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**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SATISFACTION OF FIRST-YEAR
OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS PARTICIPATING
IN THE MENTOR PROJECT DURING THE 1991-1992 SCHOOL YEAR**

by

Kathleen Jiede

A Field Project

Presented to the

Department of Educational Administration

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Specialist in Education Degree

Omaha, Nebraska

April 1992

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An Assessment of the Satisfaction of First-Year

Omaha Public School Teachers Participating


In the Mentor Project During the 1991-1992 School Year

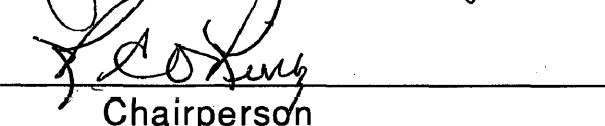
by

Kathleen Jiede

Accepted by the Department of Educational Administration
and Supervision in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Specialist in Education, University of Nebraska at Omaha

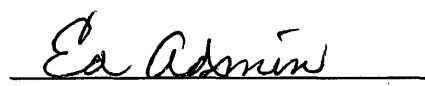

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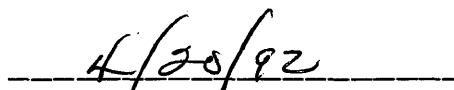

Date

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**An Assessment of the Satisfaction of First-Year
Omaha Public School Teachers Participating
In the Mentor Project During the 1991-1992 School Year**

Chapter 1

Introduction

Problems of Beginning Teachers

Because teachers work in classrooms behind closed doors and segregated from their colleagues, teaching can be a lonely profession. Except for team-teaching arrangements, teaching assignments generally hinder teachers from observing and learning from one another (Shulman, 1988). Teachers suffer from isolation and lack of opportunities to learn from their colleagues (Bowers and Eberhart, 1989). In addition to the segregated nature of their work, new teachers can especially feel isolated since they are also dealing with unfamiliar school routines, curriculum, lesson planning methods, and discipline practices. New teachers, however bright,

capable, well-trained, and enthusiastic, lack the knowledge in teaching that is attained through years of experience.

concl.

The first year of teaching is a critical year. The undergraduate degree is only the first step in becoming a teacher and cannot simulate the actual teaching experience (O'Dell, 1991). The first-year teacher must make decisions about curriculum and discipline. They are responsible to both parents and administration. In a holistic way, education of the students is their responsibility. This responsibility is a big step from sharing the task with the cooperating teacher and university supervisor as a student teacher. Research on the beginning years of teaching describes the transition from preservice teacher training to becoming an experienced teacher as a period of chaos and lack of support (Howey, 1989). During this time, many new teachers are struggling with concerns in discipline, communication, lesson planning, student evaluation, and other skills beginning teachers never acquired or were superficially treated in their education programs (Zimpher, 1986). Discouragement and frustration among new teachers lead many of them to look to another profession to make their living. The 1984 Wisconsin

Department of Public Instruction Task Force Report on Teaching and Teacher Education reported that the most academically able teachers tend to be the first to leave education and are doing so in increasing numbers. Approximately fifty percent of the graduates, in the Wisconsin Task Force Report, who take jobs as teachers leave the teaching profession within five years (University of Wisconsin, 1984).

Mentor Programs

In recent years, many school districts across the country have begun teacher mentor programs to assist beginning teachers in their adjustment to the teaching profession. School districts in Toledo, Ohio; Charlotte-Mecklenberg, North Carolina; and Louisville, Kentucky are a few of the school districts in the United States that have implemented mentor programs (Galvez-Hjornevik, 1986). These programs match successful teachers, or mentors, with new teachers. The mentors guide, support, and assist the novice teachers during their first year in the classroom. Common goals of these mentor programs are to improve teaching performance, promote the personal

and professional well-being of new teachers, and retain teachers in the profession (Galvez-Hjornevik, 1986).

A mentor program established in the Omaha area during the 1990-1991 school year was named The Beginning Teachers TEAM Project F.I.R.S.T. Grant (Mentor Handbook, 1990). The Mentor Project was organized by the University of Nebraska at Omaha College of Education, the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium, and the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement. The name was changed for the 1991-1992 school year to the Mentor Project. The Mentor Project is a three-year program financed by the U. S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching (Russell, 1990-1991). The Omaha Public School District (OPS) is one of several districts in the metropolitan area that participates in the mentor program.

The OPS Mentor Project was designed to accomplish four basic goals. The goals are:

- To provide entry year assistance to first-year teachers.
- To promote opportunities for upgrading the knowledge and

skills of current teachers through the use of national and local resources.

- To strengthen existing teacher training preparation programs.
- To enhance efforts to retain qualified professionals through an induction process (The Mentor Project, 1990, unp.).

The first goal, stated above, is to help new teachers meet success by providing entry year assistance using the expertise of experienced teachers. For the new teacher, the project will provide the following:

- "A strong support system provided by a trained mentor teacher.
- Feedback related to the professional assignment.
- Emotional support" (The Mentor Project, 1990, unp.).

This research assessed the first goal of the Mentor Project. The first goal provides for a strong support system, feedback, and emotional support for first-year teachers from trained mentor teachers. Did OPS mentored teachers perceive their first year experiences as more satisfying than non-mentored teachers?

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to assess the satisfaction of first year OPS teachers participating in the Mentor Project during the 1991-1992 school year.

Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that first-year OPS mentored teachers perceived their first-year teaching experiences as more satisfying than first-year OPS non-mentored teachers perceived their first-year teaching experiences.

Methodology

To test the hypothesis, OPS mentored teachers perceived their first-year teaching experiences as more satisfying than OPS non-mentored teachers perceived their first-year teaching experiences, the researcher utilized an attitudinal survey method of research.

A survey instrument was developed to assess the perception of first-year teachers in the areas of: (a) a support system provided by

a trained mentor, (b) feedback relating to their professional assignment, and (c) emotional support.

The twenty-two first-year teachers from OPS who participated in the Mentor Project during the 1991-1992 school year comprised the experimental group.

Twenty-two first-year OPS teachers who did not participate in the Mentor Project were matched with the mentored teachers on demographic characteristics of gender, grade level, and subject taught and served as the control group.

A cover letter (Appendix E) and survey (Appendix F) were sent to each of the forty-four first-year teachers.

Data from the surveys was coded and entered into the SYSTAT (The System for Statistics) computer program. Statistics on the demographics and participant's scores were computed, using means, standard deviation, and t tests. The Smart Spread Sheet was used by the researcher to analyze individual items on the survey.

Definition of Terms

1. Mentee - a beginning teacher receiving help from a mentor

2. Mentor - a teacher with at least three years teaching experience who has been trained to help a beginning teacher

Significance of the Problem

There is a growing concern among educators regarding the lack of adequate induction programs for new teachers. In an effort to address this concern, mentor programs have been implemented in seven local school districts. The Mentor Project, established during the 1990-1991 school year in the Omaha area, has received financial support from a three year federal grant. OPS will be giving consideration to funding this program once the grant expires. OPS must evaluate the success of the Mentor Project and the data from this study will assist in this evaluation.

Limitations

The Mentor Project included first-year teachers from seven of the metropolitan school districts. This study was concerned only with first-year teachers from OPS.

The Mentor Project in OPS for the 1991-1992 school year included twenty-two experienced teachers trained as mentors. Each mentee was assigned a mentor. The control group, matched on gender, grade level, and subject taught with the experimental group, was comprised of twenty-two first-year non-mentored teachers. Because of the small size of the groups, the t-test designed especially for group sizes which are less than 30 was used to determine significant differences. Due to the small size of the control and experimental groups, the reliability of the significance was a limitation of the study.

"First-year" teachers included in this study might have been "new to OPS" teachers, "new to grade level" teachers, "returning to teaching after time of not teaching" teachers, or teachers in their first year of employment.

Delimitations

Twenty-two first-year teachers from OPS who participated in the Mentor Project and twenty-two first-year teachers from OPS

who did not participate in the Mentor Project, but were chosen for the control group, were included in this study.

Organization of the Project

Chapter I -Introduction

Chapter II -Related Literature

Chapter III -Methodology

Chapter IV -Results of the Study

Chapter V -Summary and Recommendations

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

History of Mentor Programs

The term "mentor" originated in Homer's *Odyssey* over 3000 years ago. Mentor was the name of a wise and learned man who was trusted with the responsibility for the son of Odysseus while the father was off fighting the Trojan War (Clawson, 1980).

Historically, the term has stood for a reliable counselor and guide.

Odell (1990) lists a mentor as "an older, more experienced person who is committed to helping a younger, less experienced person become prepared for all aspects of life" (p. 6).

Mentoring in education has developed rapidly in the past ten years. In 1980, Florida had the only statewide mentoring program in education according to Odell (1990). In a 1987 survey of states, eleven were implementing mentoring programs, six were piloting mentoring programs, and fifteen were planning mentoring programs. Nineteen reported no activity in mentoring teachers (Hawk and Robards, 1987). A similar 1989 survey shows thirty-one states

with statewide mentoring programs and only eight states with no mentoring activity (Wilder and Ashare, 1989).

Need for Mentor Programs

The transition from student teacher to full-time teacher is a large step. From the outset, beginning teachers are given relatively the same responsibilities as are veteran teachers (Warring, 1989). The multitude of classroom responsibilities no longer rest with the cooperating teacher as it did in student teaching. The enormity of the job hits the beginning teacher - a phenomenon called "reality shock" (Veenman, 1984).

Beginning teachers have much to learn in the classroom. They may be prepared in content and theory, but need help in putting their knowledge to work. Moran (1990) states that the first months and years of teaching can be full of pain, confusion, loneliness, and often humiliation. Veenman (1984) found in a survey of beginning teachers that they were concerned about discipline, administrative approval, and communication in the school setting. Veenman reviewed 91 studies and found that other problem areas for new teachers were motivating students, dealing with individual student differences,

heavy teaching loads, insufficient preparation time, planning lessons, and preparing for the school day. Teachers' expectations, perceptions of teaching, strains of daily interactions, and the teaching assignment itself, are areas of difficulty for first-year teachers (Ryan et al., 1980).

A successful start in a profession is critical. Dillion-Peterson (1982) stated that the first year of teaching is the most crucial period in a teacher's career. Sandefur (1982) observed that the lack of appropriate induction was the major cause of teachers' leaving the profession during the first three years of teaching. The difficulties of the first year of teaching can lead to frustration. Particularly frustrating were heavy teaching loads with insufficient preparation time, motivating students, and discipline. The researchers concluded that these difficulties cause intense strain, which leads to fatigue, depression, and possibly, exit from the education profession (Varah, 1986).

Mentor Programs

To help address the problems experienced by first-year teachers, school personnel have been experimenting with mentoring

programs that match first-year teachers with experienced, veteran teachers. The mentor typically orients the new teacher to the educational setting, provides encouragement, assists in classroom management, acquaints the new teacher with services and materials available, helps with curriculum, and serves as a teaching model for the new teacher.

There are various types of informal mentoring programs that have taken place for years in many schools. Huling-Austin (1990) stated that upon hearing the explanation of mentoring, many teachers and administrators informally concluded that much of what constitutes mentoring is already being done. For example, it is not unusual for a first-year teacher to seek out an experienced peer to discuss problems. Huling-Austin's contention was that when the mentor process is formalized, the process goes far beyond the informal process.

Formal mentor programs have met success in the important area of helping first-year teachers. When referring to the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater program developed to assist and support first-year teachers, Varah (1986) stated that a

coordinated induction program was an effective way to develop excellent staff and retain new members in the profession. Krupp (1984) reported that a mentor program in Connecticut, which used a series of eight workshops to foster mentoring relationships, had positive results in the areas of staff growth and development.

Beginning teachers benefit from the help and relationship of a mentor in feeling good about themselves. A study by Chiang (1989) examined the relationships between self-concepts of beginning teachers as measured before and after experiences with mentors. Results showed that growth was experienced by beginning teachers as they adjusted to their teaching responsibilities and successfully created relationships with mentors. Fagan (1982) reported survey results which indicated that most beginning teachers benefit from the guidance of at least one mentor, usually a senior colleague. There was a significant relationship, according to Fagan, between having a mentor and job satisfaction.

Mentor programs have been organized in a variety of ways. Klug (1988) investigated the induction program for beginning teachers used in Southeastern Idaho that involved two models. The

first was a loosely structured "Buddy System" (mentor plus beginning teacher). The second was a highly structured "Induction Team" approach (mentor, administrator, representative of higher education, and beginning teacher). Participants stated a preference for the highly structured "Induction Team" rather than the loosely conceived "Buddy System". The results showed that induction programs must include the following: structure, emphasis on assistance rather than evaluation, and careful selection of the mentor teacher.

The mentor program used by the State of Oklahoma was called the "Entry-Year Assistance Committee". This state-wide program was designed to help beginning teachers. The objectives of this program were developed from selected knowledge bases, skills, or competencies identified as important by educators. Elsner (1984) reported that the program achieved an unusually high number of its objectives. Ninety-six percent of the participants felt the program assisted first-year teachers. It was also reported that the higher education faculty made a significant contribution to the success of the program.

One particular mentor program was used in Bloomington, Minnesota. The Bloomington Public Schools received a grant from the State of Minnesota to establish their team-centered mentorship program. The objectives of the program were to help the mentee grow and develop professional competence, attitudes, and behaviors. In the evaluation of the program, high marks were given for the clear articulation of the goals of the program. At the beginning of the program, mentors and mentees were made aware of the specific goals of the program which led to more positive kinds of understanding and interaction (Warring and Lindquist, 1989).

The first year of the mentor program used by the Omaha Public Schools in 1990-1991 as a part of The Beginning Teachers TEAM Project F.I.R.S.T. Grant showed success for the program in two areas (Jiede, 1991). First-year OPS mentored teachers felt significantly more successful than first-year OPS non-mentored teachers in the areas of "having someone in the building with whom to talk" and "having the help needed to get started during the first week of school"

Many of the mentor programs have been successful in helping beginning teachers. However, Faber (1989) tested the hypothesis that beginning teachers who had assigned mentors would be significantly better in classroom performance and more successful in their overall teaching than beginning teachers who did not have assigned mentors. Faber found in his study that mentors did not significantly affect either the classroom performance of the beginning teachers or their overall teaching performance.

A variety of formal mentor programs have been developed with various goals. According to Odell (1990), most of the programs have three primary foci: (a) developing beginning teachers, (b) addressing the concerns of beginning teachers, (c) and retaining beginning teachers. Improved instruction is the ultimate goal of a mentoring program (Heller and Sindelar, 1991).

Evaluation of formal mentoring programs is crucial. Like any specific project in the behavioral sciences, the mentor programs should be evaluated by both mentors and mentees. The mentees should be asked how successful they felt the program was in helping them adjust to school routines and procedures, improve their

teaching, and feel "at home" in the district. The mentors should be asked whether being a mentor helped them to be more introspective about their own teaching (Heller and Sindelar, 1991).

While the help given to beginning teachers in a mentor program is designed to be beneficial, it is just one of the important components within a much more comprehensive program of teacher support. Mentoring teachers is a supplement to, not a substitute for, school orientations, inservice training, and university courses that are supportive and helpful to new teachers (Odell, 1990).

Beginning teachers are not the sole beneficiaries of the mentoring process. The experienced teachers that serve as mentors reap benefits. The mentors become more aware of their own development as teachers and of the rationale for their own teaching practices. Mentoring improves the teaching of the mentor (Gray and Gray, 1985).

Summary of Research

Research has shown that first-year teachers can benefit from a mentor program during their first years of teaching (Varah, 1986). Beginning teachers need the extra support and assistance that a

mentor program can provide. A mentor program can help new teachers with the problems that are so often experienced by them as they try to assume the immense responsibility of full-time teachers (Odell, 1990).

Huling-Astin (1990) and Klug (1988) found that mentor programs that are highly structured and formalized help beginning teachers more than informal and loosely structured programs. Research by Chiang (1989) showed growth in self-concepts of beginning teachers when helped by mentors and Fagan (1982) indicated a significant relationship between having a mentor and job satisfaction. When involved in an induction program, beginning teachers developed better communication and working skills, and made progress in areas of lesson preparation, discipline, handling class discussion and classroom management (Elsner, 1984). Faber (1989) found that mentors did not significantly affect the classroom performance of beginning teachers or their overall teaching performance.

Chapter 3

Methodology

To test the hypothesis, mentored teachers perceived their first-year teaching experiences as more satisfying than non-mentored teachers perceived their first-year teaching experiences, this researcher utilized an attitudinal survey method of research.

A review of literature and examination of available published survey instruments was conducted. The Mentor Project notebook for participants was studied and three OPS mentor teachers were interviewed to enable the researcher greater understanding of the goals of the mentor program and identification of potential items for the survey questionnaire. An instrument was then developed to assess the perception of first-year teachers in the areas of support provided by a trained mentor, feedback relating to their professional assignment, and emotional support. The statements for the survey were formulated to determine whether first-year teachers perceived their first-year of teaching as satisfying in that they

were able to get the help they needed in the areas of support and feedback as noted above.

The statements on the survey were rated by teacher-participants using the Likert Scale of "strongly agree", "agree", "no opinion", "disagree", and "strongly disagree". All statements were written in the positive mode. Therefore, answers of "strongly agree" and "agree" indicated satisfaction while answers of "disagree" and "strongly disagree" indicated dissatisfaction.

The survey was piloted by the five members of the second-year OPS Mentor Team. These veteran mentors served as a steering committee for the OPS Mentor Project. The mentors were asked (Appendix A) to confirm appropriateness and understanding of the statements on the survey and to suggest additional items. All five second-year mentors returned the completed surveys. Their comments provided information for revision and addition of statements.

Permission was received (Appendix B) from Dr. John T. Langan of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, College of Education, to use the first-year teachers in the mentor group for this study. Mel

Clancy, Coordinator of Staff Development for the Omaha Public Schools, granted approval (Appendix C) from the school district to carry out this study. Permission was received (Appendix D) from the University of Nebraska Medical Center Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects to conduct the research.

The twenty-two first-year teachers from OPS who participated in the Mentor Project during the 1991-1992 school year comprised the intact experimental group. Mel Clancey, OPS Department of Staff Development, provided names of the first-year teachers in the Mentor Project.

Twenty-two first-year OPS teachers who did not participate in the Mentor Project were closely matched with the mentored teachers on the demographic characteristics of grade level taught, subject taught, and gender. Karen Crawford, OPS Department of Staff Personnel, provided names of the first-year matched teachers not participating in the Mentor Project. This group served as the control group for the research.

A cover letter (Appendix E) and the survey (Appendix F) were sent to each of the forty-four first-year teachers. Directions in the

cover letter instructed the teachers of the procedure for completing the survey and returning to the researcher. Nineteen of the twenty-two surveys sent to first-year teachers participating in the mentor program were returned, while eighteen of the twenty-two surveys were returned from first-year teachers not participating in the mentor program. The response rate was 86.4% and 81.8% respectively.

Using five points for "strongly agree", four points for "agree", three points for "no opinion", two points for "disagree", and one point for "strongly disagree", total scores were computed for each participant and for each survey statement. This data, plus demographic data from the surveys, was entered into the SYSTAT (The System for Statistics) program by the researcher. SYSTAT is a statistical computer program published by SYSTAT, Inc. In that program, scores are reported as t tests.

Statistics on the demographics and participant's scores were computed, using means, standard deviation, and t tests. Because of the size of the experimental and control groups, the t test designed especially for group sizes which are less than 30 was used to

determine significant differences between the mean scores at the .05 level. The significance of difference between the means of the total group scores, comparing the mentored group to the nonmentored group, was computed by using a t test, also. The Z test was used to find any significance of differences between proportions of the item-by-item statements of the survey between the mentored and nonmentored group. Lastly, the Smart Spread Sheet was used by the researcher to analyze individual items on the survey.

Chapter 4

Presentation of Data

Demographics

The participants in this survey responded to various independent variables which add perspective to the results. Table 1 illustrates the percentage of participants who responded to the survey in either elementary or junior/senior high assignments and arranged by participation or non-participation in the mentor program. The results indicate a large portion of the survey participants were elementary teachers.

Table 1

Teaching Assignment for Survey Participants

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Mentor Project</u>	<u>Non-Mentor</u>
Elementary	79%	89%
Junior/Senior High	21%	11%

Even though the mentor program was for first-year teachers, survey participants were asked about teaching experience. Table 2 shows that many of the "first-year" OPS teachers had professional experience in the teaching profession prior to the present school year.

Table 2

Professional Teaching Experience Before Present School Year

<u>Years of Experience</u>	<u>Mentor Project</u>	<u>Non-Mentor</u>
None	42%	66%
1-3 Years	42%	22%
4 Years or More	16%	12%

Survey participants were asked to indicate number of students in their school buildings. Table 3 shows the Category of 301-599 students in the building as the one chosen most often by the participants of both groups.

Table 3Number of Students in Building

<u>Students</u>	<u>Mentor Program</u>	<u>Non-Mentor</u>
300 or Less	11%	16%
301-599	48%	54%
600-899	16%	22%
900 or More	25%	8%

Survey participants were asked about a student teaching experience in OPS. In the Mentor Project, 37% of the participants answered "yes" to student teaching in OPS while 39% non-mentor participants answered "yes".

Only one of the OPS mentees for the 1991-1992 school year was of the male gender, while twenty-one were female. Likewise, one male and twenty-one females comprised the control group.

Survey Results

On the survey, eighteen statements (numbers 5-22) were rated on a five-point Likert scale with "strongly agree" worth five points, "agree" worth four points, "no opinion" worth three points, "disagree" worth two points, and "strongly disagree" worth one point. All items were written in a positive mode; therefore, a higher score indicates more positive feelings about the statement. The highest score possible was ninety and shows that the participant answered "strongly agree" to all eighteen statements.

Using the demographic information, t tests were conducted with SYSTAT to find significant differences between mean scores. The standard product from SYSTAT included the standard deviation score with the mean score, so both scores are displayed in all tables.

Table 2 (p. 27) indicated that 42% of first-year teachers in the mentor program had no previous professional teaching experience while 66% of first-year non-mentored teachers had no previous professional teaching experience. Table 4 shows the comparison of total mean scores from the survey between first-year

teachers with no previous professional teaching experience in the mentor program and first-year teachers with no previous professional teaching experience not in the mentor program.

Table 4

Survey Participants - No Previous Professional Teaching Experience

<u>Group</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>
Mentor Group	8	75.875	15.348
Non-Mentor Group	12	69.250	13.336

$p > .05$ (not significant)

The mean (75.875 out of a possible 90) of the mentored first-year teachers is higher than the mean (69.250 out of a possible 90) of the non-mentored first-year teachers, showing more positive responses to the survey questions. However, the difference in the means of the two groups is not significant.

Table 3 previously showed the number of students in the school buildings of first-year mentored or non-mentored survey participants. Forty-eight percent of mentor survey participants and

fifty-four percent of non-mentored participants work in school buildings with 301-599 students. Table 5 shows the mean scores of these two groups.

Table 5

Survey Participants - Buildings of 301-599 Students

<u>Group</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>
Mentor Group	9	80.333	5.220
Non-Mentor Group	10	63.400	18.051

$p < .05$ (significant)

The difference between the means shown in Table 5 of those in the mentor group and those not in the mentor group is 16.933, which is significant at the .05 level. The t score is 2.567. The standard deviation for the mentor group is low indicating agreement among the mentored first-year teachers in their positive answers to the survey statements. Other groups in the enrollment category were not large enough to do a t test comparison

Table 6 shows the comparison of means between first-year mentored and non-mentored teachers who did their student-teaching in OPS. Even though the mean scores show more positive answers from the mentored group, the differences were not significant at the .05 level.

Table 6

Survey Participants - Student Teaching in OPS

<u>Group</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>
Mentor Group	7	78.143	16.537
Non-Mentor Group	7	74.429	7.678

$p > .05$ (not significant)

Individual scores on the survey in the mentored group of first-year teachers ranged in total points from forty-two to ninety. Two teachers in this group rated every answer as "strongly agree" and were given the perfect score of ninety. Non-mentored individual scores ranged from twenty-nine to ninety. In this group, only one

teacher's survey received the perfect score of ninety. Table 7 gives the mean comparisons of scores for the two groups.

Table 7

Survey Participants - Group Comparisons

<u>Group</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>
Mentor Group	19	74.158	14.120
Non-Mentor Group	18	65.500	15.344

$p > .05$ (not significant)

The difference between the mean scores is 8.658 which indicates a level of importance; however, the t test shows no significance at the .05 level.

The mean and standardized deviation scores, taken from the eighteen statements from the survey and tabulated on an individual basis, are summarized in Table 8. Since the following scores represent individual questions, the high score (if rated "strongly agree") would be worth five points. The higher the mean, the more

positive answers were given. In order to have Table 8 on one page, the print was reduced to single space.

Table 8

Means, Standard Deviation, and Differences on Survey Items

<u>Statement</u>	Mentored-		Non-mentored		<u>Diff.</u>
	<u>Means</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>Means</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	
Curriculum questions	4.5	0.94	4.3	0.75	+0.2
Discipline help	3.9	1.32	3.4	1.26	+0.5
Materials/supplies	4.5	0.94	3.8	1.07	+0.7
Advice with parents	4.2	1.00	3.6	0.95	+0.6
Help getting started	4.4	0.99	3.4	1.34	+1.0
Explained sick leave	3.6	1.18	3.2	1.21	+0.4
Assistance in coping	4.1	1.28	3.3	1.25	+0.8
Homework policy	3.5	1.27	3.2	1.13	+0.3
Parent/teacher conf.	3.8	1.31	3.6	1.01	+0.2
Cared and helped	4.8	0.36	4.1	0.97	+0.7
Explained evaluation	4.2	0.67	3.6	1.16	+0.6
Services at MTC	3.8	1.00	3.2	1.30	+0.6
Supervisor's role	3.8	1.24	3.8	0.96	-
Someone to talk	4.7	0.55	3.9	1.10	+0.8
Building procedures	4.4	0.98	3.7	1.11	+0.7
Teaching methods	3.6	1.25	3.6	1.17	-
Goal setting	3.8	1.20	3.0	1.25	+0.8
Like job again	4.3	1.22	4.5	0.50	-0.2*

p > .05 (none were significant)

* Non-mentor mean higher

Mean scores in Table 8 range from 3.5 to 4.8 for first-year mentored teachers compared to 3.0 to 4.5 for first-year non-mentored teachers. Mean scores on every question were higher or equal for the mentored teachers compared to non-mentored teachers, with the exception of the last question which asked if the first-year teacher would like to have their job again next year. Table 8 shows that first-year teachers in the mentor program were more positive about the areas questioned than first-year teachers not involved in the mentor program; however, none of the differences between the mean scores were significant.

Another analysis of the survey items is shown in Table 9. It illustrates the percentages of agreement for the eighteen survey items. Percentages for "strongly agree" and "agree" were added together for an agreement summary for both first-year teachers in the mentor program and first-year teachers not in the program. Print was reduced to single space to place all of Table 9 on the same page.

Table 9Percentages of Agreement on Survey Items

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Mentored Group</u>	<u>Non-Mentored Group</u>	<u>Diff.</u>
Curriculum questions	94.7%	94.4%	+ 0.3
Discipline help	73.7%	50.0%	+23.7
Materials/supplies	94.8%	83.3%	+11.5
Advice with parents	84.2%	61.1%	+23.1
Help getting started	89.5%	66.6%	+22.9
Explained sick leave	63.1%	50.0%	+13.1
Assistance in coping	78.9%	50.0%	+28.9
Homework policy	52.7%	50.0%	+ 2.7
Parent/teacher conf.	68.4%	72.2%*	- 3.8
Cared and helped	100%	83.3%	+16.7
Explained evaluation	84.2%	66.6%	+17.6
Services at MTC	68.4%	50.0%	+18.4
Supervisor's role	73.7%	66.7%	+ 7.0
Someone to talk	94.7%	83.4%	+11.3
Building procedures	89.5%	66.6%	+22.9
Teaching methods	66.7%	66.1%	+ 0.6
Goal setting	73.7%	33.4%	+40.3
Like job again	89.5%	100%*	-10.5

p> .05 (none were significant)

*Non-mentor higher

Table 9 illustrates the positive answers of first-year teachers involved in the mentor program compared to first-year teachers not involved in the mentor program. Only two statements, "I would like

to have this job again next year" and "I was given guidance in directing an effective parent/teacher conference", have a higher percentage of agreement answers in the non-mentored group.

Chapter 5

Summary and Recommendations

Summary

Growth in the use of mentoring programs as a way to assist new classroom teachers is evident in a 1989 survey that reports thirty-one states with statewide mentoring programs. An additional eleven states had mentoring programs in some school districts and only eight reported no mentoring activity (Wilder and Ashare, 1989).

The Mentor Project is the name of the mentor program organized by the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium, and the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement. The 1991-1992 school year was the second year of the Mentor Project's existence. OPS was one of seven districts in the metropolitan area to have participated in this mentor program. The purpose of this study was to assess the satisfaction of first-year OPS teachers participating in the Mentor Project during the 1991-1992 school year.

It was hypothesized that first-year OPS mentored teachers perceived their first-year teaching experiences as more satisfying than first-year OPS non-mentored teachers perceived their first-year teaching experiences. When comparing mentored first-year teachers to non-mentored first-year teachers, both working in schools of populations from 301 to 599 students, a significant difference was found between the mean scores of their answers on the survey at the .05 level. This indicated higher positive attitudes from the first-year teachers in the mentored group. Other data showed more positive answers from the mentored group over the non-mentored group, but not at a level of significance as tested by inferential statistics in SYSTAT.

Recommendations

The Mentor Project used in OPS had a positive effect on the success of first-year teachers. Suggestions are:

-According to the OPS Personnel Office, OPS has approximately 280 new teachers in the 1991-1992 school year. Since the Mentor Project has positive results, more new teachers should be assigned mentors.

-This year, 58% of the first-year teachers in the mentor program had previous professional teaching experience. When assigning mentors, new teachers without previous experience should be assigned mentors before teachers with previous experience.

-According to the demographics in this study, 37% of the new teachers in the Mentor Project did their student teaching in OPS. All new teachers benefit from the extra help of a mentor, but those that have student taught in OPS previously have some knowledge of district policies and procedures. Mentors should be given first to new teachers without student teaching experience in OPS because of relative unfamiliarity.

-When examining the individual survey items, the three lowest means scores were in the areas of getting help with teaching methods, having personal/sick leave explained, and having the homework/grading policy of the building explained. These three areas could be addressed more completely by the mentors when helping the mentees.

-One-hundred percent of the mentored first-year teachers answered positively on the survey item of "I felt that I had someone

in the school building who cared how well I performed my job and was willing to help me". This response indicated a satisfying feeling among the mentees. The Mentor Project should continue. It should include as many first-year teachers as possible so they would be able to feel the support of a mentor.

Suggestions for further study include:

- Studying the mentors in this program.
- Increase the number of participants in the program to enhance validity.

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Appendix A

TO: NANCY EDICK, JOSLYN SCHOOL
FROM: KATHY JIEDE, KING SCIENCE
DATE: JANUARY 13, 1992
SUBJECT: MENTOR SURVEY

I am writing my specialist thesis this year using the Mentor Project as my topic. Specifically, I am assessing the satisfaction of first-year Omaha Public School teachers participating in the Mentor Project during the 1991-1992 school year.

To accomplish this assessment, I have written a survey to administer to first-year teachers in the Mentor Project and to an equal number of first-year teachers not participating in the Mentor Project. The questions deal with the three objectives that the Mentor Project hopes to accomplish with the first-year teachers. The objectives are:

- provide a strong support system
- provide feedback related to the professional assignment
- provide emotional support

To increase the validity and reliability of the survey, my committee has asked me to use you, the members of the Second Year Mentor Team, to do a pilot run of the questionnaire. Being a member of the mentor team, you are familiar with the program, the objectives, and are in a position to make valid judgments about the items.

Please read the survey (attached) and pretend you are a first-year teacher taking the test. Do the questions inquire about things that should be asked to determine satisfaction of first-year teaching experiences? Do the questions correspond to the three objectives stated above? Are any questions vague? Are there questions that are unnecessary or others that should be added?

Bev Urbach was going to take time at your mentor work day this week to discuss this with you, but since your day has been cancelled, I ask you to please take a few moments to share your mentor expertise and make suggestions. Send any comments to me (Kathy Jiede) at King Science by Wednesday, January 22th.

The results of the survey will be shared with your group in the spring. I hope you will find it helpful and interesting.

Thank you for your help.

Appendix B

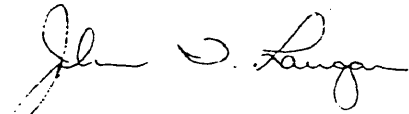


The Mentor Project
College of Education
Omaha, Nebraska 68182-0633
(402) 554-3744

January 14, 1992

To Whom It May Concern:

This communication serves to verify the request of Ms. Kathleen M. Jiede to utilize members of the 1991-92 mentor teacher group in a research study. The mentor teachers are participants in the F.I.R.S.T. Grant: Beginning Teacher TEAM Project developed by the College of Education, University of Nebraska at Omaha. Ms. Jiede's request was approved and permission was granted for her to utilize the mentor group in her study entitled, "An Assessment of the Satisfaction of First Year Omaha Public School Teachers Participating in the Mentor Project During the 1991-92 School Year."

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John T. Langan".

John T. Langan
Director
Mentor Project

Appendix C

OMAHA PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

STAFF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

3215 CUMING STREET OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68131-2024 (402) 554-6201

January 8, 1992

Ms. Kathy Jiede
King Science Center
Omaha Public Schools

Dear Kathy,

This letter is to grant approval from the Omaha Public Schools Staff Development Division for you to carry out needed program evaluations. Your efforts are supported by the District and will be very valuable to the Mentor Program.

If I can assist you further, please call me at 6201.

Cordially,

Mei A. Olancy
Coordinator

MAC:j



University
of Nebraska

Institutional Review Board
For the Protection of
Human Subjects

Appendix D

University of Nebraska Medical Center
Eppley Science Hall 3018
600 South 42nd Street
Omaha, NE 68198-6810
402/559-6463
Fax 402/559-7845

January 30, 1992

Kathleen M. Jiede, Ed S
Department of Education
UNO - 0633

IRB #: 170-92-EX

TITLE OF PROPOSAL: An Assessment of the Satisfaction of First-Year Omaha
Public School Teachers Participating in the Mentor Project During the 91-92
School Year

Dear Ms. Jiede:

The IRB has reviewed your Exemption Information Form for the above-titled research project. According to the information provided this project is exempt under 45 CFR 46:101B. You are therefore authorized to begin the research.

It is understood this project will be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Guidelines. It is also understood that the IRB will be immediately notified of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of your research project.

Sincerely,

Ernest D. Prentice, Ph.D.
Vice Chairman, IRB

EDP/lmc

Appendix E

TO: SURVEY PARTICIPANTS
FROM: KATHY JIEDE, KING SCIENCE CENTER
DATE: FEBRUARY 26, 1992
SUBJECT: SURVEY OF FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS

Twenty-one first-year teachers from the Omaha Public Schools were involved in the Mentor Project this school year. The project was coordinated in OPS by Mr. Mel Clancy in cooperation with Dr. John Langan from UNO.

In an attempt to evaluate the mentor program, you are asked to answer the questions on the following pages concerning this present school year. This survey is being sent to first-year teachers who participated in the Mentor Project this year and **an equal number of first-year teachers that were not involved in the program.**

Your answers are important and will be completely anonymous. The numbers on the top of the page are only to distinguish the mentees from the non-mentees. Your help is appreciated!

Please return the completed survey in the school mail to Kathy Jiede at the King Science Center by Wednesday, March 4th.

Thank you.

Appendix F

MENTEE/NEW TEACHER SURVEY

Circle the letter of the appropriate response for items 1-4.

1. Indicate the level of your present teaching assignment.
A. Elementary B. Junior high/Middle school C. High school
2. Indicate any previous professional, educational teaching experience that you may have had before this year's assignment.
A. None B. 1-3 years C. 4 years or more
3. Indicate the number of students in your building.
A. 300 or less B. 301-599 C. 600-899 D. 900 or more
4. Indicate whether you had a student teaching experience in OPS.
A. Yes B. No

After each statement, circle the answer that best describes how you feel about the sentence using the following guidelines:

- SA = Strongly agree
- A = Agree
- NO = No opinion
- D = Disagree
- SD = Strongly disagree

5. There was an experienced teacher/administrator available to answer curriculum questions. SA A NO D SD
6. I was able to get help with discipline problems. SA A NO D SD
7. I was told where to find materials/supplies. SA A NO D SD
8. I was given advice in dealing with parents. SA A NO D SD
9. I had the help I needed to "get started" during the first week of school. SA A NO D SD

10. Someone explained how to request personal/sick leave. SA A NO D SD
11. I received assistance in coping with the frustrations of teaching. SA A NO D SD
12. Someone explained the district's policy on homework and grading. SA A NO D SD
13. I was given guidance in directing an effective parent-teacher conference. SA A NO D SD
14. I felt that I had someone in the school building who cared how well I performed my job and was willing to help me. SA A NO D SD
15. Someone explained the evaluation procedures to me. SA A NO D SD
16. I was given advice about the materials/services available at the MTC. SA A NO D SD
17. The instructional supervisor's role was made clear to me. SA A NO D SD
18. I felt that I always had someone with whom I could talk. SA A NO D SD
19. Building procedures were made clear to me. SA A NO D SD
20. I had help/advice on using a variety of teaching methods. SA A NO D SD
21. I was given help in goal setting. SA A NO D SD
22. I would like to have this job again next year. SA A NO D SD