A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF FIRST-YEAR HIGH SCHOOL BAND DIRECTORS AND THEIR MENTORS

By

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To my parents, Herbert and Rosemarie Jacobs.
Thank you for all of your love, support and encouragement.
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Mentoring first-year music teachers is an increasingly common practice in the United States. A part of the formal professional induction process, mentoring programs pair a beginning teacher with an experienced colleague who serves to guide and support the new teacher. Mentoring has been shown to have positive effects on retention, thereby increasing faculty stability within classrooms and schools. These and other theoretical rationales exist, but the current research base provides little insight into how mentoring affects band directors. In addition, little research has been conducted into the effects of mentoring specifically on first-year high school band directors.

To help first-year high school band directors meet the unique challenges of the job, the Florida Bandmasters Association and certain school districts in Florida utilize mentoring programs. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of first-year high school band directors and their mentors regarding their mentor-mentee relationships. The following research questions were designed to guide the implementations of the study:
1. What are the situational contexts of the mentor/mentee pairs?
2. What are the mentees and mentors’ perceptions of their respective roles?
3. How do mentees’ perceptions of their relationships with mentors change during the semester?
4. What mentee or mentor-perceived changes occur in the instructional techniques of the mentee as a result of the mentoring relationships?
5. What are the mentees and mentors’ perceptions of the effectiveness of their relationships?

Five first-year high school band directors and their mentors were interviewed over a six-month period concerning their mentor-mentee relationships. Data from the mentee interviews and mentor interviews were analyzed separately using constructivist content analysis, and results of the constructivist analysis were presented as a multiple-case study narrative. The narrative was grounded in the experiences of the participants, and is presented as two separate stories: one of the mentees and one of the mentors.

Three common themes emerged from the analysis: mentor-mentee interaction, program structure, and the need for observation. The results provide insight into the challenges, benefits, and areas for improvement in these programs. Issues raised by the study and implications for music education are discussed.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

For someone attempting an activity for the first time, the presence of a mentor can be comforting and helpful. Historically, mentoring has been a way to assist people in transition to a new job or profession (Fletcher, 2000). Mentoring can increase the comfort, confidence, and production of new employees (Johnson, 2002). Businesses have used mentoring in the form of apprenticeships to their advantage for centuries (Johnson, 2002). Education is no exception, but an informal or “spontaneous” (Johnson, 2002) version of mentoring has been the norm until recently. Informal mentoring often occurs naturally, but formal and mandated teacher mentoring programs aim to achieve higher levels of success in multiple areas. Different specialties of education, such as music education, present unique settings and challenges for new teachers, which may increase the importance of mentoring and its structure (Haack, 2003). New high school band directors may provide the best example of specific needs.

Informally, mentoring has helped new educators enter the teaching profession for decades. The student teaching process is a form of apprenticeship. University supervisors, principals, and master teachers, among others, have mentored new teachers. Informal mentoring (new teachers seeking help or experienced teachers offering unsolicited help) dominated education until the last 15 to 20 years. “During the past 15 years, the significance of mentoring programs as part of the profession of teaching has grown exponentially” (Ganser, 2005, p. 14). This is a positive step for education. “Support during the new teachers’ first year or two may be just as important to their effectiveness as their pre-service training, their state certification, and their subject matter skills” (Strong, 2006). Support systems for new educators are critical to building effective teaching practices and maintaining enthusiasm that these new teachers bring into their classrooms.
Mentoring, a component of the formal induction process, has received substantial attention as an effective way to provide new teacher support. It has been connected to increased teacher retention (Ingersol & Smith, 2004). This increased retention could be linked to several benefits of having a mentor, as listed by Podsen and Denmark (2000): a) speeding up the learning of a new job or skill and reducing the stress of transition; b) improving instructional effectiveness; and c) helping socialize new teachers into the profession (p. 31). Daresh (2003) added three additional possible benefits of mentoring: improved communication skills, better opportunities to put theory into practice, and reduced isolation. School districts in Florida and other states are providing mentors for new teachers.

Despite the observation that many states include mentoring in educational policy (Conway, 2003b), significant problems still exist. Mentoring programs vary widely in their components and structure (Conway, 2003a). This variance could be one reason why so many teachers leave the profession within their first five years. The rate of attrition remains between 40 and 50 percent (Boreen, Johnson, Niday, & Potts, 2000; Ingersoll, 2003; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Madsen & Hancock, 2002). Among music educators, the numbers are equally troublesome (Lindeman, 2004). What should be the components of a mentoring program? Should all mentors receive training? Should mentors be compensated? How long should the program last? How much control should a district have over the components? Many of these questions may be answered through continuing research.

One additional important question is: Does the structure of one mentoring program meet the needs of teachers in all subject areas? From the perspective of music educators, one mentoring program does not always meet teachers’ needs. Although instrumental music educators share many of the same classroom challenges as teachers in other subject areas, they
are faced with a multitude of additional duties and responsibilities including, but not limited to, much larger class sizes, the management of large budgets, and public performances. The enormity of these responsibilities can easily overwhelm new band or orchestra directors, and result in the loss of many talented educators from the profession.

First-year band directors at the high school level can be especially susceptible to this type of situation. Teachers in these positions find themselves in a very different context from general classroom teachers. Time and class size are often the two major differences. Band directors have the same regular school day instructional and planning hours as all other faculty members. However, the hours required outside of the school day can be numerous. Marching band is often the most time consuming, especially during the summer and fall. Other ensembles and activities (concerts, festivals, competitions) make frequent demands on evenings and weekends. Class or ensemble size is another primary contextual difference. Concert bands often number 30 to 100 students (Cooper, 2004), and marching bands can be significantly larger. These numbers can be daunting, even to the most experienced teacher.

Music education students become familiar with and prepared for these situations through methods classes and student teaching, but nothing can fully prepare them for the responsibilities of student learning and the successful performance of their ensembles. Considering the job description of the high school band director and all its implications, effective mentoring programs could make a significant impact on the success of new high school band directors. The question is: Are today’s mentoring programs providing sufficient support for these new teachers?

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of first-year high school band directors and their mentors regarding their mentor-mentee relationships.
Research Questions

1. What are the situational contexts of the mentor/mentee pairs?

2. What are the mentees and mentors’ perceptions of their respective roles?

3. How do mentees’ perceptions of their relationships with mentors change during the semester?

4. What mentee or mentor-perceived changes occur in the instructional techniques of the mentee as a result of the mentoring relationships?

5. What are the mentees and mentors’ perceptions of the effectiveness of their relationships?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided to clarify terms used within the study.

The FBA is the Florida Band Masters Association.

A General Classroom Teacher is an educator who provides instruction in a traditional classroom setting.

Induction is an organized professional development system designed by a school or school district to train and support new teachers.

A New Band Director is a music educator working in his or her first year of instruction with one or more instrumental music ensembles as part of the teaching assignment.

A New Teacher is an educator working in his or her first year of classroom instruction.

A Mentee is a new teacher who has been assigned a mentor.

A Mentor is an experienced teacher who is paired with a new teacher and provides guidance and support.

Mentoring is a component of the induction process that pairs one or more experienced teachers with a new teacher.

Support consists of actions that assist new teachers in developing professionally.

Significance of the Study

The success of new high school band directors is critical to the longevity and future of school band programs. Retaining talented music educators is a concern of the entire music education profession. Mentoring offers one solution to these concerns. Various forms of
mentoring are common in most school districts, and research focusing on mentoring and the attrition of new teachers is abundant. Articles on mentoring and studies of new music teachers and their mentors are becoming more frequent in the music education literature (Conway, 2003a; Conway & Zerman, 2003; Conway, Krueger, Robinson, Haack, & Smith, 2002; DeLorenzo, 1992; Krueger, 1999, 2001; Montague, 2000; Smith, 1994). However, only one of these studies addressed a specific area of music education. The research of Conway and Zerman (2003) focused on one middle school band director.

The role of mentoring within the unique context of the new high school band director was of interest to this study. The illumination of mentoring programs through the context-specific perceptions of new high school band directors and their mentors should be of particular interest to music teacher educators, mentor teachers, preservice teachers, administrators, and professional music education organizations. This study expands the literature on mentoring and music education. The findings from this study may contribute to the development of a standardized and comprehensive model for mentoring.

**Delimitations**

The following variables were not controlled in this study:

1. Mentee undergraduate teaching preparation
2. Mentor training
3. Mentor experience (teaching)
4. Mentor experience (mentoring)
5. Learning styles
6. Personality types
7. Prior relationships between mentoring pairs

Findings from a study of this type may not be generalized to all new high school band director populations. The researcher was able to access only limited number of participants matching the selection criteria. Moreover, selected study participants represented only a small sample of mentoring programs statewide. Undergraduate teacher preparation programs
experienced by new teachers may have affected confidence, ability, attitude, and other individual attributes. These attributes differed in each first-year teacher and may have affected interactions with the mentor. These attributes could not be controlled or accounted for in this study.

Learning styles and personality types can also affect perceptions of mentoring relationships (Daresh, 2003). This study did not attempt to account for these variables. The interview responses were limited by the participants’ memory recall. Significant events or information from the semester may not have been recalled at the time of interviews. Participant responses were also temporal. If this study had taken place at another time, or with different persons in different contexts, responses may have been different. Finally, the duration of the study was limited to only one semester and did not include summer activities, which can be significant to teachers in these positions.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of first-year high school band directors and their mentors regarding their mentor-mentee relationships. This chapter will present an overview of the literature relevant to this study. The chapter is organized into eight sections: (a) philosophical rationales; (b) theoretical rationales; (c) mentoring; (d) new teacher retention; (e) teacher effectiveness and mentoring; (f) mentoring for music teachers; and (g) context of the high school band director. The eighth section is a summary statement of what this literature means and how it relates to this study.

Philosophical Rationales

As educators, “our overall goal is promoting the learning and development of all persons to their fullest potential” (Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1998, p. 2). Teachers seek to achieve this goal with their students. Professional development in education is the vehicle for achieving this goal with teachers. Teachers who are learning are building a library of teaching methods, classroom management techniques, ways to interact with students, parents and colleagues, and assessment tools. Mentoring, although primarily focused on the beginning years of teaching, is a type of professional development, and it is important because it can provide a critical structure to such learning for beginning teachers.

John Dewey advocated “careful, guided experiences” as a part of what he called “active learning” in education (Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1998, p. 67). When first-year teachers are mentored, their first-year experience becomes an example of Dewey’s active learning. The first-year high school band directors in this study are experiencing some level of active learning as they move from one stage of development (student teaching) into another (teaching in a classroom of their own). As Wanzare (2007) stated, “Beginning teachers often have a hard time
determining their success, especially during their first year of teaching” (p. 343). Mentoring, as Dewey would frame it, provides a balance of experiential learning with analysis and reflection on the experiences. This reflection can help the beginning teachers determine their success. Without mentoring, the active learning of first-year teachers is largely left to chance.

Mentoring has a place within the philosophy of music education. Elliott (1995) linked mentoring to the future of music education: “The future depends on making music education more musical, more artistic, and more creative . . . by continuing to improve the musicianship of . . . in-service teachers” (p. 305). Elliott also presents four tasks required to secure the place of music education in the future. Two of these tasks fit within the scope of mentoring:

1. To develop and refine the critical thinking abilities of pre-service and in-service music teachers with regard to the fundamental concepts of our professional practice.
2. To develop and renew the musicianship and educatorship of pre-service and in-service music teachers through exemplary models of music education in action.

Inducting new teachers into the profession should be a concern for all current music educators. When new teachers participate in a formal induction process that includes mentoring as a component, “all students in all schools can achieve the profound values of music education” (Elliott, 1995, p. 310).

Theoretical Rationales

Argyris (1976) stated, “A theory is not necessarily accepted, good, or true; it is only a set of interconnected propositions that have the same referent. Theories are vehicles for explanation, prediction, or control” (p. 4). Theory regarding mentoring can be viewed as one of both prediction and explanation. Mentoring is grounded in the theoretical framework of espoused theory (predictive) and theory in action (explanatory). Portner (2002) presented an espoused theory for general education: “Mentoring is a powerful and effective way to help new teachers learn to teach” (p. 3). The espoused theory specific to this study is: If a new music
educator participates in a mentoring program, he will be a better teacher and feel good about the profession. Theory in action seeks to explain better teaching and attitude in a reciprocal manner. This study attempted to determine if this reciprocal relationship existed, and if so, to what degree.

This theoretical rationale predicts that the first-year high school band directors will have positive attitudes about their new professions because they have a mentor. They will be achieving success with their program and this success will be due, at least in some part, to interaction with their mentors.

As Nicholls (2002) stated, “The mentor should develop a relationship built on constructive criticism, support and a relationship that allows for development” (p. 74). Therefore, theoretically, mentees can benefit from their mentors in developing their professional skills (methods in the music classroom), plus learning organizational, managerial, and communication skills. Mentees can also benefit from using their mentors as role models. The mentors and mentees should report their relationships to include (a) critical conversations to improve the mentee’s teaching; (b) the mentor being available and willing to provide advice and assistance; and (c) a mentor approach that allows the mentee to ultimately make his own right or wrong decisions.

**Mentoring**

**History and Significance**

The concept of mentoring has a long history. The process of mentoring can be traced back to the eighteenth century B.C., when the laws of Hammurabi of Babylon required artisans to teach their craft to younger students (Boreen et al., 2002). The theory of mentoring is given a more specific definition in Homer’s *The Odyssey*. The relationship of the character Mentor with his protégé Telemachus is a model of what mentoring should be in general terms: a role model,
teacher, counselor, adviser, challenger, and encourager. Additionally, the epic poem suggests that mentoring is an intentional, nurturing, insightful, supportive, and protective process (Fletcher, 2000; Johnson, 2002; Nicolls, 2002; Smith, 2005). Despite centuries of mentoring in one form or another, a clear consensus on the definition or components of mentoring has not been reached in any profession.

Successful corporations sometimes include mentoring, coaching, team building, and empowering as standard practices. However, investing time and money in the professional development of teachers, which includes these practices, has not caught on in the same way that it has in business (Fibkins, 2002). Conway (2003a) researched beginning music teachers by conducting interviews and observing 13 individuals participating in a district-sponsored mentoring program. One finding was that mentoring programs are mandated in a majority of states, but a lack of consistency arises in the types of mentor programs, their effectiveness and the level of commitment from the schools, districts, and states. High quality implementation requires significant effort and cooperation from all stakeholders. Fibkins (2002) stated,

The major goal of a mentoring program should be to help every teacher be highly skilled, self-aware, inclusive, energetic and creative, and to carry a zest for teaching into the classroom every day. These are big goals and not easy to achieve. (p. 32)

How to achieve these goals is the major question facing educators, administrators, and politicians.

Ganser (2005) stated, “During the past 15 years, the significance of mentoring programs as part of the profession of teaching has grown exponentially” (p. 14). In that time, research and writing has focused on the role of mentoring in the support of new teachers (Conway, 2003a; Fibkins, 2002; Haack, 2006a; Haack & Smith, 2000; Krueger, 1999; Montague, 2000). Kimpton (2003) stated, “Bold state and national leadership is required to fully focus our attention on mentoring and induction” (p. x).
State boards of education have reacted in a myriad of ways. Some merely acknowledge the possible benefits of mentoring and encourage their schools to incorporate informal mentoring. Others have linked mentoring to administrative codes and state statutes as a requirement for teaching licenses. During the 1996-1997 school year, only seven states had state-mandated induction policies (Ganser, 2005). Conway et al., (2002) examined and compared mentoring programs in Connecticut, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota and Washington, and they provided a national overview of beginning teacher mentor and induction policies. They found that the number of states with mandated induction policies had increased to 33 states. However, only 17 of those states required that mentors receive training, and only 12 states mandated stipends for mentors. Development and implementation of clear and structured mentoring programs at the state level could alleviate these program variations.

**Program Structure**

Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) examined more than 500 documents concerned with teacher induction and mentoring. Using specific criteria, they reduced the list to 10 studies that were empirical and sought to evaluate the effects of beginning-teacher mentoring programs. In their examination of these studies, they found in a study of induction-program effectiveness that the manner in which mentors are selected varies greatly. How carefully are mentors selected? Is the selection to be a mentor voluntary or mandatory? Some programs devote attention to the match between mentor and mentee based on level and subject; some do not consider grade level or subject. Matching new teachers with mentors can determine the success of the mentoring relationship. Research has indicated that new music educators preferred having mentors who taught in their same areas (general music, band, and so forth) and same grade levels (Conway et al., 2002).
Ingersoll and Smith (2004) studied a large amount of data from the National Center for Education Statistics’ Schools and Staffing Survey and the Teacher follow-up survey. These surveys provide a large amount of data from the teaching population of the entire United States during a 12-month period. Teachers who left the profession after the 12-month period were also surveyed to obtain information on their departures. Their purpose was to determine if types of induction support, including mentoring, had a positive effect on the retention of beginning teachers. One conclusion from these data was that the most effective induction programs provide a mentor from the same field. Pairing teachers at either the same grade level or the same subject area is preferable, and attaining both aspects is optimal (Boreen et al., 2000).

Many mentoring programs are implemented at the district level, and the level at which the mentoring programs are constructed and maintained can determine the flexibility of matching. Finding the most effective mentor for a middle school band director in a smaller district would require a formal system with the ability to network through other schools and districts. Without this ability, self-contained mentoring programs provide much less of an opportunity for quality music-teacher mentoring.

Experienced or “master” music educators are at the frontline of music teacher mentoring and retention. They have experience and enthusiasm at their disposal. As Smith (2003) pointed out, music education is fortunate in the area of selection:

The challenge is generally not in finding [music education] individuals who are willing to serve as mentors . . . rather one of the primary challenges lies in equipping well-intentioned and concerned veteran music teachers with strategies that will prove to be effective methods for offering the support that new music teachers so badly need. (p. 106)

The profession should look beyond using mentors only for advice. The Music Educators National Conference (MENC) already effectively provides online mentors for general survival-type questions. What mentoring needs are master teachers, readily available to help shape
instructional practices over time. Casey and Claunch (2005) stated, “The knowledge and skills needed for working with adults differs from those required for educating young students,” and “the what and how of mentoring remains uncomfortable for many” (p. 98). This is where formal mentoring programs can excel, but also where the most developmental assistance is needed. What kind of training should prospective mentors receive? How much training is necessary? How do districts and teachers find time for such training? These are all relevant questions.

Formal mentoring programs in several states already provide possible answers to these questions. Connecticut and Washington are two such states, and each state has a program operating today. Connecticut’s Beginning Educator Support and Training program utilizes a team approach in a comprehensive three-year teacher induction program, which includes mentor training. Washington’s Teacher Assistance Program (TAP) includes mentor training in observation techniques. Many similar programs are operating in various states, and more states are moving in this direction (Robinson & Krueger, 2003).

The length of the mentoring programs is another component. Many schools employ the use of a mentor for the first year of teaching. Ganser (2005) commented, “The trend in recent years is to extend teacher mentoring programs beyond one year to the second or even third year of a new teacher’s employment” (p. 11). As many teachers will attest, many do not feel as if they “hit their stride” until their third or fourth year of teaching. The first year is spent becoming familiar with procedures, discipline, students, and other environmental adjustments. These are challenges that need mentoring, but when it comes to improving and honing teaching skills, mentoring can affect the quality of teaching in the classroom. Often new teachers are not able to clearly focus their attention on matters related to effective instruction and structure of curriculum until well into or after their first year of teaching.
The time and the context of mentor-mentee interaction is critical to the depth and success reached through the mentoring program. Release time from regular teaching duties for both the new teacher and mentor is an important component of a mentoring program (Boreen et al., 2000). This release time can allow for each participant to observe the other within the active classroom setting and allow for regularly scheduled consultation. It is essential that mentors be able to observe their mentee from within the actual classroom environment in order to experience everything affecting the teaching-learning environment. A videotape or narrative of the classroom situation places the mentor at a disadvantage by not providing a complete picture. The same is true in order for the new teacher to understand strategies employed by the mentor in his own classroom. Release time becomes even more important if the mentoring pair is not teaching in the same building. In this case, time for informal consultation (during lunch, between classes, and so forth) is not possible, and release time is the only way to ensure that the necessary interaction will occur.

Generally, mentoring is beginning to receive the attention it deserves in the context of providing new teachers what they deserve in the way of support. The New Teacher Center (NTC) at the University of California at Santa Cruz is a center for researching, designing, and advocating high-quality induction programs for new teachers. The existence of this center and its collaboration with school districts in 16 states is evidence of the intense interest generated by the potential of mentoring. Strong support from all stakeholders and a consensus on what mentoring should include will allow mentoring to reach this potential.

**New Teacher Retention**

In any type of business, high rates of employee attrition can be linked to substantial financial costs and decreases in the degree of organizational stability, coherence, and morale (Fibkins, 2002). Education is a business that provides the consumer (students) with a product
(knowledge and experience), and requires extensive interaction between participants. For the business of education to thrive, it is dependent on continuity, cohesiveness, and coherence, all of which are impossible to sustain with high teacher turnover. Ingersoll and Smith (2004) stated, “High rates of teacher turnover can inhibit the development and maintenance of a learning community. In turn, a lack of community in a school may have a negative effect on teacher retention, thus creating a vicious cycle” (p. 32).

These kinds of consequences have become a major concern to states and school districts (Boreen et al., 2000; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Madsen & Hancock, 2002). Madsen and Hancock (2002) conducted two surveys investigating issues related to the retention and attrition of music educators. The first survey was sent to 225 certified teachers who had earned a bachelor of music education degree within the past 10 years from the same institution. The second survey was conducted with the same sample six years following the first survey. One of their findings indicated that pressure from parents, administrators, and others made the job of teaching difficult. The institution of education has not done a good job assisting people transition from new teacher to veteran teacher (Hicks, Glasgow, & McNary, 2005). Mentoring has become a primary tool in attempting to alleviate the problem of teacher attrition. Data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education indicated that in the 1990-1991 school year, approximately 40% of beginning teachers had participated in a formal teacher induction program. In the 1999-2000 school year, participation rates rose to 80% (Ingersoll & Smith 2004).

Mentoring within induction programs has also become more frequent. In the 1999-2000 school year, about two-thirds of beginning teachers said they worked closely with a mentor (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). The retention capabilities of mentoring have been documented as
well. In analyzing 1999-2000 SASS data, Ingersoll (2003) reported the following turnover percentages: 40% - teachers with no induction or mentoring; 28% - teachers with some mentoring and induction; 18% - teachers with full mentoring and induction.

Studies regarding the effects of mentoring on teacher retention continue to grow. Statistics are beginning to support the potential of mentoring in this area. The ability of school districts to provide enough faculty members to staff their classroom teaching positions depends on recruiting new teachers, but more importantly, retaining those new teachers. Effective mentoring programs can increase such retention for teachers in all areas.

**Teacher Effectiveness and Mentoring**

High levels of employee turnover are the cause of low performance in business organizations. Low performance or ineffectiveness is also the cause of high levels of employee turnover (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). This reciprocal relationship between effectiveness and turnover is increasingly important in the political climate of teacher accountability and heightened emphasis on student achievement. Studies that might link mentoring to teacher effectiveness are difficult to conduct, and few have been conducted. Data are often not readily available. Many factors contribute to changes in student achievement, such as school variables, family, economic status, tutoring, and language issues. It is therefore difficult to attribute such increases solely to the kinds of support beginning teachers receive. However, as Strong (2006) asserted, “Support during the new teachers’ first year or two may be just as important to their effectiveness as their pre-service training, their state certification, and their subject matter skills” (p. 1).

Wong (2005) proposed that student learning depends on teacher effectiveness: “The better the teacher is able to manage the classroom and deliver the instruction, the more students will learn” (p. 52). Effective teachers are cultivated from effective professional development
programs, and mentoring is a major component of effective professional development programs. This is a logical progression from student achievement to teacher effectiveness to mentoring (as part of an induction program).

Teacher effectiveness can be approached from many angles. Teachers who have worked with a mentor indicate that support with classroom management strategies and support in instructional strategies are two of the most helpful factors in their development (Odell, 1992). Observation of new teachers by mentors can lead directly to instructional improvement. Wells (2002) suggested one such opportunity:

When reviewing a lesson observed, a focus on unplanned “teachable moments” -- taken up or missed -- can offer the opportunity for the beginning teacher to recognize the intrinsically “negotiatory” quality of learning and teaching and to develop strategies for making the most of what the students bring to each lesson. (p. 6)

The continuing education of teachers may be one key to providing students with the best education possible. In the United States, millions of new teachers will enter the profession within the next decade. They will be expected to teach and learn to teach better (Portner, 2002). It appears that mentoring can facilitate how these new instructors learn to teach better.

**Mentoring for Music Teachers**

The contextual situations of music teachers are important in understanding the need for mentoring of these teachers (Conway, 2003a). Conway, Hansen, Schulz, Stimson, & Wozniak-Reese (2004) demonstrated one contextual factor common among many first-year high school band directors. This article presented the stories of four beginning music teachers in order to help illuminate the issues facing teachers in these positions. The contextual element demonstrated by Stimson was the confidence he had when entering his first year of teaching band:

I entered my first year as a band director with great expectations. I believed that my undergraduate preparation and student-teaching experiences were more than sufficient to
prepare me for what was ahead…. Everything I had learned was great preparation for teaching band. (p. 47)

Schulz explained having similar confidence:

Coming out of college, I felt confident that I could take whatever the professional teaching world could dish out. I was a good student, had plenty of teaching experience, and had enough people to call on as resources. I knew I had some weaknesses, but I was sure I could survive. (p. 46)

Stories of unanticipated challenges followed these statements of confidence, and these challenges are often the reasons for the implementation of mentoring programs.

The quality of music programs is often dependent on the same teacher serving as the instructor for long periods of time. Teacher attitude and retention are therefore important to the music education profession. Krueger (2000) conducted an investigation of job satisfaction and attrition factors for music teachers. The investigation included interviews of 30 music teachers in their first 10 years of teaching in the state of Washington. The investigators’ questions focused on the instructors’ perceptions of their first years of teaching. Only three of the participants had been part of formal mentoring programs during their first years of teaching, and they found those programs to be beneficial. As a whole, the participants regarded collaboration with other teacher and administrators as rewarding and an important means for professional development. They also viewed other music teachers as valuable sources for ideas and feedback.

The two significant and interconnected aspects of mentor matching are critically important to new music educators. First, music teachers are often referred to as “specialists” within the faculty. This designation should immediately signal implications to designers of mentoring programs. Research has indicated that new music educators preferred having mentors who taught in their same areas (general music, band, choir, orchestra) and same grade levels (Conway et al., 2002). Matching a new music teacher with a mentor who is also a music educator can make a huge difference in the professional development of the new teacher. New music teachers
are often faced with larger class sizes, performance-based assessments, physically active
classrooms, constantly changing selections of classroom materials (music), and other issues
uncommon in the general classroom. Close matching of music specialty areas is also important.
A high school band director and a high school choir director share the core area of music.
However, the specifics of the two jobs are very different.

Matching music teachers with music mentors within the same grade levels is also
important. While it is true that a band director at a high school and one at a middle school have
even more in common, the activities and music literature encountered at the two levels are
different (Haack, 2006b; Krueger, 1999). New music teachers should be matched with mentors
from within the music education field, the same specialty area, and similar grade levels. Finding
a mentor who meets all of these criteria may be very difficult to achieve within a small school or
school district.

Opportunities for observation are also important in music education. Interviews with new
music teachers indicate that it is important for the mentor to observe the mentee in the classroom
in order to understand the context of the situation (Conway, 2003a; Krueger, 1999; Haack,
2006b). Boreen et al. (2000) and Daresh (2003) emphasized the importance of proximity in
mentoring. Daily schedules of band or orchestra teachers are often extremely busy from before-
school hours through after-school hours. This can make interaction difficult even where
mentoring pairs are in close proximity. There are a limited number of band directors in any
given school district. Avoiding large distances between mentees and mentors may be difficult.
Options are available to help alleviate such difficulties, including available release time for both
parties, which is an essential part of effective mentoring programs (Conway et al., 2002).
On a smaller scale, in what areas should a mentor focus attention to best help the new music teacher? Some suggestions for general educators include (a) classroom organization and management; (b) curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation; (c) instructional strategies of learning styles and cooperative learning; (d) parent communications; (e) record keeping; and (f) grading and assessment (Conway, 2003a; Downes, 1998; Hicks et al., 2005). These are all areas that apply to the new music teacher. They often just occur in a very different environment.

Conway (2006) pointed out, “School district administrators need to be educated about the value of content-specific professional development experiences for new music teachers” (p. 56). Additionally, state boards of education, state music educator organizations, national music educator organizations, or some combination of the three may be required to assist in the mentoring process for new music educators. Before administrators and organizations can assist new music teachers, they must be aware of the difficult situations facing these new teachers, and that these mentoring programs benefit everyone involved. Haack (2006a) stated the following:

Increased teaching effort and effectiveness are demonstrated outcomes of having hardworking mentors as models and energetic music educators as mentees. Formally organized mentoring programs can encourage staff cooperation and interaction and lead to greater teacher effectiveness. The school as a whole benefits. (p. 63)

Conway (2003a) included the content of first-year teacher and mentor interaction as an important category in her findings. The frequency of questions about administrative issues was the most prevalent theme in that category. The question topics included budgets, fund-raising, and weekend events. She stated, “All of the beginning teachers suggested that they were unprepared for these tasks” (p. 16). Another theme was classroom management. Conway (2003a) suggested that mentors observe their mentees in the classrooms in order to understand the context of the mentees’ classrooms.
Based on her study, Conway (2003a) presented suggestions for music mentor practices, such as scheduling participants’ teaching duties to allow mentors to observe mentees in their classrooms. She also recommended that mentors and mentees have some informal opportunities to get to know one another. Participants in the study said that meetings in social settings allowed them to get to know their mentoring partners better.

Montague (2000) conducted a qualitative study of music education mentors and mentees from a range of public school educational levels. The focus of the study was the experiences of beginning music teachers within their mentoring relationships. Mentors were found to be “vital” and “sought to activate, invigorate, and enable . . . their novice teacher’s transfer of amassed knowledge from one community of practice [music teacher preparation] to another [teaching music in the public schools]” (p. 163). Additionally, the mentors were able to assist the mentees in adapting to and excelling in their specific situational contexts.

**Context of the High School Band Director**

Conway et al. (2002) suggested the research that forms the basis for educational policy may not reflect the needs of the beginning music teacher population. Results of studies investigating the needs of new music teachers suggest that the issues of mentoring new music teachers are highly contextual (Conway, 2003a; Haack, 2003; Montague, 2000). Included in this population are new high school instrumental music educators. These individuals, within their unique situational contexts, were the subjects of this study.

Requirements of the high school teaching position, generally referred to as a “band director,” vary depending on the size of school, expectations of students, parents, administrators, and state music organizations. There are, however, characteristics and requirements of the position that are faced by the majority of new teachers in this field. McKee (1996) addressed new band directors and stated:
There is little question but that band directing is one of the most complicated jobs man ever invented… As a director you will be expected to prepare bands for concert, marching, and jazz performances while working one-on-one with students on more than a dozen entirely different instruments. At the same time you will deal with finances, promotion, publicity, travel arrangements and fundraising as well as show production and narration, equipment purchases and management, uniform design and maintenance, library and inventory, not to mention score selection and preparation, music arranging and marching band charting, private teaching and ensemble coaching, community service and festival preparation along with ever-present counseling and parenting. (p. 13)

Several of these aspects (if not all) can be considered when arranging a mentoring program to support new band directors. The other areas include comparisons, music selection, budgets, planning, state procedures, booster organizations, and marching band.

One of the first challenges facing a new band director is usually handling comparisons to the previous director (Asbill & Scott, 1997). Traditions and habits are firmly established. It can be difficult to change behaviors and rehearsal or performance standards. Comparisons on the part of students and parents may be unfavorable to the new director and become a distraction. As Asbill and Scott stated, “After a director has gained the confidence and respect of students, changes made the following year are easier” (p. 13). However, constant reminders the previous director’s methods can weigh on the confidence and patience of a first-year teacher.

The selection of music for rehearsal and/or performance is a second aspect with which a mentor can assist. Each year may bring a different instrumentation and/or ability level to the ensemble(s), requiring new criteria for the selection of music. New band directors are also often coming from participation in college ensembles where they have been immersed in highly difficult music. Therefore, the music most familiar to them is not suitable for their new high school ensembles, and they tend to choose music that is too difficult (Ling, 1999).

In his book for undergraduate instrumental music education majors, *Teaching Band and Orchestra*, Cooper (2004) devoted an entire chapter to “Handling Business Issues.” Depending on the size of the band program, a new director will be in charge of managing thousands of
dollars. The previous director may have planned the first year’s budget, but supervising the use of that money and constructing the next year’s budget will be the job of the new director. Procedures for the spending of money are always complex, and the additional consideration of booster contributions can make the finances of the program even more complicated. Cooper (2004) stated, “Budgeting practices and requirements vary greatly from school to school and state to state” (p. 288). School districts often require the band director to solicit bids from retailers for items over a certain dollar amount. This is another process for which the band director is responsible for learning. Included in this area is the responsibility of the inventory and maintenance of expensive equipment.

A high school band is typically a very active group that requires a great deal of planning. Most of this planning must be organized far in advance in order to facilitate communication with everyone involved (custodians, bus drivers, secretaries, administrators, students, parents, coaches, and general classroom teachers). The knowledge of school and district procedures and advanced planning of events, such as evening rehearsals, concerts, and festival trips, are needed immediately upon acceptance of the job by the new teacher (Cooper, 2004). Stimson, from Conway et al., (2004), recalled his first year as a band director: “I enjoyed the community that I taught in, but I didn’t know about all the events outside school that I had to deal with. I stepped on quite a few toes when planning concerts and practices” (p. 47).

Planning for rehearsals is also completed well in advance. Ulrich (1992) stated,

Rehearsal planning must occur well in advance of the first rehearsal. Long-term planning requires that a conductor select the music early enough to ensure adequate rehearsal time. All conductors would do themselves and their ensembles a favor by planning at least six months ahead. (p. 34)

This type of planning and preparation is almost impossible for a first-year band director, because he will not know the appropriate level of music for his students until he hears them in a rehearsal
setting. This initial hearing, especially for the marching band, may only be weeks before the first performance.

Every state has music organizations. Florida has two for band director consideration: the Florida Bandmasters Association (FBA) and the Florida Music Educators Association (FMEA). Each state also has divisions of an activities association. The music division of the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) is one example. These divisions place demands on bands and band directors. These groups facilitate all-state auditions, solo and ensemble contests, marching band assessments, concert band assessments, and much more. Each of these activities may be required of all bands in the state and have specific application procedures and deadlines (Dewald, 1998). These activities are a challenge for new band directors and can place directors who are new to the state at a great disadvantage. Many states administer these activities in very different ways.

Booster organizations can be a tremendous asset to band programs (Cooper, 2004). Most band programs require additional fundraising in order to remain active and/or competitive. Boosters can be of great assistance to the band director in this capacity (Conway et al., 2004). They can also assist with equipment, transportation, and clerical work. These organizations usually have a clearly defined structure and constitution with which the new director must quickly become familiar. Unfortunately, these groups can often hold views and preferences that differ from those of the new band director. Conway (2004) commented, “They [the boosters] had a system that worked for them and were very upset when I suggested a few changes” (p. 47). They may have a reaction to change similar to those of the students, except the reaction of influential adults may be more difficult to handle. These situations can also lead to a short tenure for the new director if not handled in the correct manner (Cooper, 2004).
Directing and managing a marching band program starts the year for a first-year high school band director. It can be a moderately involved marching band that performs at home football games and a couple parades, or it can be a highly involved marching band that travels to away football games and weekend competitions. The level of involvement normally determines the amount of rehearsal time required.

Dunnigan (1998) listed seven of the demands placed on directors early in the school year:

1. Upon hiring, a new director may find July and August full of auditions, rehearsals, and camps.
2. A concept for the marching show has to be selected.
3. A small to large instructional staff may need to be hired to work with individual sections, as well as an arranger to write the music and a drill writer to write the movement portion of the show.
4. Flags for the color guard have to be selected, and student leaders need to be chosen and organized.
5. Students must be measured and fitted for uniforms.
6. The rehearsal field must be painted regularly, and fall band calendars must be mailed to parents.
7. Applications to fall contests must be sent with payments, and transportation forms must be completed for buses to fall games and competitions. These are only some of the duties facing a new high school band director long before the first day of school.

These tasks are in addition to challenges faced by general classroom teachers, such as classroom management, curriculum development, and instructional strategies. These seven areas emphasize not only a need for mentoring, but also a mentoring program that starts early and includes previously discussed components, such as a same-subject, same-level mentor, release time for observation and consultation, and a multi-year program.

Summary

The research using the espoused theories of mentoring in education (teacher retention and teacher effectiveness) continues to grow exponentially. The theories in action for mentoring
have been substantiated for increased teacher retention, and to a lesser degree, teacher effectiveness. It appears the rapid implementation of mentoring programs in school districts across the United States is justified.

There is a wide variation in the structure, components, and support of mentoring programs. It appears that the programs that include the elements of mentor training, mentor compensation, and release time are having the most success with teachers as a whole. However, too many districts implement a one-size-fits-all mentoring program that may not best serve new music educators. New high school band directors may be the most extreme example, considering the multi-dimensional nature of the position.

Teacher attitude is critical to teacher retention, and teacher effectiveness is important to all the stakeholders in education. Because mentoring can have a positive effect in these areas, this study attempted to discover the status of mentoring in music education. The authors of the existing literature suggest the situational contexts of the mentoring pairs are important to understanding the dynamics of the relationships. These contexts include the structure of the mentoring programs, demographics of teachers and teaching positions, and responsibilities of the program participants. Researchers indicate that the level of interaction between mentors and mentees is critical to the success of the mentoring process.

In order to provide insight into all these areas within this study, the researcher examined the perceptions of first-year high school band directors and their mentors regarding their mentor-mentee relationships. By obtaining a view of mentoring from those who were active participants in mentoring, the study provided a firsthand account of the mentoring programs and the opinions of those directly involved.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of first-year high school band directors and their mentors regarding their mentor-mentee relationships. A qualitative research design was selected for the study in order to explore and “obtain a deep understanding” (Creswell, 2005, p. 54) of the perceptions of the participants. The qualitative approach allowed the researcher to personally interview and interact with participants in their natural and unique contexts (school settings). This approach also enabled the researcher to present the voices of participants prominently in the reporting, and inductively construct meaning and theory grounded in the collected data (Hatch, 2002).

In this study, mentees and mentors from different work environments provided varying perspectives on their mentoring relationships. These multiple realities were explored in the interviews. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated, “Qualitative methods are chosen because they are more adaptable to dealing with multiple realities” (p. 40). It was fitting, therefore, that qualitative methods were employed as a way of answering the research questions. The constructivist research paradigm within the qualitative design guided the study and will be discussed in the following section. The remainder of this chapter will describe the following methodological elements of the study: setting and participants, data collection, data analysis, researcher bias, and trustworthiness.

Constructivist Research

This approach to examining the perceptions of first-year high school band directors and their mentors regarding their mentor-mentee relationship is based on the philosophical and theoretical positions of the constructivist research paradigm. These positions begin with the
belief that absolute realities are impossible. Individuals form their own realities (Charmaz, 2006). Individuals create realities based on cognitive maps that are constantly written and rewritten from experiences within a given--and often changing--context (Creswell, 2005; Hatch, 2002; Rodwell, 1998). The constructivist researcher is therefore interested in these individual constructions of reality.

Developing an understanding of the worldview held by people involved in a process or situation is optimally accomplished from an insider’s perspective (Rodwell, 1998). Through the interview process, the researcher becomes part of the process of co-construction (of reality) with the participants. Rodwell (1998) commented, “The inquirer and the ‘object’ of inquiry interact to influence on another” (p. 17).

Constructivist research produces evidence that is specific to individual behaviors that are time and context-bound. As stated by Rodwell (2002)

What has meaning in one context may be meaningless in another time and place… Therefore, the desired product of a constructivist study is not one that generalizes to any other setting, but one that is an accurate, rich, reconstruction of various perspectives within the context of the investigation. (p. 31)

The reader of constructivist research is able to determine the transferability of meaning to his situation and environment due to the clear picture provided by the researcher.

In this study, the researcher reconstructed the stories of band directors. The contextual situations of these educators differed in many ways. The reader must therefore consider multiple contextual variables in determining transferability. The researcher used a combination of individual realities of mentors and mentees to assemble the stories of the mentoring relationships.
Setting and Participants

Data collection occurred at the participants’ respective schools. In each case, the band director’s office provided a quiet environment with minimal interruptions. One-on-one interviews were conducted at the beginning or conclusion of the teacher’s school day or during the teacher’s planning time.

Selection Criteria

Five first-year high school band directors and their mentors -- all from Florida -- were selected for participation. The criteria for selection of the first-year band directors required the participant to:

1. Hold a bachelor’s degree in music education and a teaching license
2. Be employed as a public high school band director
3. Be the “head director” if more than one band director is employed by the school
4. Be in their initial year of teaching
5. Be participating in a mentoring program offered or required by the school, school district, or state music organization

Individual schools had assigned a mentor from another subject area to several of the first-year directors. While these mentors might have been helpful to their mentees, these mentors were not considered for participation in this study due to their lack of expertise in the field of music education. Mentors participating in this study were high school band directors assigned to the corresponding mentee by the school district or state music organization. Since redundancy and variety are both important within the case study (Stake, 2005), an attempt was made to include a variety of school, teacher, mentor, and program demographics.

Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling is the sampling technique corresponding to constructivist research. Taking into account “adequate amounts of local conditions, local mutual shapings, and local
values for possible transferability” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 226) allows the researcher to
control the range and scope of the data, as well as the contexts from which they will be collected.
Patten (2005) stated, “Qualitative researchers make subjective judgments regarding the
individuals to select based on the likelihood that they will be able to provide the needed
information” (p. 143). In this study, purposive criterion sampling was used with the criteria
previously listed. In addition, maximum variation sampling was used in order to ensure
heterogeneity in the sample. Such heterogeneity allows for a wide range of contexts and
perspectives from which readers of the study can connect (Creswell, 2005; Rodwell, 1998). The
purposive sample for this study was small in number to allow for the in-depth study of those
perceptions.

**Negotiating Access and Selection Procedures**

District chairmen of the Florida Bandmasters Association (FBA) and available county
music supervisors in Florida were asked to provide the names and/or locations of first-year high
school band directors and the existence of corresponding mentors. Job listings on the Florida
Music Educator’s Association website from the previous spring were also used to locate schools
that would have new directors in the fall of 2006. Seven first-year high school band directors
matching the criteria for selection were identified in northern and central Florida. Following the
identification of prospective participants, county administrators were contacted in order to obtain
permission to conduct research within the county schools. Upon permission from the county, a
letter introducing the researcher, which explained the purpose of the study and described data
collection, was emailed to the identified first-year high school band directors. Interested
directors were asked to respond to the email.

Six of the seven first-year directors responded to the email or follow-up phone calls,
indicating they would be willing to participate. One director did not respond. A second email to
the positive-response directors asked them to provide the name contact information for their mentor. If they had more than one mentor, they were asked to provide the information for the mentor who was also a band director. The corresponding mentors were emailed a letter introducing the researcher, which explained the purpose of the study and described data collection. Five of the six mentors contacted responded to the email or follow-up phone calls, indicating they would be willing to participate. The five responding mentors were then contacted through a phone call and received a letter of consent (see Appendix A) and interview protocol (see Appendix C) via email.

The non-responding mentor and the corresponding mentee were not interviewed as part of the study. The participants therefore included five mentees and five corresponding mentors. Hard-copy informed consent letters were signed and collected at the first mentee and mentor interviews. The researcher contacted principals of the schools and explained the purpose and data collection methods. Permission to interview the teachers at school sites was then obtained.

**Data Collection**

Each participant completed a brief demographic questionnaire (see Appendix B) in order to establish an initial context and environment. Two semi-structured interviews were conducted with each first-year band director, and one semi-structured interview was conducted with each mentor. The interviews consisted of open-ended questions that allowed the interviewer to probe for additional meaning. For the first-year band directors, the first interview with each was conducted early in the fall semester 2006. The second interview with each one was conducted late in the fall semester. The single interview with each mentor was conducted in December. Each interview lasted no more than one hour.

The researcher attempted to obtain detailed descriptions of the mentoring experiences and perceptions of these experiences. All interviews were conducted in a relaxed atmosphere with
little chance of disturbance. Confidentiality was a priority in all interviews and in the handling of all data. In order to protect the anonymity of participants, pseudonyms were used for all individuals and schools mentioned in the transcripts.

Separate interview protocols were created for initial and final interviews, as well as for the mentor interview. Protocols from research conducted by Montague (2000) were used as a model for the protocols in this study. Questions were adjusted, removed, or added to fit this study. Colleen Conway and Paul Haack, leading researchers in the field of mentoring in music education, reviewed the protocols and agreed they provided the correct direction for the research.

All interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder. These digital voice files were saved to multiple hard drives. An individual living in another state transcribed the recordings. The researcher, while listening to the original digital recordings, reviewed the transcripts to verify accuracy.

The first set of interviews focused on biographical data, expectations of teaching, and presumptions of the mentoring experience. The second set of interviews focused on teaching experiences, mentoring experiences, and other topics emergent from the previous interview. Permission to conduct the study was requested and granted from the appropriate county school administration and the University of Florida Institutional Review Board.

**Data Analysis**

A constructivist approach to data analysis described by Rodwell (1998) was implemented for this study. The model described by Rodwell included the basic unitizing, coding, categorizing, and theory construction found in grounded theory research design (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), but the end result is a story grounded in the participants’ experiences. Constructive analysis relies heavily on grounded theory, but from an interpretive tradition, as opposed to the positivist tradition (Charmaz, 2006). Objectivist grounded theory, part of the
positivist tradition, ignores the social context from which the data emerge. The grounded theory
collects data units and categories are identified very early (following the first interview) and used
to shape all following data collection and analysis. Rodwell explained that constructivist
grounded theory is produced only as the product of final data reduction and interpretation, and it
is used to provide the framework for the storytelling. The narrative, as part of this case study,
related the stories of the participants and provided the rich descriptions required of qualitative
research. The following paragraphs describe the inductive analysis portion of the Rodwell model
utilized in this study.

The inductive data analysis began with a deconstruction of the gathered data (Lincoln &
Guba, 1985; Rodwell, 1998). The data were separated into short sections or units. These units
were informative words, sentences, or short paragraphs that required no additional information or
explanation. NVivo 7 software from QSR International was used to analyze the data. NVivo 7
allowed for the open coding of the data units during which the units of the text were copied from
the transcripts and coded with source information (Patten, 2005). NVivo 7 referred to the
transcripts as sources and displayed reports of the coded text (see Appendix D) along with the
sources for easy comparison. These reports allowed quick reference to the original location of
the data unit within the transcripts.

As initial units of data were pulled from the transcripts, each was labeled, creating what
NVivo 7 called a “node.” A node is any named grouping of coded text. The researcher initially
began coding segments of text into what NVivo 7 calls “free nodes.” Using the constant
comparative method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), each identified unit of
data was compared to the labels of existing nodes and the previously coded units of text within
those nodes. If the identified unit was similar to previously coded units within a free node, the
new data unit was assigned to the matching free node. If a data unit was unique, a new free node was created. *NVivo 7* was able to create node summary reports, providing information on the amount of coded text and the number of sources and cases from which text was coded (see Appendix E).

As the next step in analysis, the free nodes created by the grouping of coded data units were sorted (Rodwell, 1998) and placed in a hierarchy. *NVivo 7* calls this hierarchy “tree nodes” (see Appendix F and Appendix G). The primary headings were given titles representative of the nature of their underlying nodes. The researcher determined which headings were supported by a majority of the participants, and these became the over-arching themes emergent from the data. The underlying nodes became supporting categories. If a node did not specifically provide evidence for an emergent theme, it remained in the hierarchy but it was not included as a category in the findings. The placement of data units within nodes and the categorizing of nodes under themes were fluid processes. These placements changed throughout open coding and the entire analysis. Ely (1991) stated:

> Making categories means reading, thinking, trying out tentative categories, changing them when others do a better job, checking them until the very last piece of meaningful information is categorized and, even at that point, being open to revising the categories. (p. 145)

This quote accurately describes the process followed in the data analysis for this study. Once the coding of data units was completed and tree nodes were created, the data units within each node were reread. Units that did not completely fit the definition of their node were moved to better-fitting nodes. Some nodes were combined to create new themes, and some nodes were moved to more logical themes.

It should be noted that the data analysis for this study was conducted in two separate processes. The data collected from the mentees were analyzed first, followed by the data
collected from the mentors. The separate analyses were justified because of the inherently different contexts and perspectives of the two groups, as well as the possible value in a comparison of the two perspectives.

Presentation of Results

A type of case study presented the results of the data analysis. Rodwell (1998) stated, “The case study or case report is the primary reporting vehicle for constructivism… the primary goal of the case study is to create understanding” (p. 173). Rodwell refers several times to the case study report as a narrative: “The reading level of the narrative should be. . . . and “The writing technique should be narration . . . the inquirer is telling a story, not objectifying the situation” (p. 174). Because of the narrative nature of the case study report described by Rodwell and the multiple cases involved, the presentation format here was referred to as a “multiple-case study narrative.”

The model presented by Rodwell (1998) provided the structure of this case study report. The findings of this study are presented as a narrative bounded by the themes and categories that emerged during the last stages of data analysis. The framework of the story was created by these major categories and their relationships. Due to this structure of the narrative, separate discussions about each individual participant were not included. The narrative was presented in two major sections, delineated by the two inherently different contexts. The stories of the mentees were presented first, followed by the stories of the mentors. In order to preserve confidentiality, all quotations were edited to eliminate the possibility of gender identification and the matching of mentors with mentees.

Researcher Bias

The researcher was qualified to undertake a study of this nature. His position as a high school band director in the public schools of Illinois for eight years provided a level of
knowledge and experience that enabled him to empathize with the participants and the research setting. The researcher’s work with undergraduate students in music education brought him close to the position and mindset of the first-year band director participants.

In the course of his studies as a graduate student, the researcher constructed his knowledge and experience in qualitative research methods through general research methods courses and a qualitative data analysis course. Interviews with higher education administrators in a previous study allowed for the development of interviewing skills.

The potential for the effect of researcher bias in qualitative analysis is significant. Data pass through the researcher during interviews and the researcher interprets the data in analysis. It is therefore subject to being shaped by the researcher’s background and beliefs. For these reasons, the researcher attempted to limit effects of bias through the process of self-disclosure. Self-disclosure refers to considering the research problem in relation to the interviewer’s background and attitudes before conducting interviews and continuing to do so throughout analysis (Patten, 2005).

The researcher was not paired with a mentor as a first-year high school band director. The difficulties encountered as part of the job led him to believe that having a mentor would have made that first year easier in a number of ways. Awareness of this frame of mind deterred the shading of interview questions and data analysis toward such a perspective.

**Trustworthiness**

Validity, or trustworthiness, is primarily established in qualitative research through rich, thick description that is used in relating the participants’ stories and experiences. Such descriptions were an important part of this study. Other verification procedures utilized for this study included triangulation of data, peer debriefing, and member checks.
Triangulation characteristically depends on the convergence of data gathered by different methods or different sources (Ely, 1991). Triangulation was accomplished in this study through interviews of both mentees and mentors.

Peer debriefing served as an external check on the research project. “The process helps keep the inquirer ‘honest,’ exposing him to searching questions by an experienced protagonist doing his best to play the devil’s advocate” (Lincoln & Guba, 1978, cited in Ely, 1991, p. 162). A former high school band director and Ph.D. candidate in music education at the University of Florida was solicited to read 10% of the data and identify themes. The researcher met with the reviewer and discussed interpretations of the data. Although fewer in number, the themes identified in the peer review corresponded with those identified by the researcher. The researcher used this opportunity to explain and defend additional interpretations and meanings drawn from the collection of data as a whole.

Finally, member checking was used to determine if the participants felt that the researcher had accurately portrayed their experiences (Creswell, 2005). The researcher provided each participant with a copy of that participant’s original transcript and an individual summary of data. The participants were asked to review the summary and provide the researcher with any corrections or additions. Adjustments were made to the interpretations based on the responses of participants.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of first-year high school band directors and their mentors regarding their mentor-mentee relationships. The participants in this study included five first-year high school band directors (the mentees) and their corresponding mentors. Using a constructivist approach to data analysis (Rodwell, 1998), interview data were deconstructed into short units, which were coded and categorized. This reconstruction of the data allowed thematic relationships between the categories to emerge.

Just as the situational context of a new teacher differs greatly from that of a teacher of 20 years, the situational contexts of the mentees differ greatly from those of the mentors. For this reason, the researcher approached the analysis of the mentee interviews and the analysis of the mentor interviews separately. The similarities and differences between emergent themes were considered only after the analysis of both groups was completed. This approach is the organizing principle for this chapter.

The story of the mentees is presented in the first section of this chapter, and the story of the mentors follows. The collective story of each group is bounded by the themes and categories that emerged during the last stages of data analysis. Due to this narrative structure, separate stories are not presented for individual participants. However, in order to provide the requisite detail, a brief introduction to each mentee precedes the mentee’s story, and a brief introduction to each mentor precedes the story of the mentors later in the chapter. These introductions are a necessary step in helping the reader consider the multiple contextual variables used to determine transferability of findings.
The Mentees

Maria

Maria was 22 years old and held a bachelor’s degree in music education from a university outside of Florida. She was a first-year high school band director in a small town in Florida. The population of her school was approximately 1,200 students, and she saw a total of 100 students in five different classes during the school day. Those classes included concert band, jazz band, percussion class, keyboard class, and color guard class. Maria indicated she had 50 minutes of planning time each day. The school had a marching band of 60 students whom she directed. She did not have an assistant director who worked at the high school, but a local middle school director assisted with the marching band. Her marching band held three-hour rehearsals three days per week. Maria was paired with her mentor through a mentoring program administered by her district of the Florida Bandmasters Association (FBA).

Corey

Corey was 23 years old and held a bachelor’s degree in music education from a university in Florida. He was a first-year high school band director in a metropolitan area of Florida. The population of his school was approximately 3,885 students, and he saw a total of 137 students in five different classes during the school day. Those classes included three concert band ensembles, a percussion class, and an advanced placement music theory class. He had an assistant band director working with him at the school. Corey had 120 minutes of planning time each day. He also directed a marching band of 125 students. The marching band rehearsed five hours per week outside of the school day. Corey was assigned a mentor by the music supervisor of his school district.
**Emily**

Emily was 24 years old and held a bachelor’s degree in music education from a university of Florida. She was a first-year high school band director in a central Florida city. The population of her school was approximately 1,700 students, and she taught a total of 144 students in five different courses. Those courses included concert band, instrumental techniques, guitar, advanced music (International Baccalaureate), and introduction to music performance. Emily was the only band director at the school; she had 90 minutes of planning time daily. She directed a marching band of 78 students who rehearsed six hours per week after school. A mentoring program administered by the local district of the Florida Bandmasters Association provided Emily’s mentor.

**Eric**

Eric was 24 years old and held a bachelor’s degree in music performance from a university in Florida. He was a first-year high school band director in a small town, just outside of a metropolitan area in Florida. The population of his school was approximately 2,900 students, and he saw a total of 147 students in five different classes. One of these classes was a band class at a local middle school. The other four courses at the high school included two concert band ensembles, a woodwind ensemble, and a percussion class. Eric was the only band director at the high school; he had 120 minutes of planning time each day. He directed a marching band of 85 students who rehearsed eight hours per week outside of the school day. The local district of the Florida Bandmasters Association administered a mentoring program and assigned Eric a mentor.

**Mike**

Mike was 22 years old and held a bachelor’s degree in music education from a university in Florida. He was a first-year high school band director in a central Florida city. The
population of his school was approximately 2,900 students, and he instructed 117 students in three different classes. Those classes included two concert band ensembles and a percussion techniques class. Mike had an assistant band director working with him; had 60 minutes of planning time daily. He also directed a marching band of 120 students who rehearsed six and a half hours per week after school. Mike was provided a mentor through the mentoring program of the local district of the Florida Bandmasters Association.

**Through the Eyes of the Mentees**

Five themes emerged from the data collected from first-year high school band directors participating in this study. Each theme has several supporting categories that—together with the words of the participants—present the story of the mentees’ perceptions of the mentoring relationship. The five themes are:

1. **The Extra Hours.** The five mentees--Corey, Eric, Emily, Maria and Mike--all said that their work did not stop with the last bell of the school day. The fall semester was filled with after-school rehearsals, administrative paperwork, supervision, and performances. Various errands, meetings, and communications resulted in “60ish-hour work weeks” which did not often “include whatever it is I do at home” (Maria). These band directors reported being at school until 6:00 or later every day. Friday night football games and Saturday competitions frequently extended their work week with important performances.

2. **Self-confidence.** The job of the high school band director is demanding in many ways, but these first-year teachers expressed confidence in their abilities. This confidence was attributed to good preparation as an undergraduate student and networking. Their confidence was evident in a number of teaching-related areas.

3. **Mentor Interaction.** The mentees had various perceptions regarding contact time with mentors. However, several similar perceptions were shared among the mentees. Mentoring methods, the primary purpose of mentoring, and contact frequency and context were among the topics discussed with mentors. The mentees were also able to discuss how the interactions and relationships had changed over the course of the fall semester, and how their teaching had changed due to mentoring.

4. **Mentoring Program Structure.** From the mentor-to-mentee pairing procedure to time as being an obstacle, the mentees frequently offered perceptions of the way the programs were structured and what might interfere.
5. Need for Observation. While not all the mentees were able to experience observing their mentor, they all included the opportunity for observation as part of their conversation. They were able to share or anticipate the benefits of observing their mentors. The importance of this program component was clear.

In the following sections, these five themes are discussed and illustrated through the words of the mentees, thereby telling the story of these first-year high school band directors’ perceptions of their mentor-mentee relationships.

**The Extra Hours**

The time commitment required of high school band directors was addressed by all the mentees. Working with the marching band, completing administrative tasks, and choosing literature for their ensembles were among the types of responsibilities that frequently kept them working beyond the regular school day. The number of duties required of these mentees was shared by Eric who said that, “Basically every day after school other than Wednesday I’m here until about 9:00 at night.” Maria stated, “I would say it probably turns in average to more of a 60-ish hour week of me here, which doesn’t include whatever it is that I do at home.”

*Marching band.* Working with the marching band by far accounted for the most time outside of the school day. Corey said, “We have marching band rehearsals on Monday nights from 6:00 to 9:00.” He quickly added, “We also have percussion rehearsals from 6:00 to 8:00 on Thursdays.” These five hours, not including Friday night football games, were the least amount of marching band rehearsal time among the mentees. Emily, Mike, and Eric’s marching bands rehearsed six, six and a half, and eight hours per week, respectively. Maria spent the most time in after-school rehearsal with her band. She stated:

> We have three-hour rehearsals three days a week outside of the school day. On Mondays and Thursdays they’re right after school and they go until 6:00. And then on Tuesdays they go from 6:00 to 9:00. So really, Wednesday . . . is our only day off, so to speak, because Fridays are often games and then we have a contest [on some Saturdays].
Maria’s description of time spent with the marching band in the fall semester was similar to the majority of mentees: “I’m hunkering down for the next couple of months because other than next week, which is an SAT testing day, we’ll have something every single weekend until Christmas break is over.”

**Administrative work.** A variety of activities fell under this category. The acknowledgment of these tasks often came with a sigh or other sign of discontent. Corey and Maria identified similar jobs. Corey commented, “Outside of the school day [activities] would be receipting checks, and getting stuff deposited, and going to the bank to get change, and helping with concessions.” Maria stated, “Not to mention staff meetings and booster meetings and meetings with the executive board and check writing to make sure that our marching techs and all kinds of supplemental staff are paid and stuff I do at home.” In his first interview, Eric mentioned there was “a ton of paperwork to do, just filling out stuff through the school and for the county.” In Eric’s second interview, he was noticeably more frustrated:

I’m fairly organized, but it’s the amount of paperwork that comes through. . . . I couldn’t even have fathomed that amount of stuff. And my job every day is about 10% teaching band and about 90% politics and filling out pieces of paper and it’s just horrible. . . . I could get so much more done if there was 10 times less paper for me to fill out. And it’s redundancy and . . . I just hate doing it. And then I get in trouble because I’d rather teach band and get a good result and so . . . it’s a vicious circle.

The paperwork and administrative-type duties came frequently and from many directions: the school’s required forms and reports for students and parents; the school district’s required forms for transportation; and the FBA district’s required paperwork for performance assessments, festivals, student ensemble auditions.

**Music selection.** To someone unfamiliar with the band-director profession, choosing music for ensembles may seem like an easy task. Contrary to that perception, these first-year band directors described why choosing music was an activity that took up time outside of the
Choosing music for their concert bands was a topic for the mentees during their second interviews that occurred after the marching band season. Mike gave some insight into why this was a time-consuming task:

Well, right now it’s me jumbling through CDs and scores of pieces for district festival, for festival with the bands. I’m not too familiar with grade 3’s and . . . the lower grade material on the FBA handbook or in the FBA book. So I’m having to do a lot of listening and a lot of searching through things like that in order to pick something that’ll fit the band, and that’ll still be challenging for them.

Maria described the difficulty of choosing music when she called it “the most difficult part of my job as a first-year teacher.” She added, “The majority of my outside-of-school attention is towards programming for next spring.”

As Eric conveyed, even though it was a significant and important task, the mentees seemed excited about choosing music: “I’ve been looking pretty hard-core through a bunch of music outside of school, and meeting with a bunch of people, and getting advice on their music things and what they know.”

Self-confidence

In providing a better picture of the context of the mentees, it was important to relate their feelings of confidence. They each communicated this confidence through several interview topics. The foundation of this confidence seemed to come from positive undergraduate experiences in college, but confidence continued to build through successes achieved during the first semester of teaching. Networking with fellow band directors, in addition to an assigned mentor, often provided feelings of accomplishment. Success in areas such as classroom management, rapport with students, and ensemble performances built feelings of confidence. Support from administrators, parents of students, and others contributed as well.

Undergraduate experience. The mentees were very positive in their assessment of their college undergraduate experiences. Corey classified his preparation for teaching as “second to
none,” and he felt “very prepared” for teaching music at the high school level. Emily felt the training her college provided “was really good, actually.” Mike and Eric had mixed feelings.

Mike stated:

Pretty much in all aspects I think my undergraduate experience was very, very good coming out to be a first-year teacher. A lot of the paperwork and things that go along with the high school band . . . all got tossed on me right when I got here. So I don’t think that I was well prepared for that--the administrative assistant portion of the job.

Eric said:

I would say the education classes I’ve had taught me little to nothing about what I actually need to know to teach in high school. The thing that’s helped me the most is my performance-related classes and . . . there was just tons and tons of opportunity to play in different ensembles and different instruments. And that’s probably been the most help being a band director.

The mentees expressed an overall positive feeling about their college preparation for teaching music. That preparation provided a foundation of initial confidence when entering their first teaching position. However, some felt that they had little to no preparation for the administrative tasks related to teaching.

Networking. Each of the mentees had been assigned at least one mentor to begin the school year. Several of the mentees had multiple mentors, including those assigned by their school, their district, or by FBA. Despite the number of designated mentors and regardless of the perceived effectiveness of their mentors, the mentees sought out other individuals for help during their first semester of teaching.

Teachers--those closer in age or closer in terms of distance--were often sources of information or comfort for the mentees. Corey frequently referenced his contact with other band directors in his county/district. He maintained a close relationship with the high school band director under whom he had been a student teacher. He said he was “in constant contact” with her, and they “get together all the time.” He also alluded to the existing culture of the directors
in the district: “We’re constantly helping each other out. I’m constantly at rehearsals at other high schools. . . . I’m going to have people out here all the time because I’m a very social person.” Mike felt there was always someone he could go to for help or advice:

I’ve got a list of numbers I’m able to call if [my mentor] is not around. In this county . . . there are about seven high schools, and all seven of us talk on a regular basis, and we’re able to kind of help each other along.

Eric simply stated, “I have about three mentors that have been helping me with things.” These were other band directors in the area whom he considered “mentors” because of their willingness to help. Instead of looking to the more experienced teachers, Emily often turned to teachers closer to her age because of their ability to better relate to her situation:

To be honest, the most beneficial thing has been talking to a few other . . . younger band directors. And just kind of [saying], “Okay, am I normal for feeling this way right now . . . feeling extremely burned out? I ask whoever seems to be willing to give me the time . . . a second-year teacher at a Catholic school . . . she’s close to my age and we’ve gotten to know each other. So I end up asking her a lot of questions . . . instead of going to [my FBA mentor].

Emily was neither pleased nor comfortable with her assigned mentor: “If he wasn’t my mentor, I don’t know that he would be one of those people that I would approach.” He was much older than Emily and that may have been the main reason for turning to her friend at the Catholic school. Her friend was able to confirm that Emily’s feelings were normal.

Musical ability. Despite the various aspects of the job, the mentees believed they possessed strong musical abilities. Emily believed conducting was “definitely [her] strength” in teaching, and that she knew “how to run a rehearsal.” Eric credited performing in college ensembles for his music education expertise:

The amount of music that I’ve played in college as a performer has really helped me in knowing the music, being able to relate teaching that aspect of the playing . . . I can play every one of the instruments so I can immediately respond to, you know, it’s this fingering, this position . . . whatever it is.
Maria was confident in her skills and methods in the ensemble classroom: “I feel like I usually have correctly identified problems and given--if not the best way--a decent way to try to correct it and to be diverse in my method of trying to correct problems.” Mike felt he had developed his musical abilities: “I have a really good ear for music. . . . I know what kind of sound I’m looking for . . . and . . . I feel like I’m getting that from the students.” Corey believed he had developed “a good memory for music and for scores.” This “musical ability” extension of their college preparation for teaching completed the level of confidence established prior to stepping into the classroom. Additional confidence was created through teaching and performance.

*Classroom management.* Maintaining order and discipline in the classroom was a strength clearly identified by several of the mentees. Their confidence in managing the classroom came through when addressing this aspect of teaching. Corey lightheartedly shared, “Classroom management for me is not really an issue. I’m a very loud person. . . . I get really great results with what I’ve done so far.” Eric attributed his ability to run orderly rehearsals to something other than his college classes:

They [classroom management skills] work pretty well. . . . The fact that I just grew up in a household where rules were important just has helped, and there, it’s either black or white for me. It’s not anything personal to the kids, it’s . . . this is what the rules are, this is what I have to follow, this is what you have to follow.

Maria felt lucky in one aspect of her first teaching position. Under the previous director, the students were “really disciplined, really hard-working, [and] had achieved a lot of success.” This prevailing attitude had carried over under her direction.

*Rapport with students.* Educators may have differing opinions regarding the significance--or insignificance--of students “liking” or “disliking” a teacher, but having the “respect” of students was important to the mentees. Signs of students’ respect for their new band director
seemed to bolster the confidence of the mentees. Corey related his perception of his students’ view by saying, “The kids respect me a lot here.” Emily shared her method of earning her students’ respect: “I think I definitely have a good rapport with the students. I try to make sure that, you know, every student gets to know me a little bit personally and that I do the same to them.”

In Emily’s second interview several months later, she confirmed that this was indeed her strong point: “I think probably my biggest strength is the rapport that I have with the students.” Eric elaborated on how his “youth” was also valuable in working with his students:

Being young I think helps me engage them better than some of the people that have been teaching for a while. They know that I’m in charge but there still is that friendship . . . And I still listen to their same music and stuff like that and they really enjoy that.

Through youth or musical ability, these mentees believed they had gained the respect of their students. However, it was the respect of other groups that raised their confidence to another level.

Validation. A display of respect or a sign of approval from other educators or parents was very reassuring to these young music educators. Support from school or district administrators was cited as a sign of empowerment. Eric summed up the difference these people can make: “I’ve heard from a lot of my colleagues that have come to watch the games, and principals, and parents, and different people, that it sounds greater than it has in the last eight years . . .”

Corey was specific in addressing the administration at his school: “I have a very supportive administration . . . They have the best interests of the band at heart.” Compliments from administrators were a sign of support for Emily’s teaching. She received many compliments on her marching band from her administration, and she indicated those compliments made her “feel a lot better.”
The school districts in which Mike and Corey were teaching employed county music supervisors. The presence and assistance of those administrators was helpful for Corey and Mike. The supervisors observed and consulted with those first-year teachers multiple times during the fall semester.

Parents were also an important factor in the confidence of the mentees. The presence of quality booster organizations allowed the first-year directors to focus more on teaching. Parental support of teacher policies and decisions was an indication of a mentee doing something right. Emily recalled one parent’s support of a discipline issue with a student: “I talked to [the student’s] mom at a football game and . . . she’s very supportive.” Mike provided a summary of his confidence:

We made leaps and bounds the second performance and I see . . . improvement. . . . I wake up every morning happy to come to work, happy to get started, for them to learn something new. So it’s pretty much the only thing I’ve wanted to do since middle school . . . I’m happy.

Mentor Interaction

The mentees perceived their interaction with mentors in several categories. Mentors were there primarily to provide advice and reminders through informal communication. Mentees believed the relationships with their respective mentors changed during the semester, but few changes were made in their classroom teaching techniques due to mentoring.

Mentoring technique. It was clear that the mentees understood that the role of the mentors was not, as Corey said, “to teach you how to teach.” Eric gave the following perception: “They’re just here kind of as guides. They’ve been very careful about saying, ‘This is your band. You run it how you’d like to.’ I try some things out. Some work, some don’t.” Maria gave only one contradictory example:
When [her mentor] was here last week and we did the clinic, he would react to a certain technique . . . or a certain exercise. In one particular case he said, “Oh, that’s not going to work. That’s not going to work.

However, Maria also provided instances where her mentor took a different approach:

“Something he says to me all the time is like, ‘Look, it’s your band. I’m here if you need help from me or advice, but it’s your decision.’” Mike expressed a similar view of the role of his mentor:

I bring up a piece I’d like to play for festival . . . he says, “Wow, that’s pretty brave . . . I would suggest not doing that.” He won’t go out and say, “Don’t do that. That’s a bad idea. Don’t do it. It’s going to ruin whatever you’re working towards.”

While the mentees believed this was the approach their mentors were taking, the mentors next identified what they were delivering using this approach.

**Survival and deadlines.** The mentees saw the purpose of interacting with their mentors as a means of surviving their first year of teaching and meeting various school, district, and state deadlines. To “survive through the first year,” as Maria described it, encompassed many facets of high school band directing. Deadlines were one facet of the job and included the submittal of numerous forms, fees, and other administrative paperwork. The mentors’ role was largely viewed as providing reminders of the deadlines and assistance in completing forms.

Mike thought the role of his FBA mentor was “[to make sure] I don’t fall on my face. Those things that you would never think about your first year, the mentor has already been through it.” Emily and Eric also mentioned survival, but addressed the mentor’s role in reducing feelings of isolation. Emily said,

I think it’s to make sure that nobody drowns . . . to get to know someone else in the district . . . Some people maybe aren’t as good about meeting other(s) . . . [Mentoring can] be kind of the support for them we all need.
Eric shared, “[The purpose of the mentoring program is] to allow for successful start-up. It’s such a job where they don’t always want to stay after the first year . . . just a helpful resource that’s there.”

Corey talked about the reduction of isolation as part of the surviving the first year of teaching band and how a mentor can help:

Being a band director can be a very lonely job, because you teach something that’s different from everyone else in the entire school . . . to keep you from feeling lonely . . . to keep communication open.

The mentees, from the beginning, thought that the role of the mentor was going to be one of assistance with policies and deadlines. Eric described his first FBA meeting where he was told his mentor was going to be “the . . . force . . . [reminding] us of things to turn in.” Maria, part of a different FBA district, said, “They acquainted us with our mentor . . . gave us a calendar that had major dates and deadlines . . . landmarks in the school year, FBA-wise.”

Maria shared that her mentor was there to “make sure that you fill out this form correctly and turn it in by this date, and you won’t have to pay the fine.” Mike, from yet another FBA district, recalled, “The district chair explains that all new teachers really need to have an FBA mentor to get acclimated . . . to know about paperwork.” Corey, whose mentor was assigned by his school district, said, “As the mentee, my role is to call and ask [his mentor] . . . not just about teaching things, but with deadlines and procedures.” Similarly, Emily summarized her interaction with her mentor “to make sure that we [mentees] don’t miss deadlines and know when events are; when meetings are.”

*Frequency and context.* Two perspectives on the frequency of contact between mentors and mentees were: frequent or limited. The context of the contact was largely by phone or email. Four of the mentees said they were in frequent contact with their mentors. Corey said he called his mentor “once [or] twice a week.” In his early interview, Eric stated, “I’ve already called . . .
and emailed with my specific mentor about every other day.” Maria recalled, “I would say a few
times a week I email him back and forth with questions I have.” Mike indicated he had even
more frequent contact with his mentor: “I’ve called him lots of times…. We talk every day on
the phone.”

Emily had far less contact with her mentor. When asked about meetings with her mentor
in her early interview, Emily said, “Nothing has really been planned. . . . The only time we’ve
seen each other is at that [FBA] meeting . . . He has called me once.” In her interview near the
end of the semester, she said that she had been in contact with her mentor “two to three times a
month, maybe.”

Corey, Eric, Maria, and Mike had all met face-to-face with their mentors in situations
other than at FBA meetings, football games, or festivals. As will be discussed in the next
section, they described impromptu meetings with their mentors at school, over dinner, or at
social functions. Corey and Maria also had opportunities during the semester to observe or to be
observed by their mentors. However, the majority of interaction with mentors occurred through
phone call or email.

When asked about the context of mentor interaction, Corey said, “We probably prefer
phone to email.” Emily also remarked, “Most of our communication has been through email.”
Eric believed that “phone call and email . . . was the easiest and best way to talk.” Mike said,
“Most of the meetings are . . . over the phone during the day when I have specific questions.”
Early in the semester, Maria “talked . . . to him once a week or once every two weeks on the
phone,” but the majority of contact with her mentor was by email “a few times a week.”

None of the individual mentoring programs required a specified type or number of
meetings between mentors and mentees. “[How often, or in what context] hasn’t really been . . .
a prescribed thing,” as Eric said. Maria saw her mentor “every once in a while,” not at a specific meeting time.

Most meetings between mentoring pairs occurred in an “informal” manner, as several of the mentees called it. Emily said that she would see her mentor “occasionally . . . at a competition or another location.” In his early interview, Corey mentioned one meeting he was about to have with his mentor: “This Saturday, we’re actually getting together and having lunch and just talking and seeing what’s going on.” In his later interview, it was apparent that this type of interaction proved to be beneficial over the course of the semester:

There have been a couple of times where [the meeting] has been outside of school . . . more valuable than the in-school . . . You’re able to talk more freely and it’s more relaxed and more informal. I really enjoy just going and having dinner and discussing things. . . . And it gives you social interaction and it gets you away from your job.

Corey said those meetings with his mentor were more valuable than his typical in-service meetings with the school faculty or even with countywide music teachers. With his mentor, he felt he was able to discuss issues specific to his level and area. This was not the case in a general music teacher setting. Corey commented, “Good teaching is good teaching, yes. But situations are totally different.”

Mike related similar contact with his mentor: “We go out maybe to dinner or something with a bunch of other teachers locally . . . That’s pretty much how we meet and talk.” Mike lightheartedly shared that he and his mentor met for “maybe some poker [laughs] every once in a while.” Eric gave a similar analysis:

We have mutual friends . . . as band dorks do, just if you go out with one random friend, [my mentor] was there tons of times . . . It’s not like we ever planned [it]. . . . The informal things are the most helpful events. I can’t even call them events. And we sit there with a pad of paper over your wings and beer and just talk band. And that’s where I’ve learned the most stuff.
Relationship changes. There was a range of perceptions concerning how relationships with the mentors had changed over the semester, but all of the mentees noticed change. The primary change was an increase in comfort level and confidence within the relationship. Emily said that early in the semester, her mentor might have felt the need to check on her. She said, “Whereas now . . . I think he knows I’m doing okay, and he’ll kind of leave it up to me.” The progress Eric had made with his teaching facilitated a change in his mentoring relationship:

The relationship probably hasn’t changed, but the questions probably have. Now it’s more on the subject that we’re actually teaching. Now it’s more literature or, you know, I’m having trouble with the flute section. How do you get them to change this pitch? And, you know, what has worked for you? So, it’s more literature-based and more content-based rather than just general [education] kind of stuff.

Maria saw her dependence on her mentor reduced as she became more confident with her own expertise in teaching. In addition, she became more discriminating about the advice she received. Early in the semester, her tendency was to do exactly what her mentor suggested. As the semester progressed, Maria discovered that the mentor’s suggestions did not always work well with her beliefs and approach. She discovered that her own methods could work, and felt “more comfortable and confident.” She added, “I felt like I could still use him as a resource, but I didn’t need the verification that I was on the right path quite as much.” Mike had a similar feeling about how the relationship with his mentor had changed:

They [interactions with his mentor] get fewer and fewer. While I would have to talk to him [almost] after every class period before, it kind of cuts down to once a day. We might not talk to each other for a couple of days.

He became more comfortable with his teaching and felt that he did not need to seek advice for every problem.

Changes in teaching techniques. Corey and Maria both referred to “increasing their bag of tricks” for use in teaching their ensembles. They were referring to methods they had for teaching or for getting good results from their ensembles. They also believed interactions with their
mentors had added certain “tricks” to their “bags” and allowed them to change some of their
teaching techniques.

Corey had the advantage of observing his mentor teach and adjusted some of his methods based on the observations:

[My mentor] is . . . probably 8 or 10 years older than I am. And I’m trying to establish that kind of [business-like] rapport with him. . . . It worked wonders for marching band. It is not working for concert band. So I have to take a much more business-like approach. I learned that today with my wind ensemble. If I take a much more business-like approach, they respond much better.

Mike shared another aspect of his teaching that had changed due to his mentoring. He had noticed that he was not having enough time to cover everything in his rehearsals. His mentor suggested changes in his planning that might help. Mike said his pacing of rehearsals changed and improved his coverage of material.

Early in the semester, Maria often felt her ensembles were not improving at an acceptable rate. Her mentor helped her deal with those feelings: “[I was] trying to relax myself, [to] have the confidence that kind of comes with more experience I think. The mentor helped me to try to acquire some of that prematurely.”

Maria also leaned on her mentor to find new ways to motivate her students. For one marching band contest, Maria wanted her students to appreciate that winning the contest was not the ultimate goal. For the “second time in like 10 years” the band did not win first place. “A series of emails back and forth” with her mentor helped Maria communicate the “it’s not about winning” message to the students.

Eric shared several areas of his teaching where he had tried new techniques suggested by his mentor: “I kind of took snippets of what he does with different long tones or different things and listening for balance and things, changing some seating configurations around and doing some things. And it gets a better sound in the band.”
Payoffs. Positive results of mentoring were cited by most mentees after a semester of their mentoring programs. During the end-of-the-semester interviews, the mentees were asked about successful moments. One mentee commented on the musical improvements that one group demonstrated during rehearsal. However, for most of the mentees, success from mentoring was directly connected to a successful performance of an ensemble. For example, Eric described a marching band performance as a culminating achievement affected by mentoring:

The night of district FBA marching festival, when they announced the grades, we got straight superiors . . . which the band never has gotten . . . We [had] worked really hard during marching band season and they [the mentors] had a lot of help in it.

Mike simply stated that his mentor played a role in a concert “com[ing] off without some major malfunction.” After thinking for a moment, he said, “I mean, just having my past two concerts [and] just [to] successfully get through them [laughs]. Everyone’s still in one piece.”

Mentoring Program Structure

While the history and complete structure of their respective mentoring programs were beyond their knowledge, the mentees relayed their perceptions of one structural element: the pairing of mentors with mentees. The mentees described one obstacle regarding mentoring high school band directors.

The pairing procedure. Most of the mentees shared that the way they were paired with their mentors was informal and dependent upon who was available and volunteered. Corey’s situation was a little different because a school district music supervisor assigned his mentor. The other mentors were assigned through FBA. Corey was uncertain about how he was paired with his mentor: “I have no idea. I called… one day and [the music supervisor] told me [who] my mentoring teacher was going to be.”

The other four mentees recalled being paired with a mentor at their first FBA meeting. Emily and Eric shared very similar memories of the mentor assignments. Emily stated,
I showed up to the first FBA meeting and they said, “Hey, we’ve got a lot of new directors. Who would like to be mentors?” A few of the directors, older directors, raised their hand and [it was] just [a], “Hey, I’ll take you” kind of a thing. [They were] pointing, “I’ll take you.” And since he and I knew we were in the same district, it made sense that we were buddied up together . . . There was no explanation. It was just kind of informal.

FBA district officers assigned a mentor to Maria. The new teachers within her district met with their mentors immediately prior to the first district meeting. At that point, she became “acquainted” with her mentor, and the mentor began to explain the purpose of the FBA and the responsibilities band directors had to the organization. Maria remarked, “They basically did a rundown of the year.” Mike indicated that his FBA “district chairperson” assigned him his mentor. The program itself “wasn’t really explained. [It was presented] just as, ‘Here’s a mentor teacher for you. If you have any questions, concerns, comments, need anything, call him.’”

While the process of how a mentee was paired with a mentor was not always clear, the importance of mentor-mentee observations was clear to all five mentees.

*Time as an obstacle.* When asked about such topics as the frequency of contact with their mentors, the context of meetings with their mentors, or changes in mentoring programs that might be beneficial, the mentees commented about the lack of time in their schedules or their mentors’ schedules. The comments came in both short references and longer explanations. At various times during his first interview, Corey made several statements: “[My mentor] and I have both been extremely busy,” “Right now we’re just both swamped,” and “We’re both so busy.” During the same interview, Corey expressed hope for mentoring time in the future: “Once festival is over . . . I think we’ll have a lot more time to devote to fostering that [mentoring] relationship.”

In his second interview, Corey echoed his earlier comments about the lack of time for the mentoring. The size of each of the band programs, the performance schedules, and director’s
family life left little time outside of the school day for the pair to meet or discuss teaching. Eric added, “There’s just not enough time to even do the paperwork . . . let alone drive out to where he was.”

**Need for Observation**

The mentees stressed the importance of two-way observation. The mentees reported the role of observation in their mentoring relationship in two distinct ways: the role was either a part of the relationship or it was not. Where observation had been a part, the mentees expressed extremely positive views of those experiences. In the relationships without observations, mentees articulated a need for those opportunities. In both cases, mentor modeling and mentor feedback were identified as beneficial parts of observation.

**Benefits.** Two of the five mentees, Corey and Maria, reported they had opportunities for observation with their mentor within the mentor-mentee relationship. Emily had never observed her mentor. Eric and Mike had not been able to participate in any kind of observation with their mentors since they were paired with them as mentees. However, both of these first-year band directors knew their respective mentors before they started their new jobs. Without being able to observe the mentor, it was difficult for the mentee to develop a high level of respect or a true appreciation for the mentor’s abilities or methods. The mentee could assume the mentor was a good teacher and had quality ensembles, but the mentee had no evidence to support an assumption. Emily stated, “I really don’t know much about his teaching to be honest, because I haven’t ever observed him or seen his band.”

Emily also expressed the difference in being told about a possible method of teaching and actually witnessing the method in practice. Observing a mentor teach a class or ensemble was more valuable to the mentees than a mentor explaining his methods over the phone. Emily summarized by saying, “Words are [just] words.” Mentors were able to model teaching
methods. Corey spoke of the times the mentor came to his to work with the band and the value of the interaction:

[My mentor has] been out here a couple times to teach, and I’ve watched him teach and gleaned . . . things that I can use as examples for articulations and all that sort of thing . . . the way that he approaches the kids is totally different from the way I approach the kids. He . . . taught wind ensemble, and it was absolutely wonderful. We basically team taught the class for two hours . . . and it was really, really beneficial for the kids and for me, I think.

Even with having these opportunities to observe his mentor, Corey thought more chances would have been beneficial: “If I could have gotten him out here a few more times to teach, I think that would have been good.”

A benefit to mutual observations was the accompanying opportunity for feedback from the mentor. Without observing the mentee, the mentor was not able to provide advice based on how the mentee was teaching. The mentor could answer specific questions, but if the mentee was not asking all the questions or the “right” questions, problems might not be addressed. Mike said, “What I’m doing in the classroom might be good, [or it] might not be good. And if it’s not good and I don’t know it’s not good, I’m not [able to ask] the mentor and [it cannot] be fixed.” Mike believed that observing and meeting in the school setting would allow the mentor to provide feedback on the mentee’s teaching methods. He thought that after a semester of feedback in student teaching, the lack of feedback sends the wrong message to a first-year teacher. The message might be that his methods are good, and there are no alternative or better methods.

Maria provided an example of immediate feedback when she described the mentor watching her teach: “This past Tuesday he came out to our evening rehearsal at the stadium. . . . While we were watching rehearsal, [we] . . . bounced stuff back and forth…”

Those mentees who had not participated in any observations were clear about their feelings. Eric stated: “I wished he could have come and watched a rehearsal . . . ‘This is what
you might want to change.’ So, if I could have met him in our work environment that would have been good.”

Finally, Eric provided some thoughts on finding possible observation time:

If [the school] would give us a sub day [to] allow us [or] me to go observe him and/or him [to] come observe here… [As] with any new teacher, they want me to do observations, but they always give me an English teacher. And, as good a teacher as they are, that doesn’t help running a marching band rehearsal.

The mentees believed that observation opportunities were or could be a critical component of their mentoring programs. In only their first year of teaching, they were unaware of what policies made observations possible or what obstacles might stand in the way. These were details that an experienced educator might know.

**The Mentors**

**Barry**

Barry was a 31-year-old director of bands at a metropolitan high school in Florida. His education included a bachelor of music education degree from a university in Florida and a master of music degree in wind conducting from a university outside of Florida. The population of Barry’s school was approximately 2,300 students, and he saw 183 students in five different courses. Those courses included three concert band ensembles, a percussion class, and an advanced placement music theory course. Barry was the only band director at the school; he had 60 minutes of planning time daily. His marching band was comprised of 150 students. This was Barry’s first year serving as a mentor.

**Tom**

Tom was 28 years old and director of bands at a large high school in Florida. His education included a bachelor of music in performance degree from a university outside of Florida. The population of Tom’s school was approximately 3,400 students, and he instructed
206 students in five different classes. Those classes included two concert band ensembles, and advanced music class (IB), and an advanced placement music theory course. Tom was the only band director at the school; he had 90 minutes of planning time every other day. This was Tom’s first year serving as a mentor.

James

James was a 55-year-old director of bands at a high school in Florida. He held a bachelor of music education degree from a university in Florida and a master of music education degree from the same institution. The population of the high school was approximately 1,750 students, and he saw 152 students in six different classes. The concert band met during a “zero hour” before school every day. The other classes included jazz band, chorus, instrumental techniques, and two “introduction to music performance” courses. James had one assistant band director working with him and had 55 minutes of planning time daily. James had been serving as a mentor for approximately 15 years.

Keith

Keith was 31 years old and director of bands at a large high school in a metropolitan area in Florida. He had a bachelor of music education degree from a university in Florida. The population of Keith’s school was approximately 3,100 students, and he taught 148 students in five different classes. Those classes included two concert band ensembles, jazz band, beginning band, and advanced placement music theory. Keith had one assistant band director at the high school; he had approximately 100 minutes of planning time each day. He had been serving as a mentor for a few years.

Kelly

Kelly was 41 years old and director of bands at a middle school. She had a bachelor of music education degree from a university in Florida. The population of Kelly’s school was
approximately 800 students with 240 students in the band program. Kelly had one assistant band
director. She estimated that she had been mentoring new band directors for 15 years.

Through the Eyes of the Mentors

Five themes emerged from the data collected from the mentors participating in this study.
Each theme and supporting categories present the story of the mentors’ perceptions of the
mentoring relationship. The five themes were:

1. Perceptions of Mentees. The mentors shared views of their mentees and the relationship
between them. They discussed mentee strengths in teaching, overall mentee abilities, and
perceived relationship depth. Several mentors also had unique connections to their mentee in
addition to mentoring.

2. Mentee Interaction. Interaction with the mentees came in several forms and included a
common approach by the mentors. Several topics dominated the conversations between the
mentoring pairs. The validation of mentee actions and methods was an important part of the
interactions, and most of the relationships changed in some way over the course of the
semester.

3. Program Structure. Several structural aspects of the mentoring programs were a common
theme among the mentors. Perceptions of how individuals were selected to become mentors
were similar, as were the perceptions of how they were paired with their mentees. An
element of training was shared by several mentors. Mentors believed that their school
administrators had little knowledge of the mentoring programs, and one specific obstacle
interfered with the entire mentoring program.

4. Need for Observation. The mentors spoke about the importance of including observation
opportunities in their mentoring programs. They presented the benefits of including such a
component even though some mentors lacked these observation opportunities. They also
described factors that inhibited mentor and mentee observations.

5. Good Intentions-Questionable Results. The mentors wanted to see their mentees succeed as
high school band directors. They also believed they provide important assistance to the
mentees. However, a theme of uncertainty connected these mentors. In many cases, the
mentors were not able to verify that their mentoring efforts were helping the mentees.

In the sections that follow, these themes are discussed and illustrated through the words of
the mentors.
Perceptions of Mentees

The mentors held some common views about the mentees. These areas included mentee strengths, strong personal mentee background, unique connections with a mentee, and the depth of the relationships. The combination of these areas provided a description of how the mentors perceived the mentees.

*Strengths.* Mentors perceived their mentees to have a generally good rapport with students. Barry said his mentee had “a great personality” and was “very good with the kids.” Tom agreed that his mentee had such a rapport and was “approachable.” This kind of relationship that mentees fostered with students translated into motivation and direction for the band programs. According to Barry, it has “given them [the students] a direction and a sense of achievement, a sense of feeling good and having pride in what they do.”

In addition to being approachable, the mentees were very receptive to advice and ideas from their mentors. Tom thought his mentee was “someone who doesn’t have all the answers, but is more than willing to search.” James credited his mentee as being “open-minded” to what he had to say.

*Strong personal background.* The mentors thought their mentees overwhelmingly had a strong personal and educational background. Kelly assessed her mentee as “really on top of things… and a successful music educator.” Keith said his mentee was “a really good musician.” Mentors recalled being enlightened by the mentees at times. Kelly referred to her mentee as having a very “solid” educational background. Tom believed his mentee was “very smart… and wants to do well.”

*Unique connections.* Three of the mentors pointed out they had a unique connection to their mentees. Kelly’s was unusual because she was the preceding band director at her mentee’s new high school. She offered this reason for serving as the mentor:
I was very interested in making sure the program stayed on the level that they were used to. And knowing that a new director was going to come in, that sometimes it takes a dip, and I didn’t want to see that happen so I offered [to be the mentor of the new director].

Kelly was aware of the possible difficulties that this situation presented. The mentee might think Kelly would become jealous if he had immediate success. Kelly’s presence around the students could also interfere with the mentee establishing ownership of the band program. She tried to avoid these potential problems by carefully explaining her advice and by staying away from band performances. She also realized some possible benefits that a mentor without such a connection could not offer: “What was unique about being able to help him through that was that I knew the band. I knew the instrumentation. I knew where their weaknesses were.”

Barry’s mentee had worked with his band before being hired as a new director in the area. The mentee had worked at Barry’s band camp. Based on what he had observed there, Barry believed his mentee was making a difference in his new job.

Finally, Tom was his mentee’s cooperating teacher in his student teaching internship. They developed a close relationship during the internship, and their mentoring relationship began there. “He was my student teacher last year, so I did have an opportunity to mentor him in that aspect, and I think a lot of that has just carried through to this year.”

Depth of the relationship. Many mentors felt connected with their mentees in ways that were deeper than just teacher-to-student. Barry, Tom, and Keith all used the word “friend” or “friendship” in describing their respective mentee. Keith said, “It’s not just a mentor thing. It’s . . . a friendship kind of thing.” Tom expanded on how close he and his mentee were: “It would be great if he and I could go bowling and fishing.”

However, not all the relationships were close ones. James had not established a close relationship with his mentee. He described his mentoring relationship: “I’m mentoring from afar. I’m not giving him [that] slap on the back he should be having.” Kelly also did not
mention developing a close friendship with her mentee. Lack of time and long distance were often obstacles to forming closer bonds.

**Mentee Interaction**

Mentors categorized their interaction with mentees in terms of their approach, the frequency and context of contact, topics of discussion, and changes that occurred within these interactions as the semester progressed. They also pointed to one particular mentoring action that was important to the mentee.

*Mentoring technique.* “I’ve always made it very clear from the very beginning that this is his program, not my program. I can only offer to him things that worked and things that didn’t.” This quote from Kelly illustrates the belief held by all the mentors that their job was not to tell their mentees how to teach or run their programs. They believed their job was to offer advice and relate stories from their own experiences. Then mentees could decide the course of action that best worked for them.

The mentors understood that different methods work for different people. When talking about his teaching methods, James said he tried to remind his mentee of alternative methods “without imposing too much of what I think is right and wrong.” He also stated, “What they want to accomplish may be different than what I think is important.” Keith remarked, “You don’t want the [mentor] to say ‘Don’t do that’ because some . . . things [you] are going to have to figure out on your own. As a mentor, you can [just] guide them.”

*Frequency and context.* The mentors stated that most of the contact between mentors and mentees was on an as necessary basis. Tom said his role was best described as “I’m here if you need me.” Additionally, he did not play “an active part in calling” his mentee to see if anything was needed. He left the initiation of contact up to his mentee. Barry said contact was “as needed” but was initiated by either party. James said he expected his mentee to “just call or
email me and vice versa” if there were any “grinding questions.” Keith and Kelly expressed the same view.

Phone and email were the main modes of communication. The frequency of the calls and emails varied among the mentors. Face-to-face meetings between mentors and mentees were much less frequent, and they usually occurred if they were attending the same meeting, football game, performance, or social function. James said, “It’s just a matter of whenever we have some free time at meetings or games for us to share ideas in what works and what doesn’t work.” One-on-one meetings occurred from three to five times during the fall semester.

Some mentors favored the social functions as meeting places. Barry said, “Most of the mentoring process has been over a dinner or an adult beverage.” Keith had gone to dinner with his mentee, and these kind of social settings helped him in “getting to know [his mentee] on a less professional level.” This social occasion helped each person feel more comfortable sharing problems and experiences.

**Mentoring topics.** The mentors and mentees had talked about a variety of subjects over the course of the semester. Two topics dominated the perceptions of the mentors: deadlines (or paperwork) and music literature selection.

The topic of administrative paperwork and the meeting of deadlines for this paperwork was discussed throughout each of the mentor interviews. Tom talked about some activities requiring paperwork: “I think most of his questions have been geared towards those administrative things. How do I order stands . . . get instruments . . . get my schedule to do this . . . get kids here?”

However, James and Kelly mentioned the completion of paperwork strictly in terms of FBA accomplishing a purpose through mentoring. James stated,
[FBA has] asked for someone who could serve as a mentor to a new band director to remind them about forms (James). [Mentoring began] so we could help [new directors] through the paperwork (Kelly).

James thought his responsibility was to remind his mentee to “get forms in” and of “deadlines approaching.” Tom echoed this type of interaction: “I . . . make sure he doesn’t miss deadlines.”

The mentors indicated they often spoke with their mentees about selecting music for their ensembles. Barry thought that this was one of the most important tasks with which he could help his mentee: “[For his mentee’s program], picking the right literature that fits the program help[s] them be as successful as possible, and that’s very hard to do.” Tom recalled his mentee calling him to ask about a piece of music he was planning to perform with an ensemble. Tom talked about the skill level required of certain players for that music, and his mentee decided, “Oh, okay, [we] can’t do that.” Keith and Kelly related almost the same story of interaction with their mentees.

**Networking.** Although networking in this context referred to a mentee’s contact with people other than his assigned mentor, it was still a type of “mentor interaction.” The mentors in this study were aware that their mentees received mentoring from others. The mentors acknowledged that their mentees had been assigned mentor teachers from within their own schools, and that these mentors provided help to address school-specific issues. Aside from school mentors, participating mentors said their mentees should be contacting other people for ideas and assistance. Tom stated, “I encourage him to call other people . . . since he’s already had experience with me and has gained insight as far as how I do things.”

James reflected on the advantages of his mentee contacting other teachers in the district: “He probably has other . . . friends that he talks to . . . It appears that the younger band directors email and call each other a lot more than I do. They help each other . . . through this.”
**Relationship changes.** Most of the mentors perceived a change in their respective mentee’s comfort level and confidence as the semester moved along. Kelly’s purpose was to help—not monitor or judge her mentee. Upon realizing Kelly’s goal, the mentee was more open in their interactions.

James thought his mentee “seemed pretty nervous” coming into the job. “He had a panicked look on his face, [but] he looks more confident now.” Several possible reasons for the increased confidence included mentor interaction, experience at their new job, or positive feedback from administration, parents, or students. Tom believed this to be the case with his mentor: “He's starting to feel more comfortable . . . and more confident in his role . . . with the positive feedback he's getting from the parents and students and I think his principal.”

**Validation.** The mentors believed that validating mentee teaching methods was also important to convey. Tom had provided some direction to his mentee regarding the music for his marching band show. Then the mentee was able to resolve the problem. Tom reflected on his next interaction with his mentee: “I'm not really sure he had any real questions for me other than… just hoping for me to say ‘Oh, you did it right.’ And I did because he handled it pretty well.”

Kelly agreed that the mentee sometimes needs “just someone to talk to and make sure you’re doing things right.” Kelly had the opportunity to team teach with her mentee. This was another chance for her mentee to feel a sense of validation because the mentee could see the mentor using some of the same techniques he was using. The team-teaching interaction was also a signal to the mentee that he was using good methods in her instruction.
Keith was also able to validate the progress of his mentee during an observation. He said his mentee’s students “weren’t even playing that great, but they behaved so well. I said, ‘Man, that’s good. You’re on the right track.’”

**Program Structure**

The manner in which the mentoring programs were set up was another theme. Mentors described the selection process and the process of pairing. They discussed common aspects in training and an obstacle to program structure.

*Selection as a mentor.* The majority of mentors simply volunteered. Barry recalled that his FBA district sent out an email asking for directors who might be interested in being mentors. Because he already knew one of the first-year directors in the district, he volunteered to help that specific person. Tom was also able to select his mentee whom he already knew. Kelly’s FBA district asked her if she would serve as a mentor since she was familiar with the band program that had the open job.

*The pairing procedure.* The pairing procedure was different for each mentor-mentee pair. For Tom, his FBA district did not actually do the pairing: “I know that there was an initiative to meet monthly at a central location for groups [of mentees and experienced directors] to get together, but as far as person by person, one-on-one basis, I don't think our district really pushed that.”

James discovered there was going to be a new band director at the school where his wife worked, so he volunteered to mentor that person. He also believed that the first-year director requested him as a mentor. Kelly was paired with her mentee because of her firsthand knowledge of the mentee’s school and band program.

*State training.* None of the mentors received training to serve as mentors to first-year band directors. However, for other purposes, state or district personnel had trained several of the
directors. Keith and Tom were trained in programs that required faculty to serve as cooperating teachers. Both felt that this training was valuable to working with mentees. Training to become a mentor was a requirement for Keith.

Kelly participated in a school district sponsored program that was designed to train teachers who would serve as mentors within their schools. The training consisted of “workshops at the county office” for a “beginning teacher program.”

Administrative awareness. The school of individual mentors played no role in the structure of any of the mentoring programs. The administration of the mentors’ schools had little or no knowledge of the ongoing mentoring programs for first-year high school band directors. When asked if the administration was aware of the help the mentors were providing to first-year teachers in their district, the response was largely negative. Kelly said, “No . . . It’s really a band director to band director thing.” Barry stated, “No, not that I know of anyway.” Tom pointed out, “I don’t think our school is aware of this program.” James commented, “I may have mentioned it to my principal that I serve as a mentor.” Keith said, “My administration probably doesn’t even know that I do it.”

Time as an obstacle. The mentors made it clear that a high school band director’s schedule is very full. Time—or the lack of it—was a major hurdle for the mentoring programs and mentoring relationships. The word “busy” was prevalent among the directors. Tom remarked, “He’s busy; we’re all busy; everyone’s busy. I’ve got a family, and he’s got [a] new job—so that would be it.” James expressed, “I know he’s very busy, and I’m very busy.” Barry did not have the time to travel the long distance between his school and his mentee’s school. He said he would be able to visit his mentee during his planning period, but the distance was too far to cover in his planning time.
The lack of time was frustrating to the mentors. Barry was not able to help much with his mentee’s marching band “because I was doing my own marching band.” James simply said, “If we had more time together, we could share more things.”

**Need for Observation**

The mentors believed observation had its benefits. Those mentors who had observation opportunities valued them. Those mentors who did not have observation opportunities wanted them. Unfortunately, obstacles were in the path of observation.

*Benefits.* Mentors who had observed their mentees or who had been observed by their mentees described the benefits. Keith experienced two-way observations. His mentee had visited him for an entire school day, and Keith had done some team teaching at his mentee’s school.

During the first visit, they had the chance to sit down and talk for two hours. That amount of time with a mentee was rare among the mentors. His mentee was also able to compare the sound of his ensemble to Keith’s ensemble. The mentee left realizing how much his ensembles could still improve. During the second visit, Keith was able to watch and listen to rehearsal, give immediate and relevant feedback, and demonstrate methods with his mentee’s own students. He stated, “I watched them rehearse and helped out a little bit.”

Kelly attended two of her mentee’s marching band rehearsals. As a mentor, Kelly was able to see her mentee’s strengths and weaknesses in person instead of guessing what they might be, based on questions through email or phone. She commented, “I’m looking at the marching band, and we’re going through the motions [together].” Providing sincere and immediate feedback validated the mentee’s methods and was another observation benefit. Kelly recalled, “I was able to [say], ‘Great job picking that out’ [and] things like that.”
Observation obstacles. Mentors who did not have opportunities to observe their mentees described the obstacles. For Barry, distance and similar schedules were reasons he could not exchange observations with his mentee: “We've never met in the classroom because his school and my school are about an hour apart . . . and we have the same exact schedule, so it's kind of hard to make that happen.” Distance was a factor for James as well. His mentee was “a good half hour drive away.”

Keith and Kelly shared some of the challenges they faced in conducting observations. Keith saw the performance demands on high school bands as a large obstacle for observation opportunities. The first-year high school director was expected to present a quality performance a month after being hired. Keith asked, “How is he supposed to go out and observe on any kind of regular basis?” Kelly agreed: “In the high school band director’s world, we’re so pushed for time and performance pressure every week that [the mentees] are going to be reluctant to . . . be out of the classroom.”

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, time was an obstacle for all components of the mentoring programs, and it impacted observations as well. The mentors believed that time might be available for observation if substitute teachers were available. This is another obstacle to overcome. Barry said,

“In a dream world, it would be great if the music supervisor could supply the mentor with a sub to [allow the mentor to] go out [and observe] at least once a semester, maybe twice a semester . . . but funding for subs is rare.

Good Intentions-Questionable Results

Desire for mentee success. The mentors wanted to see their mentees succeed as high school band directors, but were they succeeding? Were the mentors having an impact on their mentees? The mentors’ answers to these questions cast some doubts.
The mentors’ intentions were unquestionable. They wanted to provide anything they could to ensure their mentees were successful. Keith said, “I like to go in and see a concert… and hear them do a great job.” The picture of success was larger for James and Barry. Barry said,

We need more successful people and we need higher quality people. There [are] so many bands and band directors that just don’t care, don’t do the right things, and the kids suffer . . . I just want . . . young people to be successful and give their kids the best education.

James said, “I just want to make sure that everybody . . . does what they’re supposed to do. [Then] we [music educators] are all going to look better.”

Uncertainty. These mentors might have been a tremendous help to their mentees. Their mentees might have been failing without them. However, the mentors’ lack of certainty about making a difference for their respective mentees was evident.

The mentors were asked to discuss any changes in their mentees’ teaching strategies due to mentoring. Two mentors responded positively. Keith said his mentee’s classroom management had improved. The students were also more receptive to his mentee, but Keith said, “I’m not really sure if all that we ever talked about has helped. I think he said it has.” Kelly remarked that she thought her mentee was receptive to some suggestions she had made regarding the pacing of rehearsals and “[had] made some changes.”

Barry responded that he had not observed his mentee teaching, so he did not know of any changes. James “sensed” that his mentee had grasped the importance of an upcoming performance. Tom had heard from parents that they were pleased with his mentee’s work. However, he said, “Whether or not I had anything to do with it, it would be nice to think that I did, but I really can’t say.”

The mentors did not have many opportunities to receive feedback from their mentees regarding the mentoring process. Kelly spoke about the lack of feedback from her mentee: “You
don’t get that feedback from your mentee: ‘Oh great, that was a big help.’ Barry felt that the school district supervisor should hold a meeting with mentors and mentees “maybe three times a year so that the music supervisor can hear pros and cons.”

Finally, when asked to share a successful moment with their mentee, most of the mentors did not have one to share. Barry said, “Nothing major yet; hopefully next semester will be it.” James shared, “Just that he’s shown up at everything that he’s supposed to.” Keith said, “If they’re still teaching, I think that’s pretty successful.”

The mentors were only able to provide a few specific examples of how mentoring had helped their mentees. Those examples came from the mentors who had observed their mentees.

**Summary of Results**

**The Mentees**

An analysis of data from the mentees showed that they: (a) work long hours required as high school band directors; (b) felt self-confident; (c) had some significant interactions with their mentors; (d) held particular perceptions about the structure of their mentoring programs; and (e) expressed the need for observation to be part of the mentoring process.

Directing a marching band, completing administrative paperwork, and choosing musical literature for performing ensembles contributed to their long hours. The mentees’ feelings of confidence came as a result of: (a) their undergraduate experiences; (b) networking with other band directors; (c) their musical skills and abilities; (d) successful classroom management results; (e) good rapport with students; and (f) validation of their methods by students, parents, and others.

The mentees reported that the relationship that they cultivated with their mentor was an important component of their change and growth as first-year band directors. Other aspects of their relationships that were cited included: a) help with deadlines; b) frequency and context of
Mentors thought the procedure for mentor pairing lacked structure, and they shared how time limited the effectiveness of mentoring in some cases.

Both mentees, who had opportunities for observation and those who had not, described the important role that observation plays, the perceived benefits available through observation, and ways to provide opportunities.

The Mentors

An analysis of data from the mentors showed: (a) their perceptions of the mentees; (b) how particular aspects of their interaction with the mentees were helpful; (c) descriptions of the structure of the mentoring programs; (d) the need for observation; and (e) their good intentions as mentors and concern about yielding substantial outcomes through their efforts.

The mentors described the mentees’ rapport with students and receptiveness to advice. They felt that their mentees had strong personal backgrounds. Some of the mentors expressed their connections to their mentees, and the quality of their relationships.

The mentors’ frequent mentee contact was important during their first year. However, they also encouraged mentees to network with other band directors. They described how their relationships with mentees evolved, and expressed the importance of validating their mentees’ pedagogical strategies.

Mentors discussed the processes of mentor selection and mentee pairing, and how their training for other state or district programs influenced their mentoring skills. They suggested that the school administrators’ lack of knowledge of the band director mentoring program and time were obstacles to mentoring.
The mentors emphasized the importance of observation in the mentoring programs. They described the benefits of two-way observations, as well as obstacles that inhibited observations. Mentors also expressed their desire for mentees to succeed, but they were typically unable to provide examples of how mentoring led to mentee success.

**The Mentors and The Mentees**

Both the mentees and mentors emphasized the importance of mentee/mentor interactions, program structure, and observation. The mentors did not share the mentees’ discussion of long hours or self-confidence. The mentees did not share the mentor themes of “perceptions of mentees” or “good intentions-questionable results.” Because the analysis of data was conducted separately for each group, some identical categories of data supported different themes across groups. Mentors and mentees shared themes, and many categories were also shared (see Figure 4-1).

Only one theme contradicted thematic elements of the other group. The mentees did not describe the mentors’ stated goal of success for mentees. However, the mentees did discuss positive results from mentoring. The mentees cited changes in their teaching techniques and “payoffs” from mentoring in the form of successful performances. Conversely, each mentor was not able to identify changes in his mentee’s teaching techniques or any significantly successful moments with his mentee.
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Figure 4-1. Interrelationships of themes and categories.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of first-year high school band directors and their mentors regarding their mentor-mentee relationships. The role of mentoring within the unique context of the new high school band director was the focus of this study. This study also provided an insider’s perspective of the mentoring process experienced by these music educators. The situational contexts of the mentoring pairs were described in detail. The participants shared the roles they played in the mentoring process, and discussed how their relationships changed over time. The effect of mentoring on the instructional capacity of the mentees was investigated, and the participants presented their views on the effectiveness of their relationships.

The mentees were in their initial semester of teaching and were “head” band directors at their respective schools. The mentors in this study were provided through mentoring programs implemented by an individual school district or by individual districts of the Florida Bandmasters Association. Although the perceptions of the 10 participants cannot be generalized to all first-year high school band directors and their mentors, the results should be of particular interest to music teacher educators, mentor teachers, preservice teachers, administrators, and professional music education organizations. The findings from this study could be used to create new mentoring programs for music educators or to refine existing programs.

In this chapter, a summary of the data collection procedure is presented and followed by a discussion of the findings. Finally, implications for theory, issues regarding mentoring, and implications for music education are discussed.
Data Collection

Five first-year high school band directors in the state of Florida were interviewed twice during their first semester of teaching: once early in the semester and once near the end of the semester. Each of the corresponding mentors was interviewed one time near the end of the semester to provide his thoughts on the mentoring process. Each semi-structured interview was conducted at the participant’s school and recorded. The first set of interviews with the mentees focused on biographical data, expectations of teaching, and presumptions of the mentoring experience (see Appendix C). The second set of interviews focused on teaching experiences, mentoring experiences, and other topics emergent from the previous interview (see Appendix C). Each participant also completed a demographic questionnaire to provide additional contextual information (see Appendix B).

The research timeline had a possible impact on the results of the study. Presidents of FBA districts and county music supervisors were contacted in early August 2006 to locate possible participants. Next, permission to get in touch with them and to conduct the research had to be obtained from the individual school districts. Potential participants were first notified in late August. Mentors were then contacted to ensure that both members of the mentoring relationship were willing to participate. This timeline pushed the first interview back into late September. The researcher intended to interview the mentees in late August. Results of the study might have been different if the initial mentee interviews were held at the beginning of the school year. At that time, mentee recollection of early experiences may have been clearer, and perceptions of the programs may have been based more on their expectations of mentoring.
Findings

Five themes emerged from the mentee data and five themes emerged from the mentor data during the constructivist content analysis. Of the 10 total themes, three were shared and four were exclusive (see Figure 5-1). The mentee themes were:

1. Mentor Interaction: The mentees had various perceptions regarding contact time with mentors, but several similar perceptions were shared. These included topics discussed with mentors, such as mentoring methods, the purpose of mentoring, and the frequency or context of contact.

2. Program Structure: From the mentor-to-mentee pairing procedure to the enormous time obstacle involved, these five mentees frequently offered perceptions of the way the programs were structured.

3. The Need for Observation: All the mentees included the opportunity for observation as part of their conversation. They shared or anticipated the benefits of observing their mentors.

4. Extra Hours: The fall semester was filled with after-school rehearsals, administrative paperwork, supervision, and performances. The five mentees clearly expressed the lack of free time available for mentoring activities.

5. Self-confidence: The first-year teachers expressed confidence in their abilities as music educators. This confidence was attributed to good undergraduate preparation and networking, and it was evident in a number of teaching-related areas.

The mentor themes included:

6. Mentee Interaction: Interaction with the mentees came in several forms and included a common approach by the mentors. The validation of mentee actions and methods was an important part of the interactions, and most of the relationships changed in some way over the course of the semester.

7. Program Structure: Mentors held common views of the selection process for becoming a mentor and the mentee pairing process. Mentors believed that their school administrators had little knowledge of the mentoring programs, and the lack of time interfered with the entire mentoring program.

8. The Need for Observation: The mentors spoke out on the importance of including observation opportunities in their mentoring programs. The difficulties inhibiting mentor and mentee observations were also presented.

9. Good Intentions-Questionable Results: Despite wanting to see their mentees succeed as high school band directors and the perceived benefits to the mentees from the program, many of the mentors were not able to verify that their mentoring efforts were helping the mentees.
10. Perceptions of Mentees: The mentors shared views of their respective mentees and the relationship between them. They discussed strengths in teaching, overall ability, and perceived relationship depth.

The situational context of the mentees is clear within the mentee themes of “extra hours” and “self-confidence.” The mentees described long hours spent working outside the regular school day. Those hours included conducting marching band rehearsals, completing administrative paperwork, and choosing music for their ensembles. The time and effort involved with administrative duties matched one of the themes found by Conway (2003a). Conway stated, “[These duties] take sophisticated skill in time management and administrative organization. All of the beginning teachers suggested that they were unprepared for these tasks.” By including these administrative tasks as a primary reason for their long hours, the mentees in the present study suggested they, too, were unprepared.

The mentees were very confident in their abilities. This confidence resulted from the combination of many factors, which included positive undergraduate experiences, successful classroom management, and the validation of their methods, among other factors. Confidence, based on positive undergraduate experiences, was also a strong theme in the Conway et al. (2004) study. One contributing author from that study stated, “Coming out of college, I felt confident that I could take whatever the professional teaching world could dish out” (p. 47). Similarly, that level of confidence was evident from the mentees in the present study.

The mentors had positive opinions of their mentees. The mentor perceptions of the mentees included strengths of rapport and receptiveness to advice. The mentors also felt the mentees had strong personal backgrounds, expressed some unique connections to their mentees, and communicated the depth of their relationships. The mentors had good intentions in mentoring the first-year band directors, but could not confirm many positive results from their mentoring. This was the only theme in the study contradicted by perceptions of the other group
of participants. The mentees perceptions contradicted this mentor perception. Mentees did not cite a desire for their success coming from their mentors, although it might have been implied. More importantly, the mentees attributed positive changes in their teaching and successful performances to mentoring.

The mentees and mentors held similar views of their interactions and of the structure of the mentoring programs in which they were participating. “The need for observation” was the most prevalent theme from both the mentees and the mentors. Whether participants had experienced some observation opportunities or no such opportunities, they were clear in expressing their beliefs that observation should play a prominent role in a mentoring program. This theme was also supported in Conway’s (2003a) study of 13 beginning music teachers. Based on comments from participants, she included “Scheduling So Mentors Can Observe” (p. 19) as one of her suggestions for music mentor practices.

**The Research Questions**

The findings of this study provided the following answers to the five research questions:

1. **What are the situational contexts of the mentor/mentee pairs?**

The FBA districts operated four of the mentoring programs, and a school district music supervisor operated the fifth. The school district mentoring program differed in structure from FBA mentoring programs, and the district FBA mentoring programs differed among each other. The differences included methods of mentor selection, mentor-mentee pairing, and allocated resources. This finding supports the lack of consistency in mentoring programs cited by Conway (2003a).

With the school district program and the FBA programs, the administration at every participant’s school had little to no awareness of the mentoring program. The participant schools varied in student population, location, and size of the band program. Despite this wide variety,
the context of the mentor/mentee pairs included “very busy” schedules. The responsibilities to
their own band programs interfered with interactions with their mentoring partner. The mentees
spent numerous hours completing administrative paperwork, choosing music for their ensembles,
and rehearsing with their marching bands. The mentees were confident in their abilities, and
they had a positive view of their undergraduate experience in music education.

The traveling time between mentor and mentee schools was anywhere from 15 to 45
minutes. All the mentors had very positive opinions of their mentees. Several of them had
unique connections to their mentees. One mentee had served as an instructor at the mentor’s
school before graduating from college. Another mentee had been a student teacher with the
mentor during the final semester of college. Finally, one mentor had been the mentee’s
immediate predecessor at the same school.

2. What are the mentees and mentors’ perceptions of their respective roles?

The mentees believed their role was simply to ask the mentors questions through phone or
email. The mentors perceived their role to be maintaining availability to answer the mentees’
questions on an as-needed basis.

Mentors believed they should answer mentee questions by providing advice, stories, or
examples to the mentees. They did not want to tell the mentees exactly what to do or how to do
it. The mentees should be allowed to make their own decisions and determine the direction of
their band programs. The mentors also felt that the development of a closer relationship or
friendship with their mentees was important. They thought that informal meetings over dinner or
drinks were a good way to achieve this relationship and to get to know their mentees on a more
personal level.
The single biggest role perceived by the mentors was their responsibility to remind mentees of approaching deadlines and to get forms in. Some even suggested the purpose of the FBA mentoring program was to ensure that new band directors accomplished the required paperwork in a timely fashion.

3. How do mentees’ perceptions of their relationships with mentors change during the semester?

The mentees became more comfortable interacting with their mentors over the course of the semester. The types of questions asked of the mentors became more specific in nature, dealing more with pedagogical issues and less with management or rehearsal technique. The contact between the mentoring pairs became less frequent, and the mentees felt less need for verification that they were on the right path.

4. What mentee or mentor-perceived changes occur in the instructional techniques of the mentee as a result of the mentoring relationships?

All the changes in mentee teaching techniques were perceived by the mentees. Mentees referred to “increasing their bag of tricks” for use in teaching their ensembles. Some of the changes included: (a) the use of different demeanors with students; (b) the pacing of rehearsals; (c) the motivation of students; and (d) the use of different warm-up techniques.

5. What are the mentees’ and mentors’ perceptions of the effectiveness of their relationships?

The mentors and mentees believed their relationship to be most effective in ensuring that the mentees met deadlines for the submittal of paperwork and fees to the FBA. This was especially evident in the mentees’ perception that their mentors’ role was largely viewed as providing reminders of deadlines and assistance in completing forms.

The mentees believed that the mentoring relationship was effective in assisting them during their first semester. They saw the successful performances of their ensembles as evidence
of this effectiveness, but they were not specific with what mentoring moments contributed to the success. The mentors did not have a perception of how effective their relationship had been. They did not say their relationships were ineffective, but they also could not confirm that the relationships were effective. They had not witnessed enough--or any--of their mentees’ teaching or performances of their ensembles to evaluate the effects of the relationship.

**Implications for Theory**

The theory in action for mentoring suggests that the positive attitudes and teaching improvements of these first-year high school band directors should have been a result of mentoring. A positive mentee attitude was displayed through the theme of self-confidence, but the researcher could not conclude this attitude was a result of mentoring. The categories behind the mentees’ self-confidence suggest that certain factors, such as solid undergraduate experience and personal musical ability, contributed more to their positive attitude than did the mentors.

However, the mentees attributed a limited number of changes in their teaching and successful performances of their ensembles to their mentors. Despite the contributions of these two examples to positive attitudes, the mentors were not able to say the success or attitudes of their mentees were a result of mentoring. The mentors hoped they had helped but had no way to be certain. With such a large degree of ambiguity regarding the source of mentee success, the researcher can include the theory in action as only one possible explanation of mentee perceptions.

The theoretical framework in Chapter 2 indicated that three additional components should be evident in mentoring. First, conversations involving constructive criticism by the mentor should have occurred. These conversations were extremely rare or non-existent due to the lack of time available and few face-to-face meetings. Second, mentors should be available and supportive of the mentees. This was the case in this study. The mentors indicated their role was
to answer questions that the mentees posed to them, and the mentees indicated their mentors answered their questions. Third, as suggested by theory, mentors should allow mentees to make their own decisions by providing advice, as opposed to mandating methods. Both the mentees and mentors affirmed this to be the approach used in their relationships.

Theories regarding mentoring were not completely supported by this study. Reasons for the lack of support are open to interpretation. One interpretation could be that the theories regarding mentoring are incorrect. However, the researcher believes the theories regarding mentoring rely strongly on the structure and components of the mentoring program. It is logical to assume that incomplete mentoring programs would not achieve the levels of success necessary to support the theories. With adjustments in structure and procedure, these mentoring programs would support the theories.

Issues

This study prompts several issues that should be considered by school districts and state music organizations. Some of the issues are directly related to the FBA mentoring programs, and some are common with both the FBA programs and the school district program involved in the study.

Purpose of the Programs

The timely completion of forms and submittal of fees and forms to the FBA are important responsibilities of every high school band director in Florida. Without the orderly completion of forms and submittal of fees, fines are imposed and/or students are not able to participate in important FBA-sponsored events. The participants in this study frequently stated that the timely submittal of forms and fees was the primary purpose of the mentoring programs. These statements suggest that the full potential of the mentoring programs is not realized.
The FBA personnel have taken an important step in providing mentoring to young band directors, but the FBA should realize and emphasize to their mentors all the benefits mentoring can and should provide. The improvement of teacher effectiveness through modeling, constructive criticism, and feedback is one possible and important benefit.

**Pairing Procedures**

The administrators of mentoring programs should consider unique relationships that exist prior to, or may arise from, the pairing of mentors and mentees. Two of the mentoring pairs in this study had worked closely together prior to being paired as mentor-mentee. While the established familiarity might eliminate the need for a lengthy period of getting acquainted, the mentee loses the opportunity to learn from someone new.

The same possibility of advantages and disadvantages existed with one other mentoring pair in the study. The mentor who was the immediate predecessor of his mentee at the mentee’s new school acknowledged the advantages and disadvantages of that unique situation. The mentor had an advantage toward helping the mentee because he intimately knew the mentee’s new program and students. However, this familiarity did not prevent an obvious sense of uneasiness that was evident to the researcher during the interviews. The presence of the mentor around his former program and students, and the mentee’s unavoidable questioning of his mentor’s motives may not have allowed this pairing to reach optimal effectiveness.

The haphazard method of pairing mentors and mentees used by many of the FBA districts can lead to less than ideal pairings. Several of the districts asked for volunteer mentors and matched them with mentees closest to them. Personalities were not always a good match, and not all the mentoring relationships were successful in the eyes of the mentees. One pairing had little to no interaction and left the mentee wishing the mentor “would take more initiative” in his role. With the lack of opportunities for reflection or evaluation of the pairing, the FBA districts
will likely never know the level of success of their programs beyond the demonstrated success of the mentee ensembles.

**Observation**

First-year high school band directors were paired with mentor teachers through the mentoring programs encountered in this study. Little structure existed beyond this pairing. There was no mentor training, protocol for mentors to follow, or prescribed number or types of contact to be completed. Many of the mentors said they did not want this type of structure, but both the mentees and mentors wanted opportunities for observation.

One of the mentoring pairs had observed each other in their respective classrooms. They said that period of time was not enough. The other mentoring pairs had not experienced mutual observations. They said they wanted to have such observation opportunities, but the lack of free time in their schedules would not permit them.

The prevailing methods of contact between the mentoring pairs--phone calls and emails--severely limited the amount and specificity of advice the mentor was able to give. The chance for a mentee to observe a mentor would allow the mentee to increase his repertoire of classroom teaching methods based on the successful methods of the mentor. The chance for a mentor to observe a mentee would allow the mentor to witness the mentee’s classroom teaching methods and provide immediate feedback and constructive criticism.

**Administrative Awareness**

The lack of awareness of these mentoring programs on the part of the individual school administrations is surprising. If the school administrators were familiar with the programs and were aware of the benefits provided by the programs, perhaps they could assist in providing the best resources and opportunities to the mentors and mentees involved.
The participants in this study mentioned that the availability of substitute teachers would make observations of each other much easier or even simply possible. School administrators might be able to make this possible, therefore limiting the obstacle created by the lack of time available to their high school band directors. A partnership between the administrators of the mentoring programs and school administrators could greatly improve the effectiveness of music educator mentoring.

**Implications for Music Education**

All the mentees’ schools had individual mentoring programs. Most of the mentors assigned through those programs were considered ineffective for helping the mentees with music-related issues. Despite shortcomings identified by participants, the mentoring programs that provided an experienced high school band director as a mentor were deemed valuable by the participants. Therefore, music education organizations should encourage the creation or continuation of such music educator-specific programs and participation in them. School districts with music supervisors could administer these mentoring programs, as was the case with one of the pairs in this study. The FBA could fulfill this role in the rural districts where a district music supervisor is not employed.

Communication between music educators and school, district and state administrators is essential. If administrators are not aware of the programs and accompanying benefits provided to their students, they cannot capably fulfill this role. This important role consists of providing the release time that is essential to effective mentoring programs (Conway et al., 2002).

The findings of this study suggest that more structured mentoring programs might increase benefits experienced by mentees. Mentors were enthusiastic about supporting their mentees, but most waited by the phone or computer for the mentees to contact them with questions. The simplest document could provide suggestions for successful mentoring to mentors. A few short
training sessions at regular FBA district meetings could provide structure without requiring a specific number of contact hours or lengthy training sessions. The administrators in FBA districts should include open discussions and evaluations of their mentoring programs at their regular meetings. Mentors and mentees should be encouraged to share their thoughts, feelings, and suggestions. As one mentee suggested, FBA district administrators should solicit the opinions and evaluations from mentoring participants as part of a yearly evaluation. This procedure would benefit the programs administered by county music supervisors as well.

Future research should include a similar study over one or two academic years. Studying the participants longitudinally would provide more developed perspectives from participants, which could change considerably over time. Additionally, the inclusion of participants from a wider variety of positions might further illuminate the mentoring programs. School principals, FBA district officers, and district music supervisors could provide informative perspectives on the history and progress of the mentoring programs. Expansion of the research to regional and national levels and encompassing multiple states with varying mentoring constructs would provide further information and the opportunity for comparison.

Similar qualitative studies of middle school band directors are needed in order to increase the understanding of the mentoring process at that level. The situational contexts, needs, and perceptions of middle school band directors may be very different from those of high school band directors.

Since increasing numbers of first-year band directors are participating in mentoring programs, studies are needed that compare band directors who have experienced positive mentoring experiences with those who have experienced negative mentoring experiences.
Exploring the similarities and differences of these band directors’ mentoring programs might identify the most important components necessary for effective mentoring.

**Conclusions**

High school band directors are extremely busy people with multifaceted responsibilities required for building or maintaining a successful school band program. This context makes the additional contacts between mentees and mentors in these jobs even more difficult, no matter how beneficial those contacts may be. Additionally, the mentoring programs offer no guidelines or structure. Therefore, the people in these positions tend to perceive their mentoring roles in the simplest, non-time-consuming terms. A mentee may say, “I will call when I have a question.” A mentor may state, “I will provide answers as the questions are asked, and provide reminders of paperwork and deadlines when they approach.”

The mentees perceived few changes in this convenient relationship with their mentors over their first semester of teaching. The mentees saw changes in their teaching techniques based on the questions they asked their mentors. With little experience in the profession, mentees might not ask all the right questions. The mentors can answer only the questions they are asked because they are not able to actually observe their mentees teaching in the classroom. The mentees receive no feedback from their mentors regarding their teaching techniques, and the mentors receive no feedback from the mentees regarding the advice they have given. The mentors are left to hope they are making a difference in the success of their mentees.

Music education is moving in a positive direction with mentoring first-year high school band directors. The present research suggests that some mentoring from experienced high school band directors is better than no mentoring or mentoring from only non-music teachers. With continued creation and development of these mentoring programs, future high school band directors will increasingly benefit from participation in mentoring.
Figure 5-1. Common and exclusive themes.
LETTER OF CONSENT

Dear Participant,

I am Jay Jacobs, a graduate student at the University of Florida in the School of Music. My research involves the exploration of the relationship between mentoring programs and new high school band directors.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete a brief demographic survey, and you will be interviewed privately two times (new teachers) or one time (mentors) for approximately 60 minutes. The first interview will be early in the school year, and the second will be near the end of the fall semester. The interviews will be audio taped and subsequently transcribed. You can refuse to answer any question you find objectionable or ask that the tape recorder be turned off at any time. You can withdraw your consent and participation in the interview at any time. Your participation is voluntary and without compensation. Your confidentiality will be protected to the extent provided by law, and you will not be identified by name. Interviews will be conducted at your school at times most convenient for you.

There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this project. There are several possible benefits. Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on their role in mentoring and its personal and professional effects. It is possible that the findings of the study could provide a basis for the creation or restructuring of specific mentoring programs for high school band directors.

Principal Investigator: Jay N. Jacobs, 1215 NW 55th St. #7, Gainesville, FL 32605; Tel: (352) 514-8181; Email: jacobs02@ufl.edu

Supervisor: Timothy S. Brophy, Ph.D. Professor of Music Education, University of Florida, 358 Music Building, Gainesville, FL 32611; Tel: (352) 392-0223 x222; Email: Tbrophy@arts.ufl.edu

If you have any questions, you may contact Jay Jacobs at the phone number listed above or his supervisor. Questions or concerns about participant’s rights can be directed to the UFIRB office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611; Tel: (352) 392-0433.

I have read and understand the procedure described above. I agree to participate in this project and I have received a copy of this description.

Printed Name ________________________________

Signature ________________________________ Date __________________
APPENDIX B
DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name: ________________________________________________
2. Age: ________________________________________________
3. Gender: Male / Female
4. Undergraduate Degree: _________________________________
5. Undergraduate Institution: ______________________________
6. Graduate Degree: _____________________________________
7. Graduate Degree Institution: ____________________________
8. Teaching Position: ____________________________________
9. School(s): ____________________________________________
10. District: ______________________________________________
11. Student Population of School: ___________________________
12. If you are the “Head Band Director,” do you have any assistant band directors? Yes / No
   If yes, how many? _________
13. Do you have a marching band? Yes / No
14. If yes, how many students participate in the marching band? __________
15. Please list the courses you teach during the school day and the number of students in each class:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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16. How many minutes of planning time do you have each day? __________
17. Please indicate the grade level range of students that you teach:

- K-5
- 6-8
- 9-12
APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Mentee Interview 1

In this interview I want to gain a perspective of your views of teaching and the mentoring process early in your first semester of teaching. As you know, your responses in this interview are confidential. Your answers will be coded so that no one will know from whom or where they originated. This interview is not intended to evaluate you, your mentor, or this school.

1. How was this mentoring program explained to you?
2. How much did you know about the mentor program before you were hired?
3. How were you paired with your mentor?
4. Could you describe how often you will meet with your mentor and in what context(s)?
5. Describe your school-related work that occurs outside the school day.
6. How would you describe your undergraduate experience in preparing you for teaching?
7. How would you describe your role as mentee?
8. How would you describe your mentor’s role?
9. Describe your feelings about teaching this semester.
   a. Classroom management
   b. Curriculum
   c. Parent Communication
   d. Performances
10. Describe your strengths in teaching.
11. Describe your weaknesses in teaching.
12. Have you experienced any difficult situations in your teaching to this point? Did your mentoring help in that situation, or could it help for similar future situations?
13. Describe your first meeting with your mentor.
14. Could you describe your last meeting or encounter with your mentor and describe what occurred?
15. At this point, what do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of your mentor?
16. From your perspective, what is the purpose of this mentoring program?
17. How long will this mentor program last?
18. How long would you like it to last?
19. What do you expect from mentoring?
20. Now that you know the direction of the research, is there anything you would like to add?
21. Is there anything you would like to ask me?
Mentee Interview 2

In this interview I want to gain a detailed picture of your total mentoring experience during your first semester of teaching. As you know, your responses in this interview are confidential. Your answers will be coded so that no one will know from whom or where they originated. This interview is not intended to evaluate you, your mentor, or this school.

1. Could you describe your school-related work that occurs outside the school day?
2. In your opinion, what evidence of support for the mentor program is there within the school? Within the district? Within the state?
3. How would you describe your role as mentee?
4. How would you describe your mentor’s role?
5. Have your classroom teaching techniques or strategies changed over the semester due to mentoring? If so, could you provide some examples?
6. Describe your strengths in teaching.
7. Describe your weaknesses in teaching.
8. Could you describe how often you met with your mentor and in what contexts?
9. In what other ways did you communicate with your mentor? How often did these communications occur?
10. Could you describe your last meeting or encounter with your mentor and describe what occurred?
11. What would you say was most helpful in discovering the strengths and weaknesses of your mentor? What hindered the most?
12. Can you compare some of your early mentoring experiences with more recent ones?
13. Were there specific aspects of band directing that most benefited from your interactions with your mentor?
14. Please share one or some of your most successful moments with your mentor or moments that were a result of mentoring.
15. What kind of things facilitated these moments?
16. Has any specific activity proved especially meaningful in helping you adjust to full-time band directing?
17. Have you faced any challenges or difficulties as a mentee? If so, would you describe some? If not, to what would you attribute the lack of challenges and difficulties?
18. In what areas would you have liked more assistance from your mentor? What changes would have allowed for more assistance?
19. From your perspective, what is the purpose of this mentoring program?
20. What do you expect from your mentoring program in the future?
21. If you were able to design the ideal mentoring program for new high school band directors, what would be the essential components of the program?
22. Is there anything you would like to add?
23. Is there anything you would like to ask me?
Mentor Interview

In this interview I want to gain a detailed picture of your experience as a mentor. As you know, your responses in this interview are confidential. Your answers will be coded so that no one will know from whom or where they originated. This interview is not intended to evaluate you, your mentor, or this school.

1. Can you provide some background on the mentoring program?
2. How were you selected to be a mentor?
3. Did you participate in any kind of formal mentor training? If so, please describe what was involved.
4. How long have you mentored new teachers?
5. How were you paired with your mentee?
6. In your opinion, what evidence of support for the mentor program is there within the school? Within the district? Within the state?
7. Can you tell me about your mentoring responsibilities?
8. How would you describe your role as mentor?
9. How would you describe your mentee’s role?
10. What do you expect from mentoring for the mentee and for you?
11. What were some things you felt this beginning teacher needed to know in order to become a successful music educator?
12. Do you think mentoring has provided help in these areas?
13. Have you noticed any changes in your mentee’s classroom teaching techniques or strategies over the semester due to mentoring? If so, could you provide some examples?
14. At this point, what do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of your mentee?
15. Could you describe how often you meet with your mentee and in what context(s)?
16. Describe your first meeting with your mentee.
17. Could you describe your last meeting or encounter with your mentee and describe what occurred?
18. Can you compare some of your early mentoring experiences with more recent ones?
19. Please share one or some of your most successful moments with your mentee or moments that were a result of mentoring.
20. What kind of things facilitated these moments?
21. Has any specific activity proved especially meaningful in working with your mentee?
22. Was there anything that seemed to hinder the mentee’s learning?
23. From your perspective, what is the purpose of this mentoring program?
24. How long will this mentor program last?
25. How long would you like it to last?
26. What do you expect from your mentoring program in the future?
27. If you were able to design the ideal mentoring program for new high school band directors, what would be the essential components of the program?
28. Is there anything you would like to add?
29. Is there anything you would like to ask me?
Node Name: Music Ability
Description: Ways in which mentees described their musical ability level.

<Documents\1st Interviews\Corey Interview 1 Transcription> - § 1 reference coded [0.12% Coverage]
Reference 1 - 0.12% Coverage

I have a good memory for music and for scores.

<Documents\1st Interviews\Emily Interview 1 Transcription> - § 1 reference coded [0.74% Coverage]
Reference 1 - 0.74% Coverage

But I feel that what is definitely my strength is the conducting side of things. And I feel like I have, you know, a pretty good head on my shoulders for how to run a rehearsal and that sort of thing.

<Documents\1st Interviews\Eric Interview 1 Transcription> - § 2 references coded [1.68% Coverage]
Reference 1 - 0.87% Coverage

My strengths, especially in the band world, is that I can play every one of the instruments so I can immediately respond to, you know, it’s this fingering, this position, this . . . whatever it is.

Reference 2 - 0.81% Coverage

The amount of music that I’ve played in college as a performer has really helped me in the, you know, knowing the music, being able to relate teaching to that aspect of the playing.

<Documents\1st Interviews\Maria Interview 1 Transcription> - § 1 reference coded [0.46% Coverage]
Reference 1 - 0.46% Coverage

I feel like I usually have correctly identified problems and given if not the best way, a decent way to try to correct it and to be diverse in my method of trying to correct problems.

<Documents\1st Interviews\Mike Interview 1 Transcription> - § 2 references coded [0.47% Coverage]
Reference 1 - 0.31% Coverage

We made leaps and bounds the second performance and I see . . . they see an improvement. I see an improvement.
## APPENDIX E
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## APPENDIX F
SAMPLE OF MENTEE TREE NODES

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## APPENDIX G
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LIST OF REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jay N. Jacobs was born in Morgantown, West Virginia. He received his Bachelor of Music degree in music education from West Virginia University in 1993, and served as band director for the Hiawatha Elementary, Junior and Senior High Schools in Kirkland, Illinois from 1994 to 2002. Instructing elementary beginners through seniors in high school allowed him to experience every level of band in the public schools: from elementary winter concerts, to high school musicals, to Friday night marching band performances. Under his leadership, the high school band membership doubled to more than 25% of the student body. The band ranked in the top 15 Class A state schools in solo and ensemble participation, and traveled to numerous festivals around the United States.

In 2004, Mr. Jacobs received his Master of Music degree in wind conducting from the University of Florida. In the fall semester of 2004, he began coursework at the University of Florida for his doctorate degree in music education with an emphasis in wind conducting. During his time at the university, Mr. Jacobs was a graduate assistant with the Florida Bands, where he was conductor of one of the Concert Bands and graduate conductor of the Symphonic Band and Wind Symphony. He was the instructor for the Instrumental Materials and Methods course for two terms, observed student teachers, and mentored undergraduate conductors. Mr. Jacobs also worked with the marching band and was a graduate conductor of the Basketball Bands. He was a performing member of the University of Florida Wind Symphony. At Florida he studied conducting with Dr. David Waybright and trumpet with Dr. Joyce Davis.

Mr. Jacobs is active as an adjudicator and has arranged drill for high school bands in Florida and Georgia, as well as for the University of Florida and University of Northern Iowa marching bands. He is a former member and brass instructor of The Cavaliers Drum and Bugle Corps from Rosemont, Illinois. He is a member of the Music Educators National Conference,
College Band Directors National Association, and the College Music Society, and is an honorary member of both Kappa Kappa Psi Honorary Band Fraternity and Tau Beta Sigma Honorary Band Sorority.
Like in any other study, your introduction needs to state the problem, describe the methodology and outline the conclusion. An introduction is a crucial part of your study because it gives your readers a road map of what they can expect in reading your paper. It doesn't need to be long or elaborate, but it has to include the following elements. First Things First. Quick question - how confident are you in knowing what colleges are looking for in your recommendation letters? Do you have a strong understanding of what an effective letter consists of, and what a bad letter looks like? Many students have the totally wrong idea of what colleges are looking for in recommendation letters. This, naturally, leads to subpar letters for students. BUT I highly recommend that you stick with me for the next two sections - you'll get a lot more out of this guide and get much stronger rec letters as a result. Why Teacher Recommendation Letters Are So Important for College. The goal of your overall college application is to communicate who you are as a person, in an easily digestible package that can take 20 minutes to understand (or less).