The principalship: how significant is mentoring?

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Abstract

Purpose – To draw on a structured review of the literature on formalised mentoring programs for principals with the purpose of exploring their nature and the positive and negative outcomes for the parties involved.

Design/methodology/approach – The methodological approach utilised in this paper was a structured review of the literature which is a pre-determined set of criteria, namely a set of coding categories, used for analysing research papers. Forty research-based papers constituted the structured review and major coding categories utilised in this paper were positive and negative outcomes of mentoring programs for mentors and mentees and factual data relating to the research focus of the sample.

Findings – Both positive and negative outcomes of mentoring were reported in the 40 research-based papers, with substantially more papers reporting positive outcomes. Frequently cited positive outcomes for mentees included support, sharing ideas and professional development, while, for mentors, networking, professional development and the opportunity to reflect were noted. Frequently cited negative outcomes for mentors and mentees were lack of time to undertake mentoring and personality or expertise mismatch.

Practical implications – The findings highlight the necessity for planners of programs to ensure that mentors are trained; the matching process is executed to eliminate potential incompatibilities; and time for mentoring is factored into program implementation.

Originality/value – The major contribution of the paper is that it makes a strong claim about the specific outcomes of mentoring programs for principals, thereby providing a clearer picture regarding its potential as well as its caveats.

Keywords Mentoring, Principals, Research, Research results

Paper type Literature review

Introduction

Much attention in the literature has been directed to the complex and demanding nature of the principalship. Not surprisingly, specific education programs, including mentoring programs, have been designed to help principals develop new skills and learn to survive in a context fraught with ambiguity and competing demands. This paper draws upon a structured review of 40 research based papers on formalised mentoring programs for school principals with a view to making more valid claims about the nature and specific outcomes of these programs for mentors and mentees alike. While there is a huge body of literature on mentoring for school principals, to date there does not appear to be a great attempt at identifying and isolating specific

outcomes of mentoring for principals from empirical research. Yet, we would argue that a structured review of the literature might be very useful for illuminating good practice and assisting planners of programs to make more informed judgements about formalised programs. This paper begins by providing some background discussion on the nature of the principalship and principalship preparation of which mentoring has been identified as a major strategy.

The principalship

It has been widely recognised across a number of countries including Australia (Gronn and Rawlings-Senaei, 2003), Canada (Williams, 2003), the USA (Educational Research Services, 1998) and New Zealand (Brooking *et al.*, 2003) that there is a principal shortage. As an example, Malone (2001), in commenting on the USA, reported that not only is there a shortage of principals to fill current vacancies but also a sizeable portion (i.e. 40 per cent) of current incumbents are nearing retirement. It seems that the principalship is not viewed as an attractive career option for teachers due to a host of factors including the increasing workload and stress associated with the position (Holdaway, 1999). Gronn and Rawlings-Senaei (2003) use the term "disengagement" to explain teachers' disinterest in pursuing the principalship and cite it as an "unanticipated outcome of new governance models" (p.172) which have resulted in the intensification of work for principals in Australia. According to the responses of 188 American superintendents, reported reasons for the shortage of principal candidates can be summarised as insufficient compensation compared to responsibilities and too much stress (Educational Research Services, 1998). Lashway (2003) noted that much of administrator stress arises from a complicated set of interrelated variables including the demands of diverse constituents, a fast-moving environment, feelings of personal inadequacy and the isolation created by the role. Some of these very difficulties are encapsulated by Hickcox (2002) in his discussion of the principalship in Manitoba:

> ... the principalship is not a sought after goal for many educators. The job has become tangled and difficult. It involves long hours, lots of night work, lots of conflicting demands from various stakeholders. The pay is not that much more than what an experienced teacher receives (pp. 2-3).

In a study of the roles and workloads of high school principals in New Zealand and one Australian state, Queensland, Cranston *et al.* (2003) discuss how a series of targeted reforms, related to the management of education, have impacted on the principal's role. In particular, these authors see the school-based management reforms as having a demanding and significant impact on the high school principal. However, an interesting finding in the Cranston *et al.* (2003) study related to principals' satisfaction with their role. These authors report that:

> ... [w]hile it is true that principals are working long hours, feel pressure (and this is increasing), identify increased variety and diversity in the demands of their role as well as reporting some role overload role conflict it is also true and most significant that the majority of them are satisfied in their role as principal (p. 22).

In the light of the literature on principal stress, the findings of the research by Cranston *et al.* (2003) provide a glimmer of hope regarding the nature of the principalship.

Training and preparation of principals

According to Hickcox (2002, p. 3), the training of principals across Canada and many other countries tends to be an "informal, *ad hoc*, essentially uncoordinated approach". Yet, some authors have argued that this situation appears to be changing with systems around the world stressing the need for appropriate training and development of principals and mandating particular programs and courses (see Su *et al.*, 2003). To date, there appears to be some variation across countries in the way that principals are prepared for the position. For example, it is a requirement for principals in the USA (Levine, 2005) and Singapore (Bush, 1998) to complete mandated programs of university study before they are entitled to take up the principal role. In contrast, in other countries, such as Australia (Coleman *et al.*, 1996) and New Zealand (Cardno, 2003), a less systematic approach is used. In Australia, for example, an apprenticeship model continues to be used where leaders begin their careers as teachers, then move up the ranks to principal (Su *et al.*, 2003). While much learning is on the job, systems across different states and territories in Australia do provide different types of support and training for leaders at different stages of their career. It seems, however, that in both Australia and New Zealand much formal administrator training takes place at induction after principals are appointed to the position (Cardno, 2003; Coleman *et al.*, 1996).

In discussing the USA context, Mullen and Cairns (2001) argue that there are four major climate issues which are impacting upon and relevant to the effective preparation of school leaders. These are the national leadership shortage; the isolationist nature of school leadership; an insufficient reward system for aspiring leaders; and the bombardment of decision-making for school administrators. In response to these challenging issues, Mullen and Cairns (2001) focus on the importance of formal university programs in preparing school principals for the job. In particular, they argue that pre-service leadership programs provided by universities should consist of internships (with mentors supporting novice leaders) as a way of helping new leaders learn the practical and necessary skills required of the job in the context of a supportive and developmental relationship. Their argument is grounded in the belief that formal programs of study need to include not only a strong academic component but also a practical component most effectively experienced through mentoring.

An important initiative in the United Kingdom that changed the face of principal preparation in the late 1990s was the introduction of the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). Before that time, principal preparation tended to be largely uncoordinated and took place mainly at the induction stage (Bush, 1998). The NPQF is now a mandatory qualification that prepares experienced teachers for the role of headship and as such it is viewed as "the benchmark for entry to headship" (National College for School Leadership, 2005). Along with this qualification is a suite of leadership development programs for emerging and current leaders provided by the National College for School Leadership. One example is the Headteacher Induction Programme (HIP) for newly appointed principals. An important component of this program is mentoring. Of interest to this paper is the apparent potential of mentoring in principal preparation programs.

Mentoring for school principals

In this discussion of mentoring we are confining our remarks to formal mentoring, that is where the organisational structure instigates a structured program and informs staff

regarding how the program will proceed. However, one of the problems associated with the formal mentoring literature is the question of definition. A number of educational mentoring papers do not define the word mentoring in an adequate manner (see Hansford *et al.*, 2003) and this problem is not confined to educational studies of mentoring but also studies within the business literature (see Hansford *et al.*, 2002) and medical literature (Ehrich *et al.*, 2003).

The following definition reflects our understanding of formal mentoring. It should be noted that the following is an adaptation of a previous definition (see Hansford *et al.*, 2003, p. 44):

> Formal mentoring is a structured and coordinated approach to mentoring where individuals (usually novices – mentees and more experienced persons – mentors) agree to engage in a personal and confidential relationship that aims to provide professional development, growth and varying degrees of personal support.

As indicated by the definition, we would argue that mentoring is *not* the same as peer assistance or peer tutoring since a mentor by definition is a person who shows "greater experience, influence, and achievement" (Jacobi, 1999, p. 513). In other words, while two novice principals may provide "peer support" for one another, we would not coin this support "mentoring" since neither novice has more experience in the principalship than the other.

Bush and Jackson (2002) have indicated that there are many programs for aspiring, beginning and experienced principals but few of these represent a coherent and integrated program that covers these three "stages" of principalship. These authors (Bush and Jackson, 2002) actually recommend an international network of leadership centres to assist in principal learning and development.

Southworth (1995) and Bush and Chew (1999) are typical of those who review the potential for mentoring principals in a positive manner. For example, Bush and Chew (1999) report that "(m)entoring programmes are widely welcomed in Singapore and England" (p. 48) and later that although there are problems that can occur "the problems are outweighed by the benefits and many mentors and protégés report no difficulties" (p. 50).

The literature abounds with suggestions as to the how and why of mentoring for principals and some snapshots of these studies will now be reported. Reynolds (1999) reported a study in which the responding principals indicated that mentors should be available as soon as a principal is appointed. Male and Male (2001) suggested that on taking up headship of a special school, a mentor should be appointed from a similar type of school. Mullen and Cairns (2001) argue the case for mentoring of assistant principals. Kiltz (2003) in a review of Sinetar's book, *The Mentor's Spirit: Life Lessons on Leadership and the Art of Encouragement*, states that although the book is "somewhat esoteric ... leaders in schools must be nurtured in an environment where authentic dialogue, trusting relationships and self-reflection flourish" (p. 5). Kelehear (2003) although in favour of mentoring, reports that the "process of growth ... can take as long as 6 months ... and for systematic change in organisations ... a three-to-five year effort" (p. 45). Finally, Sullivan-Brown (2002) warns that there is a danger of mentoring becoming "superficial and those involved never deal with what it means to be a mentor" (p. 148).

Overview of programs

Over the past couple of decades, mentoring programs have been put into place as a developmental tool to improve the quality of principal preparation and performance in many countries. However, formal mentoring programs for principal development only began to be introduced in Australia in the 1990s (Brady, 1997). To date, the approach to mentoring programs across systems in various States and Territories in Australia continues to be *ad hoc*. With this said, however, there are some indications of concerted efforts at coordinating mentoring programs across Australia. One example is the approach used in the State Victoria. Here there is a statewide regional Principal Induction Program provided to new principals (Department of Education and Training: Eastern Metropolitan Region, 2004). This program runs parallel to a Principal Mentoring Program "where newly appointed principals will be paired with experienced principals . . . for a period of 12 months" (p. 2). A considerable component of the developments in Victoria has been driven by the Australian Principals Centre which works with the Department of Education and Training and in one region of the state alone had trained 135 mentors in their particular model of mentoring, known as SAGE (Barnett *et al.*, 2002).

In numerous locations in the USA, a range of principal mentoring programs have been established. For example, Albuquerque Public Schools' Extra Support for Principals (ESP) commenced in 1994 and was basically a matching of experienced principals with newly appointed principals (Malone, 2001) and according to Weingartner (2001) this proved beneficial for mentors and mentees. Another example is the Southern Regional Education Board's Leadership Academy which had as a significant component of their program mentoring where a coach or mentor is assigned to each district team (Crews and Weakley, cited in Malone, 2001) in Santa Cruz County a program known as "Growing Your Own" was established where a mentor relationship was established between assistant principals and principals. The emphasis is on collaboration with an agreement aimed to produce leaders for public schools (Bloom and Krovetz, 2001). The Texas A&M Principals Center has introduced various initiatives incorporating mentoring and these include the School Leadership Initiative Program, the Richardson Mentor Program and the Aspiring Principal Program (See Zellner and Erlandson, 2002 for details). A cooperative project involving various education agencies in Iowa and the University of Iowa (College of Education), has developed a program that recently had 27 mentors enrolled. These mentors were all principals or district administrators and will be later paired with students working on masters degrees in educational administration (University of Iowa, 2004). A number of other principal mentoring initiatives in USA are outlined by Mullen and Cairns (2001, pp. 147-149).

An important component of the mandatory diploma for prospective principals in Singapore is the practical component of the course that involves two four week attachments to a school whereby the prospective principal works as an associate principal under the guidance and mentorship of an experienced principal (Bush, 1998). Evaluations since its inception, indicate that the program has played an important role in developing Singapore's effective educational system (Bush, 1998). Unlike the diploma, the National Professional Qualification for Headship used in England and Wales does not utilise a mentoring component. Staffed by noted practitioners and scholars in the field, the qualification has been described as a "quasi competence model

without a mentoring dimension" (Bush and Chew, 1999, p. 41). However, other leadership development programs provided by the National College for School Leadership do include mentoring programs (http://www.ncsl.org.uk/leadership_development/entry_to_headship). The aforementioned discussion on mentoring programs has endeavoured to outline the range and diversity of programs across and within a small number of countries. The next part of the paper outlines the research approach used in this study.

Methodology

An initial examination of the literature suggests that benefits may accrue to principals as a consequence of involvement in a mentoring program. However, what does not appear to be available are precise indications as to the nature of benefits of mentoring for principals and the other parties (i.e. the mentors, mentees and the organisation) involved. Daresh (1995) made this point some ten years ago when he stated, "there have been relatively few published descriptions of research related to the structure, implementation, evaluation or outcomes of mentoring programmes designed to enhance the professional development of educational leaders" (p. 2). Thus, the major objective of the current study was to develop a database that provided future principals in mentoring programs with information pertaining to mentoring outcomes grounded in research based data. It was proposed that this database would contain information regarding positive and/or negative outcomes for the mentors, the participating principals (the mentees) and the organisations involved, such as schools, educational districts or government departments.

This paper reports on the findings of a structured review of 40 research based papers that explore the outcomes of mentoring for principals (i.e. mentees) and their mentors (i.e mentor-principals). For the purpose of the discussion we have defined a structured review as a pre-determined set of criteria, namely a set of coding categories, that is used for analysing research papers. The papers that comprised the sample were located from a search of databases including ERIC, Australian Education Index, EBSCO host, PyscLIT, ProQuest and Google utilising terms such as "mentor", "mentoring" and "principals".

Each of the 40 articles was coded with a trialled coding sheet. Apart from coding the reported positive and negative outcomes of mentoring from the study a number of other features were also coded. These were the source of the study, the year of publication, the country of origin, the sample size, the data collection methods and the methodological stance.

Findings

The literature search identified a considerable number of articles relating to the mentoring of principals. With 1987 as the starting point and 2004 as the completion date of searches, 40 research based studies identifying mentoring outcomes were located. While many other papers were found, they were not included in the database of 40 because they were descriptive, speculative in nature and did not generate any empirical research findings. Thus, these materials were not suitable for the type of analysis intended in this study.

Factual data pertaining to studies
Of the 40 studies analysed, 17 came from journals, 16 from theses and seven from conference proceedings. The great majority of the studies (i.e. 24) had been conducted in the USA, with five each from Australia, United Kingdom and South East Asia. In terms of methodological stance, 25 studies were qualitative, 11 adopted a mixed method approach and four were quantitative. The most frequently used data collection methods were surveys (16 studies), combined techniques (14 studies) and interviews (eight studies). The remaining studies used journals, log books or email transcripts.

Table I presents data regarding the sample size in studies in relation to the number and percentage of studies in the sample.

It can be observed in Table I that there was a reasonable distribution of studies across the sample sizes. Reference should be made to the five studies with unknown sample sizes. In each of these studies we either could not find a mention of a sample size or sample size was mentioned but appeared to change without explanation. Based on the background data relating to this sample of studies, the typical study was conducted in USA, based on a sample of fewer than 100, reported in a journal or thesis, adopted a qualitative stance and collected data by survey, or mixed techniques.

General outcomes from mentoring
Of the 40 research based studies, all mentioned at least one positive outcome for participants. Sixteen studies, reported positive or beneficial outcomes for mentors, that is those who were responsible for advising or supporting the principals. A total of 31 studies contained findings that indicated there were identifiable advantages for those principals who had received mentoring. The sample of 40 studies contained 26 where problems or difficulties were associated with the programs involving the mentoring of principals. Nineteen of these 26 studies reported problems arising for mentors. Eleven of the 26 studies reported findings that indicated problems could arise for the mentored principals.

In summary, all mentoring studies examined in this study reported at least some beneficial outcomes for participants and over half of the studies reported outcomes that were negative or detrimental. While the findings indicated that more studies showed that mentees rather than mentors benefited by mentoring, and fewer studies indicated that mentees more so than mentors experienced problems associated with mentoring, an explanation is required to understand the discrepancy. The imbalance can be explained, at least in part, by the fact that more research papers sought mentee responses than mentor responses although the majority of papers sought responses from both parties.

Sample size	Number of studies
Unknown	5
2-10	6
11-20	6
21-50	6
51-100	11
101+	6

Table I.
Number and percentage of studies related to sample size

Positive or beneficial outcomes for mentees. The reported positive or beneficial outcomes for principals (mentees) who had participated in mentoring are reported in Table II

Table II indicates that 31 studies reported positive outcomes for participating principals (mentees). It can be observed in Table II that 18 studies (i.e. over 50 per cent) identified the receiving of support, empathy and counselling as a beneficial outcome arising as a consequence of participating in a mentoring program. Other frequently identified outcomes mentioned in seven or more studies were a belief they had shared ideas and participated in problem solving, had an opportunity to engage in professional development, had experienced an improvement in their confidence and been given an opportunity to reflect and an opportunity to engage in networking.

In the actual coding of outcomes it was difficult to decide whether to amalgamate some outcomes where there appeared to be an association, or even potential overlap in the implied meaning. For example, the outcome described as feedback and positive reinforcement has similarities with the outcome described as support/empathy/counselling. Despite this, it was decided to use the words of the research study in an endeavour to maintain the authenticity of data. Given the strength of literature regarding the potential isolation and loneliness of principals (Lashway, 2003; Mullen and Cairns, 2001), it may have been anticipated that more than five of the research studies would contain findings that mentoring eased the problems associated with isolation and loneliness.

It is no surprise that the outcomes identified in Table II could well constitute some of the basic elements required of a mentoring program. For example, a program that offered participants support, trust and respect, mentors who listen, confidentiality, encouragement of reflection, networking and the sharing of ideas with a professional role model should be headed in the right direction.

Specific positive outcomes	$n = 31$
Support/empathy/counselling	18
Sharing ideas and problem solving	12
Professional development	10
Improved confidence	9
Opportunity to reflect	7
Opportunity to network	7
Feedback and positive reinforcement	5
Eased loneliness and isolation	5
Given career affirmation and how to advance	5
Developed mutual trust and respect	4
A mentor who listened	4
Improve performance and knowledge	4
Challenged to explore new ideas	3
Induction and helped accept school culture	2
Helped with planning strategies	2
Confidentiality of setting and process	2
Better prepared for real world	2
Advantage from observing a role model	1
More successful when same gender matched	1

Table II.
Nature of positive outcomes for mentees (principals)

Negative or problematic outcomes for mentees. Table III presents the outcomes from 11 studies where negative or at least problematic outcomes were reported for mentees (participating principals). The ten outcomes reported in Table III all have as their focus things mentors do or rather do not do. In eight of these studies concern was expressed with the expertise and/or personality match of mentors/mentees. A further eight studies also reported the fact that the mentor could not devote sufficient time to the demands of the mentoring role. It is obvious from the comments made regarding the training, selection and capacities of mentors that if this role is not performed in a competent manner the program may well fail. Given the perception that the selected mentors may be perceived as not performing their task in an appropriate manner, it raises the question as to how mentors are selected. In the great majority of studies examined, the mentors were principals or retired principals. Lampoh *et al.* (2001) reported that in mentoring programs in Singapore "specially selected principals serve as mentors" (p. 1). Grover (1994) indicated that the mentors in a New York program were "usually a retired principal from the community school districts" (p. 4) that had been recommended by senior experienced education staff. In an Australian study, Brady (1997) adopted the definition of mentoring as "a relationship between an individual principal and another principal who is trusted to provide wise counsel" (p. 4). Yet Daresh and Playko (1990) expressed concern that it could be a major flaw in a mentoring program if the only selection criteria for mentors were previously being a principal.

Positive or beneficial outcomes for mentors. Sixteen studies reported positive or beneficial outcomes for mentors (Table IV). Table IV presents ten categories of positive

Specific negative outcomes	n = 11
Concern with expertise/personality mismatch	8
Lack of mentor time	8
Work demands conflict with those of mentor	3
Mentor not trained/skilled appropriately	3
Mentor critical/out of touch	3
Lack of opportunity to express own ideas	2
Difficulties arising from cross-gender mentoring	2
Mentors should be selected more carefully	2
Lack of social contact with mentor	1
Mentor inhibited ideas of reform	1

Table III.
Nature of negative outcomes for mentees (principals)

Specific positive outcomes	n = 16
Collegiality and networking	11
Professional development	9
Opportunity to reflect	7
Personal satisfaction and reward	5
Interpersonal skill development	3
Improved role satisfaction	3
Better understanding of trust and mutual support	3
Provides a sense of purpose	2
Exposed to new ideas	2
Opportunity to give back to the profession	1

Table IV.
Nature of positive outcomes for mentors

or beneficial outcomes. Given the nature of some categories it would seem that these are linked to assumed practices that principals engage in during the course of their work. For example, 11 studies that reported positive outcomes for mentors, noted collegiality and networking and nine studies noted professional development as beneficial outcomes. These two frequently cited outcomes appear to be outcomes for current principal mentors (rather than retired principal mentors). Outcomes such as personal satisfaction and reward (five studies), better understanding of trust and mutual support (three studies) and opportunity to give back to the profession (one study) could relate to either current or retired principals.

In examining the outcomes for mentors, a number of questions arise and these include how are mentors selected? Are they trained? How are mentors and mentees matched?

In a discussion of mentoring for principals in Singapore, Chew *et al.* (1996) report that principals had learnt their skills partly through a set of guidelines and through their own experiences "as mentors started working with their first protégé, they gathered experiential knowledge and insight on how they could proceed for subsequent trainees." (Chew *et al.*, 1996, p. 10). By way of contrast, Coleman *et al.* (1996) indicated that a pilot scheme for "British mentors had allowed funding for specific mentoring training which was arranged regionally" (p. 10).

There is little doubt that mentors are a critical element in programs designed to support and develop principals. In their review of key characteristics required of mentors, Geismar *et al.* (2000) comment on the need for prior effectiveness in performing the role of principal, ability to answer the right questions, acceptance of alternative ways to carry out the role of principal, an expressed desire to help others, knowledge of models of continuous learning, an understanding of the value of reflection and an awareness of the political and social realities of being a principal. In a study of British headmasters, Bolam *et al.* (1996) asked new headmasters and mentors to rank the desired characteristics and skills of mentors. The outcomes from this rank ordering were: listening skills, open, warm, enthusiastic behaviour, experience of headship, providing feedback, being non-judgemental and having counselling skills. In summary, these findings suggest that are beneficial outcomes of mentoring for new principals. It seems likely that even greater benefits would accrue if research findings regarding training of mentors and the attributes and skills of mentors were considered more carefully as mentoring programs were put in place.

Negative or problematic outcomes for mentors. Table V presents the data relating to negative or problematic outcomes for mentors of principals. The 19 studies providing data for Table V identified 15 negative outcomes. A lack of time to perform the role of mentor and a possible mismatch between mentor and mentee (participating principal) are identified as the most frequently identified negative outcomes for mentors. It is probably no surprise that lack of time and potential mismatch were also the most frequently identified negative outcomes by the participating principals (See Table V).

The general literature regarding mentors indicates that not all people are suited to this role (Walker and Stott, 1993) nor do they have necessarily the appropriate skills to act as mentors. Although time restraints and inappropriate matching were the most frequently identified negative outcomes for mentors, the terminology of the studies, reported in Table V highlights the extraordinary difficulties associated with becoming an effective mentor. Terms such as burden, responsibility, need to establish productive

Specific negative outcomes	$n = 19$
Lack of time to perform role	6
Mismatch arising from personality/educational interests	5
Nature of communication skills, especially listening, required	3
Extra burden and responsibility	3
Initial establishment of productive communication	2
Role not explained carefully enough	2
Frustration with attitude of mentee	2
Meeting demands of authorities	2
Lack of proximity to mentee	2
Balancing support role with evaluation	2
Inadequate training	2
Stressful and draining experience	1
Jealousy and negative attitudes of others	1
Mentee expectations unrealistic	1
Being considered an authority and know-all	1

Table V.
Nature of negative
outcomes for mentors

communication, role not explained, frustration, meeting demands, stressful, draining, jealousy, and negative attitudes convey both why mentors should be selected carefully and why they need training. Ehrich *et al.* (2004) in a discussion of mentor training state:

> Educational administrators must make numerous decisions about the mentoring program, but perhaps the most difficult decisions relate to who the mentor will be and how they will be trained (p. 535)

The program coordinators in the study reported by Trenta *et al.* (2001) made recommendations about mentors that could well form the foundational rationale for a mentoring program:

> A program such as this should initiate and maintain its efforts to recruit a diverse and highly qualified cadre of persons to be assigned as mentors to entry year principals ... the strong recommendation for training ... recruitment not be left to chance or even simple recommendation ... the experience develop into a co-mentoring or mutually beneficial relationship. (p. 17)

Discussion and implications
In our analysis of 40 articles there was certainly evidence of positive outcomes being reported for mentees (participating principals). In fact, 31 of the 40 studies constituting the sample reported at least one positive outcome for the participating principals. There were also benefits reported for the mentors, but these were not as frequently identified as for mentees. Both the mentors and the participating principals were aware of specific negative outcomes they experienced from their involvement in the programs. Both these groups were aware that the lack of time for mentors to perform their role and the mismatch between mentor and mentee as a consequence of personality, expertise or educational interests impacted on program effectiveness. The negative or problematic outcome of some mentoring programs are in keeping with what Long (1997) described as the "dark side" of mentoring. Based on our examination of 40 studies relating to the mentoring of school principals, it would seem that many of the negative and problematic outcomes could be minimized if greater attention were paid to the overall planning of proposed programs.

The general literature regarding mentoring suggests that such programs have identifiable outcomes for the organisations involved (Carden, 1990; Douglas, 1997); As an example, Carden (1990, p. 285) indicated that organisational benefits of mentoring include management continuity, improved employee retention, increased productivity, improved interdepartmental communication and a better integration of employees in organisational norms. Yet, in these 40 studies, there was scant or no discussion of the outcomes mentoring yields for schools or students. It does not seem unreasonable to expect that staff and in turn students would benefit in some ways by better equipped and developed principals. To a large extent, we concur with Ganser (1993) who noted the propensity of educational mentors and mentees to relate the benefits of mentoring to themselves or each other, rather than the organisation. He stated, "Only rarely do the subjects include other beneficiaries of mentoring such as the children in the school" (p. 9).

While this study identified some of the positive and negative outcomes of mentoring for principals and those who mentoring them, two major facets of this study require clarification. The first relates to the nature of the research endeavour and the second to the principles upon which programs are developed.

Nature of research
Southworth (1995) indicated the potential value of mentoring program for principals, but sounded a warning that relates to the nature of the research process used in these studies. A majority of studies analysed for the current study used either a survey for data collection, or a survey and some interviews. Consequently the data collection procedures are in the main self reports. The report by Southworth (1995) on mentoring in England reached the following conclusion:

> There are many espoused benefits for new head teachers. On the surface advantages outweigh the disadvantages and there appears much to recommend. However, maybe some of the advantages are too idealized ... and not sufficiently realized to warrant wholesale advocacy of mentoring. Maybe the rhetoric of mentoring is a little too distanced from the actual reality. Indeed, much of the data on which estimates of the benefits of mentoring are based tend to be from participants self reports. There appear to be very little observing of mentoring in action and no third party analyses of partnerships at work. Thus we may have a strong rationale for mentoring and a supporting rhetoric from participants but no other evaluatory data to triangulate these two strongly positive positions (pp. 27-28).

Our examination of the literature tends to support much of the implied criticism by Southworth (1995). In some instances there were studies examined that although containing data, read like a description of an experience rather than a research study. Issues such as lack of clarity in the research question, a single point data collection, small one off studies and lack of data suitable for triangulation, create concern regarding the research rigour in some studies. There are studies such as Trenta *et al.* (2001) where multiple point data collection is involved and where data were collected from mentors, mentees, coordinating committee members and the evaluators. This question of rigour in mentoring has been mentioned elsewhere (Healy and Welchart, 1990; Jacobi, 1991) and, among other things, new studies should include the possibility of longitudinal research and the question of the value of such programs for the organisations involved. Currently principals who have been involved in a mentoring program generally say they benefited from the experience. This still hides fundamental

questions such as do these principals perform their role in a more effective manner than principals who have not been mentored? Are the educational outcomes at the schools where the principals were mentored more identifiable than those at schools where the principals are not mentored? Are the outcomes of mentoring short, rather than long-term? Is Kelehear (2003) correct when it is contended that for systematic change in an organisation mentoring programs may require a life of three to five years?

Program principles
In a number of the studies examined it was difficult to ascertain the nature of principles underpinning particular mentoring programs. This is understandable as journal articles and/or conference papers place restrictions on the length of presented materials. When the negative or problematic outcomes of mentoring principals are examined, such issues as lack of time, lack of training, lack of understanding of the required roles and inadequate matching of participants frequently appear. The question that then arises is what is the nature of the process leading up to implementation of a program and the principles embedded in the program?

A number of studies provided suggestions as to the planning and implementation of a program and these will be briefly outlined. A study by Dukes (2001) concluded that some of the essential characteristics of a mentoring program were careful matching of participants, clear expectation and guidelines, a confidential and trusting relationship and a non-supervisory process where mentors are not required to assess performance of others. Crocker and Harris (2002) recommended that mentors be provided with the time to carry out there role, be given an appropriate formal training and a specific set of guidelines and expectations. Finally, Sullivan-Brown (2002) warns against the dangers of mentoring becoming a superficial process with no philosophical or professional underpinnings and no shared local context. Sullivan-Brown (2002) suggests that in the sustained dialogue that should occur before implementing a mentoring program, a number of questions should be addressed and these include the following.

- What are the goals and purposes of the organization's mentoring program?
- How do these goals fit the needs of individuals?
- What type of training or preparation do mentors get?
- How does the mentor/mentee matching up process work?
- Is it possible to change mentors? If so, how does this happen?
- How does the program structure time and space for mentoring interactions to take place?
- What supports are provided especially practical ones such as adequate budget? (Sullivan-Brown, 2002, pp. 148-149)

There is little doubt that these questions should be given some consideration by planners before sizeable investments in money and time are devoted to these items.

Conclusion
Irrespective of the organisational context, the formally designated leader generally enters a challenging domain (Limerick *et al.*, 2002). Whether the domain entered by the school principal is any more challenging than that of other organisational contexts is of

course both debatable and contentious. However, based on an examination of the literature (see for example, Barnett, 1990; Cranston *et al.*, 2003; Mullen and Cairns, 2001) the role of the principal is demanding. It is these very complexities that have pointed to the need for well-designed and implemented training programs to prepare new principals for their chosen path. From our review of 40 research based papers on mentoring for principals, we would argue that mentoring programs are an important type of professional development activity for enhancing the learning and growth potential of novices and more experienced principals. While the majority of the reviewed studies revealed that mentoring provides a range of positive outcomes for mentors and mentees alike, the review showed it was not without its drawbacks. Perennial problems such as insufficient time for mentoring and personality/expertise mismatches can and do undermine the fostering of important conditions required for such a highly interpersonal and developmental relationship. We agree with the conclusions of Sullivan-Brown (2002) that much thought and careful consideration needs to be afforded to the planning, training and implementation phases of mentoring. To do otherwise is not to actualise the full potential of mentoring or the full potential of principals.

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