In an article on what makes mentoring work, Monsour (2003) conducted a study of a beginning teacher assistance program at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. This program developed partnerships with local school districts. Through workshop evaluations, journals, surveys, and taped interviews, the author generated data from mentors and

beginning teachers working in the elementary and secondary schools. Monsour found that, “in successful mentoring relationships, mentors and protégés met on a weekly or daily basis and had frequent telephone or mail contact” (p. 39). Furthermore, “monthly contact appeared to be the minimum for sustaining the relationship” (p. 39).

Monsour (2003) further noted that, “aside from frequent contact, successful mentor relationships were characterized by trust, openness, and confidentiality” (p. 39). The author found that successful mentors were flexible and not judgmental. It is interesting to note that, though mentors and protégés were formally assigned, it proved crucial that there was an assumption of friendship. These personal relationships between mentors and protégés were reported to form by participants’ structuring time to share ideas, in addition to attending monthly workshops. The workshop topics included classroom management, parent conferences, and special education referrals. Also interesting is that the time spent driving together proved invaluable, along with preparation and break-times. The protégés were reported to need the most help in the areas of classroom discipline, daily routines, office procedures, communication with parents, grading, and evaluation.

Monsour’s (2003) research study focused on beginning teachers’ development; however, it also revealed that the mentors benefited from sharing ideas, problem solving with protégés, and developing new strategies together. The author also found that mentors in the program kept protégés on top of their practice by requiring them to be more organized, reviewing their teaching techniques, improving communications, and maintaining unity with other teachers working at the same grade level. Monsour pointed out that “the dynamic of a successful mentoring relationship develops the protégé into a



true peer” (p. 134). The evaluation of the Beginning Teacher Assistance Program in this article revealed various problems and obstacles, resulting in a number of recommendations. One recommendation highlighted was that mentors chosen to work with beginning teachers should be exemplary and respected in their field.

### **Alternative Options in Florida and Various Models**

Former West Coast School District ATC director, V. Meridith (personal communication, October 2, 2005), reported that the options for certification in Florida include traditional programs, master programs, and practitioner programs. The model for the traditional program consists of the regular 4-year teacher bachelor’s degree with assigned internships integrated into the program. The model for the master program consists of the option to apply 50% of earned credits toward a master’s degree in teaching at the university level. The model for the practitioner program or the Transition to Teaching Program consists of three parts. First, the participant must demonstrate proficiency in the Accomplished Practices for Educators:

- Assessment
- Communication
- Continuous Improvement
- Critical Thinking
- Diversity
- Ethics
- Human Development and Learning
- Knowledge of Subject Matter
- Learning Environments

- Planning
- Role of the Teacher
- Technology.

Second, the Transition to Teaching participants must gain teaching experience under the supervision and guidance of a trained support team. Third, the program participants must gain professional development training that is designed to provide quality learning opportunities. Furthermore, the West Coast County Transition to Teaching Program is designed to provide non-education majors with bachelor degrees the opportunity to be trained as educators. Under this model, the new teacher would be able to complete all certification requirements locally with minimal expense. When the program is successfully completed, the teacher may apply for a professional certificate.

A west coast Florida private college uses a similar approach to teacher training as its neighboring school district. The college coordinator for the west coast Florida alternative teacher certification program highlighted the design of the curriculum as a cohort model that “moves backwards” (E. Wetmiller, personal communication, April 28, 2008). Instead of taking courses prior to entering a teaching setting, the participants are hired first; then, they engage in course work and training. Part of the training includes 16 sessions of workshops or seminars on professional development that include classroom management. These sessions are held at various locations in the district. The mentors of these developing teachers have the role of ensuring they are meeting the competency expectations for the program. In regard to the training process, the college alternative certification coordinator referred to a speech given by the widely acclaimed education

author and researcher, Haberman described the 10 attributes of an alternative certification program (ACP) at a 1994 ATC convention.

Wetmiller discussed some of these attributes described by Haberman that highlighted the mentoring role: (a) faculty instructing the teacher candidates are classroom teachers working as on-site mentors, (b) admission to the program requires the candidates go through the hiring process and work as a beginning teacher (ACP works backwards until the individual is hired) (c) candidates land a job, and (d) then they are put through the preparation process.

To explain the importance of alternative options, the Florida west coast district cautioned that the program cannot afford to lose talented and qualified candidates by placing these adults into an extended curriculum of courses without employment. The school district ATC coordinator, Wetmiller (2008) further explained that many of the candidates have worked in other careers for years, have families to care for, and several adult life roles to serve in. These teacher candidates often cannot afford to go back to college and take an entire program of studies and course work.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this research study was to explore how college ATC participants experience mentoring while at the college and in their field experience. To provide an understanding of the relationship dynamics between mentee and mentor, along with a foundation of knowledge on ATC and mentoring, several literature threads were presented. Theoretical perspectives on ATC and mentoring included an overview of theoretical approaches through models of learning, dimensions of support, domains of

learning, knowledge domains, reflections on practice, hierarchical needs, and self-efficacy theory.

The overview of literature also included studies conducted resulting in reported needs of mentees and mentors, along with recommendations from state universities, colleges, districts, and business and industry on best mentoring practices. To provide a foundation for this study more specific information was provided on the status of ATC in the state of Florida. Also, college and district program reviews were provided along with in-depth information from the Florida Department of Education. In the next chapter, the research design, methods, measures, and data collection procedures for this study are presented.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methods**

The purpose of this research study was to explore how college alternative teacher certification (ATC) participants experience mentoring while at the college and in their field experiences. The goal of the research study was to obtain a rich and deep understanding of the nature of the mentoring experience in a college ATC program through the perspectives of mentees and their mentors. In addition, the research study results were directed towards promoting the retention of ATC teachers through successful mentoring in teacher induction programs.

The sections of this chapter include the following: study participants, setting of study, research questions, researcher's experience, population and sample, demographics, instrumentation, data collection, the Institutional Review Board, validity and reliability of the study, and summary.

#### **Mentoring Support Team**

The mentoring support team provides various types of services to the student teachers. The courses that the instructor mentors provide for the Educator Preparation Institute (EPI) students include classroom management, instructional strategies, technology in education, teaching and learning process, foundations of language, professional foundations, diversity in the classroom, and field experiences (North Florida Community College, 2008).

Providing examples on some of the roles that EPI mentors may have, an EPI program coordinator mentor explained the following: instructor mentors teach the EPI students and may hold rap sessions, coach, discuss issues teachers may face, and collaborate with the program coordinator. The coordinator mentor further explained that her roles may include some of the following activities: having an active mentoring role in the program, interviewing students before entering the program, developing an education plan with the students, advising EPI students, addressing issues on job attainment and security, working on EPI students field experience and professional development review, meeting with the EPI instructors, and possibly observing EPI students teaching in the field.

It was reported that the field-based mentor models teaching to the EPI students and may observe EPI students teaching. The field-based mentor may also provide feedback to EPI students on field assignments and discuss observations with EPI students. Instructor mentors, the coordinator mentor, and field mentors may also address any concerns EPI students are having (M. Ratliff, personal communication, April 5, 2010).

### **Setting for Study**

The participants in the study were also given the opportunity to elaborate on any concerns or suggestions for the program. The type of mentoring examined for this study was not the traditional mentoring carried out in the schools while the beginning teacher is on the job. It involved the combined efforts of the EPI instructor, EPI field mentors, and EPI program coordinator in providing support to EPI teacher trainees as they proceeded through the college teacher training program.

In designing the research questions and interview schedule, the researcher used some of the mentoring experiences and themes found by Danin's University of Denver (1998) study on provisionally licensed teachers participating in an alternative certification program (see Appendix A). Danin incorporated the themes for his study from previously implemented educational questionnaires and a thorough review of literature on the topic. These themes included the individual concerns of emotional support, time scheduled for observation, and time scheduled for consultation.

The study also examined the EPI program structure and activities. This information was triangulated with information from the interviews to provide a broader view of the program. The research questions were derived in part from Danin (1998), the literature review for this study, and discussions with ATC leaders and professional educators in the field of ATC. Discussions with the experts in the field confirmed the themes found in Danin's study and the literature review.

Recurring themes found in the extensive literature review conducted for this study were used in conjunction with Danin's themes. These themes from the literature review were collaborative relationship, observing modeled lessons, being observed, mentor role as nonjudgmental, relationship based on trust and confidentiality, expectations clarified, specific feedback provided, and self-directed learning (see Appendix B). The interview schedule (see Appendix C) was derived from Danin's (1998) themes and the literature review for this study.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. How do EPI students describe the mentoring support provided by their EPI instructor mentors, field mentors, and program coordinator?
2. How do the EPI instructor mentor, field mentors, and program coordinator describe the mentoring support they provide to EPI students?
3. What is satisfying about the mentoring relationship?
4. What is challenging about the mentoring relationship?
5. What themes and perceptions reflect the EPI student's decision to complete the college teaching program?

### **Researcher's Experience**

As a former Hillsborough County K-12 school teacher and Pasco-Hernando Community College academic advisor, the researcher has participated in the mentoring relationship as a protégé and also as a mentor. Other mentoring experiences were received working as an assistant to the St. Petersburg College coordinator of a program for adult women re-entering the work force. Having been through the traditional track rather than the alternative track to become a licensed teacher may be viewed as a potential bias for this researcher. However, as a graduate student, engaging in various research projects has provided a number of opportunities to practice researcher objectivity. Understanding that the researcher, of necessity, becomes part of the study, previous research experiences were applied in an effort to counter any unintended teacher bias. The researcher has no affiliation with the college investigated for this study and had not worked at nor participated in any internships at this college.

The researcher has also participated in Florida Department of Education and National Association of Alternative Certification mentor workshops designed to train



college faculty and staff to mentor nontraditional college students. Attending an EPI training seminar at Hillsborough Community College in 2010 for teacher candidates provided a working knowledge base on the topic for this study. Having served in the role as both protégé and mentor in the educational system also provided personal experience to help in organizing and carrying out this study, as well as providing the experience needed to generate the research questions.

To prepare for the topic of alternative teacher certification, the researcher participated in an internship assisting an EPI coordinator at St. Petersburg College with the operation of the college EPI program. The researcher additionally attended a national ATC/mentoring conference in Chicago where ATC seminars were given through the National Association of Alternative Certification (NAAC). The NAAC selected this study to receive a national grant. The researcher also observed a Hillsborough Community College EPI entrance interview and field experience seminar. In preparation for this study, the researcher talked to leading scholars and authors around the country on the topic of ATC and throughout the state of Florida on the topic of EPI.

In addition, the researcher studied counseling and adult education for her master's degree, which was helpful for the interviewing and interaction processes involved in this study. Finally, the course work taken for the doctoral degree in higher education provided the researcher with a foundation on research design and college administration. Research design knowledge was helpful in obtaining resources and designing the processes for this study. The higher education administrative knowledge was also helpful in understanding program development, management, mission, and implementation processes at the college.

## **Population and Sample**

The target population was EPI students at or near the end of their college teacher training program. All study participants were associated with one community college. The target population included college EPI students, a college instructor mentor from the program, the program coordinator mentor, and field mentors. The number of participants in the study was eight: four college program EPI students, one college program ATC mentor, one college program EPI coordinator mentor, and two field mentors. The field mentors were aligned with the EPI students in the research study. The field mentors who were interviewed were the same mentors who worked with the EPI students in this study.

Regarding the number of subjects to use in a qualitative study, Merriam (1998) found that there is no ideal number but advocated trying to select between 4 to 10 cases to generate theory with some complexity and empirical grounding that can be convincing. Merriam further noted that more than 10 cases can be overwhelming with the large amount of data and complexity involved. Discussing the use of different types of participants, Merriam pointed out the benefit of soliciting the experiences and perceptions of individuals from a single setting who function in various roles. “In a qualitative case study of a community school program, for example, a holistic picture of the program would involve the experiences and perceptions of people having different associations with the program-administrator, teachers, students, and community residents” ( p. 83).

The sampling was deliberate and the subjects in this study were all located in Florida. The participants were selected from an experimentally accessible college population as described by Glass & Hopkins, (1996). They were from diverse areas in the local cities surrounding the community college where this study took place.

Purposeful sampling was used to identify participants for this study with a focus on qualitative research methods seeking to provide rich data as detailed by Lincoln & Guba, (1985). In referring to qualitative studies and selection of participants, Eisenhardt (2002) pointed out that “random selection is neither necessary nor even preferable” (p. 12). Expanding on this point, Eisenhardt (2002) added that “the goal of theoretical sampling is to choose cases which are likely to replicate or extend the emergent theory” (p. 13). Through personal contact with mentors and mentees in the college EPI program, the coordinator mentor and instructor mentor helped to refer participants who were able to contribute to the study and fulfill the needs of the study.

To begin the process of participant selection the researcher contacted the program coordinator mentor. EPI participants were referred by the program coordinator mentor and instructor mentor using a criterion reference. The program coordinator mentor also referred the instructor mentor and field mentors to participate in the study. The instructor mentor was recommended for study participation based on the amount of time spent and interaction with program participants. The program only used two field mentors and they both participated in this study. EPI student participants in this study were referred based on a representation of specialization areas, gender, race or ethnicity, and varying levels of success to help with generalizability. Study participant EPI students were referred who were specializing in elementary education, middle school science, high school dropout prevention, and ESOL/Spanish teaching. The gender and race or ethnicity of the EPI student participants referred for the study included one white male, one white female, one Hispanic female, and one African American female. The gender and race or ethnicity of

the mentor participants in the study included two white females, one white male, and one Hispanic female.

To help provide a well-rounded perspective of the EPI program, the coordinator and office personnel, along with the program instructor were requested to refer EPI students for the study who displayed different levels of success. The researcher sought participants who were doing well and participants who were struggling in the program according to the EPI faculty and staff. Emphasizing research participant selection in qualitative studies, Merriam (1998) explained that:

Unlike survey research in which the number and representativeness of the sample are major considerations, in this type of research the crucial factor is not the number of respondents but the potential of each person to contribute to the development of insight and understanding of the phenomenon. (p. 83)

### **Study Participants**

There were eight participants in the study. Four of the participants were EPI program mentors employed at the college; the other four were teacher candidates enrolled in the EPI college program. The college mentors (program coordinator, program instructor, and program field mentors) were in second or third careers after working in the K-12 school system in leadership positions. All of the mentors had extensive backgrounds in the field of education.

The mentor participants were concerned with their daily scheduling and needed to carefully arrange the date and time of their interview in conjunction with their work demands. Some of the mentors had additional jobs outside the EPI program at other schools and colleges. The EPI students in the study were all in their second careers and their second fields of study. The EPI students had many characteristics in common: all were highly motivated to become certified as teachers, each one of them had family

responsibilities and needed to arrange their EPI schedule accordingly, and the teacher candidates had jobs at the same time they were studying to become teachers.

For purposes of this research, the participants were assigned codes to protect their confidentiality rather than using personal names. These codes are presented below:

For the mentor participants:

Coordinator Mentor = CM

Field Mentor 1 = FM1

Field Mentor 2 = FM2

Instructor Mentor = IM.

For the mentee participants:

Student 1 = S1

Student 2 = S2

Student 3 = S3

Student 4 = S4.

**EPI mentors.** The coordinator mentor (CM) had an educational doctorate degree and a long history in the field of education. She also taught at a local university in a teacher education program. The CM projected enthusiasm for her role in helping individuals become teachers. This study participant maintained a receptive and caring demeanor during the interview and also appeared well organized and passionate in discussing the EPI program. When asked a question, the CM became deeply reflective and very expressive with her hand movements. The CM had a full schedule as program coordinator, managing the EPI faculty and staff as well as the students.

The only male mentor in the study was the instructor mentor (IM). The IM had a history of service in several leadership positions in the field of education; among these was his position as a principal at four different schools. The IM also worked with students of varying exceptionalities at a local elementary school in addition to his position at the college EPI program. This study participant maintained a serious yet caring tone when discussing the EPI students. The IM was very pressed for time, checking his watch often during the interview sessions.

Field mentor 1 (FM1) was the main field experience mentor and was in charge of all field mentoring that took place. Before becoming an EPI program mentor, FM1 was head of the county learning disabilities school program. FM1 retired from her EPI college mentor position shortly after the last meeting. FM1 was concerned about her time and gave shorter responses than some of the other participants. Probing techniques were used to promote more elaboration from FM1. FM1 was responsible for approximately 200 EPI students and had a demanding schedule.

Field mentor 2 (FM2) had an educational doctorate degree and had spent 45 years in the field of education. She worked many years as a school teacher and as a site-based and district-level administrator. During the time of this study, FM2 was teaching at a local university while working in the college EPI program. This study participant was professional and projected a nurturing side when discussing the EPI students. FM2 discussed the interview questions with consistent eye contact, calmness, and patience.

**EPI mentees.** Student 1 (S1) brought a plethora of knowledge to the classroom with a background in archeology and anthropology. This study participant worked as an archeologist and had earned a bachelor's degree in anthropology. She worked as a

director of special projects for a nonprofit organization at the time of the interviews. S1 balanced her job and the EPI program with her duties as wife and mother of a son in elementary school. S1 was eager to discuss the EPI program. She seemed to approach her challenges with determination and self-assuredness, which were communicated in her interviews as she displayed confidence and the drive to be proactive. S1 reported that she enjoyed working with the EPI mentoring team, but found the fieldwork arrangement to be stressful and confusing. S1 wanted more guidance with the EPI program field experience and more hands-on practice as a student teacher.

Student 2 (S2) had a bachelor's degree in criminology and worked as a teacher substitute while completing the EPI program. She also had to balance her roles as worker, student, wife, and mother of a toddler. This study participant was relaxed and joyful in the interviews while reflecting on and discussing the topics. S2 reported that she was pleased to finally pursue her dream of becoming a certified teacher. This study participant found areas of the EPI curriculum confusing and wanted more guidance with the fieldwork aspect of the program.

Student 3 (S3) had a degree in business and a certificate in real estate. She sold real estate and worked with mortgages and insurance before deciding to become a teacher. S3 was married with two young children at home. S3 was very frustrated with the management of the EPI program. This EPI student began the first interview with reluctance indicated by her crossed arms. As the interview progressed, the tempo changed, and S3 became trusting, calm, and reflective. S3 was serious about getting into her new career and happy to share her plans in the interview. Navigating through the EPI

program was somewhat of a struggle for S3. The interview tone became emotional when S3 discussed disappointments in the program.

S4 was the only male student who participated in the study. His bachelor's degree was in business management, and he had worked in the corporate field for several years before deciding to pursue teaching as a career. S4 was newly hired as a 3rd-grade elementary school teacher at the time of his interviews for this study. As a husband and father of a young son and step-daughter, he also had to balance his work, school, and family life while completing the EPI program. This study participant began the interview hesitant to elaborate on the questions asked. As the interview progressed, S4 unfolded his arms and began to relax and share his experiences. S4 was very confident in his ability to achieve his goals and was considering the pursuit of a graduate degree in the future. S4 took extra measures while in the EPI program to gain in-depth learning. This individual was pleased with the course work curriculum, but somewhat disappointed that the program design did not provide an avenue for more skill development in courses and field experiences.

### **Demographics**

**County demographics.** The study was conducted using participants from a multi-campus community college located in a large county in the west Gulf Coast region of Florida. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the county residents had a median household income of \$40,663 while the median income for a family was \$48,223. Males had a median income of \$34,111 as opposed to \$26,962 for females. The per capita income for the county was \$21,812, and 9.1% of families and 12.5% of the population were below the poverty line, including 17.2% of those under age 18 and 10.0% of those



senior citizens aged 65 or over. The county is also ranked as having the eighth largest school district in the United States. Seventy-eight percent of the residents in the county are White, 17.5% are Black, and 23% are Hispanic.

**College demographics.** The research participants in this study were adults who were either mentors or were being mentored in an ATC program at a large public, multi-campus, urban community college in west central Florida. The college had five campuses and an unduplicated enrollment of 42,278 students (M. Ratliff, personal communication, March 7, 2010). The college vision included assisting lifelong learners of a diverse community to reach their greatest potential in a global society. The 2006-2007 total college race/ethnicity enrollment for African Americans was at 20.1%, American Indians 0.4%, Asians 4.0%, Hispanic 20.8%, and Caucasians 55.8%. The total number of individuals whose race and ethnicity was not reported was 444. Total College enrollment by gender for 2006-2007 was 55.9% female and 44.1% male.

The average age of the student body was 25.6 years for credit enrollment, and 36.5 years for noncredit enrollment. All students at the college ranged in age from 16.6 to 88.9. This college had a slightly younger student body average age compared to the rest of the United States. The American Association of Colleges and Universities (2010) reported the average age of credit-seeking undergraduates at community colleges in the United States was 29 years old. The instructional personnel status at the college was comprised of 22.6% African-Americans and 15.7% Hispanics, with Caucasians at 56.6%. In terms of the gender of the college personnel, 54.4% were female and 45.6% were male for full-time faculty and 45.1% were female and 54.9% were male for part-time faculty.

**EPI demographics.** Comparing the total college enrollment percentages to those of college students in the EPI, enrollment for African Americans was at 15.7%, and Asians were at 4.6% while Hispanics comprised 11.8% and Caucasians had the highest enrollment at 68.0%. In terms of gender in the program, 80% were female, and 20% were male. The average age of the EPI students in 2007 was 37 years old.

The EPI examined for this study consisted of eight or more cohort groups working at the same time. Each group had approximately 25 students. Taking the demographic makeup of one cohort group at random, the average age was 41, the lowest age was 25, and the highest age was 54. There were 19 females and 4 males present in the cohort group examined for this study. Of these cohort group members, three were African American, five were Hispanic, and 15 were Caucasian.

### **Instrumentation**

The primary method of data collection for this qualitative study was semi-structured standardized open-ended interviews. The instrumentation for this study was comprised of the interview schedule that guided the interviews conducted by the researcher. An interview schedule containing 15 questions relating to the mentoring support, the mentoring relationship, and reasons for completing the program guided the interview (see Appendix C). Research Questions 1 and 2 relate to mentoring support and were addressed by interview questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 11. Research Questions 3 and 4 relate to the mentoring relationship and were addressed by interview questions 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, and 13. Research Question 5 relates to the decision to complete the EPI program and was addressed by interview questions 14 and 15. See Appendix D relating research questions to the interview schedule questions.

**Pilot study.** The interview schedule was field tested through a pilot study prior to the main study. The pilot study was conducted one-on-one with a community college EPI student and EPI faculty mentor not participating in the main study. First, the researcher briefed the pilot study respondents on purposes and procedures of the study. Next, the demographic survey was distributed along with the consent form for digitally recording the interview. Then, the pilot study participants were asked the questions from the interview schedule developed for the study.

The pilot study participants were asked to make notes on any areas that seemed unclear or needed adjustment. The researcher held a discussion session after the interviews to identify and adjust the interview schedule for any areas of concern the pilot study participants found during the process. A member check was also carried out with the pilot study participants. Through e-mail, the study participants received a themes verification grid (see Appendix E) filled out by the researcher for them to check over, add any suggestions, and return.

Dick and Carey's (2001) approach to formative evaluation was consulted as a guide in conducting the pilot study. Although this approach was largely directed towards instruction, it can fit into the role of evaluating instruments, interviews, and tests. For the purposes of this study, the Dick and Carey (2001) model was utilized from a qualitative study evaluation standpoint. Doing so involved a one-on-one approach to remove and identify any obvious errors and obtain responses on content. Recommendations presented by Dick and Carey (2001) have been incorporated into criteria for the interview instrument evaluation. The researcher asked the pilot-study participants questions pertaining to (a) clarity (whether the questions are clear to individuals during the

interview), (b) impact (what the impact of individual interview questions is on participant's responses), and (c) feasibility (whether interview time allocations are feasible).

**Main study.** For the main study, each participant was interviewed for approximately 30 minutes on two separate occasions. The study also examined the program structure and activities through program documents and discussions with program leaders. This information was triangulated with information from the interviews to provide a broader view of the program. The first interview meeting was conducted using questions from the interview schedule. The second interview meeting occurred approximately 2 to 3 weeks after the first meeting and used questions to probe the responses from the first interview meeting. Meeting on two separate occasions, according to Seidman (2006), "allows time for the participant to mull over the preceding interview but not enough time to lose the connection between the two and this passage of time reduces the impact of possibly idiosyncratic interviews" (p. 15). "That is, the participant might be having a terrible day, be sick, or be distracted in such a way as to affect the quality of a particular interview" (p. 15).

All the participants were in the EPI program long enough to have fully experienced the field-based training part of the program. The interview schedule focused on the mentoring support themes found in Danin's (1998) study and the in-depth literature review for this study. The interview and research questions were developed through the extensive literature review for this study, as well as discussions with leaders in the field of ATC across the United States. Other consultants included in generating the interview and research questions were the expert panel assembled for this study, an

educational researcher from the University of Denver, Florida community college ATC program coordinators, and USF faculty.

**Interview schedule.** Experts in the field of ATC were interviewed on their perceptions regarding the mentoring support provided and received through a college teaching program. Appendix C contains the interview schedule consisting of 15 questions to guide and facilitate the long interview. In addition to using the themes identified by Danin (1998) and found in the literature review, an expert panel of professionals in the field was consulted on the development of the interview schedule questions. The themes identifying form (Appendix E) was used to guide the informal information gathering discussions. The meetings and conversations involved a review of notes and adjustments for the interview questions.

The expert panel consulted for this study consisted of nine individuals serving as ATC program coordinators and leaders from the Florida Department of Education (see Appendix F). The field experts were informally interviewed for their perceptions regarding mentoring themes and alternative teacher certification. Face-to-face interviews were held, along with numerous phone discussions and e-mail exchanges for follow-up questions and concerns.

Merriam (1998) encouraged the use of a question list as a guide for the long interview. The questions for this present study were divided into two groups: one for the mentors and one for the mentees. The topics of the 15 questions were similar for both groups, with minor word substitution for each type of participant. For example, the question for the mentor type of participants asked, “What type of support do you provide

as a mentor?” The question for the student teacher or mentee participants asked, “What type of support does the mentor provide?”

The focus of the questions solicited the perceptions and reflections of EPI participants about the nature of the mentoring experience while in the college program. The interview schedule of questions was designed to be carried out in a semi-structured format with some open-ended opportunity. The primary function of the semi-structured open-ended format was to expand and probe participant responses to the questions. The interview schedule questions also sought advice on improving mentoring support in the program and meeting the needs of the participants.

The closing question inquired about the support the program provided and whether it had an impact on the participants’ decisions to complete the teaching program. The following mentoring themes were incorporated into the interview schedule (Appendix C) and were used to extract information to answer the research questions: (a) emotional support, (b) time for observation and consultation, (c) addressing individual concerns, (d) collaborative relationship, (e) observing and being observed, (f) mentors role as non-judgmental, (g) trust and confidentiality, (h) clarification of expectations, (i) specific feedback, and (j) self-directed learning.

The semi-structured or standardized open-ended type of interview was explained by Patton (1990) as using a predetermined sequence of questions and wording. The respondents are asked the same basic question that is given in the same order. This type of interview uses questions that are worded in a completely open-ended format. Patton (1990) examined the strengths and weaknesses of this method of instrumentation and found that, for strengths, “respondents answer the same questions, thus increasing

comparability of responses, data are complete for each person on the topics addressed in the interview” (p. 289). Patton (1990) also viewed the predetermined method of interviewing as assisting in the facilitation of organizing and analyzing data. Looking at the weakness, Patton (1990) found “little flexibility in relating the interview to particular individuals and circumstances; standardized wording may constrain and limit naturalness and relevance of question and answers” (p. 289).

### **Data Collection**

**Pilot study.** Prior to the main study, a mini preliminary investigation or pilot study was conducted to test interview questions and procedures for data collection (Gall et al., 2003). Highlighting the benefits of a pilot study Gall et al. explained, “problems can be identified and solved now more easily than when the main study is underway” (p. 37). The pilot study was conducted one-on-one with a community college EPI student and coordinator mentor not participating in the main study. The community college where the pilot study took place was located on the northwestern side of Florida.

First, the researcher briefed the pilot study respondents on purposes and procedures of the study. Next, the demographic survey was distributed along with the consent form for digitally recording the interview. See Appendix G for a copy of the demographic survey. Then, the pilot study participants were asked the questions from the interview schedule developed for the study. The pilot study participants were asked to make notes on any areas that may seem unclear or need adjustment. The researcher held a discussion session after the interviews to identify and adjust any possible areas of concern the pilot study participants found during the process. A themes verification grid was also sent to the pilot study participants through e-mail for a member check.

The results of the post-interview discussion and member checks revealed a few adjustments that needed to take place before the main study was conducted. These adjustments mostly related to using terminology that the study participants could relate to in the interview. The coordinator mentor returned the themes verification grid without any comments for adjustments. However, the coordinator mentor's main concern during the post-interview discussion centered on usage of the correct title for the field experience and for the EPI students (teacher candidates).

The pilot study also provided experience on keeping study participants focused on the mentoring relationship when discussing the interview questions. The EPI student for the pilot study returned the themes verification grid without any comments for adjustments. However, during the interview and discussion that followed, the researcher identified a few word substitutions that were needed on the interview schedule of questions to avoid misinterpretations. The pilot study also provided insight into which areas of the interview needed extra attention to extract responses with probing techniques.

**Triangulated methods.** The systematic design of the instruction process in Dick and Cary (2001) included a small evaluation check list that included clarity of directions, response patterns, and any concerns presented by the respondents during the pilot interview. Dick and Carey (2001) suggested that, in assessing the design of instruction and questionnaires, it is helpful to obtain descriptive information from the audience for revising. Doing so would involve directing the respondents to point out any unfamiliar topics or unclear questions. In the Dick and Cary (2001) model, the subcategories of impact on learner are attitudes and achievement, which refer to learners' attitudes



towards the instruction or respondents' attitudes towards the interview and study and achievement on the objectives.

Dick and Carey (2001) recommended that the evaluator determine whether the participant perceives the activity as being personally relevant and whether the task takes a reasonable effort to execute. The Dick and Carey model also guides researchers in the assessment process by helping them to identify areas that may be misinterpreted by interview respondents through an evaluation of the logic behind the interview respondents' responses and mistakes.

The main study began with a triangulated set of research methods for data collection. This was followed by a thematic validation of the data collected. In addition to the long semi-structured interviews, a descriptive record of program structure and activities was examined. The data collection process also included a demographic profile of the participants (Appendix G). The demographic profile included each participant's specialization area, gender, age, race or ethnicity, city of residence, teaching employment status, and length of time enrolled in college teaching program.

The primary method of data collection for the study was long semistructured interviews. Each study participant was interviewed on two separate occasions. The first interview used an interview schedule of 15 questions (Appendix C). The second interview asked questions based on the responses from the first interview. The long interview was considered by McCracken (1988) to be an effective method for uncovering the frame of mind of the individual. McCracken emphasized that the long method can capture the themes and logic through which the respondents view their environment.

The description of the program structure and activities was used to describe how the program was designed to function. Knowing how the program was designed to function provided a foundation for understanding what the participants may be experiencing. Also, while examining perceptions, components, core categories, and themes in the interviews, it was useful to have information on the program structure.

### **Institutional Review Board and Human Participant Protection**

The researcher received approval to conduct this study from the University of South Florida's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The University of South Florida's IRB helps to ensure protection of the study participants. In addition, the researcher was certified through the Human Participant Protection performance standards program, which also strives to protect the rights and welfare of research participants. Permission was also obtained from the study participants through a signed consent form approved by the University of South Florida's IRB before interviewing, conducting a demographic survey, and tape recording the responses.

**Digitally recording introductory discussion.** A digital recorder was used to conduct the interviews with careful attention to using an objective, neutral, and natural approach. Prior to the interview, the interviewer conducted a brief (5 to 10 minute) informal introductory discussion separately with each participant. This discussion introduced participants in the study to the research project. Study participants were also briefed prior to the interview concerning plans to follow the interview with e-mailed results for review and input. The e-mailed results requested the study participants to check the data for completeness and authentic representation of their thoughts and perceptions. This utilized a themes verification grid.

Patton (1990) issued an important reminder to researchers in stating that “the researcher communicates respect for persons being interviewed by giving them the courtesy of explaining why questions are being asked” (p. 327). Patton (1990) continued, “[U]nderstanding the purpose of the interview will increase the motivation of the interviewee to respond openly and in detail” (p. 327). As Eisner (1998) advised, “[C]onducting a good interview is in some ways like participating in a good conversation: listening intently and asking questions that focus on concrete examples and feelings rather than on abstract speculation” (p. 183).

**Interview probes.** Also focusing on data collection methods, Patton (1990) emphasized the benefits of using various types of probes and follow-up questions. Patton explained, “[P]robes are used to deepen the response to a question, to increase the richness of the data being obtained, and to give cues to the interviewee about the level of response that is desired (p. 324). Patton further noted that “probes should be conversational, offered in a natural style and voice, and used to follow up initial responses” (p. 324). Furthermore, Patton explained, “[P]robes provide guidance to the person interviewed” (p. 327). The researcher also pointed out that probes provide the interviewer with a tool to manage control of the flow of the interview (Patton, 1990).

Among the probes suggested by Patton (1990) to extract more information from study participants are natural conversational probes, elaboration probes, clarification probes, and contrast probes. Patton (1990) explained that a natural conversational probe can contain fill-in-the-blank detail-oriented questions. Examples presented by the researcher were as follows:

1. “When did that happen?”

2. “Who else was involved?”
3. “How did that come about?”

Furthermore, Patton recommended using elaboration probes to keep a respondent elaborating on a topic, explaining that elaboration probes are interview techniques used to cue respondents that they should continue talking, and some of the most effective probes are a simple nod of the head and body language to encourage respondents to continue speaking. Examples of elaboration probes presented by Patton (1990, p. 326) included the following:

1. “Would you elaborate on that?”
2. “Could you say some more about that?”
3. “That’s helpful.” “I’d appreciate it if you could give me more detail.”
4. “I think I’m beginning to understand.”

Clarification probes were explained by Patton (1990) as an effective way to let the respondent know the researcher “needs more information, a restatement of the answer, or more context” (p. 326). Clarification question examples given by Patton (1990, p. 326) included the following:

1. “You said the program is a success.” “What do you mean by success?”
2. “I want to make sure I understand what you are saying.”
3. “I think it would help me if you could say some more about that.”

Finally, Patton also indicated that during the probing process, it is more prudent for the researcher to project the notion that the lack of understanding is the fault of the researcher and not a failure by the interview respondent. The remaining probing technique suggested by Patton (1990) is the contrast probe. Patton (1990) explained, “[T]he

contrast probe gives the respondents something to push off against by asking, ‘How does x compare with y?’” (p. 326).

The activities of digital recordings and note taking in the interview are valuable tools that were used in conducting this study. Collection of raw data or actual quotations spoken by the participants was referred to as an essential task by Patton (1990). Patton viewed the recorder as “part of the indispensable equipment of researchers using qualitative methods” (p. 348). However, Patton declared that using a recorder does not relieve the researcher from the task of note taking.

**Note taking.** According to Patton (1990),

[N]otes can serve at least two purposes: note taking during the interview can help the interviewer formulate new questions as the interview moves along and taking notes about what was said will facilitate later analysis, including locating important quotations from the tape itself. (p. 348)

Patton also brought to the surface some nonverbal aspects that result from note taking. Note taking helps pace the session and often becomes a way to communicate nonverbally to the respondent that a response was sufficiently valuable enough to have been written down; “conversely, the failure to take notes will often indicate to the respondent that nothing of particular importance is being said” (Patton, 1990, p. 349). Also advocating detailed note taking during data collection, Eisner (1998) urged researchers to collect rich, thick descriptive data to assist with understanding and interpretation of information. Applying these methods of data collection Fenton (2005) suggested writing “detailed anecdotal and analytical notes in the margins of the transcripts that included the researcher’s ideas, perceptions, observations, special situations, favorable conditions, and challenges” (p. 56).

Merriam (1998) provided note-taking guidelines to use while in the research setting. The guidelines can be applied to field observations as well as case-study interviews. Making notes on elements in the physical setting, such as a description of the physical environment, was advocated by Merriam. Some of the elements Merriam listed were roles and characteristics of the participants, silences or pauses, and nonverbal behavior that may add meaning to the study. For this study, the researcher took notes during the interview to document body language, pauses in answering questions, voice inflections, laughter, sighs, emphasis on particular words, and other clues or researcher's impressions.

Merriam (1998) also recommended that researchers note their own perspectives about the experience. Placing emphasis on a written record of the researcher's personal thoughts, Merriam explained that these comments are an important part of field notes. Once the interview has taken place, Merriam suggested writing down reflections immediately and further advised that "these reflections might contain insights suggested by the interview, descriptive notes on the behavior, verbal and nonverbal, of the informant, parenthetical thoughts of the researcher, and so on" (p. 88).

Providing further insight into field note taking, Eisenhardt (2002) suggested, "One key to useful field notes is to write down whatever impressions occur, that is, to react rather than to sift out what may will and will not be useful in the future" (p. 15). Eisenhardt (2002) continued, "A second key to successful field notes is to push thinking in these notes by asking questions such as 'What am I learning and how does this case differ from the last?'" (p. 15). Ideas of these, explained Eisenhardt (2002) can be "cross-case comparisons, hunches about relationships, anecdotes, and informal observations"

(p. 16). Finally, Eisenhardt suggested analyzing case data to gain a familiarity with each case as a separate entity from the others. This activity was suggested as an approach to yield unique emerging patterns.

### **Data Analysis**

**Transcripts.** The data in this study were analyzed using full transcription of the interviews from the digital recordings. Raw data of interviews are quotations, according to Patton (1990), and therefore, full transcription of the interviews is the essential method of analyzing data. Merriam (1998) also acknowledged the value of this method: “verbatim transcription of recorded interviews provides the best data base for analysis” (p. 88). The objective of the study was to explore and understand the nature of mentoring in a college ATC program. The perspectives of individuals directly involved in the program process were the focus of the study. Merriam asserted that interpretations of reality are obtained directly through observations and interviews involving human beings because they are the primary source of data collection and analysis in qualitative research.

**Member checks.** Once the data were collected, the analysis of the data involved transcribing the audio tapes, coding the data, and sorting the data into topics or issues for identification of patterns and trends. Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the data collected (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). The participants were interviewed twice. After each interview, a member check was conducted. The digital recordings were transcribed, and preliminary lists were constructed to look for any patterns that emerged. The preliminary findings were charted on a themes verification grid (as seen in Appendix E). Study participants were briefed

prior to the interview concerning the plans to follow up with e-mailing the results to them on the themes verification grid for their review and input.

The e-mailed results requested the study participants to check the data for completeness and authentic representation of their thoughts and perceptions. Participants were then requested to return their comments and any corrections to the researcher through an e-mail reply. Regarding member checks as a multi-method tool, Morgan (1997) explained that the activity adds depth to the data gathered in interviews. Once the study participants' comments and corrections were returned to the researcher, a narrative analysis on the collected data was carried out.

**Thematic patterns and connections.** The researcher's personal viewpoints, judgments, and perceptions were deferred during the process of extracting meaning from participant reports and interviews. Seidman (2006) emphasized that the data analysis must be performed inductively and not deductively. In other words, the researcher should not bring a predetermined set of hypotheses to test or a pre-developed theory to the analysis. The researcher sought findings as they emerged in repeated patterns and categories, participants' experiences, and significant reports.

**Coding and categorizing data.** The analysis involved searching for categories of data, along with linking categories and concepts through the use of the Microsoft Excel Program. The analysis was also executed using multiple methods, including identification of patterns, coding data, and arranging data into categories. Individual excerpts from the transcripts were grouped according to categories and thematic patterns. The researcher also searched for patterns and connections among and between categories that were eventually organized into themes.



**Peer evaluations.** In an effort to increase the validity, reliability, and generalizability of the findings, several methods were incorporated into the data analysis. In addition to e-mailing the transcripts to the participants, the researcher also used peer examinations as a data analysis tool. The peer examinations involved an independent evaluator who was an expert in the field of education and certified by the University of South Florida IRB. The peer examiner reviewed the findings as they emerged while looking at transcripts and filling out an identifying themes form on each study participant, as seen in (Appendix H). The peer examiner provided an individual interpretation of the arising themes from the transcripts to compare with the researcher's findings. Through the triangulation of data collection methods, reliability and validity were increased.

During the process of analyzing the transcribed material, a microanalysis of each line was conducted. This type of analysis assisted the researcher in identifying units of data and, eventually, categories and subcategories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Analysis procedures were also advocated by Maher (2002) as the researcher recommended using tools that assist in the qualitative analysis process. Among these tools were conducting a microanalysis of the material, asking questions, and comparing and coding data.

Consulting with expert qualitative researchers through reading qualitative literature provided guidance on the use of line-by-line evaluation for interview transcripts to pinpoint emergent themes or significant data to answer the research questions. While collecting and making interpretations of data, the researcher asked questions about the results. According to Fenton (2005), there are "four types of questions that are generally utilized: (a) sensitizing-make the researcher aware of the meaning of the data; (b) theoretical-consider the connections among data units and categories; (c) practical-assists

in constructing developing theory; and (d) guiding-lead interviews, observations, and transcript analysis” (p. 55). The researcher examined the transcribed data and extracted themes that related to the research questions in the study.

Analyzing qualitative data and inductively building on theory was viewed by Strauss and Corbin (1998) as a process that confronts data while making sense out of the material. According to Strauss and Corbin, this process is best accomplished by grounding interpretation in empirical reality reflected in the materials while making sure data and interpretations are valid and reliable. More specifically, Strauss and Corbin advocated conducting comparisons of data on two levels: comparisons between cases that are based on common properties and comparisons of cases that are based on situational properties. Common properties in this research study were respondents’ participation and role in the EPI program, and situational properties were the mentoring support provided and the mentoring relationship.

**Constant comparative method.** The data analysis process for this study utilized the constant comparative method suggested by Merriam (1998). Glaser and Strauss (1967) described the constant comparative method as data evolving into the center of an emerging theory. The constant comparative method is a means to develop grounded theory. Merriam explained, “A grounded theory consists of categories, properties, and hypotheses that are the conceptual links between and among the categories and properties” (p. 159). According to Merriam, “[P]roperties are also concepts but ones that describe a category; properties are not examples of a category but dimensions of it” (p. 190). As for the last concept in the definition, Merriam (1998) continued, “[H]ypotheses are suggested links between categories and properties” (p. 190).

Explaining the basic strategy behind this method, Merriam (1998) noted that the researcher should proceed as the title implies—constantly comparing. Elaborating on the strategy, Merriam suggested, “The researcher begins with a particular incident from an interview, field notes, or document and compares it with another incident in the same set of data or in another set” (p. 159). Merriam also explained how a theory becomes formulated through this process by comparisons leading to the formation of tentative categories that are compared to one another and to other instances. Concluding the explanation of the process, Merriam added, “Comparisons are constantly made within and between levels of conceptualization until a theory can be formulated” (p. 159).

Addressing potential biases in comparisons, Eisenhardt (2002) emphasized, “The key to good cross-case comparison is counteracting these tendencies (biases) by looking at the data in many divergent ways” (p. 19). Eisenhardt further suggested that researchers, “Select categories or dimensions, then look for within-group similarities and across-group differences, next select pairs of cases and then list similarities and differences between cases” (p. 19). These methods are believed to strengthen the chances for accurate and reliable theory. Cross-case searching can help researchers explore beyond initial impressions (Eisenhardt, 2002).

**Themes verification grid.** Sorting and identifying data require a system of organization. Merriam (1998) advised using coding or assigning numbers, abbreviations, or other symbols to identify commonalities found within the data. This study implemented a coding system to organize data and look for possible themes. To expedite this process, the researcher implemented a themes verification, seen in (Appendix E), used in a study by Fenton (2005) to organize the codes and themes. The themes grid was

forwarded through e-mail to the study participants along with the transcripts of their individual interviews with the request for their input. The participants were given the opportunity to reply and provide any input they had concerning the identifying themes grid filled out by the researcher. Developing a coding system, e-mailing transcripts and verification grids to participants for evaluation, and creating a themes form provided the researcher with an audit trail as advocated by Fenton (2005), Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Merriam (1998).

**Framework.** Another valuable method of analyzing qualitative data used in this study was a process called “framework” and involves five key stages that are interconnected, but also distinct. Describing the method of framework, Ritchie and Spencer (2002) stated, “The approach involves a systematic process of sifting, charting and sorting material according to key issues and themes” (p. 310). Ritchie and Spencer listed the five key stages in the framework:

1. familiarization,
2. identifying a thematic framework,
3. indexing,
4. charting, and
5. mapping and interpreting (this being the stage at which the key objectives of qualitative analysis are addressed). (p. 310)

Ritchie and Spencer (2002) explained the first step in the framework method: familiarization relates to becoming acquainted with and gaining a feel for the material gathered; it can involve “listening to tapes, reading transcripts, and studying observational notes” (p. 310). They also described a typical analysis session: “while

reviewing the material, the analyst will be making notes, recording the range of responses to questions posed by the researchers themselves, jotting down recurrent themes and issues which emerge as important to respondents themselves” (p. 310).

The second step in the framework method, the researchers explained, is to discover key issues, ideas, and themes according to how the data can be examined and referenced. At this point, the researcher organizes a thematic framework for the material to be sifted and sorted (Ritchie & Spencer, 2002). The authors also suggested that the result of this activity should supply the researcher with themes that surface from the recurrence or patterning of individual perspectives or experiences.

The third step in the framework method, indexing, is described by Ritchie and Spencer (2002) as initially being largely descriptive and found in the issues. Indexing is used with the transcripts in the process of refining categories and looking for emergent themes. It is then applied to a few transcripts, when categories are refined and become more responsive to emergent and analytical themes. According to the authors, “[F]or these refinements, the researcher looks for conceptualizations which encapsulate and represent diversity of experience, attitude, circumstance, etc.” (p. 314). The authors further emphasized that this process of refining involves “making judgments about meaning, about relevance, and importance of issues, and about implicit connections between ideas” (p. 314). Importantly, indicated Ritchie and Spencer (2002), this process must “also involve making sure that the original research questions are being fully addressed” (p. 314).

Furthermore, this step should involve indexing references and recording them in the margins of each transcript. Here, a numerical system is suggested by Ritchie and

Spencer (2002), one “that links back to the index, or by a descriptive textual system based directly on the index headings” (p. 316). This procedure of annotating the textual data will allow others to see how the data are being selected and arranged.

The fourth step in the framework method, charting, according to Ritchie and Spencer (2002), creates “a picture of the data as a whole, by considering the range of attitudes and experiences for each issue or theme where data are lifted from their original context and rearranged according to the appropriate thematic reference” (p. 317). Charting is simply described by the authors as using charts for summarizing each respondent’s views.

The fifth step in the framework method, mapping and interpretation, begins after data “have been sifted and charted according to core themes” (Ritchie & Spencer, 2002). The authors elaborated on this step: “the analyst begins to pull together key characteristics of the data, and to map and interpret the data set as a whole” (p. 320). This stage is seen as the point at which the serious and systematic process of detection begins.

Going through the five-step framework analysis for this study, the researcher created core categories and then themes. This process is referred to by Richie and Spencer (2002) as linking two or more dimensions in a multidimensional data analysis. More specifically, the authors explained that this process includes “finding associations, indexing and charting interview material and becoming aware of patterning of responses” (p. 324). According to Richie and Spencer further analysis in creating typologies can include “systematically checking for associations among attitudes, behaviors, motivations, etc, either those made explicit by respondents themselves or those derived

from implicit connections” (p. 324). The authors also recommended using labels and subheadings to plot responses according to particular terms that were used in the interview.

In summary, the data analysis for this study was grounded in inductive thematic analysis, which involved categorizing data with rich thick descriptions that resulted from long semi-structured interviews with respondents. The narrative data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed for each case and across each case. Then patterns were formed into categories that eventually revealed themes. Comparative analysis was utilized to explore any unique and common perceptions, experiences, reflections, descriptions, relationships, and recommendations. Respondents’ feedback on the e-mailed personal transcripts along with the themes verification grid was implemented to help limit researcher bias and assist in accuracy of the data analysis. A methods steps and procedures list for this study is provided in Appendix D.

**Internal and external validity and reliability.** Emphasizing a defining attribute of qualitative studies, Merriam stated, “We are thus closer to reality than if a data collection instrument had been interjected between us and the participants, most agree that when reality is viewed in this manner, internal validity is a definite strength of qualitative research” (1998, p. 203). In academic research, the questions of validity, reliability, and generalizability must be addressed if the results of the study are to be awarded credibility. Validity is concerned with justifying inferences derived from the interview data. Highlighting this point, Seidman (2006) asked, “Whose meaning is it that an interview brings forth and is reported?” (p. 15). Reliability, on the other hand, asks if another researcher were conducting the interview, would the participants respond

differently? The other concern, generalizability, refers to the possibility that using a different sample for the study would reveal entirely different or contradictory results.

By asking questions, the researcher can assess the validity and reliability in a qualitative study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) listed a few questions to guide researchers: “[W]ere the interviews reliably and validly constructed; was the content of the documents properly analyzed; do the conclusions of the case study rest upon data?” (p. 378). Providing a unique description of the characteristics of qualitative research, Merriam (1998) explained, “[O]ne of the assumptions underlying qualitative research is that reality is holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing; it is not a single, fixed, objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered, observed and measured as in quantitative research” (p. 202). Merriam summed up the main idea by stating; “What is being observed are people’s constructions of reality and how they understand the world” (p. 203).

It is also desirable for study results to be reliable or consistent with the data that were collected. Lincoln and Guba (1985) indicated that, rather than insisting outsiders get the same results, it is more important for outsiders to agree that the data collected and the results make sense. Commenting on reliability, Merriam (1998) asserted that “the question then is not whether findings will be found again but whether the results are consistent with the data collected” (p. 206). This study used various techniques to ensure findings were dependable.

Examining the elements of research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) stressed that, in qualitative studies, inquiries must be made about the validity and reliability of the case study, transcript accuracy, and the foundation of the conclusions. Internal validity or



credibility is explained by Lincoln and Guba as obtaining participants' perspectives on the believability of the results. Issues to address in assessing internal validity are presented by Merriam (1998) and include "internal validity deals with the question of how research findings match reality, how congruent are the findings with reality, do the findings capture what is really there, and are investigators observing or measuring what they think they are measuring?" (p. 201).

### **Validity and Reliability of This Study**

**Member checks, peer evaluation, and audit trail.** The internal validity and reliability of the research findings in this study were strengthened by the use of triangulation. Triangulation is described in Merriam (1998) as "using multiple investigators, multiple sources of data, or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings" (p. 204). Merriam also emphasized that triangulation strengthens internal validity and reliability in qualitative studies. Triangulation of data sources and methods of analysis are recommended by experts in the research field (Eisner, 1998; Huberman & Miles, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). The use of triangulation for this study was accomplished through member checks that requested the participants to review individual transcripts and the themes verification grid. Member checks were explained by Merriam (1998) as "taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results are plausible" (p. 204).

In addition to member checks, this study used peer examinations to increase the validity and reliability of findings. Peer examinations involved having an independent evaluator review the findings as they emerge using the identifying themes form. Using a

triangulation method of data collection helped increase the validity and reliability in this study. Obtaining feedback on data from participants and using a peer evaluator as sources for examination of documents is supported by many researchers including Lincoln and Guba (1985), Maher (2002), Merriam (1998), and Fenton (2005).

This study also used an audit trail demonstrating how conclusions were made. Lincoln and Guba (1985) supported the use of an audit trail in that it strengthens validity by providing hard evidence linking themes to their supporting documentation. The audit trail requires a systematic presentation of the information gathered to provide a record of the research processes used along the way. Much of the systematic presentation of the information gathered for this study was organized and displayed using the Microsoft Excel computer program. Independent judges can authenticate the findings of a study by following the trail of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba 1985). In order for an audit to take place, the investigator must describe in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry. The thorough descriptions can assist independent judges in following the trail to authenticate the findings (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

**Data validation.** There were two methods of data validation for this study. One method was carried out through peer reviewer evaluation and the other through member checks. The peer evaluation of the data coincided closely with the researcher's evaluation of the data. There were few differences in the data evaluations of the peer reviewer and researcher. Some data entries were titled as field or general in order to differentiate between mentoring taking place out in the field experience and mentoring taking place on the college campus.

As part of the data validation process, a few charts are displayed to demonstrate researcher and peer reviewer results. Figure 1 shows the negative mentorship patterns that emerged through an analysis of the data carried out by the researcher and peer reviewer. Lack of clarity in the field was ranked the same by the researcher and the peer reviewer. The researcher interpreted slightly more responses, 18%, relating to lack of preparation in the field while the peer reviewer interpreted these response to be at 10%. The peer reviewer saw slightly more responses on lack of relationship in the field, 16%, compared to the researcher, 12%. Lack of clarity (in general) was identified by the researcher 15% of the time and 10% of the time by the peer reviewer. Lack of relationship (in general) responses were identified at 21% by the researcher and 26% by the peer reviewer.

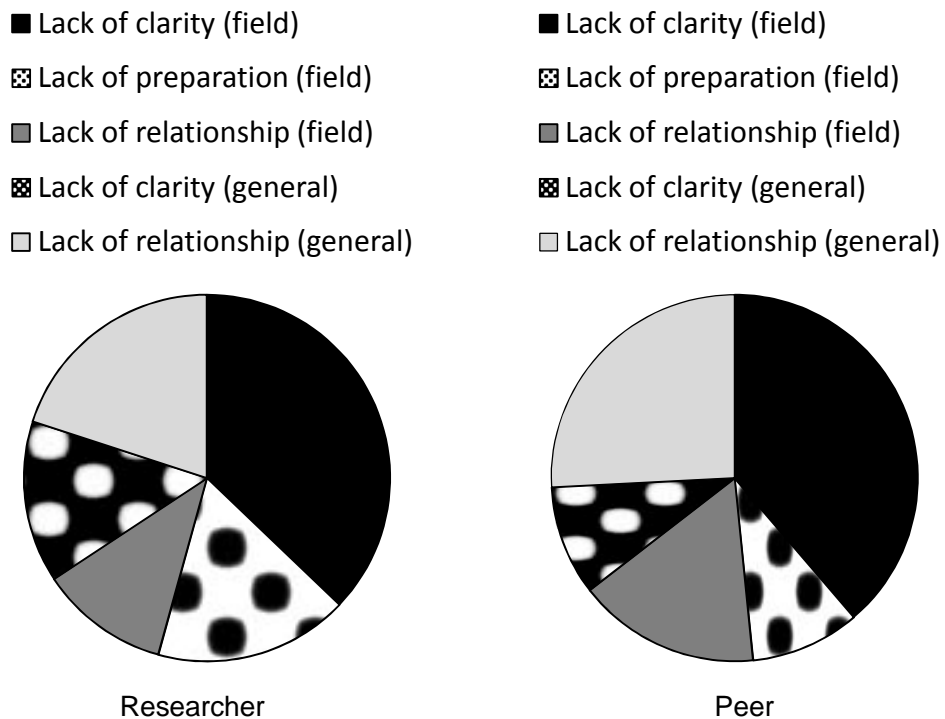


Figure 1. Pie chart comparison of negative mentorship components as identified by researcher and peer reviewer.

Figure 2 displays the student factors that emerged through an analysis of the data carried out by the researcher and peer reviewer. There were some differences between the researcher and peer as shown on the pie charts, but these were not significant differences. The researcher found a little more in the area of external factors compared to the peer reviewer. The peer reviewer found slightly more in the area of locus of control (positive) than the researcher did. Locus of control (negative) findings were somewhat higher for the researcher than for the peer reviewer. This difference may be attributed to the researcher knowing the participants' areas of emphasis as a result of conducting the interviews personally.

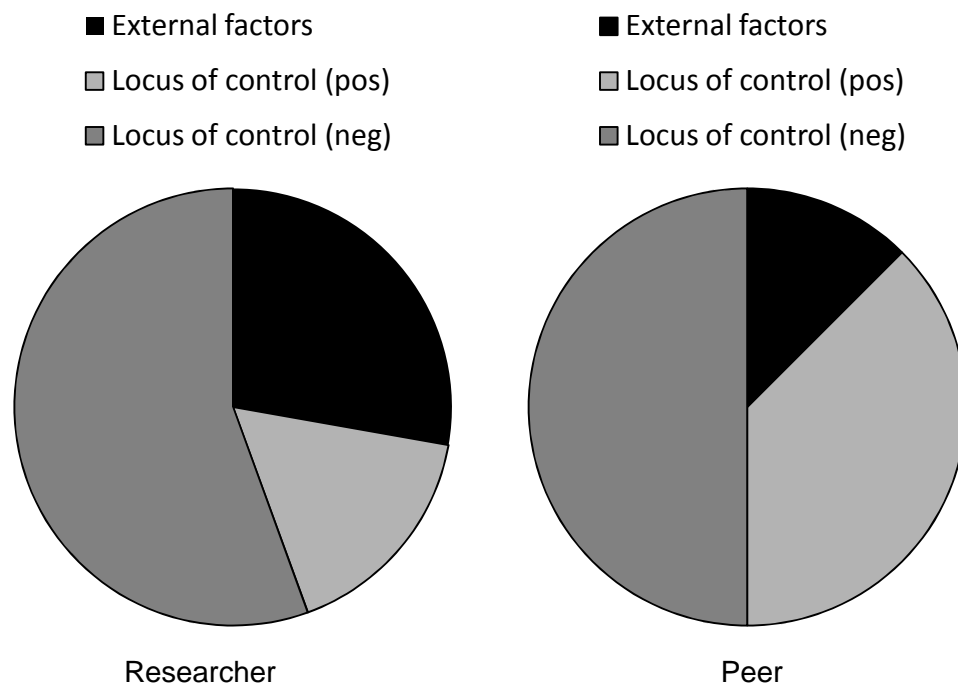


Figure 2. Pie chart comparison of student factor components identified by researcher and peer reviewer.

Data validation through member checks was effectively carried out by providing study participants with a copy of their transcribed interviews and a themes verification grid with each prominent point charted. Some forms were sent and returned through e-mail while others were handed out and collected in person on the college campus. The method of distribution depended on the participants' preferences and electronic resources. Each participant reviewed and verified his or her own materials.

The member checks also elicited any comments the participants may have had after reviewing the materials. The comments were limited, with a few comments by the instructor mentor on additional activities and information provided to EPI students. A few comments by the EPI students addressed an error in the name of an activity, emphasized some program areas seen as needing more support, and clarified that other EPI students were seeking more support as well. Other than these comments that added to the knowledge of the experience, the completed themes verification grids were acceptable to all of the study participants

**Comparative analysis.** This study followed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) suggestion of keeping records at all stages of the research process, which included details of decision making during each step of the project. Transcripts from each interview were analyzed for patterns and units of data within and across each case. Next, this information was coded and analyzed for themes within and across cases using Excel. The comparative analysis implemented for this study was used to identify commonalities across cases. Eisenhardt (2002) offered an explanation of how analysis of cases can enhance confidence in validity: "[C]ases which confirm emergent relationships enhance confidence in the validity of the relationships, and cases which disconfirm the

relationships often can provide an opportunity to refine and extend the theory” (p. 21). Furthermore, explained Eisenhardt (2002), “[W]hen a relationship is supported, the qualitative data often provide a good understanding of the dynamics underlying the relationship and this is crucial to the establishment of internal validity” (p. 24).

**Thematic analysis.** Evaluation of themes was conducted through independent reviews, meetings, discussions, and use of the identifying themes form and themes verification grid (Fenton, 2005). Establishing grounded theory is a major step in qualitative research. Merriam (1998) defined the process of forming grounded theory as emerging from data and growing from categories. Once the researcher has conducted a thematic analysis, an independent reviewer (peer reviewer) was asked to identify patterns and categories in the transcripts and provide his or her own perceptions of the data.

**Identifying themes forms and themes verification grid.** The researcher’s perceptions of the transcripts were not known to the reviewer during the evaluation in order to obtain the reviewer’s own independent perspective. Blank identifying themes forms shown in Appendix H were given to the reviewer to record themes and add personal commentary (Fenton, 2005). This form, adapted from Fenton (2005), contains such items as the name of the reviewer, the page number of the transcript, the participant being interviewed, and the interview schedule question being answered, along with columns for prominent points and themes.

Once the reviews took place, the researcher met independently with the peer reviewer to discuss evaluations and make necessary revisions. After the independent meeting with the reviewer, the themes verification grid was used again (see Appendix E). This form was adapted from a study by Fenton (2005) and was completed for the member

checks and also after the peer evaluations to reflect any changes made from the initial identifying themes form.

**Literature on validity and generalizability.** This study also examined the literature for similar findings during the validation process to enhance validity. Similar findings in research literature can also be a tool for strengthening validity and generalizability. Ritchie and Spencer (2002) supported this concept by stating, “[L]iterature discussing similar findings is important as well because it ties together underlying similarities in phenomena normally not associated with each other” (p. 26). Furthermore, the researchers explained, “[T]he result is often a theory with stronger internal validity, wider generalizability, and higher conceptual level” (p. 26). Therefore, if researchers compare their findings to similar findings in educational literature, confidence in the findings being valid and generalizable will be strengthened because others had similar findings (Ritchie & Spencer, 2002).

It is can be difficult to achieve generalizability in qualitative research. Professional researchers often suggest directing qualitative studies towards understanding specific situations rather than universal ones. Qualitative findings are useful according to Merriam (1998) if the results are transferrable to other situations with similar conditions. The focus of this study was on community college ATC participants from the same program and setting. The steps taken in this study focused on maintaining external validity. Some qualitative researchers refer to external validity as *transferability*. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described transferability as the extent to which study results can be generalized or transferred to another setting. This study was organized to enhance the

transferability of results to similar settings by thoroughly explaining the research context and the researcher's assumptions (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

According to Maher (2002), another check for transferability of findings relates to the selection of cases that most closely match the phenomenon under investigation. To enhance other researchers' ability to relate the themes in this study to other similar settings and participants, suggestions provided by Fenton (2005) were implemented. These suggestions from Fenton (2005) included the use of "specific quotes, anecdotes, and detailed information" (p. 60).

### **Summary**

The purpose of this research study was to explore how college ATC participants experience mentoring while at the college and in their field experience participating in the college program. The goal of the research study was to obtain a rich and deep understanding of the nature of the mentoring experience in a college ATC program through the perspectives of mentees and their mentors. In addition, the research study results were directed towards promoting the retention of ATC teachers through successful mentoring in teacher induction programs. The participants in the study were also given the opportunity to elaborate on any concerns or suggestions for the program. The research questions, selection and description of participants, instrumentation, pilot study, data collection, data analysis, and validation have been addressed in this chapter.

The next chapter includes an overview of the findings, profile of study participants, mentors' descriptions of the program, emerging components and categories, analysis of the research questions and data, aggregated data, and themes that emerged from the data.



## Chapter 4

### Findings

The purpose of this research study was to explore how college alternative teacher certification (ATC) participants experience mentoring support while at the college and during their field experiences. The goal of the research study was to obtain a rich and deep understanding of the nature of the mentoring experience in a college ATC program through the perspectives of mentees and their mentors. In addition, the research study results were directed towards promoting the retention of ATC teachers through successful mentoring in teacher induction programs.

The participants in the research study were also given the opportunity to elaborate on any concerns or suggestions for the program. The type of college ATC program examined for this research study was the Educator Preparation Institute (EPI). The type of mentoring examined for this research study was not the mentoring carried out in the schools while the beginning teacher is on the job but the combined support provided to teacher trainees as they proceeded through a college teacher training program.

The sections of this chapter include the research questions, profile of study participants, mentors' descriptions of the program, analysis of research questions and data, elements of the college EPI mentoring systems model, aggregated data, themes, and summary.

The study focused on themes found in a University of Denver study (Danin, 1998). These themes (Appendix A) were individual concerns addressed, emotional

support, time scheduled for observation, and time scheduled for consultation. Recurring themes found in the extensive literature review conducted for this study were used in conjunction with Danin's themes. These themes from the literature review (Appendix B) were collaborative relationship, observing modeled lessons, being observed, mentor role as nonjudgmental, relationship based on trust and confidentiality, expectations clarified, feedback provided, and self-directed learning. These themes along with discussions held with the panel of experts were used to develop the research questions and the interview question guides. The participants in the study were also given the opportunity to elaborate on any concerns or suggestions for the program. The following research questions were established to guide this study.

### **Research Questions**

1. How do EPI students describe the mentoring support provided by their EPI instructor mentor, field mentors, and program coordinator?
2. How do the EPI instructor mentor, field mentors, and program coordinator describe the mentoring support they provide to EPI students?
3. What is satisfying about the mentoring relationship?
4. What is challenging about the mentoring relationship?
5. What themes and perceptions reflect the EPI student's decision to complete the college teaching program?

### **Profile of Study Participants**

The Demographic Profile Questionnaire (Appendix G) was used to collect participant information for determination of age, gender, race or ethnicity, employment status, city of residence, and teaching area of specialization. The demographic profile

served to provide a more complete analysis of the population in the study. The research population of interest for the purpose of this study was adults living in west central Florida and attending a large, public, multi-campus, urban community college. The sample for this study consisted of eight adults active in the EPI.

Two categories of participants participated in this study: four mentors and four mentees. The mentors consisted of two field instructors, one college instructor, and one program coordinator. The mentees consisted of four college students. The student participants for this study met the following criteria: three were enrolled in the EPI program and were near the end of the EPI program and one recently graduated from the EPI program. All EPI student participants in the study spent at least 25 to 35 hours in the field.

To help provide a well-rounded perspective of the EPI program, the coordinator and office personnel, along with the program instructor were requested to refer EPI students for the study who displayed different levels of success along with a mix of ethnic and racial backgrounds. In this study, race and ethnicity of students were represented as follows: one African American, one Hispanic, and two Caucasians. The gender and age breakdown of the EPI students included one male (35 years of age) and three females (29, 42, and 46 years of age). The specialization and teaching interest areas of the EPI student participants were elementary education, middle school science, high school dropout prevention, and English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)Spanish.

The demographic makeup of the college EPI mentors for race and ethnicity were three Caucasians and one Hispanic. The gender and age breakdown was one male (59 years of age) and three females (60, 68, and 71 years of age). The specialization areas of

the EPI mentor participants were K-12 administration, exceptional student education, elementary education, educational leadership (school principal), gifted reading, specific learning disabilities, and exceptional students of varying exceptionalities (ESVE).

### **Mentors' Descriptions of Program**

The study also examined the program structure and activities through program documents and discussions with program leaders. This information was triangulated with information from the interviews to provide a broader view of the program. All Florida EPI programs must follow the Florida Department of Education (2005) model in operating and providing their courses. However, they have the freedom to differentiate their programs on certain aspects such as program length, how often course meetings are held, and technicalities of operating the field experience. For example, one college on the northwest coast of Florida used field mentors who were working in the schools where the students were visiting, whereas the college examined for this study provided its own mentors who were housed on the college campus.

**Field experience options.** EPI program mentors explained the field experience options their teacher candidates could select. The college participating in this study had two field experience options for teacher candidates to select from in designing their program paths. One option was for students who had prior classroom teaching experience either as a substitute teacher or a teacher in a temporary position. This option was identified as an alternative field experience, and these students were given credit for their experience in designing their individual field experience plan. The other option was for students who did not have any prior classroom teaching experience. The two options differed in the type of reflections the student teachers prepared. The student teachers

with experience created deeper reflections while they were teaching and taking course work. The traditional track student teachers who were new to education prepared their reflections projecting to future teaching experiences. The written reflections were also known as summaries and correlate to the Florida Educators Accomplished Practices (FLDOE, 2008): assessment, communication, continuous improvement, critical thinking, diversity, ethics, knowledge of subject matter, learning environments, planning, role of teacher, and technology.

Furthermore, the mentors explained that the traditional field experience EPI students must select, from a listing provided by the program, the schools where they want to have their field experience. The mentors emphasized the importance of EPI students taking responsibility in arranging their own field experience and introducing themselves to the school principal or assistant principal. Also, the EPI students set up times and dates for their field experience, observations, and participations at each school site. More specifically, there were two field experiences divided into four sections: each section was for 7.5 hours totaling 30 hours. The mentors explained that the first field experience was largely for observing classroom teachers, the second was primarily for assisting classroom teachers, the third was intended for EPI students to gain hands-on experience in the classroom, and the fourth required the students to teach the class. This schedule could vary depending on the EPI student and the host teacher. Some EPI students might have been equipped to begin teaching a lesson sooner than others.

In the alternative field experience, EPI students can accomplish their college program goals in the classrooms they are substituting or working in. The program path assigned depends on the amount and type of teaching experience the applicants bring to

the EPI program. For example, an applicant with experience in teaching with a temporary assignment position may complete a summary packet with a verifier form signed by his or her school of employment. This would be a different option from the 30 hours of field experience in a school setting. However, a substitute teacher may only need to participate in 15 hours of field experience and complete selected summary forms. All of the EPI student participants in this study were following the traditional path of 30 hours or more for their field experience work.

**Program activities.** Discussions with EPI program mentors also provided program activities information. The EPI Program was composed of seven classroom based courses plus the two courses that make up the field experience. The field experience was designated by the state to be 30 hours or more. Each field experience was correlated with each EPI college course. For example, if an EPI student was taking the course on Classroom Management, he or she would write the field experience reflection on classroom management when visiting the host schools. The first 7.5 hours of the field experience is for guided observation. The EPI students observe classroom teachers conducting their classes while they look for examples of classroom management. The other course that they take at the same time is Professional Foundations, which focuses on teaching ethics.

The next 7.5 hours are referred to as *getting started*. At this point, students are gaining some actual teaching experience. They may briefly assume some of the same tasks in the classroom that the teachers do. For the third observation series of 7.5 hours, called *hands-on*, they teach a lesson. The EPI students begin planning and teaching a lesson at this point. The last 7.5 hours is spent teaching in a classroom. The EPI

program calls this an apprenticeship, and the teacher candidates are expected to be responsible for planning, teaching, assessing, and reflecting on the experience during this time.

Each visit to a host school for the field experience also required a verification form to be filled out by the EPI student identifying the activities that occurred for the day. The forms verifying EPI student visitations were signed by the host teachers from the field and submitted to the college EPI field mentor. The EPI program can be completed in 6 to 8 months; however, some students find it necessary to take a leave of absence and return to complete the program at a later time. The instructors in the program are former school principals, administrators, and experts in the field of education. The required courses in EPI are Classroom Management, Instructional Strategies, Technology, Diversity, The Teaching and Learning Process, Foundations of Research-Based Practices in Reading, Professional Foundations, Field Experience 1, and Field Experience 2.

The program mentors also explained that their EPI program required students to attend three seminars along with a coffee meeting (informal feedback session). The seminars were held to provide program information to the EPI students and answer any questions they may have on the program and field experience. EPI teacher candidates must have attended three seminars and one coffee meeting. A seminar could accommodate two or more cohorts combined, and each seminar was on a separate agenda. The first seminar addressed the field experience. In this seminar, the students were introduced to an overview of the program and received detailed instructions on the field experience. The second seminar focused on FLDOE information. Someone from

the district attends this seminar and discusses hiring policies and other areas of interest about teaching in the particular county.

In the third and last seminar, students learn about teaching resumes and interviewing techniques and work on a culminating activity with their field experience. This activity centers on reflection about what they learned in the program and in the fieldwork. The mentors also provided some detailed information on the coffees. There were four scheduled coffee meetings arranged for each cohort, and EPI students could select one to attend that best fit their schedule. The coffee meetings were held to obtain feedback from the students on how they were doing and any suggestions they may have had concerning the program.

The EPI coordinator mentor offered further information on the path to certification. Once the teaching candidates have completed the EPI program and taken three state exams for certification, they will have an exit interview with their college EPI mentor. The three state exams for Florida teacher certification are (a) Professional Education, (b) General Knowledge, and (c) Subject Area exams. The EPI exit interview was intended to be a check point to determine whether all their paper work and certification requirements were in order for the teaching certificate.

**Component frequency.** A frequency chart presented in Table 1 was constructed to display the number of times each study participant mentioned each emergent pattern in the interviews. From this chart, the categories that received the most attention from the participants were andragogy, counseling, guiding, compliance, lack of clarity (in field), skill development, span of control, and time (positive). Topics addressing andragogy



Table 1

*Number of Times Study Participants Mentioned Each Component*

Component	Participant							
	S1 <i>n</i>	S2 <i>n</i>	S3 <i>n</i>	S4 <i>n</i>	CM <i>n</i>	FM1 <i>n</i>	FM2 <i>n</i>	IM <i>n</i>
Andragogy	1	1	1	2	1	3	5	1
Compliance	1	—	1	—	5	1	5	4
Counseling	3	7	4	1	11	6	13	12
Disconnect	—	—	6	—	—	1	1	—
External factors	1	1	1	1	—	—	1	—
Guiding	1	3	1	1	7	10	5	8
Lack of clarity (field)	3	7	3	—	—	—	—	—
Lack of clarity (general)	—	1	1	1	2	—	—	—
Lack of preparation (field)	3	1	2	—	—	—	—	—
Lack of relationship (field)	—	3	1	—	—	—	—	—
Lack of relationship (general)	—	—	4	—	—	1	1	—
Locus of control (positive)	—	—	—	3	3	1	2	1
Locus of control (negative)	—	—	3	—	3	2	2	—
Program evaluation	—	—	—	8	1	—	1	—
Self-efficacy (positive)	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Self-efficacy (negative)	1	1	2	—	—	—	1	2
Skill development	1	1	4	8	5	5	4	—
Span of control	2	5	3	1	2	4	2	1
Time (positive)	4	4	1	—	1	—	5	3
Time (negative)	2	1	1	—	—	—	—	1

Topics addressing andragogy were discussed by all the participants. Counseling was discussed by all the participants, but mostly by the mentors. Guiding and compliance were also generally discussed only by the mentors. Skill development was discussed by all but one of the mentors and all of the students. Span of control was a popular topic with both students and mentors because they often commented on needing more time for mentoring. Time (positive) was discussed by both the students and mentors, usually in reference to mentors' availability and accessibility.

Table 1 displays the number of times each study participant mentioned each of the 20 components that developed from the interviews. The first component in Table 1 is andragogy, which was defined in this study as engaging adult learners within the structure of the learning process. The mentors in the EPI program for this study expected the EPI students to direct their own learning paths in the program.

Describing the EPI program, all of the participants discussed characteristics that formed into the component of andragogy. S4, FM2, and CM shared the following on andragogy:

You're an adult and you're going to get out of it what you put into it, you were given the opportunity to develop your own lesson plan, determine what grade level and how you wanted to present it. It was self-directed. (S4)

They get to select their own field experience model for them. These are adults and very focused people that know what they need. They're kind of consciously incompetent. They know what they don't know which is great. (FM2)

They have a hand in the learning process in their own plan immediately as we design a field experience around what they come in with and it is very much self-directed learning here in helping us come up with a plan. . . putting you in places where you have opportunities to really reach your potential. (CM)

Each of these individuals discussed concepts related to adult learning.

The second component was compliance which was defined in this study as an emphasis on legal implications and meeting state guidelines. Focusing on compliance, the mentors discussed state mandates, maintaining paperwork, and legal implications. Compliance was discussed mostly by the mentors. FM1, FM2, CM, and S1 shared the following relating to compliance:

There are guides that are provided by the state department of education that we encourage because it gives the testing format for grading, the Rubric has all the accomplished practices listed and each of their summaries is broken down into certain accomplished practices. For the field work, the classroom teachers basically sign off on a sheet. (FM1)

I will use something similar to the FPMS form where I look for certain behaviors that are reflected in the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices. The Florida Performance Measurement System is something that's used at this present time to evaluate them. Have you seen our forms? We have specific forms we give to each student after they do an assignment. . . they also have forms for their field experiences that we monitor and provide feedback on their field experience reflections. (FM2)

Well, the State Department guides us and says that they must have 30 hours or more. We use the Rubrics evaluation system for grading everything and Rubrics themselves set out an expectation. (CM)

Trust has to be there. We have them fingerprinted and it's handled very carefully in that we have a system by which we can communicate to the school district. (CM)

I applied to get certified on my own and I was rejected, the state of Florida did not want to recognize my Masters Degree or my teaching experience in the University of New York. Then, I came across this program. It helped having people to contact when you have questions. You know, how best to study for these exams and there are a lot of them. (S1)

The third component was counseling which is defined in this study as activities that provide more personal guidance such as emotional support, stress management, personal concerns, employment assistance, encouragement, and reassurance. The area of

counseling was primarily discussed by the mentors. CM, S1, and IM shared the following on counseling:

We provide quite a lot of emotional support. Occasionally I have somebody who feels like the workload is extremely heavy. We try to help them find other ways to maybe get some things off their plate and begin to rely on other people to carry some of the burdens that they feel that they have to carry and so we basically give some support and advice in, you know, how you can lower your stress level. Also, I interviewed a Navy Seal and he wanted to become a teacher. After several months of being in the field experience portion of it in the schools, things were not working out. He was extremely harsh with the kids and we finally counseled him out of the program. (CM)

I received emotional support in the program when I went for some observations in the schools, I saw really wonderful examples of teaching, but I did see one example that was a little bit mortifying and it disturbed me so I spoke with my EPI mentor about that and we sort of put that in perspective and that was very helpful. (S1)

I have always been able to make a connection and basically reach back and remember what it was like and extend a hand and help them go forward and reassure them that they will develop their teacher pace and that discipline will become better for them and parent conferencing will become easier for them and just remembering what it was like as a young teacher and sharing my experiences with them. (IM)

The fourth component was disconnect, which was defined in this study as a lack of connection or communication between the college and the host schools. The college monitored the attendance in the field experience through a signed form. The classroom teachers in the field did not have any role in evaluating the EPI teachers. The EPI students were required to arrange their own field experience and self-report completion of their assignments in the field. S3, and FM1 discussed disconnect in the following:

The only feedback we have, [*sic*] we have a sheet we have to get verified on how many hours we were in the classroom . . . no phone calls or emails, a lot of teachers are so busy, and I don't think they want you to be there. Also, I had a hard time getting help to get into the schools for the field experience . . . they don't know what we're doing. The field mentor had no clue. (S3)

Typically, I do not talk to the classroom teacher unless I'm doing a follow-up or there's a concern, but for the most part I do not have frequent contact with the classroom teachers. We keep track of the field experiences through verification forms. (FM1)

The fifth component is external factors, which was defined in this study as elements outside the program that impact the students. For example, the external factors for the EPI students may include (family, financial concerns, career change, etc.). S2 discussed external factors in regard to completing the program: "What impacted my decision really was just my family and like needing to make a career change." S4 also attributed his program completion to external factors: "I needed a job and I wanted to teach."

The sixth component was guiding, which was defined in this study as facilitating with program activities. This may include EPI coffee and seminar meetings, helping with lessons plans, providing strategies for time management, offering course work support, and discussing field observations. The FM1 and the IM briefly described some of the guiding support they provided to EPI students:

I work with them in scoring summaries for the paperwork piece and guiding them as to how the experiences went, answering questions that they've had, giving them support, whatever is needed. (FM1)

For the EPI students, I sit with them and talk with them on levels of certification, what else they need to do, talk to them about a variety of topics. And again, basically, the mentoring goes back to sharing knowledge and answering questions that people have at the beginning stages of wanting to become a teacher. (IM)

S1 reflected on her experience in receiving guidance and support on program procedures.

I did receive guidance and support along the way in various capacities, beginning with the coordinator mentor, in our interview. And, you know, it's a very intimidating process. She walks us through, you know, the entire process. (S1)

The seventh component was lack of clarity (field), which was defined in this study as the EPI student's lack of understanding on procedures and expectations for the field experience part of the EPI program. S1 reflected on her experience with lack of clarity in the field:

It does feel like getting through the different levels of observing is very difficult, it's not well guided . . . I show up, and I have my paperwork. At the last school I was at I just walked around. I could have been doing anything in that school. (S1)

S1 elaborated on the lack of clarity in the field:

My problem with that is that there's not a lot of guidance on that end, as to what school you go to, how you develop the relationship with the schools . . . I show up off the street, and I have to build this rapport with the teacher. (S1)

S2 also reflected on lack of clarity in the field:

I don't feel expectations are clear enough because there were a lot of questions, and a lot of confusion in the field experience, so I don't feel they were clear, I think they need to be more thorough. (S2)

The eighth component was lack of clarity (general), which is defined in this study as the EPI student's lack of understanding on aspects of the EPI program that are not part of the field experience. S4 reflected on his experience with lack of clarity general:

When you would ask direct questions like, what is the placement rate, the success rate of the teachers in this program, or the turnover rate, they couldn't say. They need to keep track of that data. I am finding out in my job there's a lot of stuff that they left out. (S4)

S3 also reflected on her experience with lack of clarity general and communicated a lot of confusion in her discussion:

I thought I was going to get a job and then they told us we might not get a job when we finish the program . . . and that we still have to take three tests and that we can substitute until they get to know you and my class was telling me that we have do that. (S3)

The ninth component was lack of preparation (field), which was defined in this study as the EPI student's need for more time observing in the field, not feeling equipped to teach, and finding the fieldwork stressful. The other areas under lack of preparation that the students discussed were: wanting stronger feedback and a restructuring of the fieldwork. S2, S3, and S4 discussed lack of preparation (field):

I didn't feel prepared for the field experience. I am still unclear about it because I don't feel it was discussed properly . . . we do the field experience, we fill out the paperwork, and we turn it into the box and we pick it up for our grade. (S2)

Well, they have everything written down. You have a meeting for it, probably for five minutes, then she sets it up, and you're pretty much on your own. (S3)

You need to teach the whole day and really need to teach a couple of weeks. That level four should be about two weeks long because you really don't gain any good experience teaching one lesson. (S4)

The 10th and 11th components were lack of relationship (field) and lack of relationship (general). They were defined in this study as students' feeling disconnected from mentoring support in the field and in their general EPI program activities (courses, seminars, counseling, orientation, paperwork procedures, etc.). S3 discussed wanting more support or more of a mentoring relationship for the field work and for general work in the program and FM1 discussed wanting more personal visits with the EPI students for their field work:

You have a meeting for it, probably for five minutes, and then she pretty much sets it up and then you're pretty much on your own. They're always so busy, five minutes is not enough. (S3)

They teach you briefly how to do a portfolio very fast. They go like 100 miles per hour and, I mean, you can't even follow. You need to have some more time than that. (S3)

Again, not seeing them personally enough, a lot of my communication with is virtual or the phone, and just getting out to see them towards the end of their internship in the school. I would like to be able to see them. (FM1)

The 12th and 13th components were locus of control (positive) and locus of control (negative). Internal locus of control (positive) was defined in this study as one's belief that personal destiny was within their own control. Locus of control (negative) was defined in this study as one's belief that personal destiny is controlled by forces outside of themselves. Students with an external locus of control are less likely to be proactive in connecting with mentors or host schools. In this study S3 wanted more time in the field but displayed an external locus of control by not feeling equipped to direct her own field work:

One full entire [*sic*] day from opening to closing in the field experiences including everything that the teacher would do from opening to closing. That would be my suggestion, because I have no clue what kind of things they do, I have no clue. The program doesn't allow me to see it. (S3)

S4 also wanted more the time in the field, had a different approach, and displayed an internal locus of control:

I observed probably like 45 hours, so I did a little bit extra on my own just because I wanted to get the feel for different grades or different styles of instruction. So, I just kind of took it upon my own to go and observe a little bit more. (S4)

The IM emphasized the importance of EPI students taking initiative on their own:

Because the EPI program is an accelerated program, they do have to take the initiative to find out more than they can just receive in the short time period that they have with the professors. What we're doing is topic learning or concept learning, and then it's up to them to go and find more details that go with that. For example, if we talked about classroom management through how a classroom is arranged, it would be up to them to go out and discover on their own. (IM)

The 14th component was program evaluation, which was defined in this study as the program participants' discussions on EPI adjustment. This area related to study



participants' feedback on the program. Mentors viewed the coffee meetings as a way to solicit ideas for program improvement from the EPI students. FM2 shared the following in regard to program evaluation:

We do a continuous progress check where we meet with our students and we ask them what's working in the program and what's not . . . we have had issues with conflicts of scheduling and we have had issues where they did not like an assignment and we found this as part of the coffees that they have. So we've changed one of our assignments based on student input and an area that they thought needed to be addressed more. (FM2)

The 15th and 16th components were self-efficacy (positive) and self-efficacy (negative). Self-efficacy was defined in this study as a student's perception of his or her ability to reach a goal. Self-efficacy (positive) refers to a positive personal judgment about one's capability, while self-efficacy (negative) refers to a negative personal judgment about one's capability. Below, S1 demonstrates the concept of self-efficacy (positive) in her positive perception of her abilities and proactive tendency to reach her goal, while S2 demonstrates the concept of self-efficacy (negative) in her negative perception of her abilities and sedentary tendency in reaching her goal.

The field mentor has scheduled times that she's in the office and you're welcome to drop in . . . it is your choice. You can come in and speak with her or not. I have, and she has been there, and it has been helpful. (S1)

I have never met with my field mentor one-on-one besides when she introduced herself to the whole entire group at the seminar. We turn in our field experience observations, critiques, at the end of this session with our classes. I'm still unclear about the field experience. We do the field experience, we fill out the paperwork, and we turn it into the box, and we pick it up for our grade. (S2)

The 17th component was skill development, which was defined in this study from the mentor's and the student's point of view. The mentor's point of view places and emphasis on positive mentoring activities: modeling concepts, modeling teaching techniques, role modeling, discussing field summaries or reflections in open forum, and

peer-teaching in courses. These activities were directed towards building skill levels in the program participants. The student's point of view places an emphasis on the skills they wanted to gain from the program. The CM provided an example on skill development from a mentoring perspective, and S4 provided an example on skill development from a student perspective below.

I also in our seminars am [*sic*] able to model teaching techniques. For example, co-teaching . . . in one of our seminars, the person who is in charge of our field experience and I co-teach something together to be able to demonstrate what co-teaching is about. We will stop and say, "what just happened now?" That is modeling but it also is mentoring in developing skills in other people. (CM)

The Foundations of Research Based Reading or whatever it's called, the final course is very good but it wasn't long enough. It wasn't in depth enough, and the field experience needs to be longer, especially the level four needs to be much longer. (S4)

The 18th component was span of control, which was defined in this study as the number of people a mentor can supervise effectively. Span of control also overlaps with the program structure and the component of time. FM1 provides an example of this component:

I'm responsible for every single student that goes through the EPI program; and that's a lot, I can have up to 200 students at a time. So what would I like? I would like more time. But there are so many constraints within the community college system. (FM1)

The 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> components were time (positive) and time (negative). These components were defined in this study as: time (positive), the actual time spent on providing or receiving mentoring, and time (negative), the time constraints on providing or receiving mentoring. S1 provided an example of time (positive): "The most satisfying thing, I think, is the caliber of the mentors, their availability, and accessibility to me." S3 provided an example of time (negative): "They're always just so busy, five minutes is

not enough time to meet. The component of time (negative) is closely related to span of control as one impacts the other.

**Emerging components and categories.** Components and core categories that emerged after three reviews of the collected data are displayed in Table 2. Some of the components were combined with others that were similar and more prominently discussed. For example, the component of depth of experience was collapsed into the component of skill development because these two had many similarities; however, skill development was more prominently discussed. Also, program design was collapsed into andragogy because participants discussed the self-directed nature of the program more frequently. Another area collapsed by the researcher was mentoring limitations, which became part of the span of control component.

The mentorship taking place was held within the limitations of the structure of the program. Due to the program's design as an accelerated path to teaching, there was less time scheduled for meeting training requirements. This situation impacted the amount of time mentors and mentees had to interact.

The program had two field mentors to monitor approximately 200 teacher candidates at a given time. This mentor and mentee ratio was an example of a wide span of control for the number of people a manager can supervise effectively (Davison, 2003). Another merging of components was training in teaching methods that collapsed into skill development (positive). Overall, the data analysis revealed five core categories, shown in Table 2, that resulted from repeated emerging components found in the transcripts and charted interviews. These five core categories included positive mentoring, negative mentoring, program factors, student factors, and outcomes.

Table 2

*Components Merged into Core Categories for Data Analysis Purposes*

Positive mentorship component	Negative mentorship component	<u>Core Category</u>		
		Program factor component	Student factor component	Outcome component
Guiding	Lack of clarity in field	Time negative	Locus of control positive	Skill development positive
Counseling	Lack of clarity in general	Span of control	Locus of control negative	Skill development negative
Shared expertise	Lack of relationship in field	Disconnect	External factors	Self-efficacy positive
Time positive	Lack of positive relationship in general	Compliance		Self-efficacy negative
	Lack of preparation in field	Andragogy		
		Procedures		
		Program evaluation		

## **Analysis of Research Questions and Data**

The goal of the research study was to obtain a rich and deep understanding of the nature of the mentoring experience in a college ATC program through qualitatively examining the perspectives of protégés, and their mentors. The research questions for this study focused on Danin's (1998) attributes in teacher induction programs and the mentoring themes found in the literature review. The interview questions (Appendix C) were developed to obtain data to answer the research questions. All of the research questions are tied to the interview schedule of questions (Appendix D). The following paragraphs address the research questions and provide in-depth analysis of the perceptions of EPI program students and mentors while revealing various patterns, categories, and emerging themes in the process.

**Perceptions of mentoring support.** Research Questions 1 and 2 were focused on the support provided to mentees. The mentoring support core categories identified by study participants included student factors, program factors, positive mentorship, negative mentorship, and outcomes.

**Student factors.** The study participants' responses that formed into the core category of student factors revealed components of students' locus of control. The study participants identified activities that formed the components of locus of control. S3 wanted more time in the field, but displayed an external locus of control by not feeling equipped to direct her own fieldwork:

One full entire [*sic*] day from opening to closing in the field experiences including everything that the teacher would do from opening to closing. That would be my suggestion, because I have no clue what kind of things they do, I have no clue. The program doesn't allow me to see it. (S3)

S4 also wanted more the time in the field, had a different approach, and displayed an internal locus of control:

I observed probably like 45 hours, so I did a little bit extra on my own just because I wanted to get the feel for different grades or different styles of instruction. So, I just kind of took it upon my own to go and observe a little bit more. (S4)

The IM emphasized the importance of EPI students taking initiative on their own in pursuing more teaching knowledge and experience:

Because the EPI program is an accelerated program, they do have to take the initiative to find out more than they can just receive in the short time period that they have with the professors. What we're doing is topic learning or concept learning, and then it's up to them to go and find more details that go with that. For example, if we talked about classroom management through how a classroom is arranged, it would be up to them to go out and discover on their own. (IM)

The locus of control component was also acknowledged in several threads of the literature review through discussions of the importance of student teachers taking the initiative to ask for help and scheduling time for consultations. The activities under locus of control for this study were students' responsibility for arranging consultation time and time in the field, along with requesting to be observed. Program factors were discussed the same number of times for mentors and students and had a fairly high ranking. The students' and mentors' perceptions of mentoring support are presented in Figure 3.

***Program factors.*** The core category of program factors displayed in Figure 4 revealed repeated components of compliance, span of control, skill development, disconnect, procedures, program evaluation, and andragogy. The procedures component was developed from discussions on EPI program structure, communicating through office mailboxes, addressing concerns by arranging an office meeting, and learning about program expectations through the initial orientation meeting and seminar. The program evaluation component emerged from participants' discussions on EPI adjustments.

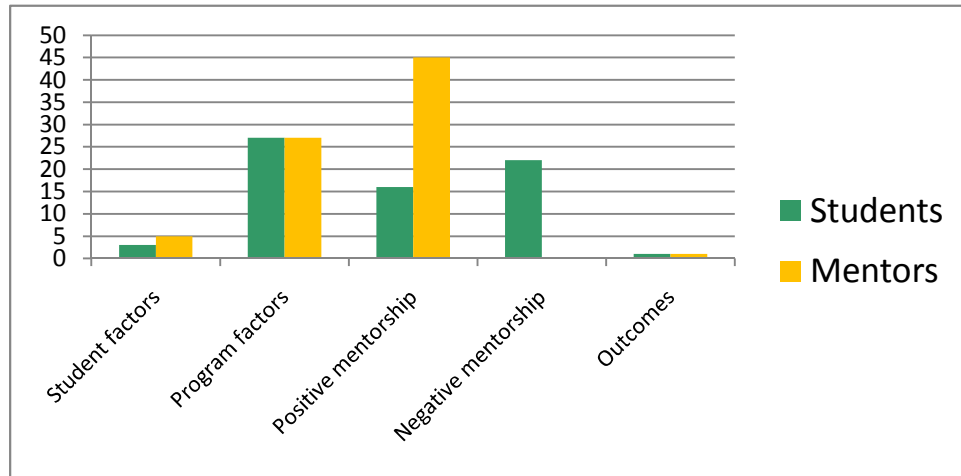


Figure 3. Comparison of the number of times students and mentors mentioned their perceptions of mentoring support by core categories (Research Questions 1 and 2).

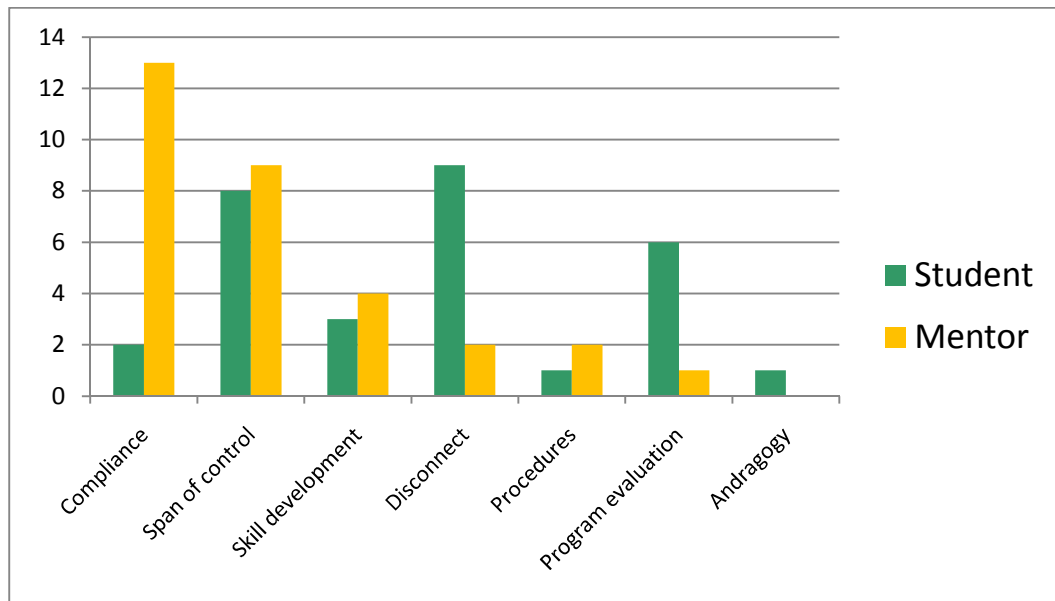


Figure 4. Comparison of the number of times students and mentors mentioned their perceptions of mentoring support by program component factors (Research Questions 1 and 2).

The areas identified by the study participants that led to the identification of the component of compliance were concerns with state guidelines, signed verification forms, state exams, forms and paperwork, and the rubrics rating system. FM1 and FM2 described compliance procedures in the field experience:

I work with them after they have had their field experiences and they have documented and written their summaries. I work with them in scoring summaries for the paperwork piece and guiding them as to how the experiences went, answering questions that they've had, giving them support, whatever is needed. (FM1)

They have a packet of information that they take, and they go out and do a very focused observation, and it's all on the skills that I am focusing on in instructional strategies. All seven of our courses have that very specific observation tool that they go out with. (FM2)

The CM spent time expanding on various state guidelines while she explained the hour requirements of the EPI college program. These discussions on guidelines were combined in Excel and formed into the component of compliance:

Well, the State Department guides us and says that they must have 30 hours or more, and we always make that clear that a minimum of 30 hours and you can always do more observation time than that. That has been defined out that the first seven hours is observation. We use Rubrics for grading everything. Rubric is an evaluation system with a four-point scale. (CM)

FM1 and FM2 explained the rubric the state-mandated system used for scoring students' written summaries.

The Rubric has all the accomplished practices listed. Each of their summaries is broken down into certain accomplished practices. So let's say for the summary for Classroom Management, it has a portion that says, "Assessment, and it says, How does the classroom teacher assess her students? You know, classroom management skills. How do they do this, this, that and the other?" And then depending on how they answer those questions, each question is worth up to three points. One meaning, not met. They didn't answer the question with enough information or didn't answer it all. (FM1)

FM2 also discussed the rubric system of scoring:



We actually use a Rubric, and we score the summary based on their answers. Are their answers very direct, or do they synthesize information? Do they extrapolate information? Do they use application? (FM2)

FM1 explained the area of grading and guidelines in detail:

They have point values, and they have to meet so many points in order to pass the summary. And they're based on the accomplished practices. So, we're looking for individual accomplished practices in there. And so they get a one, a two, or a three. A one means they did not meet that accomplished practice criteria. A two means they met it, and a three means they exceeded it. They gave a really strong response to that answer. (FM1)

FM1 elaborated further on state guidelines in relation to the program activities:

They must do their Facts.org, which is where they have to show competencies for their accomplished practices. This has to do with getting ready for the professional certificate and to get a job. They cannot graduate from the program until they've completed the three exams: the General Knowledge exam, the Subject Area exam, and the Professional Certificate exam. (FM1)

FM2 noted her observation and grading procedures, which were categorized under the component of compliance:

I will use something similar to the FPMS form where I look for certain behaviors that are reflected in the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices and FPMS [Florida Performance Measurement System] and then give them information back, and I critique them all the time on the presentations they do in class. The Florida Performance Measurement System is the tool that's used at this present time to evaluate them. (FM2)

Compliance surfaced as an important element in discussions on trust with the CM:

In the Professional Foundations class, we make them very much aware that by law, they must report child abuse. And in this particular case, the question was, do I report this by calling or how is this handled? And they had not mentioned anything to the certified teacher that was in that classroom, and so we helped them understand that their responsibility was to report it to that teacher because there may be something else that she did not know. (CM)

Furthermore, the CM explained compliance as part of one of the courses along with trust and confidentiality:

Professional Foundations covers ethics, and we do not want these teachers to cross the line at any time in any of the schools so that's why that's part of the

observation. Trust has to be there. We have them fingerprinted, and sometimes they come in here and have to reveal things that are in their background. It's handled very carefully in that we have a system by which we can communicate this to the school district and it's not talked about. (CM)

Span of control was identified by the study participants as they discussed wanting more time on fieldwork, more support in the field, more meaningful mentoring, more time to discuss fieldwork, and a better feedback pace. S1 shared concerns on the span of control topic: "It's a very short program . . . it's very hard . . . there are a lot of students . . . they have a lot of cohorts going on at one time and you're one of a number of students." Also expressing concerns that surfaced from the large mentor-to-student ratio, S3 interjected: "They're always just so busy, five minutes is not enough time to meet."

Further emphasizing difficulty with time management due to span of control FM1 shared:

I'm responsible for every single student that goes through the EPI program; and that's a lot, I can have up to 200 students at a time. So what would I like? I would like more time. But there are only so many constraints within the community college system. (FM1)

Skill development positive was discussed only by mentors, and became a component as they focused on the positive activities: modeling concepts, modeling teaching techniques, role modeling, discussing field summaries or reflections in open forum, and peer-teaching in courses. These activities were directed towards building skill levels in the program participants. The CM explained the concept of modeling as it is used in the EPI program:

In our seminars I am able to model teaching techniques. One example is co-teaching. One of our seminars, the person who is in charge of our field experience and I co-teach something together to be able to demonstrate what co-teach is about. And we will stop and say, what happened just now? What did the field mentor do? What did the coordinator do? Then we label that behavior so you see how we work together. This is modeling, but it is also mentoring other people. We're mentoring people all the time. We're modeling what we believe in as we communicate with people. (CM)

Mentors discussed field summaries written by EPI students and peer teaching as methods of training and developing teaching skills. FM2 described this process in some detail:

We discuss field summaries a lot in class. When you're out in the field, what have you seen? Or if they see something that is really disturbing to them, they'll bring it in an open forum or they'll bring it to me before or after class or e-mails, this sort of thing. (FM2)

In our courses, they watch their peers do modeled lessons. They stand up, and if they're teaching kindergarten, they treat their peers as kindergarten students, and if they're teaching third grade or high school, it's a simulation. So they get to watch them actually do the lesson, and then we spend a great deal of time after each lesson processing it. So that they see a lot of modeled lessons and in instructional strategies, and the instructor does a modeled lesson also. Our students get peer reviews. Each student is required to provide specific feedback to the student that just modeled the lesson and in that we're working on specific academic praise. (FM2)

The CM also explained how EPI students participate in peer learning activities.

In our courses, they do some small group teaching exercises. Peers give them feedback. They do some small group teaching exercises. Peers give them feedback. The instructor gives them feedback, and so you can't get through this program with probably not having that experience of teaching in front of peers. (CM)

Skill development negative was discussed only by students and developed from their discussions on needing more intensive time and practice in the field, more depth in the field, more time observing in the field, more in-depth feedback, a formal internship, and support after graduation. S4 reflected on areas in the program that he felt needed attention in order to provide more skill development:

The level four field experience needs to be much longer. To me, seven and a half hours of the final field experience should be teaching for seven and a half hours, not teaching a lesson and then observing for the rest of the time. So, I was very surprised that they would allow that to happen because if you're going to learn, you need to teach the whole day and really you need to teach a couple weeks or so because you really don't gain any good experience teaching one lesson plan for an hour. (S4)

The reading course, the Foundations of Reading course is very good but it wasn't long enough. It wasn't in depth enough. The Classroom Management course was phenomenal, and I think it should be done later as you're getting ready to exit so it's fresh on the mind. (S4)

S2 provided her perspective on skill development regarding the field experience:

The little time that they have is like 7.5 hours, every six weeks or so, I don't think it's enough time. I think we should be *[sic]* if we're doing internship, it should be full-time and that way we can get more out of it. (S2)

Wanting more skill development in the fieldwork through hands-on practice in the classroom, S3 suggested increasing the hours:

I think they have to definitely increase the hours. Even people that work, they should, you know, be aware that we need more hours to be prepared. I don't feel the EPI students, after leaving this program, will be ready for their own class, for lesson planning, teaching, or whatever. (S3)

While mentors focused on compliance, EPI students directed much of their attention on disconnect. Disconnect was discussed by the students largely as a lack of connection between the college and the host schools where the field experiences take place. Disconnect developed from the following participant' needs: guidance for contacting schools, relationship with host schools, connection between college program and host schools, and support for getting into host schools for fieldwork experience. Other comments referring to disconnect noted the requirement to have verification forms signed for fieldwork and that host school teachers do not prepare to work with EPI students. S1 explained her concern with this aspect of the program:

My problem with that is that there's not a lot of guidance on that end, as to what school you go to, how you develop the relationship with the schools. The fieldwork was a little more stressful. It says—you know, when we go through our initial interview, the coordinator says, "You'll be expected to do fieldwork." I think my assumption going in was that they, sort of, had a relationship with the school. (S1)

S1 elaborated on some of the disconnect areas she experienced:

You know, you really are responsible for calling the schools up yourself. And a lot of times, the principals and the vice principals don't call you back. It is hard to make contact with them. And you have to keep calling and calling. And, you know, there's that fine line between I really need to speak to you, and I'm being rude. You know, it reflects poorly on me and on the course. So I didn't like that. That really did make me feel adrift. And though we had very good guidelines, there is a lot of paperwork that we're supposed to take with us when we're observing. And it is helpful. It does feel like getting through the different levels of observing is very difficult. It's not well guided. Yeah, the fieldwork piece, for me, is the Achilles heel in the program. (S1)

Having participated in the EPI fieldwork part of the program, S1 and S2 offered suggestions for working on the disconnect they experienced:

What I would maybe restructure or hope to improve in the EPI program would be the fieldwork aspect of it. It would be really nice if there were a number of schools that EPI already had a relationship with, and these schools knew every semester there would be a certain number of EPI students coming in. And they understood—if the school understood what was expected of me, then, maybe, they would be more able to help me to do it. So for example, when I went to the middle school you know, they had no idea what I'm supposed to do. So if, for example, EPI had a relationship with schools, the teachers and the administration knew what we were expected to do, then, it would be easier, I think, to achieve that. (S1)

I would just say as far as the support for the field, I think they need to be more thorough, and maybe kind of having to meet with the students, or even—even [*sic*] if it's via e-mail, just contacting the EPI students throughout the class session, keeping up with their field experience, and not just make everything due 12 weeks down the road, with the student not knowing if it's done properly or not. (S2)

The mentee participants also identified concerns that fit into the component of program evaluation. The following concerns were discussed by the participants: coffee meetings were not helpful (purpose of meetings was to evaluate program), there was a need for sharing data tracking on graduates, and the program was rushed and not challenging. S4 reflected on his experience with the coffee meeting: “Well I attended a coffee meeting, and it wasn't really effective . . . I mean it didn't really provide us a whole lot.” Providing his perspective on data tracking, S4 explained:

The support they provided when you would ask them pointed questions, like direct questions, “What is your placement rate? What’s the success rate of teachers in this program? What is the turnover? Is that kind of data kept?” And, you know, they say that they keep in touch with their students for three years or keep track of them. They never would give direct numbers. They couldn’t say “Our success rate after, you know, within three months of completing the program, X percent of our students were placed in full-time teaching,” none of that. Saying, “well, it’s pretty good, you know, it’s pretty high.” That’s very relative. They need to keep track of that data and if it’s not high, they need to ask themselves why it’s not high and make changes to the program to help their students be more successful, because I’m finding out in my job there’s a lot of stuff that they left out. (S4)

Other areas discussed that fit into the program evaluation area were the fieldwork was graded on self-report and the program should use differentiated instruction (courses based on the level students are intending to teach). S4 also brought up the topic of differentiated instruction. On this topic he pointed out the necessity of providing different instruction to teacher candidates headed to different levels of teaching positions. For example, S4 mentioned that, for elementary teaching, he felt more reading emphasis was needed than for those planning to enter high school teaching positions:

The reading course, we met six times, I guess. And I really think that you need—I would say double that, but I know it’s an accelerated program, so it is kind of hard, but somewhere in between? Reading should be maybe 9 to 10 meetings at least, because especially for elementary teachers, they are going to have to teach reading. For those in high school maybe if they have that broken up where if you are looking at high school you have a shorter program for that, a different path would be a good way to say it. However, with it being an accelerated program, you have to do things a little bit differently. (S4)

Areas identified by study participants that led to the creation of the component of andragogy included peer learning support, students’ self-awareness of needs, and self-directed learning. Andragogy was addressed in the literature review through discussions of the characteristics of adult learners and teacher inductees. S4 shared his perspective on the adult education aspect of the EPI program:

You're an adult. You're going to get out what you put into it. You were given the opportunity to develop your own lesson plan. They'd give you a subject but you would determine what grade level and how you wanted to present it and how you wanted to organize it, so it was self-directed. (S4)

The mentors reflected on the adult roles of the EPI students as well as the self-directed nature of the EPI program:

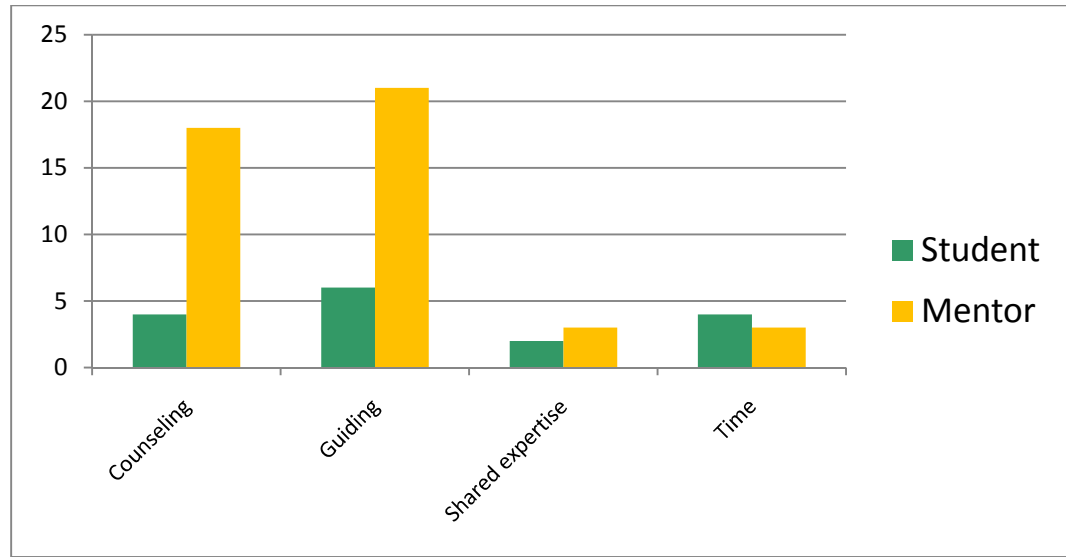
These are adults, and they usually have day jobs. Okay? So if they cannot get into the school and get their field experience during the allotted time, we work out strategies as to how they can do this, to work around their life. (FM1)

These are mature adults. They know what they need. They're kind of consciously incompetent. They know what they don't know which is great. (FM2)

They have a hand in the learning process in their own plan immediately because one of the questions we ask you, "Have you ever taught before? Have you had experience with children?" So at that point, we design a field experience around what they come in with. And so it's very much self-directed learning here in helping us come up with a plan that you feel you could be learning at your maximum and we can be putting you in places where you have opportunities to really reach your potential. (CM)

**Positive mentorship.** The core category of positive mentorship displayed repeated components of counseling, guiding, shared expertise, and time. Positive mentorship depicted in Figure 5 was discussed much more by mentors than students. The study participants identified some of the counseling activities as stress management, having concerns addressed, employment preparation assistance, encouragement, reassurance, and help with career change. S1 and S2 reflected on some counseling areas under positive mentorship while discussing mentoring support:

When I went for observations in the schools, I saw really wonderful examples of teaching. But I did see one example that was a little bit mortifying. It disturbed me, so I spoke with my coordinator mentor about that. We, sort of, put that in perspective and talked about it. So that was very helpful, as well. And then, also, I think, just having somebody—having people in the office for support, and having people that you can contact when you have questions is important. (S1)



*Figure 5.* Comparison of the number of times students and mentors mentioned their perceptions of support by the positive mentorship component (Research Questions 1 and 2).

I was able to speak to my mentor instructor about being stressed out. She was just like, you know, “Don’t stress out.” She was very supportive and she understood it was a workload, and she gave us that line, but she was able to work with us as far as giving us a little leeway with the deadlines. Because she understood that we did have a life outside of school, and that helped out a lot, because towards the end, it wasn’t just me, when we met, it was a lot of the students. (S2)

The mentors are very reassuring as far as that the program is very beneficial, and they kind of like compare it to the other colleges. Letting you know that you are still getting the same amount of work. It’s just in a short—it’s just more an express term. And it is a good program, and they also have previous students come back and speak to you about the program, to kind of reassure you that this is a good program. (S2)

The IM described situations in which mentoring and counseling provided support to students who needed stress management and had outside issues:

I can remember a few cases where students in the EPI program were like, somewhat on overload, due to either a family situation, a marital situation, a medical situation, and several of them wanted to just pretty much throw in the towel. And we tried to convince that that they were so close to finishing the program, that just to tough it out, take a little extra time if they need to, take a break, but don’t walk away from something that they put this much effort into. I can also remember mentoring a couple people that had family problems and wanted to go take care of their family problems, which we encouraged them to do that first, and then they did return back to the program. (IM)



FM2 discussed many areas of support provided in the program that fit under counseling in positive mentorship. Among her focus areas were answering school system questions, providing support with career change, employment preparation, and fieldwork tasks.

Well, our students are exceptional in the fact that they have a tremendous number of life skills and work experiences. But going into education for many of them is like going to a foreign country or speaking a foreign language. And so I see my job as helping them adjust to this change of venue for them. (FM2)

Well, they come to me with specific questions about the school system. I do counseling sessions with them, 15-minute sessions on how to take their business resumes, which are very rich and very wonderful, but to convert them to education-related resumes that truly reflect all of the work they have done to prepare themselves in the world of education. I also do mock interviews with them so I have that time period. I provide assistance for students with their lesson presentations for their field experience, assist students with creating appropriate assessments for field experiences as well as provided class time to discuss their joys and challenges during their field experience. I also offer to observe their lesson presentations in the field. (FM2)

FM2 reflected on situations in which support helped career changers displaying anxiety when asked to teach in front of a group.

Some of 'em [*sic*] were very successful in managerial positions in the business world or used to having a total complete control and grasp of what they're doing, and then all of a sudden, they're faced with something simple like presenting a lesson plan and can't carry it through. They get terrified. They can't follow a logical thought and this sort of thing. So I meet with a lot of them individually after that, offering specific things to help them. (FM2)

The CM pointed out some typical situations in which EPI students have needed support:

Well, sometimes they can't identify people who could help them answer questions. So I mentor them by saying here are the resources. Occasionally, I have somebody who feels like the workload is extremely heavy. And they'll come in and say, "I think I want to drop out. I just can't do this." We try to help them find other ways to maybe get some things off their plate. So we basically give some support and advice in how you can lower your stress level. In some of our field experiences, we might have a time when the fit doesn't feel very good for the person and they'll say, "Really, I'm seeing these things or that I'm not

seeing what I want to see in my field experience.” And sometimes non-examples can be extremely important as well as examples. And so our message then is “All right, you’re seeing what you don’t want to do in your classroom. You are there to pick up positive things, but occasionally it’s negative and that also helps you shape your own behaviors.” (CM)

The participants’ responses that developed into the components of guiding included facilitating (coffee and seminar meetings), helping with lessons plans, identifying strategies for time management, providing course work support, and discussing field observations. The FM1 and the IM briefly described some of the guiding support they provided to EPI students:

I work with them in scoring summaries for the paperwork piece and guiding them as to how the experiences went, answering questions that they’ve had, giving them support, whatever is needed. (FM1)

For the EPI students, I sit with them and talk with them on levels of certification, what else they need to do, talk to them about a variety of topics. And again, basically, the mentoring goes back to sharing knowledge and answering questions that people have at the beginning stages of wanting to become a teacher. (IM)

S1 reflected on her experience receiving guidance and support with program procedures.

I did receive guidance and support along the way in various capacities, beginning with the coordinator mentor, in our interview. And, you know, it’s a very intimidating process. She walks us through, you know, the entire process. (S1)

The areas emphasized by study participants that developed into the core category of shared expertise were sharing expert knowledge, having knowledge of the educational system, and mentors having a high level of experience. Time was also a repeated component that fell under the core category of positive mentorship. The study participants identified accessibility, availability, and flexibility in reference to time. The participants’ perceptions of positive mentorship is displayed in Figure 5 previously mentioned.

**Negative mentorship.** Mentors did not discuss negative mentorship; however, students did spend time on this topic as shown previously in Figure 3. The core category of negative mentorship was formed through the component of lack clarity in the field. Lack of clarity (in field) was identified by the students as involving confusion on fieldwork expectations, paper work, lesson plans, field procedures, and field placement.

That's what I feel the program needs to work on. As far as being a lot clearer on what it is that they want us to do for the field experience. It was more of a—they just, "Here's your folder for the field experience. You need to pick a school. Go out. Fill out the paperwork." And it was myself and two other students who filled out the wrong paper for our field experience because we didn't know how to fill it out, and they didn't give us like a list of schools to choose from. (S2)

S2 shared her experience on lack of clarity regarding fieldwork procedures:

I was unclear about the field experience. Because it wasn't—I don't feel it was discussed properly. We do the field experience, we fill out the paperwork, and we turn it into the box, and we pick it up for our grade. I don't feel expectations were clear enough because there were a lot of questions and a lot of confusion in the field experience, so I don't feel they were clear. Now, I can say that you have only the basics as far as how many hours you need to complete and deadlines.

S3 shared her perception of the field experience lack of clarity:

For the field experience, I really don't know what they want, and it's really hard to get a-hold of them. I don't know what expectations they have of us, and I really would like to know.

**Outcomes.** The final core category under perceptions of mentoring support for Research Questions 1 and 2 was outcomes. The component of outcomes was not discussed that often in this section of interview questions. The area of outcomes was identified by study participants as they discussed skill development. The pattern of skill development (positive) was formed through the participants' discussions on modeling concepts, modeling teaching techniques and behavior, discussing reflections in open forum, and scoring field summaries. On the other hand, the pattern of skill development (negative) was formed through the participants' discussions on wanting more field time,

more depth in fieldwork, more intensive fieldwork, more time observing teachers, more depth in feedback, and more depth in the reading course.

Figure 6 displays a pie chart comparing students' perceptions of negative mentorship for Research Question 1. Students' responses primarily centered on a lack of clarity in the field. Lack of clarity in the field was described by students as their needing clarity on field expectations, lessons plans, and paperwork. Students also discussed needing clarity on fieldwork procedures and the fieldwork seminar. Need for clarity was followed closely by students' discussions of lack of preparation for the field. Lack of preparation in the field was described by students as needing more time observing in the field, not feeling equipped to teach, and finding the fieldwork stressful.

The other areas under lack of preparation that the students discussed included wanting stronger feedback and a restructuring of the fieldwork. Lack of relationship in the field was mentioned by the students as shown in Figure 6. Lack of relationship was discussed as students expressed a need for more support in the field and their negative experiences in the fieldwork.

**Satisfaction in mentoring relationship.** Research Question 3 was focused on satisfaction in the mentoring relationship between mentors and mentees. Satisfaction in mentoring relationships produced core categories that were identified by the study participants. These core categories that emerged from Research Question 3 were program factors, positive mentorship, and outcomes displayed in Figure 7. The patterns that developed from participants' responses on program factors were andragogy, program evaluation, and time availability as shown in Figure 8. Andragogy had the highest level of responses of the three patterns.

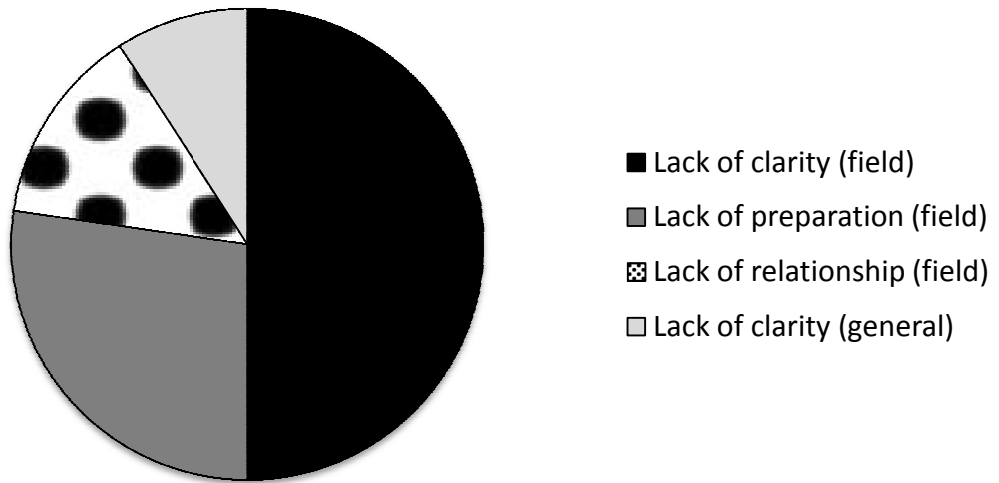


Figure 6. Pie chart of students' perceptions of negative mentorship category components relating to support (Research Questions 1 and 2).

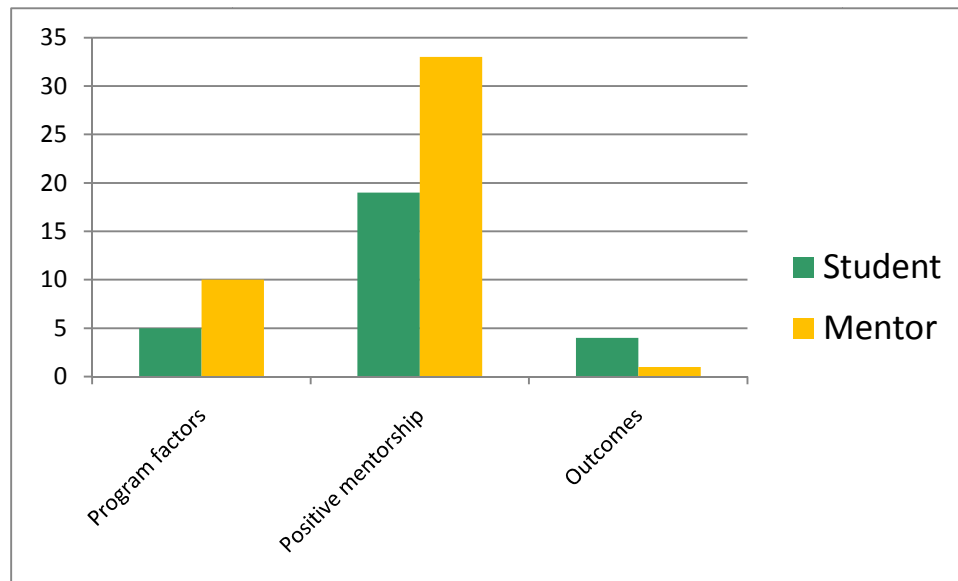
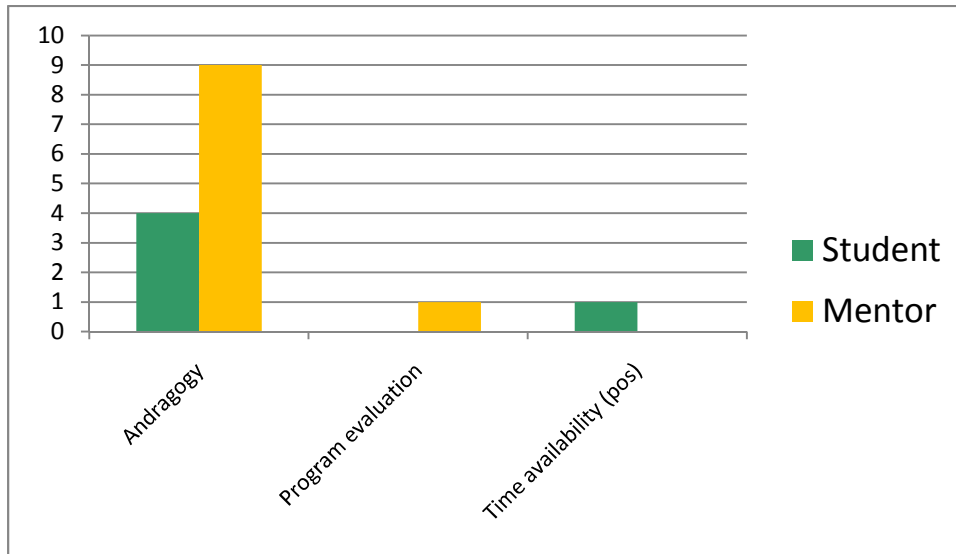


Figure 7. Comparison of the number of times students and mentors mentioned their perceptions of satisfaction related to core categories (Research Question 3).



*Figure 8.* Comparison of the number of times students and mentors mentioned their perceptions of satisfaction related to program factor components (Research Question 3).

The mentors gave andragogy a high level of attention in their conversations.

While the EPI students addressed the topic of andragogy, they discussed it less than their mentors did. The characteristics of andragogy discussed were the self-directed aspect of the field experience, students selecting their own field experience model, students' awareness of needs, instructional choices in the field, and students designing their own personal learning plan. For the components of program evaluation, the participants usually referred to coffee meetings. These meetings were held to discuss any program concerns with the EPI students. The component of time, for Research Question 3, was discussed by both types of study participants as involving accessibility and availability of the mentors.

Participants described positive mentorship under Research Questions 3 with four patterns. These components were counseling, guiding, shared expertise, and time availability. The components of time and availability in the mentoring relationship were

also found throughout the literature review. Counseling involved establishing a trusting environment, one-on-one communication, direct contact with instructors, offering advice, and maintaining a safe, caring environment. Trust was an important factor found in the literature review in regard to mentoring relationships.

Other counseling activities that participants focused on were discussing concerns, reassuring students, relating to students, and honoring student privacy. Guiding was described by mentors as building EPI students' self-efficacy, providing strategies for classroom management, leading EPI students, and having multiple ways to connect (e-mail, office mail boxes, office visits, phone calls). The pattern of shared expertise under the core category of positive mentorship was described by mentors as sharing experiences and sharing knowledge. Shared expertise was described by mentees as benefitting from the experiences of the mentors. The pattern of outcomes were discussed very little and centered on developing student's self-efficacy. The importance of a student teacher's sense of self-efficacy was also emphasized in the literature review. The EPI mentors shared their perceptions of what they found to be most satisfying about the mentoring relationship.

That every once in a while you get some of those students that come through, that come from a diverse business background, sales, communications, marketing. Those people are usually top-notch teachers. They take those life skills. They take those product-oriented-type skills and they turn it right into teaching. And they get very serious about it and they are able to see the big picture, and they turn into wonderful teachers in a very short period of time. (IM)

Oh, watching them grow. Once they get in the schools, one of the questions I ask them is "What are your successes and what are your challenges?" And finding out how their view changed, based on what you've seen in the schools. And that—I think it's most satisfying watching them grow. They go in thinking, "Oh this'll be a piece of cake." And after the first few observations, they say, "Wow, this is going to be really hard work." And if they're willing to buckle down and do what it takes to become a teacher, by the end of their field experience they have totally gotten it. (FM1)

Well, I think they're so appreciative of knowledge, and it's a validation for me because I have been in this system such a long, long time, but to have them enjoy that knowledge that I have and enjoy being shared with. That's very, very gratifying. (FM2)

The relationship itself is satisfying because we as human beings want to connect. Mentoring is about connecting, building, and linking. Ideas come together and new ideas are given birth to and that makes it just extremely exciting and productive. (CM)

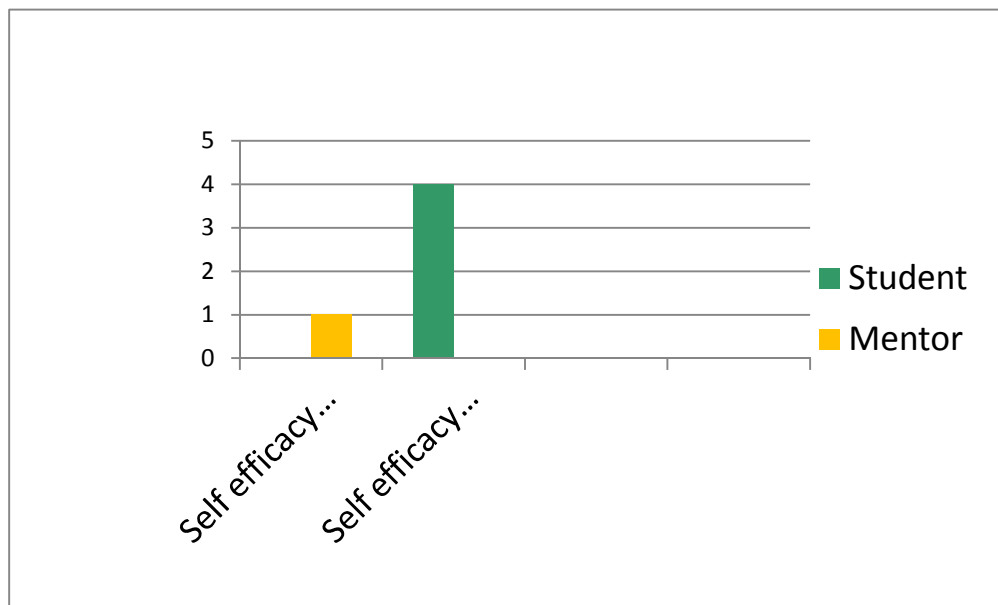
The EPI mentees also shared their perceptions of what they found to be most satisfying about the mentoring relationship. S1 reflected, "The most satisfying thing, I think, is the caliber of the mentors, their availability, and accessibility to me." S3 concurred, "They're very reassuring as far as that they're pretty confident in us, in the students, us students [sic] as a class, as a whole." S3 also found some aspects of the mentoring relationship as satisfying, "they are accessible for questions through e-mail and have meetings and seminars from time to time." Looking at satisfaction in the program, S4, added, "A lot of the instructor mentors were very experienced and very knowledgeable."

Perceptions of outcomes for Research Question 3 presented in Figure 9 generally showed patterns of building and demonstrating self-efficacy. The literature review for this study found articles urging induction programs to work with novice teachers' self-efficacy in the mentoring process. This component was divided into positive self-efficacy and negative-self-efficacy. Positive self-efficacy was discussed by all of the EPI students. These areas related to students' locus of control, pro-activity of students, and mentors' confidence in EPI students. Negative self-efficacy was discussed briefly by mentors. This area referred to the EPI students quickly becoming experts in teaching.

The component of skill development was not discussed in regard to participants' satisfaction with the mentoring relationship. Skill development was discussed under



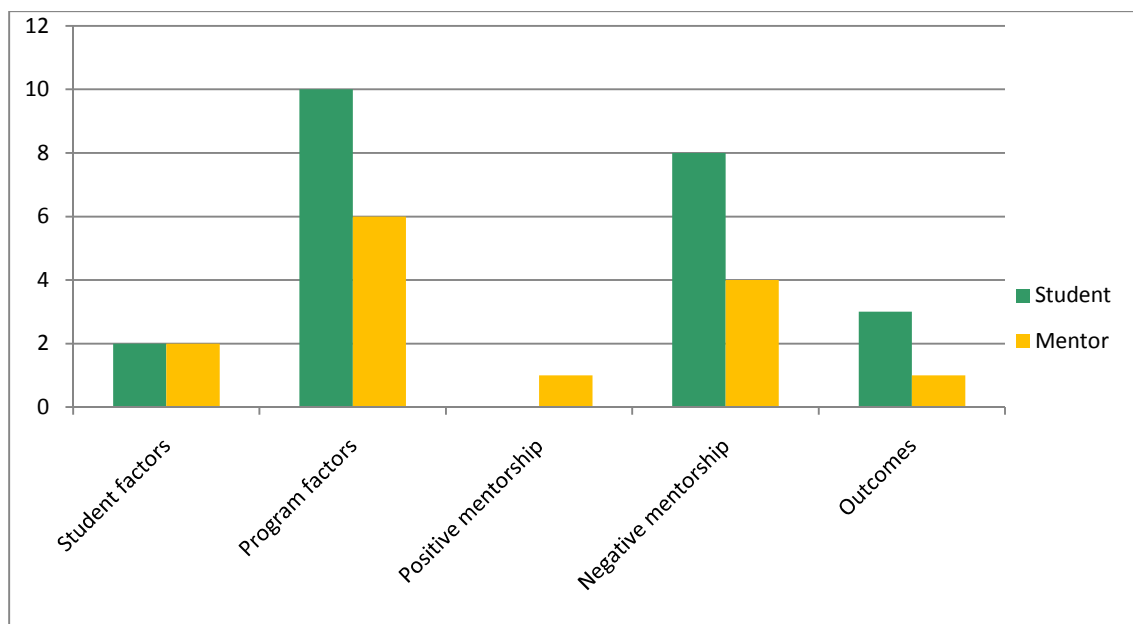
research question 3 on challenges with mentoring in the EPI program. Here, skill development was discussed by students in regard to skills that they wanted to gain from the program. The mentors discussed skill development in regard to the types of mentoring they engaged in to enhance teaching skills.



*Figure 9.* Comparison of the number of times students and mentors mentioned their perceptions of satisfaction related to the outcome component of participants' self-efficacy (Research Question 3).

**Perceptions of challenges.** Mentors' and mentees' perceptions of challenges in the mentoring relationship were addressed in Research Question 4 and are displayed in Figure 10. The core categories that formed through discussions with study participants were student factors, program factors, negative mentorship, and outcomes. For Research Question 4, student factors were discussed equally by students and mentors. Student factors emerged from the pattern of locus of control (negative). Locus of control

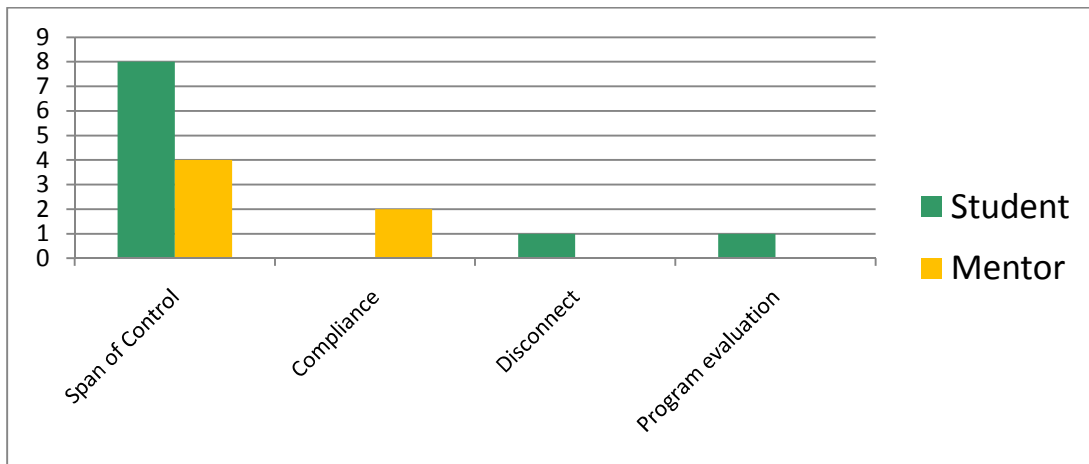
(negative) related to mentors getting students to be proactive and Positive mentorship was mentioned briefly by mentors under challenges as displayed in Figure 10. The pattern of guiding was discussed for positive mentorship along with personal responsibility for in-depth learning. For the students, locus of control (negative) related to expecting job placement and feeling isolated from mentors. Program factors had the most responses for challenges in the mentoring relationship and were mentioned by all the students.



*Figure 10.* Comparison of the number of times students and mentors mentioned their perceptions of challenges related to the core categories (Research Question 4).

The components that emerged from program factors were span of control, compliance, disconnect, and program evaluation presented in Figure 11. These responses centered on mentors needing more time with students (span of control), wanting more one-on-one time with students (span of control), meeting legal guidelines and state standards (compliance), and wanting better time management by the program (program evaluation).

For the mentees, responses were centered on needing more time with mentors (span of control), the large number of EPI students (span of control), needing a quicker response time by mentors (span of control), and the college program's and host schools' lack of communication (disconnect). Under program factors, span of control had the highest number of responses and was largely discussed by students shown in Figure 11.



*Figure 11.* Comparison of the number of times students and mentors mentioned their perceptions of challenges related to the program factor components (Research Question 4).

Positive mentorship was mentioned briefly by mentors under challenges as displayed previously in Figure 10. The pattern of guiding was discussed for positive mentorship and related to challenges in mentoring ESOL students. Negative mentorship had the second highest number of responses under Research Question 4 and was discussed twice as much by students as by mentors previously shown in Figure 10. This result was not unexpected in that Research Question 4 related to challenges. Negative mentorship was a core category that presented many areas of difficulty for the EPI students.

The component that formed the core category of negative mentorship under challenges for students were lack of clarity in the field, confusion in the field, lack of relationship in the field, lack of relationship in general (feeling disconnected from mentoring support), and lack of clarity in general (poor communication). Lack of relationship and clarity in general refer to other aspects of the EPI program (courses, seminars, counseling, orientation, paperwork procedures, etc.).

Lastly, outcomes were discussed somewhat by mentors and largely by students as shown previously in Figure 10. The components that formed the category of outcomes were students wanting more practice in the field and more in-depth training (skill development) and a student not finding mentors approachable (self-efficacy negative). The mentors' discussions on challenges emerged into outcomes from the pattern of students that needed help but did not ask for help (self-efficacy negative).

Mentors discussed some of the challenges they perceived as part of the mentoring relationships in the EPI program:

Part of the challenge is not seeing them personally enough. A lot of my communication with them is virtual or the phone. And just getting out to see them towards the end of their internship in the school, I would be like to be able to do this. (FM1)

You have the quiet ones, the ones that you look out [sic] and you think they have questions, and you know they don't come and ask you. And you keep telling yourself, well I try to ask questions that I think they might be thinking, but Lord only knows, you know, what it's all about. So it's your quiet students, the ones that you hope that you're meeting their needs. It's all about time and that's always the issue. (FM2)

Well, when I feel that we haven't met the needs of our candidates, that is challenging. Where we just aren't able to connect and make things okay or help them understand and find happiness within their choices here. (CM)

The most challenging issue that has popped up recently goes back to the students that are English speakers of other languages. If their diction, dialog, accent is

very heavy in another language, it's difficult for them to be understood when they're teaching a lesson. It is challenging mentoring them in this capacity and getting them to understand what we need to work on. (IM)

Mentees also discussed some of the challenges they perceived as part of the mentoring relationships in the EPI program:

It's a very short program. It's very hard. There are a lot of students. They have a lot of cohorts going on at one time. You're one of a number of students. (S1)

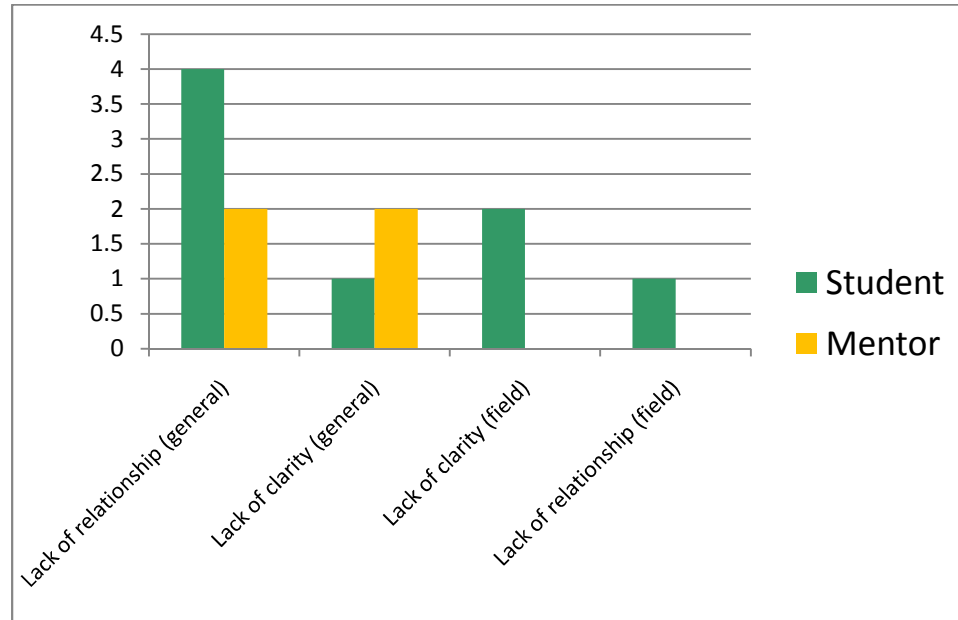
If I had to choose, I guess it would just be reaching out to them about finding the time to reach out to anybody, any of the mentors, because with the schedules, it can be a bit conflicting. (S2)

What was challenging about the relationship was that I didn't know what the fieldwork expected of us as teachers. But if I don't know something or need help with what is going on with my teaching, I would even go to the instructor because it was hard to connect with the fieldwork people. (S3)

Response level should be encouraged, you know, because all these instructors, I understand they have other jobs and they're doing this as a second job or second career type deal, but at the same time they are getting paid to do it, so they need to make sure that they try to respond in a timely fashion, and certainly 24, 48 hours is a timely fashion. I'm talking a week or 10 days between response times which, you know, is kind of frustrating and this is not good for a mentoring relationship. (S4)

Negative mentorship for Research Question 4 encompasses lack of relationship (in general), lack of clarity (in general), lack of clarity (in field), and lack of relationship (in field). Figure 12 displays perceptions of negative mentorship challenges for Research Question 4. Participants focused on these patterns more heavily in Research Questions 1 and 2 than they did for Research Question 4, possibly because Research Question 4 was automatically covered by the participants' flow of conversation when answering Research Questions 1 and 2. When the study participants came to the end of the interview, many of them had exhausted their more passionate answers earlier in the conversation. For Research Question 4, on challenges in the mentoring relationship, lack

of relationship (in general) had the most responses and was discussed by all of the student participants.



*Figure 12.* Comparison of the number of times students and mentors mentioned their perceptions of challenges related to the negative mentorship components (Research Question 4).

**Perceptions of program completion.** For Research Question 5, there were four core categories that formed from participants' perceptions of program completion as shown in Figure 13. These core categories were student factors, program factors, positive mentorship, and negative mentorship. Mentees generally identified student factors as contributing to their decision to remain in and complete the EPI program. These student factors were external to the program and included family, time, cost, job incentive, commitment, and student self-efficacy. Positive mentorship depicted in Figure 13 was discussed some by mentees and referred to mentors being supportive and reassuring. Positive mentorship patterns (displayed in Figure 14) discussed by mentors were commitment, and student self-efficacy.

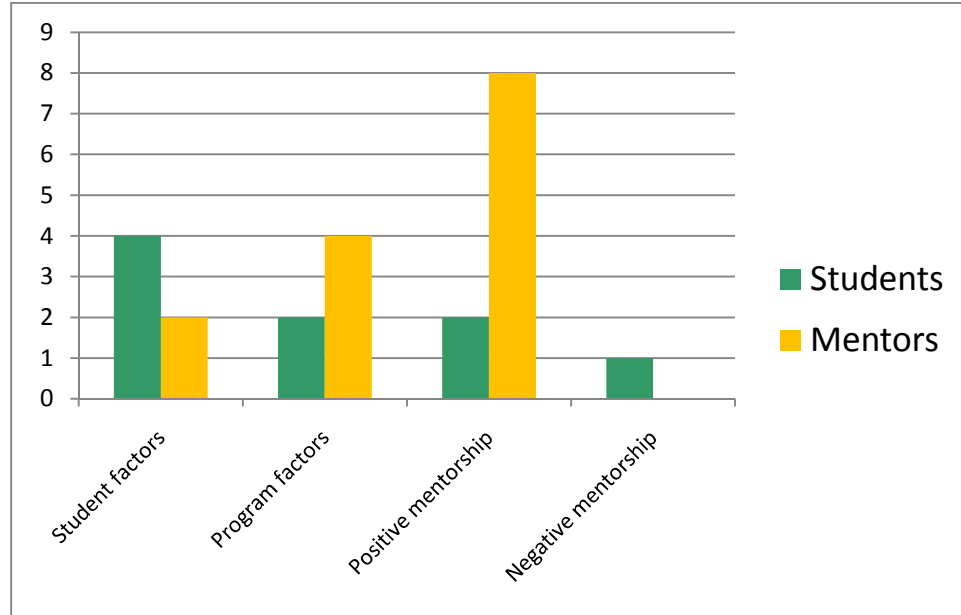


Figure 13. Comparison of the number of times students and mentors mentioned their perceptions of program completion related to core categories (Research Question 5).

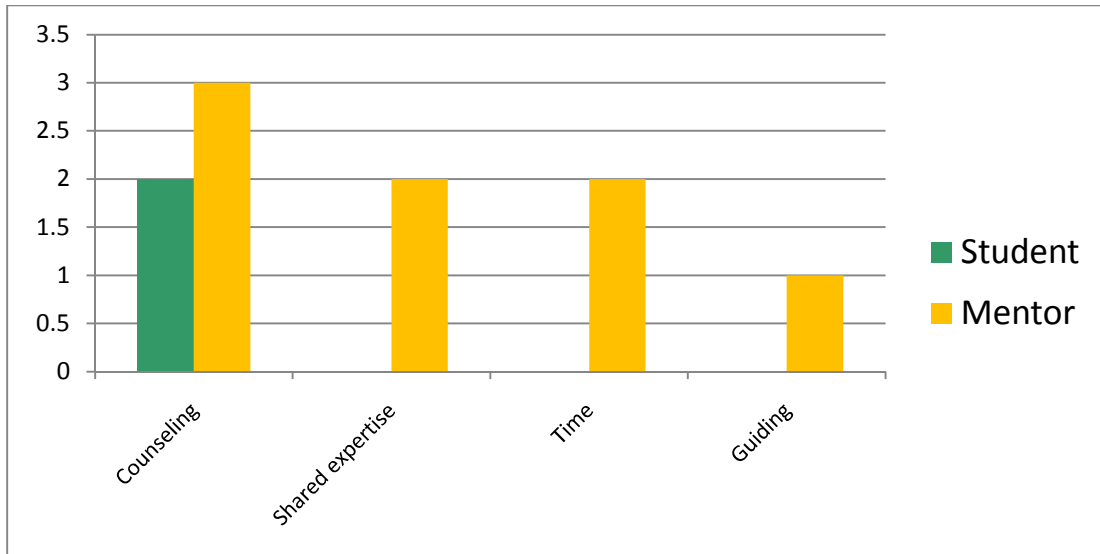


Figure 14. Comparison of the number of times students and mentors mentioned their perceptions of program completion related to positive mentorship components (Research Question 5).

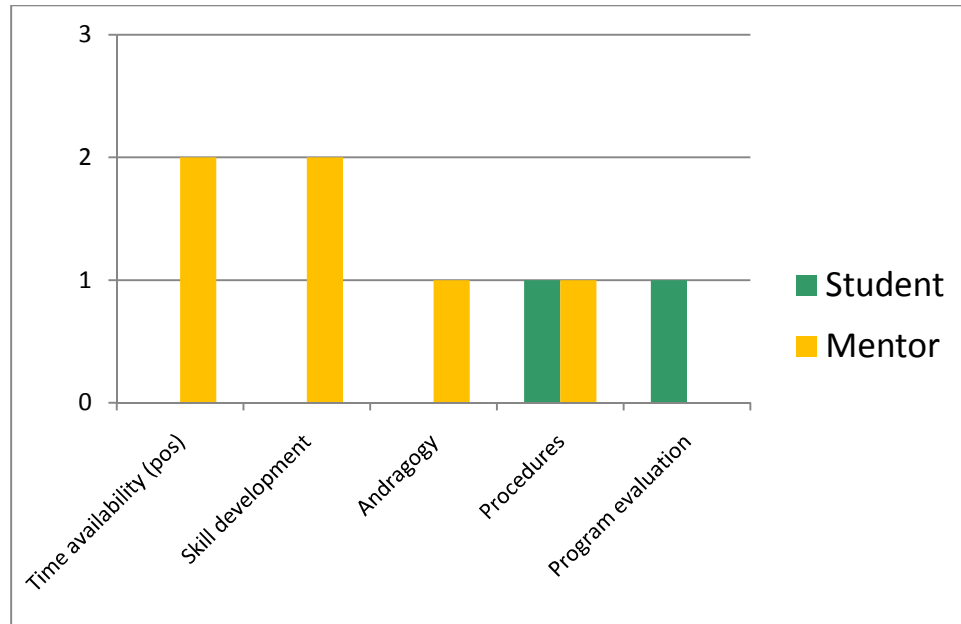
The component of counseling formed from participants' discussions on mentor support and reassurance. One student viewed the advice given to her by the mentors as discouragement, which was identified as a lack of relationship. Lack of relationship was placed under the core category of negative mentorship (in general). It was placed under the general description because it related to the overall mentoring and not specifically to the field experience. Mentors identified positive mentorship and then program factors as contributing to the students' decisions to remain in and complete the program as seen previously in figure 13.

Positive mentorship patterns (displayed previously in Figure 14) discussed by mentors were counseling (personal contact between mentors and students), sharing expertise with students, time (accessibility of mentors), and guiding. Program factors were identified by mentors through repeated components of skill development (positive) and time (positive) shown in Figure 15. Skill development was discussed as involving program procedures, cohort membership, and positive field experiences. Time was discussed as involving the accelerated nature of the program, mentor availability, and program flexibility.

Mentors shared their perceptions of what they believed contributed to students' completing the program:

Their own growth, when we debrief at that last seminar, we talk about their experiences in the classroom, that's what makes them or breaks them. If they've had good experiences, and they have found themselves to be compatible to the instructional procedures, and that they've been able to have good classroom management and develop good lessons, and feel successful about themselves, those are the ones that stay. Those are the ones that'll be good teachers. Helping them— mentoring them as we go along. Guiding them with their decisions, all contribute to their program completion. (FM1)





*Figure 15.* Comparison of the number of times students and mentors mentioned their perceptions of program completion related to the program factor components (Research Question 5).

Oh, I think most definitely the group of hand-picked instructors employed here contributes to their completing the program. In my opinion, they're all very much experts in the field, but they combine that with care and peace. That lets the EPI student know that someone is going to be there for them. Someone's going to be there to help them, and someone's going to be there to answer their questions. (IM)

Recognizing factors both external to the program and internal to the program, S2 shared her perception of what contributed to her plans to complete the program:

What impacted my decision really was just my family and, like, needing to make a career change, was it for me. And also the instructor mentors and the coordinator mentor, they're very reassuring as far as that the program is very beneficial, and they kind of like compare it to the other colleges. Letting you know that you are still getting the same amount of work. It's just in a short—it's just more of an express term. (S2)

S3 and S4 also shared their beliefs on what influenced them to complete the program. S3 had a unique perspective:

I wanted to get a job as a teacher and that is what influenced me . . . As for the EPI program, they discouraged me telling me that I'm not going to be able to get a job! . . . Also they told me, you know . . . \$9.00 an hour to substitute is an excellent way to get to know you . . . It's very discouraging.

Looking at external factors contributing to program completion, S4 explained, "I needed a job and I wanted to teach." "I wanted to get in front of a classroom and I wanted to get that experience, and this was the best way to do it."

### **Elements of the College EPI Mentoring Systems Model**

The components that emerged through the data analysis were organized into a framework that shows the interdependent nature of the components in the system and is presented in Figure 16. This framework is called the college EPI mentoring systems model and displays interaction among the components in the activity system for this study. The model has a similar purpose as the CHAT model discussed in the literature review for this study. Schatz (2006) used the CHAT model for a study of mentoring to provide an overall sense of the interaction among various components in an activity system. The college EPI mentoring systems model in this study was used to better understand how interaction in the mentoring process and each component impacts the other.

Miles and Huberman (1994) referred to this framework as a process map or a causal flow chart. The researchers defined the process as developing a meta-network to investigate an organizational system by conducting a comparative analysis. Miles and Huberman suggested using the variables that are estimated by the researcher to be the most influential in accounting for the outcome. They further explained, "[Y]ou look at

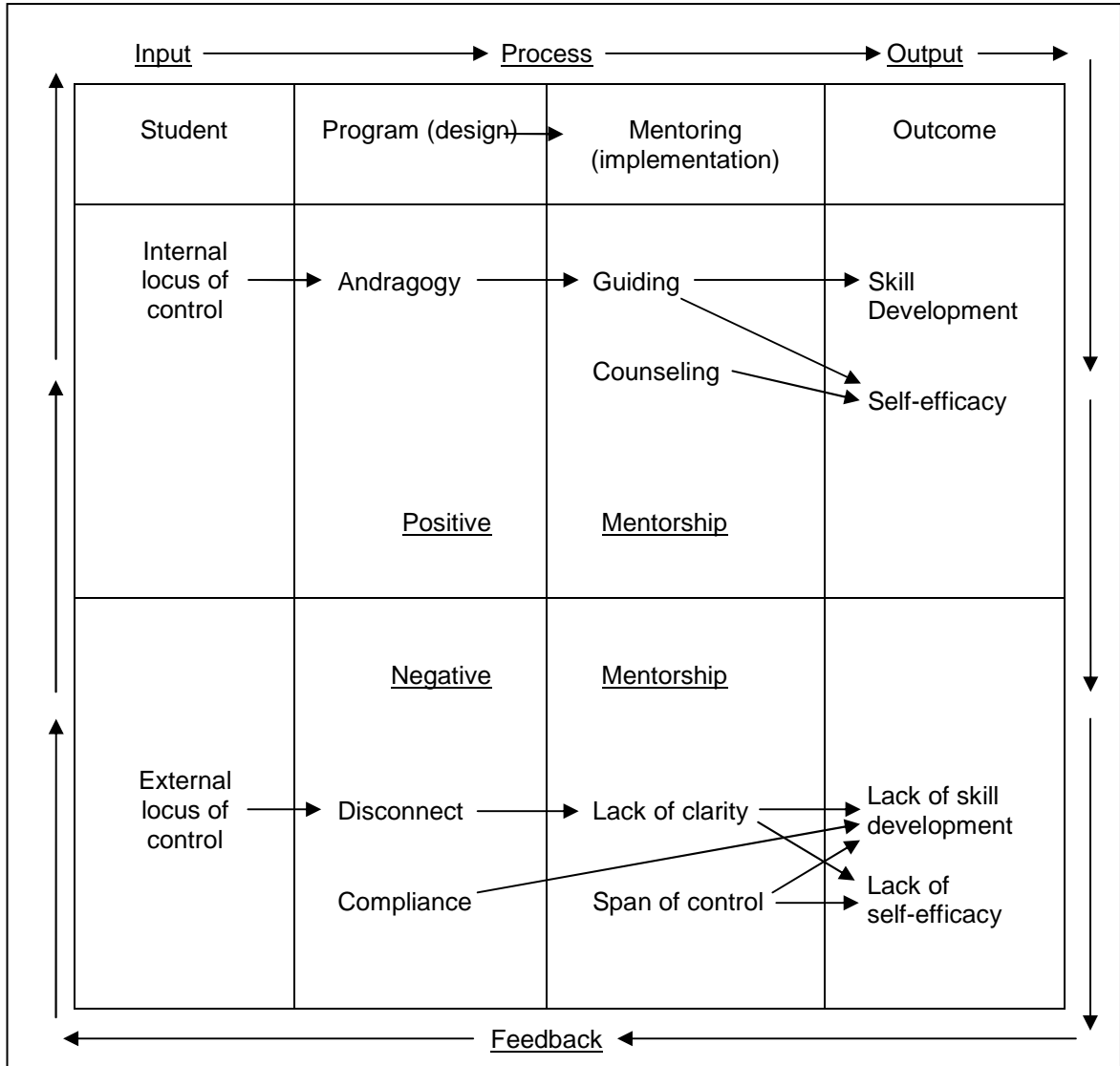


Figure 16. Systems model of college EPI program displaying interaction among components related to the core categories in the EPI activity system.

each outcome measure and examine, for each case, the stream of variables leading to that outcome” (p. 228).

The systems model is divided into an upper section that displays the components of positive mentorship and a lower section that displays the components of negative mentorship. Input in the model is referred to as an importation of energy by Echtenkamp (2004). The researcher further explained that input is the energy in the system that forms from the external environment. For this study on EPI mentoring, an example of input for positive mentorship would be a student’s internal locus of control. The process is also explained by Echtenkamp (2004) as involving inputs of information. For this study on EPI mentoring, an example of a process would be the activity of mentors guiding the teacher candidates. The output of the system is explained as something that is exported into the external environment. For this study on EPI mentoring, an example of an output for positive mentorship would be the skill development of the students (shown previously in Figure 16).

Echtenkamp (2004) also explained the benefit of using an open systems theory flow chart or systems model. In doing so, the researcher advocated the use of the model as being “appropriate for describing person-situation interactions at multiple levels of analysis” (p. 89). This is viewed by the researcher as allowing one to better comprehend activity at the micro and macro levels of analysis. It is further noted that the system is cyclical in nature, which is evident by the feedback loop of the model. For this study on EPI mentoring, an example of the feedback loop would be the coffee meetings held by the EPI mentors to evaluate the program. This open system is seen by Echtenkamp

(2004) as “continually impacting its external environment and, thus, shaping its source of inputs” (p. 91).

The systems model designed for this study begins with input and moves to process and output. It then loops around and down to feedback, which connects back up to input. For this study, *student* appears under input, *program* and *mentoring* are listed under process, and *outcome* appears under output. The input of internal locus of control of the students refers to the belief that personal decisions and efforts impact outcomes (Rotter, 1954). Therefore the process of andragogy is formed from an internal locus of control. Andragogy is a theory of adult education based on learning strategies of adults. Knowles (1973) emphasized the importance of distinguishing pedagogy (children learning) from andragogy (adult learning).

A student displaying the characteristics of andragogy would be a self-directed learner. A self-directed learner, as explained by Knowles (1973), is an adult taking initiative for his or her own learning. Knowles examined this concept through his andragogical theory, which is based on four assumptions that are the opposite from those of pedagogy: (a) changes in self-concept, (b) the role of experience, (c) readiness to learn, and (d) orientation to learning. Knowles (1973) emphasized that self-directed learning assumes that a learner’s experiences become a rich resource for learning. When EPI students begin their teaching program with an internal locus of control, they are more likely to follow the assumptions of Knowles in their training.

The process of andragogy is connected to the process of guiding as the mentors guide the teacher candidates in the program as seen previously in Figure 16. The process of guiding is connected to the outcome of skill development under positive mentorship

for the teacher candidates. The use of external factors as an input refers to elements outside the program that impact the students. For example, the external factors for the EPI students may include (family, financial concerns, career change, etc.). The external factors are connected to andragogy because the students are motivated by adult circumstances to direct their own learning. Andragogy follows the path to guiding because students seek guidance from mentors and then skill development follows as the outcome. Counseling and guiding, under process, are connected to building students' self-efficacy under positive mentorship.

*Self-efficacy* is defined by Bandura (1999) as one's perception of his or her ability to reach a goal. Bandura (1999) cautioned not to confuse the term with self-esteem, which relates to a person's sense of self-worth. Because self-efficacy is related to the personal judgment about one's capability, it is tied to the process of counseling and guiding which is connected to the outcome of a student's self-efficacy shown previously in Figure 16.

External locus of control is explained by Rotter (1954) as one's belief that his or her destiny is controlled by forces outside his or her personal control. In the Figure 16 systems chart, under input, the component of student's external locus of control is connected to the process of disconnect. The student feels disconnected from the program, host schools, and mentors. Students with an external locus of control are less likely to be proactive in connecting with mentors or host schools.

A disconnect was found between the college program and the host schools, and this disconnect was more of a problem with students having the input of external locus of control. The process of disconnect is tied to the process of lack of clarity. The feeling of

disconnect in the design of the EPI program often resulted from a lack of clarity in the implementation process. These processes are connected to the output of a lack of skill development.

Compliance is a process in Figure 16 that connects to a lack of skill development. The mentors were very driven to meet compliance guidelines, and this drive can often take precedence over skill development. The process of span of control leads to the process of a lack of skill development. Span of control refers to the number of students the mentors have to work with. The EPI program has a very high ratio of students to mentors. There are approximately 200 EPI students at various levels in the program at any given time. There is one main field mentor, one assistant field mentor, instructors who can serve as college-based mentors, and one college-based coordinator mentor. Span of control dictates the amount of time the program can mentor the EPI students. The process of span of control is also connected to the output, a student's lack of self-efficacy also shown previously in Figure 16. When EPI students are not mentored and not clear on expectations, they are less likely to feel equipped to reach their goals and more likely to have a lack of self-efficacy.

### **Aggregated Data**

The overall data analysis comparing mentors and students in the area of student factors is displayed in Figure 17. Locus of control (negative) was discussed the most by mentors while external factors were discussed the most by EPI students. The aggregated data displayed show that students were generally concerned about lack of clarity and lack of preparation in the field. The components displayed in Figure 18 identify program factors discussed by the study participants. Compliance was most often discussed by the

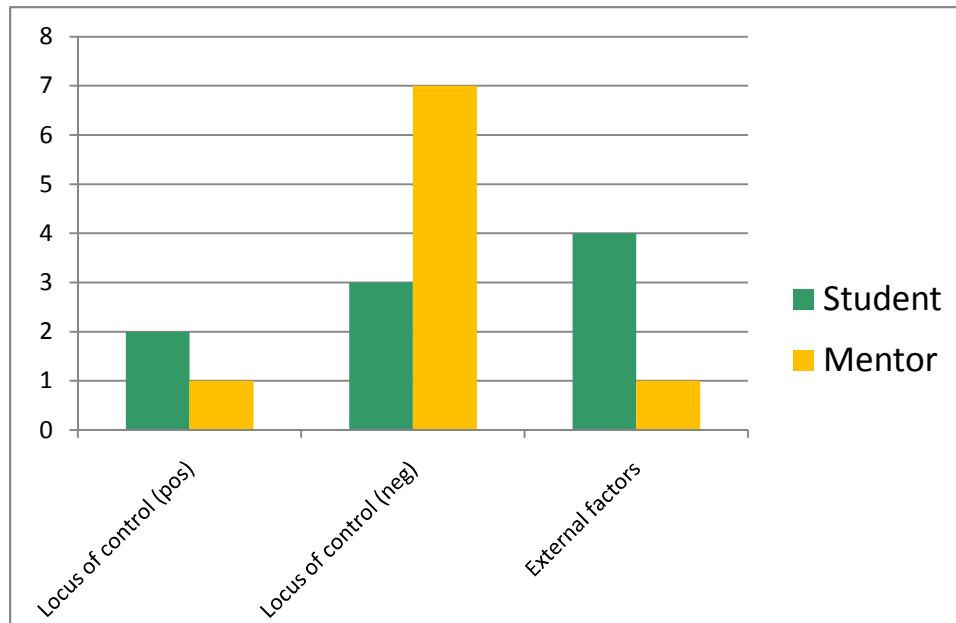


Figure 17. (Aggregated Data) comparison of the number of times students and mentors mentioned student factor components for all research questions.

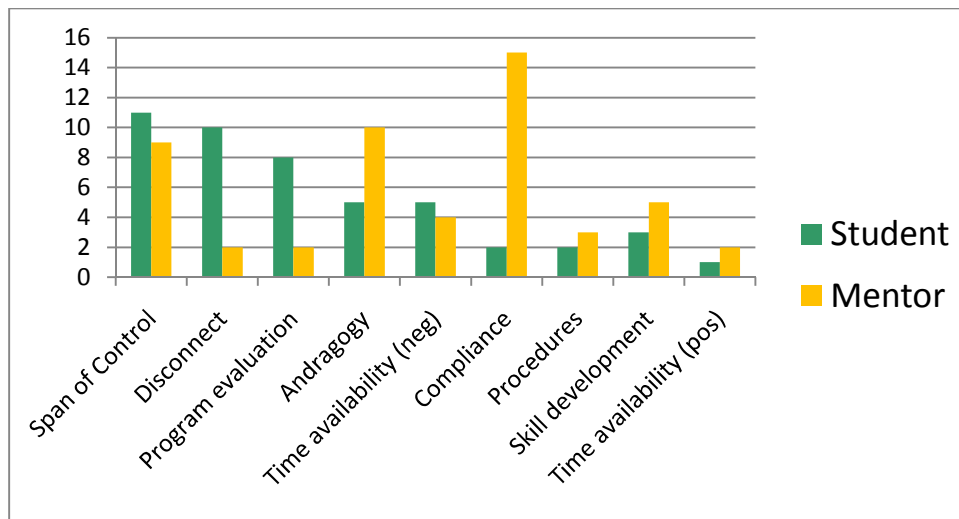


Figure 18. (Aggregated Data) comparison of the number of times students and mentors mentioned program factor components for all research questions.



mentors, and this component was closely followed by andragogy, and then span of control. The EPI students usually discussed span of control and disconnect, followed by program evaluation.

Positive mentorship, displayed in Figure 19, shows counseling and guiding as being discussed a good deal by mentors. Students talked somewhat about counseling and time under positive mentorship. Negative mentorship was largely discussed by EPI students as shown in Figure 20.

The aggregated data displayed for outcomes presented in Figure 21 show skill development as having a high number of responses for both mentors and students. Field issues displayed in Figure 22 were shown to be of the highest interest to EPI students. The components that were mainly focused on in the discussions were lack of clarity, span of control, and disconnect. For field issues, the mentors usually talked about span of control and a little about disconnect.

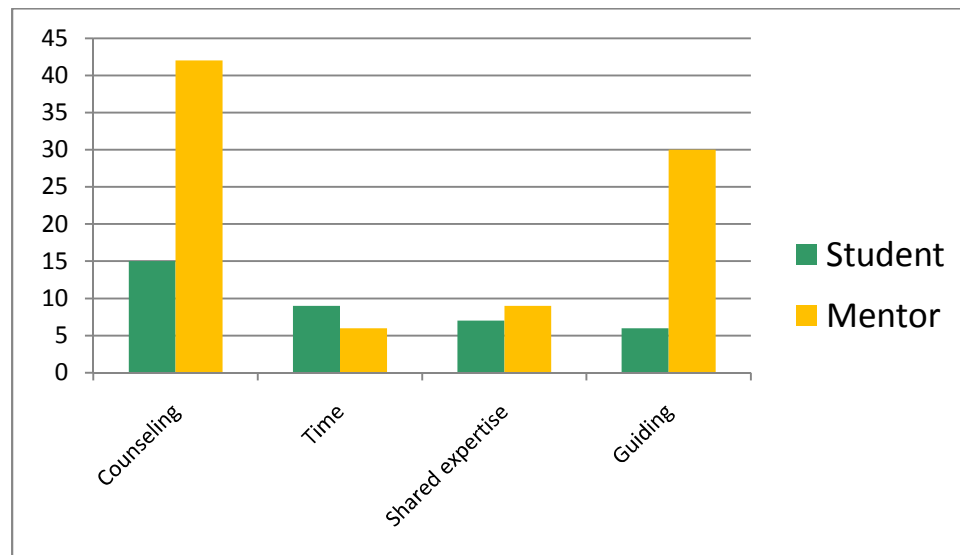


Figure 19. (Aggregated Data) comparison of the number of times students and mentors mentioned positive mentorship components for all research questions.

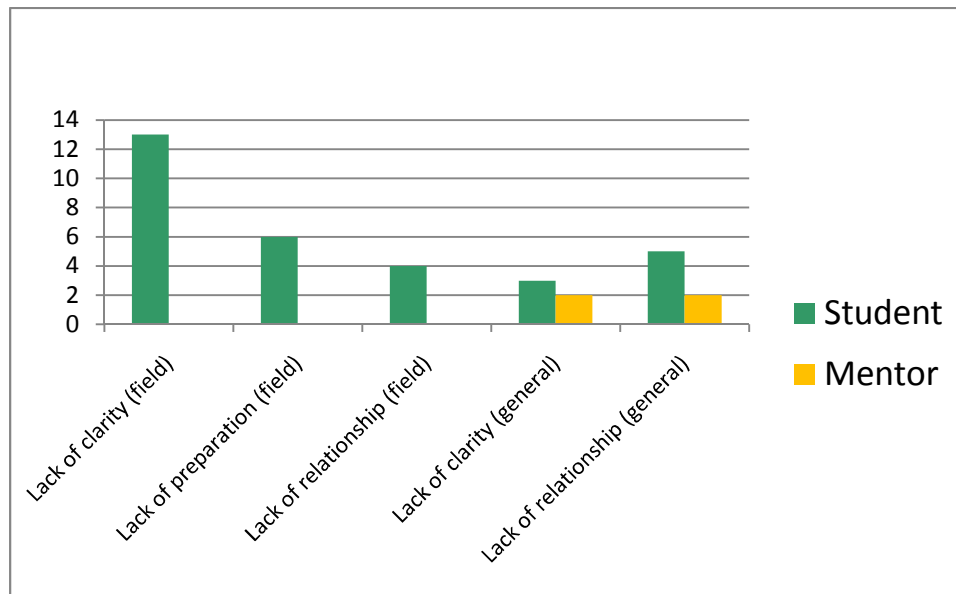


Figure 20. (Aggregated Data) comparison of the number of times students and mentors mentioned negative mentorship components for all research questions.

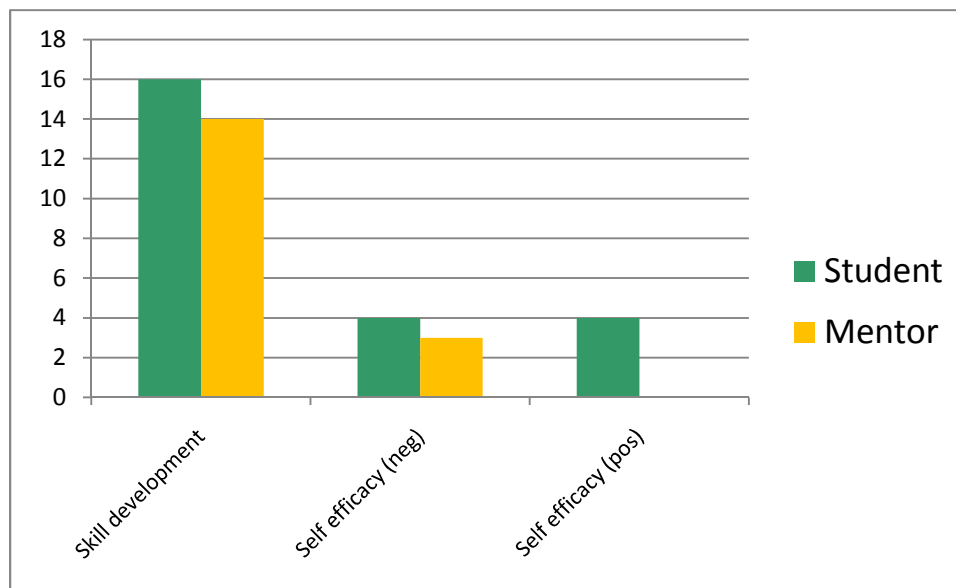


Figure 21. (Aggregated Data) comparison of the number of times students and mentors mentioned outcome components for all research questions.

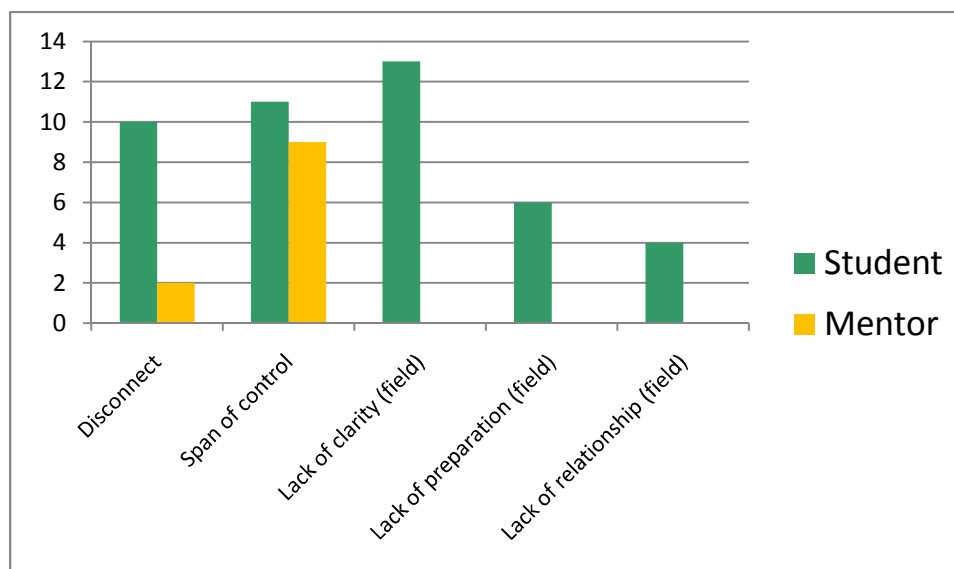


Figure 22. (Aggregated Data) comparison of the number of times students and mentors mentioned field issue components for all research questions.

## Themes

Five themes emerged from the data after examination of the components, refinement of the categories, and constant comparisons. These themes that emerged from the data were (a) group perceptions, (b) time, (c) feedback loop, (d) lack of student awareness, and (e) practice with feedback in a realistic setting.

**Group perceptions.** There were gaps in the group perceptions between the mentors and EPI students (mentees). These gaps became apparent as study participants discussed counseling, guiding, and andragogy. The mentors perceived counseling and guiding as services that were going well for the EPI students. However, the EPI students perceived these services as lacking. Furthermore, the mentors expected the EPI students to be self-directed, which can fall under the area of andragogy. However, most of the EPI students expected more direction from the mentors because they often felt lost and unclear on the field experience aspect of the program.

**Time.** Discussions on span of control, lack of clarity, and lack of relationship formed the theme of time. Time was discussed repeatedly by the study participants and was often tied to span of control. The mentor-to-EPI-student ratio is a major factor in the amount of time available to have one-on-one interaction. Time became identified as span of control to describe the situation as being out of the mentors' control. Also relating to span of control are the confines of the program. Due to the accelerated nature of the program, the time mentors were able to work with individual EPI students was compromised. Lack of clarity and lack of relationship were results of span of control.

**Feedback loop.** The feedback loop developed as a theme through the study participants' discussions of feedback in the program. This area was underrepresented as far as providing a means for the EPI students to evaluate the EPI program and provide the mentors with feedback. The evaluation survey instruments handed out in the college courses did not cover the field experience. These standard evaluations were for the EPI course work only. The four coffees held per year were regarded by mentors as a means to obtain feedback from the EPI students on the program. However, some of the EPI students did not view the coffees as useful or meaningful, and some did not take the meetings seriously. Mentors, on the other hand, did view the coffees as helpful and a way to solicit ideas for program improvement from the EPI students. The results of the interviews for this research study indicated that the feedback loop in the program was underrepresented in regard to program evaluation. When EPI students discussed program evaluation, they suggested that their program provide more opportunities for them to be heard.

**Student awareness.** Research study participants' discussions of compliance, andragogy, external locus of control, and skill development formed the theme of student awareness. There was a strong emphasis on meeting state mandates on the part of the mentors, resulting in less focus on skill development. The National Research Council (1999) acknowledged the difficult balance: Focusing on the need to satisfy certification requirements can result in programs that offer little depth in academics or studies in education. The EPI students in this study did not seem to be as aware of or concerned with compliance as the mentors were.

Most of the EPI students also did not recognize that the program was designed for self-directed learning and andragogy. The program design required a strong locus of control on part of the students. To take part in the field experience, EPI students are expected to arrange their own school and classroom assignments.

The EPI students are also expected to schedule extra time in the field for skill development on their own as well as being observed by a field mentor if they desired. If EPI students seek in-depth learning in educational areas, they were expected to do so, and on their own, using peer support in their pursuits. The interviews with the study participants revealed that the mentors thought the EPI students were aware of these expectations; however, the EPI students appeared to be unaware of them. Mentors had much more awareness of counseling and guiding taking place than the student teachers.

**Practice with feedback.** The final theme that emerged in this research study was practice with feedback in a realistic setting. This theme was generated by the research study participants' discussions of disconnect, skill development, lack of preparation, and self-efficacy. Many of the discussions on the field experience revealed concerns from the

EPI students on disconnect between the college and the host schools. The most confident of the EPI students also felt frustration when reflecting on their experiences of making connections with the host schools and having rapport between the college and the field experience.

The value of experience and deliberate practice in training was recognized by Ericsson, Prietula, and Cokely (2007) in his discussion of the making of an expert. The author asserted that novices must engage in deliberate practice focusing on tasks that are beyond their current level of comfort and competence if they are to become experts. Ericsson, Prietula, and Cokely (2007) cautioned that, to achieve expertise, it will take a novice at least a decade, and achieving expertise is accomplished through a series of deliberate hands-on practices. Further explaining this concept, Anders contended that nearly all successful learners were dependent on the quality of their deliberate practice that was observed or supervised by a subordinate.

All of the EPI students in this study desired more skill development, more practice, and more feedback on their teaching while they were in the field experience. The accelerated nature of the teaching program makes it difficult to provide adequate hands-on experience; however, all the EPI students advocated the need for more practice. Observing factors that contribute to high levels of success, Gladwell (2000) coined the phrase “10,000 hour-rule.” According to Gladwell (2000), the key to success in any occupation is largely attributed to practicing a particular task for a total of approximately 10,000 hours. In other words, it can take up to 10 years to have 10,000 hours of practice on a specific task. An example is the number of years it may take with repeated practices and perfecting of techniques to become a martial artist at the master level.

Most expert-level individuals followed a path of around 10 years or 10,000 hours of practice before earning this title. This information is presented to emphasize the importance of hands-on practice and repeated practice in training. The requirement of 30 hours in the field for the EPI program in this study, while convenient, seemed to result in teacher candidates feeling unprepared to enter the teaching field.

In the literature review for this study, feedback on teaching performance was identified as an important factor in teacher development. With continuous feedback, teacher candidates can make modifications and improve their performance. All but one of the EPI students in this study did not feel equipped to enter the field of teaching without more hands-on practice in the realistic setting of the field. Their feeling of not being prepared to enter the field also had an impact on their level of self-efficacy. These EPI students communicated low self-efficacy in regard to their ability to teach in front of a class.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this research study was to explore how college ATC participants experience mentoring while at the college and also in their field experiences participating in the college program. The goal of the research study was to obtain a rich and deep understanding of the nature of the mentoring experience in a college ATC program through the perspectives of mentees and their mentors. In addition, the research study results were directed towards promoting the retention of ATC teachers (mentees) through successful mentoring in teacher induction programs. The participants in the research study were also given the opportunity to elaborate on any concerns or suggestions for the program.

To achieve these goals, the researcher conducted a qualitative analysis. This analysis began with interviewing the study participants using an interview schedule directed at answering the five research questions, transcribing the interviews, analyzing the data obtained, conducting a member check with the participants, and conducting a data validation check with a peer reviewer. The next chapter presents a summary of the study, conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for further research.



## Chapter 5

### Summary, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

The purpose of this research study was to explore how college alternative teacher certification (ATC) participants experience mentoring support while at the college and also during their field experiences. The sections of this chapter include a summary, conclusions, themes, implications, and recommendations for further research. This study focused on the perspectives of college Educator Preparation Institute (EPI) students and their mentoring team. The research collected was qualitatively examined for components, categories, and themes relating to mentorship. The study participants in this study were EPI students at or near the end of their college teacher training program. All study participants were associated with one community college.

#### Summary

The goal of the research study was to obtain a rich and deep understanding of the nature of the mentoring experience in a college ATC program through the perspectives of mentees and their mentors. In addition, the research study results were directed towards promoting the retention of ATC teachers through successful mentoring in teacher induction programs. The participants in the research study were also given the opportunity to elaborate on any concerns or suggestions for the program.

The type of college ATC program examined for this research study was the Educator Preparation Institute. The type of mentoring examined for this research study was not the mentoring carried out in the schools while the beginning teacher is on the job

but the combined support provided to teacher trainees as they proceed through the college teacher training program.

In addition, the research study results were directed towards promoting the retention of ATC teachers by providing training programs with information on mentoring support from the perspectives of the actual participants. Adding to the richness of this information, the participants in the research study were also given the opportunity to elaborate on any concerns or suggestions for the program. The target population included college EPI students, a college instructor mentor from the program, field mentors, and a coordinator mentor. There were eight participants in the study including, four college program EPI students, one college program alternative certification instructor mentor, two field mentors, and one college program EPI coordinator mentor. The field mentors were aligned with the EPI students in the research study. In other words, the field mentors who were interviewed were the same mentors who worked with the EPI students in this research study.

Long semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researcher on a college campus in a private conference room. Each of the eight study participants were interviewed on two separate occasions. A triangulated set of research methods for data collection and analysis was used. This process included using member checks, validation forms, and peer reviews. The interview questions were developed through concepts found in the themes from Danin's (1998) research study and the literature review for this study, along with discussions with professionals in the field of alternative teacher certification.

After the interviews, the digital recordings were transcribed, and the data were charted, coded, and sorted into groupings for identification of components and categories. Study participants were given a copy of their interviews for review of tentative findings. Study participants were asked to conduct a member check using a themes verification grid while they looked for authentic representation of their perspectives. Once these forms were returned, the researcher made necessary changes and met with the peer reviewer. The peer reviewer was provided with the study transcripts and asked to make independent reviews of the interviews using blank identifying themes forms. While reviewing the transcripts and filling out the themes forms, the peer reviewer was not aware of the themes found by the researcher. Once the independent reviews were completed, meetings were held between the peer reviewer and researcher to discuss, compare, and validate findings as they emerged while analyzing the data on the themes forms and in Microsoft Excel.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do EPI students describe the mentoring support provided by their EPI instructor mentor, field mentors, and program coordinator?
2. How do the EPI instructor mentor, field experience mentors, and program coordinator describe the mentoring support they provide to EPI students?
3. What is satisfying about the mentoring relationship?
4. What is challenging about the mentoring relationship?
5. What themes and perceptions reflect the EPI student's decision to complete the college teaching program?

**Summary of findings.** The students stated that the course work was clear and well structured, however the fieldwork aspect of the program was confusing, lacked clarity, depth, and enough practice with feedback. EPI students felt the overall program structure and the coordinator functions were set up appropriately. All of the EPI students in the research study discussed the fieldwork as needing restructuring. Three of the four EPI students in the research study did not feel adequately prepared to teach in a classroom. All of the EPI students felt they received theoretical knowledge, but not much hands-on practice in the program. The EPI students specified lack of clarity in the field as a challenge and wanted more guidance in this area. Furthermore, the topic of fieldwork disconnect between the college and the host schools was repeatedly observed as a challenge by the EPI students and viewed as lack of support. All of the EPI mentors discussed lack of time and span of control issues in their interviews.

### **Conclusions**

The conclusions that evolved from the findings, were organized into themes, and indicated that EPI group perceptions on program expectations differed between mentors and students, time was a major factor in program dissatisfaction, there was a deficit in the feedback loop, a serious lack of student awareness, and a tremendous need for practice with feedback in a realistic setting. It is important to keep in mind that this study was conducted on a small group at one community college and the results should not be generalized to other programs.

It was surprising to learn from this study, that every EPI student interviewed, although interested in a fast track to their teaching career, overwhelmingly desired more time, practice, depth in the field experience and depth in the classroom work. After

learning in this study that these teacher candidates wanted more depth in learning and more hands on practice, the concern became directed towards their future in the classrooms. Is the mentoring and training they are receiving now strong enough to help retain them in the teaching profession? Some of the teachers in this study did not feel adequate to teach in a classroom at the time of their interview.

The conclusions derived from this research study are discussed in greater detail below according to each research question in the study.

**EPI students and support they received.** The research study findings on mentoring support, from research question 1, indicated that EPI students desired to continue some of the aspects of the program and improve some areas of concern. The EPI students were content with the support they were given in the EPI course work. They were concerned with clarification and preparation for the field experience, as well as having additional practice in the field experience. The EPI students were also concerned with the lack of time being mentored and for the field experience. The need for more time developed into a system-wide issue in the program.

The mentor-to-student ratio was highly imbalanced, and the programs' accelerated design did not allow for EPI mentor-to-student ratio, and the programs' accelerated design did not allow for EPI students to have as much time with mentors as they may have wanted. This span of control issue also appeared to have an impact on the EPI students' reports of not feeling prepared for their field experience. The mentor-to-student ratio, and the programs' accelerated design did not allow for EPI students to have as much time with mentors as they may have wanted. This span of

control issue also appeared to have an impact on the EPI students' reports of not feeling prepared for their field experience.

**EPI mentors and support they provided.** The research study findings on mentoring support, from research question 1, indicated that EPI mentors also desired to continue some of the aspects of the program and improve some areas of concern. The EPI mentors discussed counseling and guidance frequently and felt that they provided an adequate amount of each. They were also concerned with not having enough time to interact with their students. The EPI mentors had the tendency to expect the EPI students to navigate the program and function independently. The EPI students were encouraged to engage in more in-depth study and practice on their own; however, they were given only minimal requirements. Another finding that emerged repeatedly through the interviews was the high priority mentors gave to compliance issues, whereas the EPI students hardly discussed compliance issues.

**EPI students and satisfaction.** For satisfaction with mentoring in the program, from research question 3, the EPI students liked the brevity of the program and its design to accommodate individuals going through career change. Although they acknowledged this purpose, they still wanted additional time for practice in the field. EPI students also appreciated the level of expertise of their mentors as well as their availability and accessibility. Another area the EPI students were satisfied with related to being a member of a program cohort group. They discussed the cohort group as beneficial in providing peer support. Overall, most of the EPI students in this study were content with their relationships with the mentors; however, the way the system was designed made mentorship not as effective as it could be.

**EPI mentors and satisfaction.** The mentor participants, for research question 3, expressed that they liked watching EPI students grow and develop. They reported satisfaction with helping students with talent in various fields develop into teachers. Some of the mentors reflected on the mentoring relationship as being satisfying when they felt they were connecting with the students and when the students displayed an appreciation for knowledge.

**EPI students and challenges.** Responses for research question 4, with mentoring in the program, showed that the EPI students wanted more time for interaction and fieldwork. The students believed that, while the course work was clear and well structured, the fieldwork aspect of the program was confusing, lacked clarity, depth, and enough practice with feedback. Program factors were discussed mostly by the EPI students. They felt the overall program structure and the coordinator functions were set up appropriately. They described the course work as effective, but wanted more depth in their studies.

All of the EPI students in the research study discussed the fieldwork as needing restructuring. Most of the EPI students in the research study did not feel adequately prepared to teach in a classroom. EPI students felt they received theoretical knowledge, but not much hands-on practice in the program. The EPI students specified lack of clarity in the field as a challenge and wanted more guidance in this area. Furthermore, the topic of fieldwork disconnect between the college and the host schools was repeatedly observed as a challenge by the EPI students.

**EPI mentors and challenges.** Responses for research question 4, with mentoring in the program, showed that the EPI mentors wanted more time for interaction with the

EPI students. They also discussed the challenges of working with an abbreviated field experience, but concluded that this was out of their control.

**Program completion.** Observing reasons for program completion, for research question 5, EPI Students recognized mentoring in the program as helpful. However, they emphasized outside influences as instrumental in their decision to complete the program. These influences included family, financial concerns, and career goals. Mentors, on the other hand, believed that their expertise, accessibility, and convenience of the program were responsible for program completion rates.

**Themes.** Five themes emerged from the data in this study after examining the components, refining the categories, and constantly making comparisons. These five themes were (a) group perceptions, (b) time, (c) feedback loop, (d) lack of student awareness, and (e) practice with feedback in a realistic setting.

### **Implications**

The results of this study suggest implications for practice in the field of education and are presented below:

**Programs.** According to the participants, there was not enough one-on-one time for mentors to work with EPI students due to the large number of students in the program. If programs could balance the number of EPI students with the number of field mentors, it may have the potential to alleviate the negative mentorship concerns that emerged in this study. Naturally, education budgets would determine the ability to implement this change. EPI programs may find it helpful to hire more field mentors to work with the EPI students in the field experience or assign college EPI mentor instructors to serve as field mentors.



The EPI students in this research study wanted the host schools to be aware that they would be making contact for their field experiences. The EPI students believed that this understanding would eliminate confusion and stress in arranging the field experiences. Therefore, EPI programs may find it beneficial to assist EPI students with their field arrangements.

The EPI students in this research study did not seem aware of the expectations the program had of them regarding the directing of their own experience. It may benefit these types of programs to focus more on informing the incoming EPI students that they are expected to direct their program experience. Doing so would address andragogical aspects of the program: scheduling of their own fieldwork, independent in-depth learning, peer learning support opportunities, and employment obtainment. Lack of clarity with the field work was another component that EPI students emphasized in their interviews. Lack of clarity with the field work was closely tied to awareness of expectations for this study. The EPI students in this study wanted more guidance and information. Knowing this, ATC programs may find it conducive to place more emphasis on clarity in their mentoring relationships with program participants.

Another implication for EPI programs centers on ESOL. A mentor study participant and EPI student mentee discussed ESOL during their interviews. The mentor found teaching ESOL teacher candidates challenging. Some of the challenges mentioned by the mentor were working with grammar usage before they enter the field experience, understanding ESOL students, and preparing them for the certification tests. The EPI student reported encountering various challenges relating to her ESOL status: having appropriate ESOL materials to teach, understanding the mentors, not feeling a sense of

membership in the EPI program, and not receiving employment assistance for ESOL teaching paths. Alternative certification programs may find it beneficial to have special training and materials available for EPI students needing this type of assistance.

**Host schools and colleges.** The results of this research study also may have the potential to impact both host schools and colleges. These institutions may find it vital to establish a strong connection between teacher training programs and host schools in the training of teachers. Doing so would require host schools to take on some of the training roles if they are not doing so already. The teachers in the host schools for this study had no mentorship duties with the EPI students and no interaction with the college EPI mentors. An implication for college EPI programs may be to focus on building a working relationship with the host schools that will expedite the training of the EPI students.

If the EPI students wanted to be observed in the field, they reported that it was their responsibility to request the field mentor to observe them. Being observed in the field is not a requirement. One of the study participants reported that only about 10% of the students from the total EPI student body request to be observed. For this research study, only one of the four EPI students asked for a field mentor to observe them in the classroom. If the host school teachers can become more a part of the total mentoring experience and work in cooperation with the college program mentors, there may be more time for practice and observations in the field.

**Host schools, K-12 students, and EPI students.** Offering diversified instruction to college EPI students may have implications for host schools, K-12 students, and EPI students. Diversified instruction was discussed by an EPI student in the interviews. The

EPI student suggested that different types of classes be offered depending on the grade level a person intends to teach. For example, one of the EPI students pointed out that a more in-depth reading course was needed for those planning to teach elementary school than for those planning to teach high school. The one-size-fits-all method of having every EPI student take the same reading course regardless of what grade level they plan to teach may not be the best curriculum design for preparing the prospective teachers.

**U.S. Department of Education and the FLDOE.** A final implication of this research study may be directed towards the U.S. Department of Education and the FLDOE in their efforts to retain beginning teachers. A few of the major outcomes of this research study were the perceived need for more time for interaction, in-depth knowledge, and hands-on practice by the EPI students. In the interviews, every study participant emphasized the need for more time regarding the EPI program. An implication for the U.S. Department of Education and the FLDOE would be to consider alterations in the program design and number of faculty to operate the instructional program. According to all of the EPI students and some of the mentors, the program may improve if the field mentors could have more time to mentor and the number of required hours for field experience and practice could be increased to some degree.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The results of this study suggest opportunities for further research. The following recommendations for further research are presented:

1. This study analyzed the mentoring in one Florida college EPI program.

Another study should be conducted examining the mentoring in more Florida college EPI programs comparing and contrasting them to each other. This

could provide more perspectives on the concerns that emerged from this study.

2. A more comprehensive analysis could be organized by researching alternatively certified teachers who have left the field of teaching within the first three years of being hired, along with a follow up on EPI teachers that continued in the teaching profession. Many certification programs track their students after graduation and would likely have teacher contact information on hand.
3. Another study could be conducted examining the perspective of the host schools where the teachers participate in their field experiences. The host schools' principals, vice principals, and classroom teachers could be interviewed or surveyed on their perspectives of working with ATC programs and ATC teacher candidates.
4. A quantitative analysis may be conducted on a larger sample expanding on the five themes that emerged from this qualitative analysis.
5. Another study could be conducted focusing primarily on the interaction between training programs and host schools, investigating the disconnect that emerged as a strong theme in the results.
6. Racial and ethnic population samples could also be researched in regard to efficacy in ATC programs. The results of the interviews with individuals from different race or ethnic origins in this study found that there may be connections between their perspectives on the program and their backgrounds.

7. This study focused on one type of ATC program. A further study could conduct a comparative analysis on the mentoring taking place in different types of ATC programs such as district, agency, or traditional college and university programs.
8. This study investigated one type of ATC program in one state, a college EPI program, in the state of Florida. A further study could conduct an analysis on other college ATC programs in other states in relation to Florida EPI programs.
9. The topic of differentiated instruction (dependent on your intended grade level to teach) emerged in this study. A further study could be conducted to determine the demand for differentiated instruction and how ATC programs may be designed to provide training for different grade levels of teaching.
10. A study could investigate the success of ATC teachers in comparison to traditionally trained teachers over time.
11. It may be useful to gain more insight from field mentors. A study could be conducted on field mentors in ATC or EPI programs to elicit their perspectives on their mentoring experiences.
12. Although Florida EPI programs follow the same curriculum, they all have their own unique style of operating. A comparative analysis could be conducted on the various EPI programs in Florida.
13. A Study can be conducted to examine the training that ATC mentors receive to serve in the role as a mentor.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A

### Danin's Themes

Danin's Attributes of Mentoring in Teacher Induction Programs:

Individual concerns addressed

Emotional support

Time scheduled for observation

Time scheduled for consultation

## Appendix B

### Literature Review Themes

Repetitive themes found in literature on mentoring in teacher induction programs:

Collaborative relationship (working together to identify solutions)

Observing modeled lessons and being observed while teaching

Mentor role as nonjudgmental

Relationship based on trust and confidentiality

Expectations clarified

Feedback provided

Self-directed learning

## Appendix C

### Interview Schedule

#### Questions for College EPI Students

Questions asking participants to respond on three types of mentors (instructor mentor, field mentor, and coordinator mentor):

1. If support was provided to you, could you give examples of how this support may have been carried out by your instructor mentor, field-based mentor, and coordinator mentor?
2. Were individual concerns addressed and emotional support provided, and if so how?
3. What did you think about the time scheduled for consultation with the EPI mentors?
4. What did you think about the mentoring relationship with your instructor mentor, field mentor, and coordinator mentor?
5. How much time was spent observing modeled lessons?
6. Were the program, course work, and field-based expectations clarified, and if so how?
7. If feedback was provided to you, Could you give examples of how this feedback may have been provided by the mentors?
8. Did you work together to identify solutions in a collaborative manner, and if so how?
9. Was learning self-directed, allowing you, the beginning teacher candidate, to have a hand in the learning process, and if so how?
10. Were trust and confidentiality maintained in the relationship, if so how was this done?
11. What kind of advice would you give, if any, on improving the mentoring support provided in the program?
12. What did you find to be the most satisfying about the mentoring relationship throughout the EPI college program?
13. What did you find to be the most challenging about the mentoring relationship throughout the EPI college program?

## Appendix C (Continued)

14. Did you ever think about leaving the program, and if so, why?

15. What impacted your decision to complete the teaching program ?

### **Questions for College EPI Instructors, Program Coordinator, and Field Experience**

#### **Mentor**

1. Do you consider yourself to be a mentor, and if so how?

2. Could you give examples of the type of support you may provide as a mentor?

3. Were individual concerns addressed and emotional support provided, and if so how?

4. What did you think about the time scheduled for consultation with EPI students?

5. What do you think about your mentoring relationship with the EPI students?

6. How much time was spent having student teachers observing modeled lessons?

7. Were the program expectations clarified, and if so how?

8. Could you give examples of how you may have provided feedback to the EPI students?

9. Did you work together to identify solutions in a collaborative manner, and if so how?

10. Was learning self-directed, allowing the beginning teacher to have a hand in the learning process, and if so how was this done?

11. Were trust and confidentiality maintained in the relationship, and if so how?

12. What kind of advice would you give, if any, on improving the mentoring support provided in the program?

Appendix C (Continued)

13. What do you find to be the most satisfying about the mentoring relationship?
14. What do you find to be the most challenging about the mentoring relationship?
15. What do you think may have had an impact on the EPI students' decision to complete the teaching program?

## Appendix D

### Tying Research Questions to Interview Schedule Questions

#### Students

RQ1. How do EPI students describe the mentoring support provided by their EPI instructor mentor, field mentors, and program coordinator?
RQ2. How do the EPI instructor mentor, field mentors, and program coordinator describe the mentoring support they provide to EPI students?

The following interview schedule questions addressed Research Questions 1 and 2:

1. If support was provided to you, could you give examples of how this support may have been carried out by your instructor mentor , field mentor, and coordinator mentor?
2. Were individual concerns addressed and emotional support provided, and if so how?
3. What did you think about the time scheduled for consultation with EPI mentors?
5. How much time was spent observing modeled lessons?
6. Were the program course work, and field-based expectations clarified, and if so how?
7. If feedback was provided to you, could you give examples of how feedback may have been provided by the mentors?
11. What kind of advice would you give, if any, on improving the mentoring support provided in the program?

RQ3. What is satisfying about the mentoring relationship?
RQ4. What is challenging about the mentoring relationship?

The following interview schedule questions addressed Research Questions 3 and 4:

4. What did you think about the mentoring relationship with your instructor mentor, field mentors, and program coordinator?



## Appendix D (Continued)

8. Did you work together to identify solutions in a collaborative manner, and if so how?
9. Was learning self-directed, allowing you, the beginning teacher candidate, to have a hand in the learning process, and if so how?
10. Were trust and confidentiality maintained in the relationship, if so how was this done?
12. What did you find to be the most satisfying about the mentoring relationship?
13. What did you find to be the most challenging about the mentoring relationship?

RQ5. What themes and perceptions reflect the EPI student's decision to complete the college teaching program?

The following interview schedule questions addressed Research Question 5:

14. Have you ever thought about leaving the program, and if so, why?
15. What impacted your decision to complete the teaching program?

### **Mentors**

1. How do EPI students describe the mentoring support provided by their EPI instructor mentor, field mentors, and program coordinator?

2. How do the EPI instructor mentor, field mentors, and program coordinator describe the mentoring support they provide to EPI students?

The following interview schedule questions addressed Research Questions 1 and 2:

1. Do you consider yourself to be a mentor, and if so how?
2. Could you give examples of the type of support you may provide as a mentor?
3. Were individual concerns addressed and emotional support provided, and if so how?
4. What did you think about the time scheduled for consultation with EPI students?
6. How much time was spent having student teachers observing modeled lessons?
7. Were the program expectations clarified, and if so how?

Appendix D (Continued)

8. Could you give examples of how you may have provided feedback to the EPI students?
12. What kind of advice would you give, if any, on improving the mentoring support provided in the program?

RQ3. What is satisfying about the mentoring relationship?

RQ4. What is challenging about the mentoring relationship?

The following interview schedule questions addressed Research Questions 3 and 4:

5. What did you think about your mentoring relationship with the EPI students?
9. Did you work together to identify solutions in a collaborative manner, and if so how?
10. Was learning self-directed, allowing the beginning teacher to have a hand in the learning process, and if so how?
11. Were trust and confidentiality maintained in the relationship, if so how was this done?
13. What do you find to be the most satisfying about the mentoring relationship?
14. What do you find to be the most challenging about the mentoring relationship?

RQ5. What themes and perceptions reflect the EPI student's decision to complete the college teaching program?

The following interview schedule questions addressed Research Question 5:

15. What do you think may have had an impact on the EPI students' decision to complete the teaching program?



## Appendix F

### Panel of Experts

The following individuals were interviewed in during the development of the questions:

Dr. Henry-Sue Bynum  
Educator Preparation Institute former EPI Program Coordinator  
Indian River College

Lorraine Coughlin  
Educator Preparation Institute EPI Program Coordinator  
Indian River College

Molly Drake  
Educator Preparation Institute EPI Program Coordinator  
St. Petersburg College

Dr. Diane Edwards  
Educator Preparation Institute EPI Program Coordinator  
Lake Sumter Community College

Carol Jones  
Educator Preparation Institute EPI Program Coordinator  
Pasco-Hernando Community College

Eileen McDaniel  
Senior Educational Program Director  
Bureau of Educator Certification  
Florida Department of Education

Ian Neuhard  
Director of Baccalaureate Programs  
Indian River College

Dr. MaryAnn Ratliff  
Educator Preparation Institute EPI Program Coordinator  
Hillsborough Community College

Eileen Wetmiller  
Alternative Teacher Certification Program Coordinator  
Eckerd College

## Appendix G

### Demographic Profile Questionnaire

The information you provide will be used for statistical analysis only.  
Your identity and personal information will not be revealed or released to anyone other than the researcher without your written permission.

Gender:

\_\_\_\_\_Female                      \_\_\_\_\_Male

Your Age at time of induction program: \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity:

- a. American Indian/Native American \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Asian/Pacific Island Native \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Black/African American \_\_\_\_\_
- d. White/Caucasian \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Puerto Rican \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Mexican American \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Cuban American \_\_\_\_\_
- h. Other Hispanic \_\_\_\_\_

City and County in which you live \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Employment Status:

Are you currently employed as a teacher?

\_\_\_\_\_Yes    Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_No

Specialization area of teaching \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Length of time in college teaching program \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix H**  
**Identifying Themes Form**

IDENTIFYING THEMES

College EPI Student (Mentee)

Reviewer:		Study Participant:	
Date of Review:		Date of Interview:	
Pg. #	Question #	Prominent Points	Themes

## Appendix I

### Steps and Procedures for Methods

1. Examine documents describing program and develop interview schedule.
2. Meet with expert panel to obtain opinions, perceptions, and suggestions for interview schedule.
3. Revise interview schedule after receiving input from expert panel.
4. Conduct a pilot study and a member check with the pilot study participants.
5. Discuss results with pilot study participants and revise any areas needing attention.
6. Schedule two interview sessions with each study participant for approximately 30 minutes each.
7. Explain the study and obtain participants signed permission for interview and digital recording.
8. Conduct the actual interviews and demographic survey.
9. Use face-to-face semi-structured open ended interview with a digital recorder.
10. Examine program structure and activities.
11. Transcribe each interview recording.
12. Analyze transcripts and notes for themes, patterns, data identification, sorting and coding.
13. Use a member check system sending participants transcribed interviews (A) and (B) and Themes Verification Grid for review and input.
14. Final themes form completed by researcher after member check.
15. Provide transcripts and blank Identifying Themes Form for first peer evaluation.
16. Themes Validation Form developed by researcher with revisions after peer review.

## Appendix I (Continued)

17. Analyze data using Excel Program and the framework process of sifting, charting, and sorting.
18. Create typologies linking data, finding associations, and charting material.
19. Provide Themes Validation Form/framework material for second peer evaluation.
20. Make necessary adjustments and complete thematic analysis.



## Appendix J

### Letter to EPI Participants for Member Check

Dear EPI Program Participants,

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me about your experiences as a college EPI student or mentor. The information you have shared will not only help me with my dissertation research, but may be useful in assisting alternative teacher certification programs in operating to their greatest potential.

Attached is a copy of the transcript from our interview and a themes verification grid. Please review the transcript and themes verification grid and note any comments or observations you may have concerning these documents. Also, please put an (X) or check-mark in the column under (V) for each of the (15) themes boxes to note that you have previewed and verified the summary of our interview. When the over-view is complete, simply return the attachment to me through email.

Again, I thank you for your assistance. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me.

With Sincere Appreciation,

Debra Kilgore

USF Dissertation Study

## About the Author

Debra V. Kilgore received an Associated in Arts degree from St. Petersburg College in 1983, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education in 1986 from the University of South Florida. After a number of years in the work force she returned to the University and earned a Master of Arts degree in 1996 in Adult Education and Counseling from the University of South Florida. Work experience included television broadcast news reporting, marketing and business ownership. Education work experience began as a Hillisborough county K-12 school teacher. Higher education work experience involved working as a graduate assistant at the University of South Florida designing computer based training programs, working at Pasco Hernando Community College as an adjunct academic student advisor, at St. Petersburg College as an assistant to the coordinator of the Women on the Way program, also as an intern organizing job fairs for the career center and assisting the ATC program coordinator, as well as other adjunct functions at the college while pursuing her doctoral degree and being a mother. She moved to Florida in 1977 from Chicago, Illinois and currently lives in a farm zoned nature and wild life community on the west coast of Florida with her husband, 14 year old daughter, mother, and three precious canines.