REAL TIME VIDEO MENTORING: INVESTIGATING SYNCHRONOUS VIDEO TECHNOLOGY AS A MENTORING TOOL FOR NEW MUSIC TEACHERS IN RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

A Dissertation

presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School

at the University of Missouri-Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

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December, 2016
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a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DEDICATION

I wish to thank my family. From my parents and siblings, I received a desire to learn. From my daughter and son-in-law, Kimberly and Darren Roback, I was supported by humor and humbled by love. From my mother and father-in-law, Oscar and Lorene Curtis, the strength to challenge myself and determination to succeed. Their greatest gift to me was permission to marry their daughter, the love of my life and constant companion, Karen. She was there the whole time on this journey and her faith in me, freely given amidst her own challenges, is beyond my comprehension. I love you all.

TO:

Oscar Harold Curtis

My example and guide from the past.

And

Olivia and Landon Roback

My hope for the future

And

My God who provides it all.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following colleagues for their support and assistance during my work: Dr. Paul Crabb, Beth Fritz, Dr. Judith Mabry, Elizabeth Hogan McFarland, Dr. Claude Westfall. Their time and efforts were greatly appreciated.

I would also like to thank the members of my committee for their encouragement and dedication to see that this dissertation was of worth and quality, Dr. Lloyd Barrow, Dr. Julie Gaines, Dr. Brian Silvey. I was blessed with one of the finest and most patient doctoral/dissertation advisors, Dr. Wendy Sims. Her constant encouragement, patience, and often needed tough love kept me going among numerous challenges.
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Chapter One

Introduction

Since the 1990s, researchers have expressed concern that teachers were leaving educational positions at an alarming rate (Merrow, 1999). Data taken from the biannual School and Staffing Survey (SASS), conducted from 1987 through 2000 by the USDE’s National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES), revealed that between 40 and 50% of all beginning teachers left the classroom within their first five years (Ingersoll, 2003). While some attrition in all professional fields is natural, loss rates such as this are extremely troubling. When attrition rates are considered along with projected retirement rates, there is cause for concern that the profession cannot sustain the numbers of replacement faculty necessary to fill future classrooms.

Overview of the Problem

Music education is not immune to issues of teacher attrition. Music teachers leave the classroom at rates consistent with the percentages found in the general population of new teachers. A research study by Hancock (2009) compared attrition rates for music teachers with teachers in all areas of education. Statistical data focused on information collected during the 2000-2001 National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS). The TFS revealed that teachers either left the classroom to pursue other opportunities or migrated to a new teaching position in a new school district. Data indicated that between 1988 and 2000, 10 percent of music teachers migrated to another teaching position and 6
percent left the teaching field completely. This level of teacher loss is comparable to the approximately 15 percent of attrition for non-music teachers who participated in the 2001 TFS (Hancock, 2009; Ingersoll, 2003).

The factors that affect when and why music teachers leave teaching is also reflected in research findings. As stated earlier, the rate of attrition during the first five years is surprising. Madsen and Hancock (2002) indicated that 17 percent of music teachers left the music classroom within their first ten years as an in-service educator, a factor consistent with the general teacher population. However, after 6 years, only 34 percent of music teachers left education as compared to a 50-percent rate found with educators in general. An earlier study by Hancock (2008), using the data collected during the 1999-2000 School and Staffing Survey (SASS), focused data analysis on the effects of teacher characteristics, school conditions, efficacy, support and remuneration to determine what influence each may have on teacher retention or migration. A controlled analysis of the data, when variables were gradually added to the analysis to determine their effect on the individual factors of teacher attrition, revealed the following:

In brief, significant factors, after controlling for the influence of all other variables, were as follows: young age (younger than 30 years and 30–39 years), private school, secondary school, extracurricular hours, school concerns, administration support, parent support, salary, and satisfaction with salary. (Hancock, 2008, p. 139)

The Hancock (2008) study revealed a disturbing factor concerning the effectiveness of mentoring programs for music teachers. Although other important national research studies reported that school-sponsored mentoring programs have a positive effect on teachers in general (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004), Hancock’s (2008)
study did not support that music teacher participation in mentoring activities had any effect on teacher attrition or migration. This supports the results found by authors of other music teacher mentoring studies indicating that traditional mentoring may not be as effective for music educators as it is for the general teacher population (Killian & Baker, 2006). The unique circumstances of the music classroom may be a contributing factor related to the impact of music teacher mentoring programs. Research by both Conway (2003) and DeLorenzo (1992) indicated that music teachers preferred experienced music mentors. It is likely that when poor mentoring pairing exists the effectiveness of the process is in jeopardy.

The impact of teacher attrition not only affects our nation’s school system but also has a considerable impact on our teacher preparation institutions. In 2001, the Higher Education Arts Data Services reported that 3,897 Bachelor of Music Education degrees were awarded from accredited members of the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). Adding those figures to the equivalent degrees awarded from non-accredited schools increased the number of new music teachers by 2,000. However, there still existed a deficit of 5,000 new teachers necessary to replace those leaving music education (Lindeman, 2004). Although the Higher Education Arts Data Service reported that the number of music education graduates was on the rise, the inability of schools to retain qualified music teachers, as well as educators in other specialized disciplines, continued to pose a serious problem (Jacobs, 2007).

Filling the vacant classrooms resulting from teacher attrition contributes to the already strained budgets of effected school districts. The financial burden
exact on school systems as a result of high teacher turnover rates is a factor that should be considered. The Texas Center for Educational Research initiated a study in 2000 that conservatively estimated the cost of teacher attrition at more than $300 million per year. However, by 2005 a policy brief published by the Alliance for Excellent Education, using a United States Department of Labor cost formula, estimated this number had grown to $4.9 billion (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007). While some aspects of the study have drawn criticism, it did provide sufficient data to show that a disregard for increased teacher attrition rates was fiscally irresponsible (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007).

Growing concerns by educators and policy developers over student achievement are also part of the new-teacher attrition problem. When teachers leave the classroom, they drain public schools of teaching experience. Their absence may jeopardize the welfare of a student’s individual educational development and force districts to implement remedial programs to assist in improving achievement scores on required state testing (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013; Strong, 2006). Because music teachers often work with students across number of grade levels, especially in smaller districts, attrition potentially disrupts the continuity and sequencing of the curriculum.

**Mentoring of Beginning Teachers as a Possible Solution**

Over the past two decades, mentoring and induction programs have become a fixture within public schools as the primary element of support for teachers entering their first teaching positions. The focus of mentoring has traditionally been
one of individualized guidance provided by a more experienced master teacher. The term *induction* describes a program of support that assists a young teacher’s transition from a “student of teaching to a teacher of students” (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). However, the definitions of mentoring and induction are often interconnected when describing the varied programs that exist across the vast number of mandated beginning teacher support programs.

As introduced previously, a number of research projects have been undertaken to determine the success of new mentor/induction programs in reducing teacher attrition (Conway, 2003; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Killian and Baker’s (2006) study of new music teachers who were members of the Texas Music Educator’s Association (TMEA). The purpose of the research was to study factors that might help highlight the issues affecting music teacher attrition in their state. Between the years 1999-2004, data were collected from a voluntary survey given to new music teachers when they joined TMEA. Killian and Baker’s (2006) analysis of the survey responses revealed that while over 60 percent of the participants in the study received some form of mentoring support during their first year, the data demonstrated that had no significant impact on whether the participating teachers remained in the classroom or not. Hancock (2008) did not find participation in an induction or mentoring program to be a significant predictor of teacher attrition.

While inconsistencies exist within the methodologies and procedures utilized within several of these research projects, and among the characteristics of programs studied, there remains empirical data to support claims that there may be a positive
impact of mentoring upon the retention of novice teachers in general (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). The extent to which this may be true for music teachers, however, is still a matter of question. Hancock (2008) reinforced the need for further research in this area, stating, “There has recently been an explosion in the availability of early-career support programs designed for music educators, and monitoring the impact of such programs on music teacher attrition will provide valuable insights” (p. 140).

Some of the most salient factors to materialize as impactful for new teachers are centered on the emotional and psychosocial influences that effect new teacher attitudes and feelings of confidence. Personally, as a teacher who began an educational career in a small town and was constrained by the minimal resources of a rural school district, I understand the isolation that a new teacher in music may feel when trying to cope with these complex issues.

Beginning music teachers in small school districts, in which they may be the only music specialist, are often assigned a mentor from another academic discipline. While this provides basic assistance for these special area teachers, this type of mentor/mentee pairing is insufficient. Few of these mentors truly understand the needs of their mentees outside the basics of classroom management and district logistics. The frustration felt by new teachers in this type of induction environment is often expressed in feelings of a lack of administrative support and reduced self-worth as a teacher. Research has indicated that mentoring provided by someone in the same teaching area reduced the risk of a new teacher leaving after one year by over 30 percent (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).
**Mentoring program content.** Data on the contents of studied mentor/induction programs show that the most common elements consist of activities that include support for new teachers in professional development (Gold, 1996), emotional support (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004), formative evaluation (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Giebelhaus & Bendixen-Noe, 2000), and reflection (Schën, 1987; Halpern 2000).

The professional development consisted of activities that assisted with directed instructional lessons that enabled novice teachers to develop best practice skills and techniques (Clark, 2001). Programs that include modeling, practice, feedback and coaching are critical to the successful development of a professional attitude toward continued learning for new teachers (Joyce & Showers, 2002). The goal of professional development activities is to move the new teacher through the important stages of cognitive apprenticeship such as modeling, coaching, scaffolding, reflection, and exploration with the expressed purpose of allowing the new teacher to reach a point of faded support by the mentor (Glaser & Resnick, 1989).

New teachers found they need personal and emotional support from peers, as well as more experienced teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Giebelhaus & Bendixen-Noe, 2000). Activities that provided new teachers with opportunities to share their uncertainties and request assistance were found to be vital to a new teacher's development of well-being and confidence (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). While interacting with peers, new teachers may develop collegial relationships and create
learning communities that foster professional discourse on the analysis of ideas and best practice techniques (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

Mentoring related to the area of formative evaluation was found to provide new teachers with the opportunity to participate in assessment strategies that incorporated constructive feedback on teaching practice (Livengood, 2006). As a new teacher interacts with an experienced mentor/teacher during formative evaluation experiences, constructive feedback helps guide the mentee in solving problems encountered during educational activities in the classroom (Wertsch, 1985).

The reflective aspect of mentor/induction programs is the most recently added component and requires the new teachers to critically analyze their role in the classroom before attempting the application of new teaching strategies (Cady, Germundsen, & Distad, 1998; Livengood, 2006). By reflecting on new concepts and techniques, the novice teacher is given the opportunity to share a thoughtful and objective examination of their practice and progress with peers and the mentor (Darling-Hammond, 2001).

However progressive and positive each of these individual elements of mentor/induction programs may appear, no one element alone has been shown to have a significant impact on reducing the exodus of new teachers from education. It was shown that mentor/induction programs that combined various elements of professional development, emotional support, evaluation, and reflection were the most effective in encouraging novice teachers to remain in the field (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). The Smith and Ingersoll report also revealed that the quantity as well
as quality of the elements included in a support program greatly impacted the success rates on teacher retention.

**Statement of the Problem.** The basis of this study is both the extant research and my personal interests in new teacher mentor/induction programs. The amount of effort expended by a school district in attempting to implement the elements necessary for an effective mentoring experience for new teachers has a direct relationship with how successful their programs will be in keeping new teachers in their systems. However, the knowledge and financial resources of individual districts vary greatly. With school finances that fluctuate between unequal and inconsistent revenue sources, programs are frequently restricted by how well individual districts can allocate funding to support mentor/induction programs. While research shows that rural public school districts suffer teacher attrition at only slightly lower rates than suburban and urban districts (Ingersoll, 2001), it is the rural district that most likely must confront issues concerning the availability of qualified mentors for new music teachers (Beeson, 2001; Collins, 1999).

Rural schools that are geographically isolated may experience additional difficulties with attracting and retaining new teachers, especially in specialized subjects where there are few, if any, teachers in the same content area (Monk, 2007). Video technologies are evolving rapidly and may provide an answer to problems faced by geographically isolated school districts that are seeking ways to maintain qualified new teachers in their classrooms. Livengood (2006) surveyed the existing online mentor/induction programs present in various locations throughout the country. The findings revealed that multiple elements of electronic
communication media were being utilized to facilitate new teacher retention programs. A combination of electronic mail, telephones, bulletin boards, video conferencing and chats were being implemented to support all required components in the most promising mentoring programs of the study. Each of these technological ingredients enhanced the communication efforts in isolated educational communities struggling to implement new teacher support programs. However, many of the more complex electronic mediums, specifically audio/video conferencing, required a diverse and costly technological infrastructure beyond the common Internet capabilities available to some rural school districts (Klecka et al., 2002).

This study was designed to contribute to the professions’ knowledge regarding technology-assisted strategies that may be useful to enhance the mentoring process of new music teachers. Ultimately, it is my hope that effective mentoring may lead to greater teacher success, that ultimately will reduce beginning teacher attrition.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research was to study a means for providing mentoring to first-year teachers in the specialized educational discipline of music, who are teaching in rural areas and thus geographically isolated from other music teachers. Most of the research related to new teacher mentoring has been based on face-to-face mentor/mentee relationships. This study was designed to examine the feasibility of utilizing the established Internet capabilities of small school districts to
electronically connect a new teacher with an experienced professional in the same educational field and with teaching experience in a comparable rural location. One-on-one mentoring techniques similar to those that have been successful in traditional programs were implemented within the framework of visual teleconferencing. The computer-to-computer communication program Skype™ was employed, as it was a proven software package available at no charge on the Internet—the best free software available for this purpose at the time this study began.

Visual teleconferencing software combines the ability for individuals to communicate both synchronously and asynchronously through written, spoken, and video mediums. Skype™ allows asynchronous messaging that is like conventional email. If a contact is not online, a new teacher or mentor could post a question to their mentor or mentee for future discussion. If they wish to communicate face-to-face in real time, the use of a web cam connected to or contained within the computer makes this possible. If no video component is desired, then audio communication is available with clarity that equals that of conventional and cellular telephones. Video streaming also can be used to allow a mentor to view a new teacher in classroom settings in a synchronous format by focusing the camera on the teacher who is presenting the lesson in the classroom. This direct connection between mentor and mentee provides an opportunity for immediate feedback from the mentor as well as shared reflections by both parties.

Skype™ includes a number of other useful features. Its document transfer capabilities allow new teachers to share lesson plans and teaching artifacts for
inspection and evaluation by a mentor or peer groups. Peer support is also possible, because Skype™ allows conference and chat formats to facilitate group discussions on best practice techniques and successful strategies for the classroom. Skype™ is not platform specific and is available for Windows, Apple, and Linux operating systems. The basic system requirements for these particular computer platforms are well within the technological budgets available to most schools. While Skype™, as well as all developing technology, is not without potential problems, it presents a low cost, full feature software option that can enhance established mentor programs at all educational levels. The use of Skype™ or similar electronic communication software can help to remove the distance boundaries for rural school districts by providing them access to experienced mentors located in other communities, states, or even countries.

Research Questions

This study was designed to investigate the contents and effectiveness of real time or synchronous video conferencing technology to determine its potential as a tool for strengthening the mentoring new of teachers. One way to accomplish this is to examine how the distance mentoring experience compares with characteristics of more traditional mentoring programs, as identified in the research literature. Specifically, I sought to answer one primary research question through the examination of three sub-questions:
Research Question. How effective is the use of real-time video mentoring (RVM) as a tool for mentoring new music teachers in geographically isolated schools?

Sub-Question 1. To what extent are the findings of this study consistent with the results of research on traditional face-to-face mentoring and induction programs?

Sub-Question 2. What were the contents of the RVM interactions by the participants in this study with respect to topics addressed and amount of time spent per topic?

Sub-Question 3. What are the perceptions of participants regarding the RVM mentoring process?

Importance of the Study

When I began my teaching career in the 1980’s, a mandatory mentoring program did not exist. The common practice at the time was to place a new teacher, often only days or weeks past their student teaching internship, in a classroom environment based on the subject area and the curricular needs of the school. The new teacher, while provided with a basic orientation to building and district policies and procedures, was expected to impart knowledge to their new charges as effectively as a veteran educator. While frequently supported by kind words, new teachers were often left alone to find their own way. Evaluative procedures were minimal and based primarily on administrative individualism that often consisted of a “sink or swim” mentality. If a new teacher needed guidance, it was up to that
individual to seek the necessary available resources. In the music program, it was my experience that support from the district was even less effective, as only the more metropolitan districts could provide access to specialized resources, including other music teachers, that might be helpful for a new music teacher.

In the modern classroom, state- and federally-mandated induction and mentoring programs have been developed to provide all new teachers with necessary guidance and materials to support a new teacher's introduction into the educational setting. My knowledge with this new process is based on service as both a new music teacher mentor and school building lead mentor. While my mentor responsibilities were with new music teachers in a large metropolitan school district, the mentoring procedures were framed within the guidelines for all new teacher induction programs statewide. The district level orientation consisted of an introduction on best practice techniques for the mentors. This, combined with my own personal experiences, was my sole resource to assist my mentee.

Now that mentoring has become a mainstay of the induction programs required both on national and state levels, the proper implementation of these programs has proven valuable in helping alleviate the struggles of new teachers, including those who teach music. Beyond the benefit provided to beginning educators, the potential benefit that mentoring can have on the mentors themselves should also recognized. Mentoring may inspire mentors to reflect on their own teaching and how it could improve. The process of mentoring provides veteran teachers the opportunity to experience new teaching concepts and pedagogical methods that come both from the mentee and from sharing with other mentors.
about working with new teachers. Mentors have the satisfaction of knowing their work is providing a beginning teacher with the support needed to succeed as a music specialist.

It is unrealistic to assume that successful mentoring/induction programs alone will eliminate concerns over high teacher attrition. There exist a number of systemic concerns beyond the scope of this research project that must be resolved before a more definitive solution is possible. However, the promise of this research lies with increased possibilities for improving the existing support systems designed to help rural districts retain quality music teachers, while at the same time assisting new music teachers with skills and knowledge early in their careers that will become the building blocks for continued success as an educator.

**Definition of Terms**

With the intent to provide a clear understanding for the reader, definitions of specific terms used in this study are provided. These definitions are based on common usage in the literature reviewed:

**Beginning Teacher:** A professional educator who is in the first few years of in-service teaching. In the research literature, the beginning teacher is sometimes referred to as a novice, rookie, protégé or a new teacher.

**E-Mentoring:** The process by which the internet is used to provide multiple computer access to email, Wikispace, blogs, electronic bulletin boards, electronic forums, or other platforms for the purpose of providing new teacher mentoring. It
is asynchronous in nature and is often referred to as virtual mentoring in research literature.

**Induction:** The process of socialization of a new teacher into the role of professional educator through the assistance provided by the school district.

**In-service Teaching:** Teaching that takes place once an individual is hired by an educational institution and placed in the role of professional educator.

**Mentee:** A beginning teacher who has been assigned a mentor, by the employing school district. Often mentors will refer to their assigned new teacher as their mentee or protégé.

**Mentor:** An active in-service educator that is qualified to assist and support one or more beginning teachers during the teacher’s first few years in the classroom.

Online Synchronous Audio or Video. The process by which a dedicated software program utilizes the Internet to connect people at two or more remote computer workstations in real time.

**Pre-service Teaching:** Teaching that takes place within the academic environment of a teacher preparation and certification program, including that of a student teaching or teaching internship.

**Real-Mentoring. Time Video:** The label used to describe the online mentoring construct under study in this research. It is defined as the use of online synchronous audio and video as the primary interactive medium in the mentoring process.
Chapter Two

Review of Literature

A beginning teacher's transition from pre-service educational experiences to the reality of the modern classroom means the successful end of one life chapter and the beginning of a new and long awaited career. Not unlike other newly employed professionals, novice teachers experience the excitement and anxiety when immersed in the culture, logistics and structure of a professional career in an unfamiliar environment. However, pre-service teachers have reported receiving insufficient teaching opportunities to allow mastery experiences with the daily challenges inherent in the first year classroom (Lortie, 1975). Furthermore, a novice teacher's first year is often the stage for initial professional development and building networks for future growth as an educator. The combination of planning lessons, developing practical classroom skills, and building a framework for continued growth can seem an overwhelming task.

A number of support programs for new teachers have developed over the last decade. Mentoring has become the primary feature in most of the induction programs provided for new teachers. While research has shown that mentoring new teachers is a viable tool to smooth their paths, the diversity that exists within school structures and policies has led to various applications that are not always successful (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Strong, 2009). If a new teacher is provided guidance that lacks the elements that encourage connection and growth, the likelihood of success when dealing with the complex issues presented during their initial classroom experiences is diminished (Blair, 2008; Conway & Holcomb, 2006; Krueger, 1996).
For the first year music educator, the issues common for all new teachers are combined with the added responsibilities of the music classroom. These may include being the only music teacher in the district, the necessity to travel between schools, curriculum development for multiple grade levels, and extensive extracurricular activities. The new music teacher faced with one or more of these added requirements would naturally be challenged to find sufficient time for adequate mentoring support.

The descriptions and focus of mentoring programs found in the literature are as varied as program implementations. The conceptual view of mentoring draws its foundation from the mythical stories found in Homer's *Odyssey* (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006; Strong, 2009). Telemachus, the son of Odysseus, was placed in the care of Mentor for training and development into adulthood. Mentor's personal investment in the growth of Telemachus combined with his wise counsel provides an ideal example for the apprenticeship concept of mentoring. The mentor teacher imparts prior knowledge and wisdom, along with emotional support, to the novice teacher in the hope of easing the mentee's travails through the first year as a new educator. A similar perspective of mentoring can also take a more humanistic format (Wang & Odell, 2002). The primary mentoring processes are focused upon new teacher well being, the purpose of which is to provide individual support while building teaching confidence. This process relies more on building relationships between mentoring participants than an emphasis on a need to share teaching pedagogy and experience. While the need for relationship building is important, the constructive perspective of mentoring focuses on the need to develop critical
inquiry skills allowing mentor and new teacher to construct knowledge that can be shared by both parties (Wang & Odell, 2002). This process is designed to reduce the hierarchy between experienced teacher and protégé. The differing viewpoints on mentoring philosophy present those who research the effectiveness of mentoring with unique challenges for developing analytic frameworks that can accurately assess how good quality mentoring supports the success of new teachers.

This review of literature will begin with a focus on the existing systemic issues faced by new teachers in general, and an explanation of what constitutes a “rural” school, especially as that relates to attracting and retaining qualified teachers, and how these issues affect new music teachers specifically. Current mentoring programs and their role within the induction of new teachers will be described. Research related to mentoring, with insight into process and philosophies, will follow. This review will conclude by examining current literature on how school districts are coping with teacher attrition and mentoring and how the use of technology with regard to online communication pertains to effective mentoring strategies.

**Teaching in a Sink or Swim Environment**

The vast majority of new teachers enter the classroom with previously constructed images based on their own experiences as a student. The typical midwestern public school system delivers learning based on a single teacher eagerly poised to teach a group of children or adolescents. This standard of practice has been the norm for over a century and, while some have advocated alternatives, few
signs of change loom on the horizon. In 1975, Lortie’s research into teacher socialization revealed the need for greater understanding of how teachers view themselves as leaders in the classroom. In his book, *Schoolteacher*, Lortie (1975) outlined the individualized perception of teaching experienced by new teachers as they begin their careers in the classroom. Lortie defined an “apprenticeship of observation” as the approximately sixteen years spent by all teachers absorbing the traditional actions of their original mentors, their school teachers. The influence of these early experiences often cemented specific and sometimes inaccurate assumptions as to what teaching is really all about. Lortie's work outlined important theoretical concepts that illuminated both the positive and negative impact of this early “apprenticeship.” While these pre-teacher experiences enlighten the student with what teachers do and is primary in their early teacher development, they provide little insight into best practice strategies and the development of individualized reflection of teaching effectiveness. Lortie stressed the need for teacher pre-service programs that offset these negative aspects by encouraging new teachers to begin building a shared technical socialization within education. If these original concepts are not challenged and finally overshadowed by a new paradigm of teacher collaboration and collegial support, teaching would remain mired in an isolationist construct potentially restricting the flow of effective teaching strategies.

Lortie (1975) outlined the dangers to novice teachers trapped within traditional teacher identity constructs. A new teacher is often assigned a classroom and expected to function on the same level as a veteran educator. Without proper
guidance, the feeling of “being thrown to the wolves” forces a new teacher to default
to their “apprenticeship of observation” for help. Without a network of other
teachers sharing effective techniques and support, new teachers frequently flounder
amid the numerous challenges placed on them. Novice teachers often spend all day
alone with their charges while attempting to learn how to be an effective teacher on
the spot. Lortie warns that while some interaction and socialization exists within
schools, there is little evidence that peer influence is of significant impact on the
communication and encouragement of sharing best practice techniques or enhanced
technical vocabulary. The new teacher is sequestered within the classroom, a
solitary juror, challenged with the responsibility to assess both teaching and
learning.

**Challenges for New Teachers**

Research into why teachers leave teaching earlier and in greater numbers
than other professions has revealed common factors described by beginning
teachers as reasons for not wanting to remain in the classroom. While these factors
are contextually diverse and framed within differing research methodologies,
researchers Gordon and Maxey (2000) organized all new teacher difficulties into six
basic categories: isolation, difficult work assignments, inadequate resources, unclear
expectations, role conflict, and reality shock. Each of these will be described in the
sections that follow.

**Isolation.** While the research conducted clearly indicates a need for change
there is little evidence demonstrating education’s isolationist culture and “sink or
“swim” attitudes (Lortie, 1975) have altered from its long established course. New teachers, freshly released from years of academic study based on reflective practice, are submerged within a culture that is not always welcome to discussion and collaboration. A young teacher’s conflict is revealed in this statement:

I believe strongly in what I do and I could argue intelligently for why I make particular curricular choices, but still I am insecure. Though never challenged, I feel completely unsupported. I am alone in the choices I make, and my panic and insecurity seem clear evidence of my isolation. (Akin, 2001, p. 9)

This novice teacher's cry for help is a common theme among the ever-growing body of research into beginning teacher attitudes (Fox & Certo, 2002; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

**Difficult Work Assignments.** Unlike other professions that incorporate internships and residencies that allow the novice to master challenges on a progressive scale, beginning teachers are often placed in a classroom environment with the same expectations and responsibilities as the master teacher (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). While placed at this experiential disadvantage, new teachers are often given the most challenging classes and working environments (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Veenman, 1984). With these additional demands placed on new teachers there is little surprise novice educators report excessive physical stress and feelings of struggling for survival during their first years in the classroom (Corley, 1998).

**Inadequate Resources.** Professional environments often develop special sets of rules that help define a framework to the social and cultural structure. These rules or interactional patterns guide those immersed in the culture in understanding
their organizational role and in decisions as to acceptable behavior. Research has defined organizational culture as “a patterned system of perceptions, meanings, and beliefs about the organization which facilitates sense-making amongst a group of people sharing common experiences and guides individual behavior at work” (Bloor & Dawson, 1994, p. 276). In education these patterns of perception are revealed in the process of teacher replacement. In my own teaching career, I often witnessed that when a teacher left the school community either through retirement or migration to a new school district, teachers in their former building raided the vacated classroom and removed favored educational resources, replacing them with their older or less functional items. In much the same way younger children are given the used clothing of their older siblings, new teachers are greeted to a classroom filled with the hand-me-downs of their colleagues. When combined with the practice of giving new teachers classes that are less desirable and for which they may not be prepared educationally, it is little wonder why new teachers struggle (Veenman, 1984). While this type of conduct is counterproductive for the success of new teachers, its regeneration each year by veteran teachers has created a level of cultural acceptance. Material procurement for new teachers that follows this process continues to reinforce Lortie’s (1975) contention that new teacher success is measured by who can stay afloat during the first year as an educator.

Reduced public school funding at both the national and state level restrict public education’s ability to properly equip new teachers. The size and geographic locations of school districts, either rural or suburban, are also constraining factors when funding is through property value tax structures. School districts have little
control over the fluid nature of property tax assessments and economic ups and downs. For the new teacher this may result in additional complications when trying to obtain the necessary materials for the classroom.

**Unclear expectations.** As Lortie (1975) outlined in his work, new teachers enter education without a clear vision of what it means to be a teacher. Their “apprenticeship of observation” does not prepare them for the diverse viewpoints as to their role as teacher. Administrators, other teachers, parents, and students each have their own concept of what a new teacher’s role should be in the education of children. This state of confusing expectations often becomes more conflicted when the educational culture of the new teaching assignment conflicts with the novice teacher’s personal teaching philosophy. The result can be a paralysis of action combined with an inability to transfer pre-service teaching techniques to the reality of the classroom (Corcoran, 1981). When evaluated by administrators during their first year in the classroom, novice teachers are often confused when discipline-specific strategies conflict with administrator-based criticisms raised (Blase, 1986).

**Role Conflict.** A beginning teacher during the first classroom assignment is confronted with the duality of living as both a working person and a professional. For many new teachers this is the first time they are no longer sheltered within their family and some form of educational environment. Most have just completed their teaching degree and received certification granting them entrance into public education. Some may be moving to a new town or city and leaving the security of a known cultural setting. While these same factors exist for all novices in the
workplace, education is unique. As has already been stated, teachers’ views of their role in the classroom are based on years of observation as students (Lortie, 1975). As their first year passes they find these prior experiences did not include observation, planning, grading, teacher’s meetings, parent-teacher conferences and how these combine to create conflicts with managing a teaching career while having a function personal life (Byrne, 1994; Fox & Certo, 2002).

**Reality Shock.** For the majority of new teachers, the process of transition from pre-service teacher education to in-service classroom specialist is filled with a flurry of emotional and professional confusion. The combining of each new teacher challenge so far discussed can result in a conflict between the ideological image of teaching and the reality of being a teacher. This conflict has been labeled as “praxis or reality shock” (Ballantyne, 2007; Corcoran, 1981; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Nahal, 2010; Veenman, 1984). It is not uncommon for new teachers to find their first year teaching environments vastly different from their student teaching experiences, as well as their personal and cultural upbringing (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998). The confusing nature of the conflict between pre-service teacher education and the reality of a new teacher’s real world classroom often leave a novice teacher frustrated and overwhelmed with feelings of inadequacy in their beginning efforts to teach (Veenman, 1984). Corcoran (1981) described this as a “condition of not knowing.” When confronted with a set of new variables inconsistent with their individual conceptions of teaching and role in a new teaching environment, new teachers may become professionally impotent. They are faced with a seemingly impossible paradox of admitting they don’t have answers and
appearing vulnerable or feigning knowledge that, if incorrect, leads to error. The ultimate conclusion of these issues is a new teacher struggling to transfer learned skills and pedagogical techniques gained in pre-service programs to the reality of the classroom.

**Challenges for Teachers in Rural School Districts**

Rural school districts face a unique set of challenges that affect their ability to attract and retain new teachers. The process of defining what accurately constitutes a rural school is fraught with challenges, based on the unique nature of each individual district or school. The diverse characteristics of each educational environment confound the analysis process used to determine the most effective policies to limit the problems that confront recruiting and retaining staff necessary for rural schools (Monk, 2007). In addition to the typical first year challenges, teachers in a rural school setting also may be impacted by unique issues related to school and community size, economic foundations, and educational population stability.

**School and Community Size.** One of the most significant characteristics of rural schools is a small student population, typically because the district covers a large geographic area that is sparsely populated, although not all rural programs will neatly fit this criteria (Gibbs, Swaim, & Teixeira, 1998). A new teacher in a rural school often had limited options for where to live, and for participation outside of school activities such as shopping, access to hospital and social services, entertainment and other social amenities (Simmons, 2005). The inability to find
suitable outlets for both personal and professional engagement can heighten the anxiety and feelings of isolation for new teachers (Bates, 2011; Beeson, 2001).

**Economic Foundations.** Rural districts share many of the economic factors that effect larger educational communities. In the last century, the economic foundation of a majority of rural communities was based on traditional industries such as timber, agriculture, and textiles. However, global and national economic decisions made over the last decade began to erode the stability of these long-standing sources of income. While people in many rural communities have successfully found new and innovative alternatives for economic growth, the difficulties of the transition has strained many rural communities’ educational finances (Monk, 2007).

New teachers in rural districts are often faced with limited budgets and lack the purchasing power of larger districts to obtain new materials and equipment. This may leave rural students in a situation that deprives them of the material and opportunities accessible to students in suburban school districts (Beeson, 2001; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2007).

**Student Populations.** A by-product of economic change is the instability of population that accompanies the evolution of new financial foundations. While many rural communities retain a strong connection to agribusiness, the decline of the family farm has created a challenge for rural schools in maintaining a viable and stable student population. In areas with larger agricultural production student participation may be unstable based on the crop, and eventual migration of workers to other locations. In other areas the lack of stable employment contributes to a
lower social economic strata and higher poverty levels. Families that struggle with financial stability often move from one community to another in an attempt to avoid creditors, evade domestic violence, or to find more stable employment (Miller, 2012; Schafft, 2006). For music teachers, this may result in a lack of continuity among students enrolled in their ensembles.

The effect of unstable student populations on new teachers manifests itself in multiple ways. The inability of a district to accurately estimate student populations in progressive years complicates the hiring process. District administrators are faced with decisions of faculty reductions or shifting existing staff into teaching situations for which they may lack proper preparation (Beeson, 2001). Asking a new teacher to teach subjects areas for which he or she is only minimally qualified compounds the already existing stress of beginning a new career. It is little wonder that novice teachers in this environment struggle with the challenges of difficult teaching situations and the resulting insecurity of administrator expectations (Bates, 2011). The complexity of effectively using limited faculty resources to their best advantage often results in the exclusion of many specialized courses or electives, as well (Monk, 2007).

In addition to the potential added stress of teaching in a rural community, new teachers still face the challenges common to most beginning educators. While the geographic location, social structure, or economic fabric may differ, the fact that basic issues of personal and professional isolation, challenging working condition, unclear professional expectations, socialization into a new work environment, or the shock of the in-service reality of being a teacher all play a part in creating the
seemingly monumental task of transition from student practitioner to professional educator.

**Challenges for Music Educators**

New music teachers encounter many of the same challenges as do novice teachers in other content areas (Hancock, 2008). This is apparent in the findings of research designed to evaluate the conditions faced by first year music teachers. In addition, music teachers face a number of specific conditions that may include demanding extracurricular schedules, isolated classroom locations, discipline specialization, and minimal contact with music education peers. These factors, as well as the fact that music teachers often teach in multiple schools or part time situations, may help explain the research findings that music teachers were more likely to leave the classroom than were other teachers (Blair, 2008; Gardner, 2010; Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005).

Analysis of research focused on new music teachers reveals issues that may contribute to a loss of new music educators. Krueger (1999) found that more than 75 percent of the novice music teachers in her study reported feelings of isolation during their first year experiences. This, combined with teaching assignments that required travel between multiple buildings, confounded the possibility of establishing professional support networks with their colleagues. While research has suggested that isolation contributes greatly to the stress levels felt by all new teachers, the additional burdens of travel, inadequate resources, and conflicting expectations with different building administrations increase the potential for

New music teachers are challenged by conflicting perceptions of their role both within their new school environments and personally as music teachers. Conway (2004) explained that it did not take long during the first year of teaching for a new teacher to realize that there was much more to teaching music than expected. She described how the title “music educator” contributed to a conflict of professional identity between being a musician and a teacher. Extensive amounts of time are spent in pre-service music education programs in the training of musicianship only to find that music skills may need to take a back seat to the process of teaching students. Conway stated that, “I know many disillusioned music teachers who struggle with their jobs every day because they spend less time than they anticipated on music making and more on management and administrative details” (p. 46). This sums up the frustration novice music teachers may feel as they attempt to maneuver the complexities of being a musician and a teacher. Music researchers report that the issues described here are significant contributors to new teacher attrition in music education (Conway, 2001; Conway, 2003; Hancock, 2008; Krueger, 1996, 2000; Scheib, 2004).

**Induction**

Following the prolific surge in research in the 1990s regarding the conditions faced by both new and experienced teachers, there came an outcry for the development of programs to correct the growing departure of teachers from the
classroom. *Induction* was the process designed to address the issues of isolation, lack of support, and desire for peer collaboration within the educational community. Within a few years mandates from many states began requiring school districts to implement induction programs for all teachers, both those new to teaching and those newly hired by a district. Induction programs were designed to deliver a “multi-faceted, multi-year system of planned and structured activities that support novice teachers’ developmentally-appropriate professional development in their first through third year of teaching” (Stanulis & Wood, 2009).

Opportunities available for new teacher support have increased over the past 25 years. In 1990, approximately 50 percent of new teachers received any form of induction during their primary educational experience. By 2008, that number had grown to over 90 percent. In 2012 the number of states that had mandated some level of functional induction programs had grown to 27 (Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, & Burn, 2012). Although the number of state induction programs has grown, the content of individual state induction and mentoring processes vary greatly. The depth of district-required participation can vary from a full-time, trained mentor, with a reduced teaching load that provides the opportunity for observing each assigned mentee, to one who is only responsible to serve as an informal “buddy” to a new teacher (Strong, 2005). Smith and Ingersoll’s (2004) research also described the inconsistent frameworks regarding induction duration, structure, mentor selection and funding.
Mentoring

One of the central features in new teacher induction programs is one-on-one mentoring (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Mentoring is viewed as the interaction between an experienced educator and a new teacher. Although not always consistent, this interaction usually occurs between teachers that share common grade levels, disciplines and/or school locations. The process links the veteran teacher’s experiential knowledge of content and process to the pre-service training of a new teacher. The guidance provided by the mentor in the professional development of a novice teacher is a critical element in the success of new teacher induction programs (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Research reveals that the process of mentoring not only includes assisting in the maturation of a new teacher with classroom strategies and teaching techniques but can also provide much needed support with issues of teacher identity and the reality shock described in research by Veenman (1984) and summarized again by Maxey and Gordon (2000). Moir (2005) defined good mentoring practice as that which provided “practical, concrete advice, posed important questions” to guide a new teacher in the process of transferring knowledge and skills gained during teacher education to the real-life situations of the classroom. Moir also discussed the importance of maintaining perspective for a new teacher while receiving feedback and reviewing alternative viewpoints when developing solutions for the learning needs of students.

The duties and processes of mentoring may vary beyond those mentioned above. New teacher mentoring often includes lesson planning and curriculum
implementation, classroom observations, technical and logistical support, working through student emotions and conflict resolution, and support with parental and administrative challenges (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006). Results of one line of research suggests that additional elements of mentoring should include guidance for a novice educator in the use of classroom assessment data to facilitate development of goals intended to improve teaching skills and continued growth as a teacher (Wang & Odell, 2002; Wang, Odell, & Schwille, 2008).

**Philosophical Models of Mentoring**

Insight into the different mentoring philosophies is critical to understanding the diverse pathways followed in new teacher induction programs. In a traditional model, an experienced and professional colleague’s role is to smooth the transition from pre-service student learner to in-service facilitator of learning. This relationship is built on a foundation of trust that knowledge is best transferred in one direction. The protégé must be confident in and respect the superior knowledge and experience of the mentor. In turn, the mentor’s guidance is founded in an abiding trust of the importance of proper professional leadership and personal support. While this type of mentoring structure has validity within current mentoring strategies, it can easily neglect the individuality of the novice teacher by suggesting that the mentor’s guidance is always the best path (Bell-Robertson, 2014) while at the same time reinforcing the long existing traditions of classroom isolation (Gratch, 1998).
The pitfall within traditional mentor/mentee philosophies exemplified by the preceding example is the lack of reflection on practice. Mentoring that neglects the analysis of the how and why of learning delivery strategies, and purports to convey best practice methods of teaching, contributes to proliferation of ineffective methods through generations of new teachers. Mentoring that neglects the knowledge and experience of new teachers encourages a mindset in novice teachers that prior or pre-service learning is of little value in the classroom and their only survival exists within the guidance of the more experienced mentor (Putnam & Borko, 2000; Wang & Odell, 2002). Wang and Odell (2002) argued that new teachers within a primarily positivist mentoring environment lack support to critically analyze existing teaching practice and are less likely to develop more constructivist classroom frameworks or establish standards-based teaching practices.

Another philosophical approach to new teacher support during the first year is more directly reflected in a humanistic viewpoint for mentoring (Wang & Odell, 2002). From this perspective, beginning teachers receive emotional support to combat personal issues of confidence and their emerging teacher identity. While this model does not neglect traditional mentoring strategies, its emphasis is more focused on mentors serving as a sounding board when novice teachers need to talk through issues that challenge their feeling of security (Gold, 1996; Wang & Odell, 2002). This method of new teacher mentoring can be an effective tool (Odell & Ferraro, 1992). There is little support, though, that a humanistic approach will
improve new teachers’ abilities to learn from their experiences in the classroom (Wang & Odell, 2002; Wang et al., 2008).

Critical constructivism provides another philosophical model for new teacher mentoring (Wang & Odell, 2002). The focus of this process is to encourage new teachers to seek answers by using an inquisitive approach when creating and developing teacher best practice strategies (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Wang & Odell, 2002). Athanases and Achinstein focused their research on 20 induction pairings and 37 mentor leaders to determine which induction processes were most effective on new teacher abilities. Their research indicated that beginning teachers began to develop greater understanding in the learning process of students, especially lower achieving students, when mentoring activities incorporated the use of individual reflective practice, brainstorming, and analysis of assessment activities. Although the critical constructivist approach shows promise, Wang and Odell (2002) found only minimal research that focused on the connectivity between collaboration and constructed knowledge for new teachers and the potential impact this could have on student learning.

Each mentoring model reviewed, traditional, humanistic, and critical constructive, demonstrates the complex issues that exist within the mentoring and induction processes for new teachers. Each is lacking without inclusion of some or all elements of the other two methodologies. While a constructivist approach requires a proactive attitude for a new teacher, this does not assist them with implementing best practice teaching strategies that could be learned in traditional mentoring. Yet, the emotional needs of new teachers should not be ignored in hopes
that following tried and true methods or the analysis of student work, will somehow relieve issues of isolation and teacher identity that may plague a novice instructor. Each method represents a different philosophy of knowledge regarding what types of mentoring support new teachers actually need to be successful in the classroom.

Mentoring Effects on Induction.

Over the last two decades, mentoring research has based questions on two primary areas. Attrition is the focus of one body of research. Researchers undertaking these studies want to know how effective mentoring is for reducing the number of teachers leaving the classroom during the first years of their career. The second area is based on the humanistic mentoring model that addresses a new teacher’s emotional wellbeing and quality of entry into a unique teaching environment.

Teacher attrition. A number of large quantitative studies were conducted to help understand the role of mentoring to stem the tide of new teachers leaving education not long after their first year. Research findings have revealed that mentoring had an important positive impact on teacher retention (Scherer & Berliner, 2001). Scherer and Berliner reported that the mentoring of new teachers in the school districts of Arizona reduced the previous attrition rates from 50% to 15%. Results of other studies have confirmed that well designed and implemented induction and mentoring programs can reduce the attrition rates for new teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 1996; Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999; Lucksinger, 2000; Serpell, Bozeman, & Educational Resources Information Center (U.S.), 1999). Smith and
Ingersoll (2004) compiled statistics taken from the National Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) to determine if the implementation of new mentoring programs in school districts that participated in the SASS data were finding improved retention of new teachers. The findings revealed a reduction in the potential for new teacher loss to 30% when a mentee and mentor pairing shared the same field of study. Smith and Ingersoll (2004, 2011) discovered in the survey data that additional induction program features such as common planning time with colleagues, collaborative instructional design, and participation in positive networking groups were also significant factors toward new teacher retention.

A number of mentoring initiatives implemented by individual states have provided additional evidence supporting the premise that induction and mentoring help reduce teacher attrition. Connecticut’s BEST mentoring program has been the focus of several important research projects. Young (2002) found that schools providing quality mentoring and professional development experienced greater retention rates for teachers during their second year in the classroom. His work was based on a qualitative case study framework of two urban schools with contrasting programs for beginning teacher support and development. A common element, proper mentor pairing regarding grade levels and curriculum, was noted by Young as a significant factor in the BEST program success at reducing new teacher attrition. Young stated:

the possible importance of a grade-level and content-area match points to the potential value of linking new teachers with mentors and other colleagues who have knowledge of their curriculum, and pedagogical expertise and the ability to work closely with other adults. (p. 823)
Young also found evidence that mentoring quality was improved when mentors demonstrated extensive knowledge of mentee-relevant curriculum and best practice strategies regarding induction and mentoring process. The findings of the study indicated a possible need for a more “it takes a village” approach to mentoring. New teachers who were provided support at multiple levels beyond a solitary mentor were less likely to leave teaching in the early stages of their career.

The effects on new teacher retention of a state-level mentoring program in Texas were also investigated. When comparing those who left and who remained in teaching during their first year, data demonstrated retention of beginning teachers who did not receive mentoring as almost 10 percent less than those who were part of a induction program (80.8% and 89.2%, respectively). The same data revealed a difference of the almost the same amount for second year teachers in the same situation (75.4% vs 84.4%) (Fuller, 2003).

**Mentoring and student achievement.** One aspect of research related to new teacher mentoring that has resulted in conflicting results addresses the issue of how mentoring influences student achievement. In a review of existing research, Ingersol and Strong (2011) reported that several studies empirically demonstrated a positive relationship between new teacher mentoring and student achievement. However, the existence of additional studies that failed to support positive results with student achievement made generizability of the positive effect mentoring can have on student learning unwise.
The diverse nature of mentoring programs and their inclusion in state mandated induction programs does demonstrate the possibility of optimistic results. During the mid 1980s both North Carolina and Connecticut reported significant improvements in math and reading scores following the implementation of a number of new teacher support efforts that included mentoring for all first year teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000). As with other studies, however, the fact that mentoring was included with many other initiatives creates challenges to making claims concerning mentoring’s importance when reviewing student achievement.

Mentoring’s possible effect on student achievement may be reflected in research on new teacher attrition, if mentoring helps keep teachers in the classroom. Recent research exposes issues created when new teachers leave. Results of two studies show that even after controlling for diverse indicators of teacher ability and circumstance, teacher turnover has a detrimental effect on student achievement (Hanushek, Rivkin, & Schiman, 2016; Ronfeldt et al., 2013).

**The Internet and Beginning Teacher Induction**

The increased influx of computer technology in the public school, accessible through the World Wide Web, has opened new possibilities for broadening the scope of induction programs for first year teachers. In the late 1980s several university education programs began pioneer projects to combat early career teacher attrition. In the early 1990s, a director of teacher education at Harvard began using the Internet to connect groups of former Harvard students who were beginning their teaching careers with the purpose of stimulating dialogue about
teaching issues and theories that were part of their Harvard training (Merseth, 1991). This type of communication was facilitated by the creation of Internet forums and bulletin boards. Based on the overwhelming participation and the positive feedback from users, Merseth’s confidence in using Internet technologies to support new teachers was revealed in her quote that she was “on to something. This is a coming thing” (Merseth, 1991, p.146). By the early years of the 21st century the term “telementoring” appeared in publications and research describing the use of the Internet to create educational exchange through e-mail and chat-rooms for the specific purpose of supporting beginning teachers (Ganser, 2005). Within the last decade more school induction programs have begun partnering with universities to develop networks that facilitate a type of virtual communication between new teachers, peers and members of teacher education faculties for the purpose of supporting new educators and encouraging their growth as professionals. These new virtual networks range from the use of basic e-mail or instant messaging to bulletin board type forums that allow communication from all corners of the globe. Within these Internet communities of educators there exist powerful exchanges of materials, best practice strategies and other education-focused interactions (Babinski, Jones, & DeWert, 2001; Fry, 2006; Liston, Whitcomb, and Borko, 2006).

Whereas several universities have begun to develop Internet assisted learning centers as part of the teaching curriculum for pre-service teachers, few have been more influential than the New Teacher Center in Santa Cruz, California. During its infancy, the New Teacher Center was part of an outreach program of the
University of California at Santa Cruz. However the project grew and is now an independent, not for profit organization designed and dedicated to teacher development. One element of the project that is relevant to this research is the online mentoring program for math and science educators. In this program new teachers receive mentoring from a trained online mentor who is presently teaching or has taught in the same curricular area and grade level as the novice teacher. Titled *e-Mentoring for Student Success* (e-MSS), beginning teachers have the opportunity to interact through online communication technology with an assigned mentor in the areas that most concern them during their first year or years in the classroom ([www.newteachercenter.org](http://www.newteachercenter.org)). While the program supports new teachers both emotionally and professionally, it also encourages new teachers to discuss the problems they face in the classroom. The use of questioning and reflective conversations, dilemmas and inquiries help the novice teacher develop an inquisitive attitude toward their professional growth. This is not only helpful during their initial teaching experiences but also is an essential personal and professional characteristic that encourages individual development of best practice teaching and learning strategies (Prouty, 2009).

The process by which mentor and mentee communicate and the content of that communication has been the focus of a number of important studies. Based on research by Gentry, Denton, and Kurz (2008), online mentoring communication is instituted in written dialogue between the mentor and mentee. Findings of their inquiry revealed that there were three specific constructs that guided online mentoring interactions: 1) technology based professional development that utilized
modeling and/or self-observation using video feedback techniques combined with mentor interaction either in person or through online communication technology, 2) email or instant messaging software, and 3) online discussion using an electronic bulletin board or forum. The content within the communication during mentoring was the focus of a qualitative study done by Hew and Hara (2007). The observations of online activities and interviews with participants communicating via an electronic mailing list of literacy teachers revealed that the sharing of knowledge was the most common content in the messages exchanged. The authors concluded that primarily focused on the content and motivation for knowledge sharing in this email-based community. However, the final implications of the results concern communication barriers to the email process, and the authors suggested that some type of mediating structure is necessary to reduce the potential of misunderstanding and conflict in text based communication.

Issues of new teacher emotion are also present within the content of online interaction between individuals. Data analysis of the comments shared through a number of online communication structures, wikis, blogs, and so forth, revealed that online communication was an effective method for revealing the spectrum of emotions felt by teachers (Hur & Brush, 2009). The participants’ ability to express and reflect on their emotions provided a needed balance between learning and a desire for emotional support.

**Rationale for online communication technology for new teachers.** The processes and strategies of face to face mentoring such as reflective practice, shared learning, and acclimation to a teaching culture can all find applications within an
online environment. A number of research studies have suggested that, based on the proliferation of Internet access in educational settings and the growth of digital communication, the process of reflection and self-analysis for the novice teachers may be as effective in online settings as face-to-face interaction. Online structures with almost limitless digitalization of information allow extended access times for discussion and contact with teaching artifacts, thus extending the time for analysis and interpretation (Dede, Ketelhut, Whitehouse, Breit, & McCloskey, 2009; Roddy, 1999).

An array of online interactions can increase and enhance the depth of reflective practice and enculturation of teaching. The results of a case study conducted by Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) indicated that the relationship between members could strengthen within an online environment. Interactions conducted through virtual networks foster interchanges between participants based on the same cultural and interpersonal structures found in real life personal contact. The constructs of searching for common ground, participant connection, sharing of knowledge deemed valuable, and a group investment and cultivation of continuity, fundamental to traditional group interaction, also are found in online interactions.

Most mentoring environments are based on a traditional mentor-mentee framework. Glickman (1985) structured novice supervision within three categories for the support for new teachers; directive, collaborative, and non-directive. The directive construct is based upon the well-established master-novice model in most mentoring and induction programs. Mentoring based on a collaborative model is structured to allow communication between both parties that will facilitate
decisions based upon joint agreement. A non-directive paradigm is designed to encourage reflection and a mentee driven decision making process. While it may appear the participant flexibility necessary for a professional collaborative or non-directive mentoring relationship could hinder successful mentoring, research has revealed that empowering novice teachers with the selection of their own mentors, specifically to our study, another music teacher with similar teaching experience combined with flexibility of time and the induction environment, enhanced the depth of mentoring effectiveness as well as the sustainability of the mentor/mentee relationship (Raschdorf, 2015).

**Benefits of online communication technology for new teachers.** Current research studies explicate the advantages of online interaction within online environments. Interviews of 23 teachers from a trio of large online communities revealed five salient reasons for participant involvement in an online group (Hur & Brush. 2009). These included: sharing emotions, advantage of online environments (larger audience, diverse perspectives and anonymous participation in conflict resolution), combating teacher isolation, exploring new ideas, and a sense of belonging or group camaraderie. The fact that some of the issues pertinent to Hur and Brush (2009) parallel issues expressed by new teachers in a study by Gordon & Maxey (2000) strengthen the argument for development of online mentoring programs.

A significant contribution for the support of new teachers is the flexibility online mentoring can provide for addressing the diverse and specific needs of new teachers, including the ability for creating online mentor pairings that were
curriculum and grade level specific in the areas of math and science (Kepp & Mike, 2009). Hur and Brush’s (2009) online participating teachers expressed a need to share personally their feelings about teaching, which included the desire to feel part of a professional community. Participants in online study groups commented about a need to share how they were feeling about being a new teacher, in addition to a number of other pertinent issues for new teachers (Babinski et al., 2001; Levin, He, & Robbins, 2006; Sprague, 2006).

A policy and research development initiative by Schlager, Farooq, Fusco, Schank and Dwyer (2009) supported the importance online environments can play in teacher development. They explained the significant value and impact “cyber enabled” programs could have to alleviate the issue of time and inadequate resources for mentoring prevalent in many public schools. The value of this debate is summarized thus; “New teachers, isolated teachers, and those in underserved schools, where expertise and resources are least available, will benefit the most” (p. 88).

The ability of an online mentoring environment to create a program that is able to cover those areas of greatest concern to new teachers is essential. In addition to meeting the teachers’ personal needs, Baran and Cagiltay (2010) indicated that the participants became invested in online communities for the purpose of applying learning theory to real classroom situations, creating online discussion environments where teachers can experience diverse perspectives and ideas affecting teachers’ beliefs about practice, and discovering new teaching topics. A review of literature completed by Zhao and Rop (2001) emphasized the potential
that online communication technology could have for meeting the individual needs of teachers, both in their novice years and as they grow professionally. The flexibility of online communication environments is reflected in this quote from Virtual Learning Environments: Using, Choosing, and Developing Your VLC:

They work reliably using good technology that can be accessed from a variety of locations, using a range of devices. This is key to their success in that they allow members of the community to seek answers and support from the community at the time and place they need it. (Weller, 2007, p. 154)

Online teacher support structures. The beginning of research on the subject of online networks dedicated to either pre-service or in-service teachers began in the early 1990s at Harvard University (Merseth, 1991). The Beginning Teacher Computer Network or BTCN was created to keep beginning Harvard alumni in education connected with other new teaching alumni and university faculty. In the beginning, 38 first year middle and high school teachers and four members of the Harvard faculty participated in the project. Connected through networked computers, all participants could communicate privately through email or publicly via bulletin boards. Data collected from the computer network included information about the classification of each posting and how often the network was utilized. Participants also were interviewed. Some of the most frequent responses were coded under the categories emotional support, value of private discussions on school related issues, isolation, and problem solving.

The use of an email-based support system with student teachers also had been studied. Roddy (1990) collected data on messages between student teacher groups assigned to share their experiences. Other participants in the networked
group could read and, if so inclined, respond to their colleagues. The intent of the
program was to connect new teachers within a learning community that allowed the
potential for diverse prospective for problem solving and facilitating the transfer of
pre-service learning to in-service teaching. Hawkes and Romiszowski (2001)
conducted a similar study that incorporated computer-mediated communication
(CMC) using email and bulletin boards as the primary media for participant
communication. Data collected over a four-month period suggested that CMC was an
important strategy for the encouragement of reflective learning and collaborative
networking development.

During the last decade of the twentieth century, a number of computer-
mediated networks were initiated for students in college and university teacher
development programs, as well as their graduates in their first year of teaching
(Broholm, 1993; Clarken, 1993; Merseth, 1992). The data in these early programs
consisted of communication types and their differences and similarities. “The
Lighthouse Project” (Babinski et al., 2001), while sharing the message analysis
method similar to other projects, was organized on a two tier structure with two
distinct grouping. The project participants were twelve first-year teachers, four
experienced teachers, and four university faculty members. They were organized
into two groups, experienced teachers in the first group and university faculty in the
second. The purpose was to explore the development of the roles between the two
groups by analysis of the responses to the messages shared between participants.
As with the studies discussed previously, significant factors of emotional support,
collegial networking, and best practice classroom strategies and curriculum were
the most prevalent topics. However, data analysis also enlightened the research community regarding the importance of the facilitator role in providing effective communication and organizational stability.

Although the research findings include positive elements of computer-mediated computer networks, the benefits to new teachers are not guaranteed. A study by Killeavy and Moloney (2010) was based on a premise espoused by Wenger (1998), that participants using Internet Communication Technology (ICT) to facilitate a community of practice type environment should share a feeling of common or joint purpose. Although one goal was that participating novice teachers would learn constructively from group and individual reflection, researchers found that participants were often more focused on personal issues, and less likely to personally reflect or respond to the messages of others. While no definitive reason materialized from the data analysis, one explanation offered in the research was that study participants taught diverse subject matters in secondary school settings, and therefore may have found less common ground by which to develop a unifying purpose.

**Limitations to online mentoring research.** There is a limited body of research that specifically addresses online interactions between mentors and new teachers. However, some of the initial studies pointed to the potential of online mentoring as a part of new teacher induction (Bonk & Kim, 1998; Ensher et al., 2003; McMullen et al., 1998). Klecka et al. (2004) examined the electronic communications between 300 beginning teachers and mentors who interacted online as part of four independent electronic mentoring programs. Data, collected over a three-year
period, consisted of interviews, email texts, surveys, focus group discussions, and statistics on website usage. Analyses indicated that new and experienced teachers became involved in online communication to share experiences and discuss new strategies in teaching with others in the online program. The study revealed that new and experienced teachers, as well as mentors, found that professionally relevant communication with others was valuable to their professional growth.

The College of William and Mary participated in a joint venture with the Center for Teacher Quality to create an online mentor group. Titled *Electronically Networking to Develop Accomplished Professional Teachers* (ENDAPT), this endeavor created an online environment for mentoring both in groups and singularly. Gareis and Nussbaum-Beach (2007) collected and analyzed participant postings from the perspectives of direction, function, and content. The results revealed: 1) an almost equal number of one-on-one mentor/mentee relationship posts as there were postings directed to the entire group; and 2) novices communicated with other novices and mentors communicated with other mentors. The posting topics were diverse, including many of the those found in face-to face mentoring, such as encouragement and support, personal reflection, communicating similar experiences and frustration with classroom issues.

While most of the existing studies focused on teachers in general, some have been designed to focus on how online mentoring can effect the mentoring of teachers in unique disciplines. Gentry (2011), as part of the eMSS program developed at the New Teacher Center in Santa Cruz California, designed and implemented a mixed methods study focused on online mentoring of special
education teachers. The study participants were 78 special education teachers, mentors, facilitators, and one university faculty member. The data collected were drawn from both surveys and online communication that occurred during the five-month study period. The postings by mentors and mentees reported by Gentry reflected similar figures as reported by Gareis and Nussbaum-Beach (2007). Other interesting findings were that mentees posted more in one-on-one interactions with their mentors than they did in the online area designed for group participation. The content of the postings reflected issues of collaboration, conditions and administrative support, managing student behavior, managing the role of teaching to diverse student needs, and time management.

I found limitations in most of the research studies that focused on the use of an online structure with new teacher mentoring. The use of the term ‘mentoring’ was seldom consistent. While some research described here addressed interactions between mentor and mentee, others used a more open structure that included communication with a mentor, other new teachers, other professionals in the field, or online learning communities. This makes it difficult to determine and assess salient elements of online one-on-one mentoring. The lack of more rigorous qualitative or quantitative data collection strategies makes it difficult to determine if there was clear participant growth or development in online mentoring programs (Zhao & Rop, 2001).

The literature presented in this review does provide evidence that online mentoring programs may provide needed personal and emotional support for novice teacher participants (Gentry, Denton, & Kurz, 2008; Zhao & Rop, 2001).
However, there exists less evidence that online mentoring leads to the growth and implementation of best practice strategies in the classroom. Findings on new teacher mentoring research do support the value of online interactions for new teacher growth, and thus further research on this aspect of new teacher induction seems warranted (DeWirt, Babinski, & Jones, 2003; Gareis & Nussbaum-Beach, 2007; Klecka, Cheng, and Clift, 2004).

**Mentoring and Beginning Music Educator Specific Issues**

The struggles that may affect the success of new teachers and perpetuate their flight from the classroom are paralleled within the music classroom. Like teachers of other content areas, new music teachers need quality mentoring and induction programs. However, because of the unique conditions found in the music classroom, traditional mentoring and induction structures may require modification to be effective. Problems faced by school music teachers do not seem to be reflected well in the current body of literature. The reason may be that often music teachers are the only such specialized educator in a building or district, thus making the process of a content-specific mentor pairing difficult, if not impossible.

**Isolation.** The inability of music teachers to network and interact with other music colleagues may be a contributing factor in why new music teachers leave the profession. The fact that music teachers are often assigned multiple buildings with different environments and administrative leadership contributes to the complexity of providing a suitable mentoring situation. Induction under these circumstances may leave new music teachers feeling alone and isolated. Participants in a study by
Krueger (1999) summed up the frustrations felt by music teachers in a one-size-fits-all mentoring world, stating: “I don't feel that I've found any mentors in this school or district in my first year of teaching; I've really had to wing it on my own” (p. 7, interview 7), and “We had new teacher facilitators, but they weren't music teachers. They couldn’t help much with the problems I face” (p. 8, interview 9).

The isolation felt by new music teachers first received attention in a research project completed by Sindberg and Lindscomb (2005). One hundred music educators with differing levels of experience were surveyed to help the researchers gain an insight on music teacher attitudes regarding professional isolation, and speculate on its causes. Analyses revealed four pertinent factors: 1) isolation resulted from the teacher’s location in their building, and 2) from the subject they taught; 3) teachers with 10 or less years in the classroom felt the effects of isolation more intensely than teachers with greater experience; 4) feeling of isolation were detrimental to effective teaching. Perhaps only those who have spent time in a music-teaching environment can understand the immense pressure of public concerts, program administration, festivals and competitions, and developing a parental supported supplemental funding structure. Krueger (1999) revealed that novice music teachers found feelings of isolation combined with an extensive workload to be the primary struggles during the first years in the classroom.

**Traveling between buildings.** Other factors that compounded the frustrations of isolation for new teachers also included the need to travel between buildings during the school day. The complex and unique demands of building schedules sometimes require travel times to overlap lunch breaks or planning periods. In
addition, school district professional development programs are often facilitated by assemblies that are district wide and discipline specific. The result of this structure is that new music teachers are seldom able to develop important professional networks and collegial relationships inside their own building.

**Unique nature of music classroom.** New music teachers are often confronted with the dissimilar classroom conditions between music and regular teachers. Both elementary and secondary music teachers typically teach many more students and/or larger classes than other teachers. The materials of teaching for a novice music teacher, musical instruments or singing voices, are vastly different from other types of schoolwork. For a new music teacher, this lack of commonality can heighten feelings of being all alone (Haack, 2003). Feelings of isolation, as shown in the research, are detrimental to the healthy personal and professional development of new music teachers.

A powerful example supporting the necessity for new music teachers to find guidance and process reinforcement from experience music educators can be seen in a participant comment in the Sindberg and Lindscomb (2005) study. The participant stated: “I honestly believe that if I could have had at least one person there for support and to talk about the profession with, I might not be leaving after this year” (p. 55).

**Solitary role as novice music teacher.** The inability to supply properly trained and matched mentors is a common theme in the literature about mentoring new music teachers. An early study of 55 new music teachers in Pennsylvania and New Jersey revealed concern that if novice music teachers are not mentored by other
music educators it was highly unlikely they would master the skills necessary to be successful in the music classroom (DeLorenzo, 1992).

**Funding of programs.** The strength of district financial resources is another factor that limits the level of induction complexity that can be provided to new music educators. These mandated and frequently unfunded programs may require local districts to comply in order to be eligible for participation in state funding formulas. Conway (2003) described the frustrations felt by many administrators concerning state mentoring initiatives: "The state just came down from above and told us 'you will have a mentor program.' But without money to support it we just cannot provide what the state is asking" (p. 15).

Districts with greater funding foundations are able to bridge these monetary obstacles and develop highly structured and well-implemented mentoring programs. Larger, more wealthy districts often have the ability to provide new music teachers with music mentors. Many of these programs also include professional development workshops designed with novice music teachers in mind. However, new music teachers in smaller districts or those districts with lower tax-based funding support are often left on their own to find needed professional development and mentoring support (Conway, 2006).

**Professional networking issues.** The development of professional networks created specifically for new music teachers is an important factor for overcoming the uncertainty and frustrations incumbent for all new teachers. Smith and Haack (2000), as part of a series on mentoring, expounded the value of new music teachers actively creating relationships with experienced music educators with the purpose
of creating and developing a career-long mindset of professional growth. Conway (2003) supported the necessity for searching out important professional connections as a significant element for continued growth and as a method to alleviate feelings of isolation. Research by Krueger (2003) revealed that it is not unusual for new music teachers to seek out other professionals for assistance during the early years of their teaching career. Blair (2008) warned that new music teachers who do not find support mechanisms to combat isolation never become immersed in the teaching culture of their discipline, which is important in the total learning process for their students. Research reveals that music teachers want and need professional connections. New music teachers, either encouraged by a personal need to connect with other music teachers or forced to reach out by situational necessity, actively seek for connections that fill the void of isolation and help combat the constant fear of failure (Krueger, 2003; Sindberg, 2011).

**Mentoring New Music Educators**

While state and local district mentoring programs have strived to minimize the negative effects of new teacher isolation during the transition from pre-service to in-service teacher, the district-developed mentoring programs often leave new music teachers feeling much like the proverbial round peg in the square whole. As revealed by Zerman and Conway (2004), the proper pairing of a novice music teacher with an experienced music educator as mentor can create a personally and professionally successful transition into the classroom and strengthen the process of knowledge transfer necessary for new teachers to become creative and
constructive educators. However, when administrative assignments of music mentors are not based on an understanding of the needs of new music teachers, the results are often less than successful. The stress and additional problems created by a lack of professional and personal support in the first years of a music teacher's career can lead to frustrations and a loss of passion for teaching. Leaving the profession altogether is a frequent result of this negative environment (Conway, 2003; Krueger, 2003; Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005).

School districts, despite their best efforts, have shown little progress in developing programs that adequately meet the needs of new music educators. A review of existing research of beginning new teacher induction and mentoring by Benson (2008) illuminated several factors that contribute to the lack of success in the mentoring of new music educators. These include a lack of consistent standards in implementation of the program and the mentor/mentee pairing process, an ignorance of the unique nature of the music classroom, non-addressed issues of isolation with new music teachers, a lack of sensitivity to needed flexibility in program design, and the lack of emotional support provided for music teachers. Based on the findings in the study, Benson (2008) called for all involved in the training and professional growth of new music teachers, including both music teacher training institutions and professional music education organizations at the state and local levels, to become actively involved with those who are responsible for the design of new teacher induction programs. Results of research reported by Krueger (2003), Sindberg and Lipscomb (2005), and Conway (2006), are consistent
with Benson’s (2008) call to action for developing improved induction and mentoring programs for new music educators.

Although research in the area of new teacher mentoring has grown extensively since Lortie awakened educators to the plight of beginning teachers, there still remain relatively few studies designed to discover factors beneficial to the development of new music teachers. Krueger (1999) initiated a study of twenty music teachers from a variety of educational settings, both rural and urban. Interviews conducted at the end of their first year of teaching were designed to discover the ways each participant felt they were supported during the first year in the classroom. Data revealed that while most described situations in which they were isolated with little support, a number of participants reported they were satisfied with the support and opportunities they were given to interact with and observe their mentors, both individually and through professional development workshops. These examples of positive mentoring supported Krueger’s belief that new music teachers who developed strong mentoring relationships with veteran music teachers did not suffer detrimentally from feelings of professional isolation. These data are consistent with the results of pioneer research on music teachers done almost a decade earlier, in which new music teachers reported that mentors and experienced colleagues were their most influential platform for support (DeLorenzo, 1992). It is unfortunate, however, that the successful outcomes in Krueger’s participant sample were experienced by only 4 of the 20 new teachers surveyed. Those who reported unsuccessful mentoring experiences described problems regarding inconsistent one-on-one interaction between mentor and
mentee, mentor lack of content area experience, and the absence of useful materials and support.

Conway and Zerman (2004) shed light on the importance of experiential, curricular and grade level similarities shared between a mentor and mentee and the positive impact this has on a successful induction process. Their study focused on the first year mentoring experiences of one of the authors in the study. Zerman was a beginning instrumental music teacher assigned a mentor who was a veteran of the same grade level as he was teaching. Not only did they teach within similar contexts—Zerman was allowed to select the mentor, who received compensation for service in the mentoring role. Conway compiled data through interview and observation of mentor and mentee interactions. Issues such as curriculum, as well as the complex logistical challenges of teaching instrumental music, such as concert programming, were present in the mentoring interactions. Based on the data collected, Conway and Zerman (2004) recommended that mentor pairing for new music teachers could be improved if selected mentors shared common music teaching experiences as well as grade level assignment with their new mentees.

Existing research demonstrates the importance of curricular and age level commonality to the successful mentoring of new music teachers, yet the structure of mentor/mentee interactions varies there is often a mismatch between district mentoring program parameters and new teacher needs. Conway (2003) examined thirteen school districts in Michigan that had recently employed new music teachers. Based on analysis of observations, documents, and interviews, findings revealed inconsistency between mentor/mentee assignments, reimbursement,
interaction time with mentees, and training received by mentors. Also revealed was the variety of content within the mentoring interactions. Little conversational content was found to be focused on curriculum. Instead, challenges of leadership duties, school policy, classroom management, and dealing with parental issues dominated the interactions between mentors and mentees. This is consistent with other research findings. DeLorenzo (1992) reported that new teachers were less interested in mentoring conversations about classroom teaching than on matters of budgeting and program enlistment. Based on surveys from new music teachers, issues of communication and other non-curricular issues were found to be of greater concern to new teachers than a need for focused attention on best practice teaching strategies (Ballantyne & Packer, 2004). It seems that while “beginning teachers need to be asking curricular questions and interacting with experienced music mentors in meaningful ways about instruction” (Conway, 2003, p. 18), issues that occur outside the classroom are more overwhelming to new music teachers.

Although research aimed at providing more diverse mentoring and support for new teachers is growing within the body of literature in general education (Stanulis & Wood, 2009), the process of music education mentoring practice still has much to be studied. Conway (2015) interviewed thirteen experienced music teachers who had reviewed findings in an earlier study (Conway, 2003) to determine the level of perceptual change that had transpired between music teachers during the interim. The interview responses indicated that there still existed a lack of consistency in music teacher mentoring and the value placed on the mentoring process by those affected. Continued efforts are necessary to address
the perceived needs of novice music teachers in order to understand and facilitate the kinds of mentoring needed to achieve the most successful induction to teaching possible.

**Emerging Technology and Beginning Music Teacher Mentoring**

With the recent increases in the use of social networking, new teachers now have numerous ways to stay connected to professional colleagues, regardless of geographic restrictions. While some authors have expounded the value of social media, such as Facebook or Google or other forms of online communication (Ajero, 2007; Blair, 2008), the mentoring of beginning music educators via social media has not been studied. Although there is research into the use of online platforms for communication and interaction in pre-service music educator development programs (Bauer & Daugherty, 2001; Conkling, 2003; Hwang & Vrongistinos, 2012), there exists a very small body of literature available regarding research into online mentoring for beginning in-service music educators.

The use of online forums or discussion groups been the primary source of online interactions for new music teachers. A study of topics posted on the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) website during 2004-2005 revealed that the teachers interacting in the posted discussions were concerned with issues in their specialties such as planning, teaching strategies, and concerns that were both curricular and extra-curricular in nature (Bauer & Moehle, 2008). The tally of postings lead to increased awareness of a need to provide support for new music educators with concerns over co-curricular issues of budgets, advocacy, and travel.
These results lend support to findings from DeLorenzo (1992), that music teachers tend to struggle more with issues outside the classroom than those within.

The use of a Wikispace online format for music teacher support groups was studied by Bell-Robertson (2011). Based on this study of a small group of new music teachers, it was concluded that by the process of reading posts, contributing posts that shared individual daily experiences, and interacting with group member posted questions and concerns, the participants felt a stronger sense of belonging and lesser feelings of isolation. Based on the findings of the studies cited here, there seems to be potential value in continued design, implementation and investigation of online support programs that incorporate existing and evolving technologies in asynchronous and synchronous web-based communication for the support if new teachers.

The use of a virtual reality technology for mentoring new teachers is slowing developing momentum, as shown in research now available. Virtual reality models are defined by the use to computer technologies allowing video and audio communication in real time. Virtual reality mentoring may soon open new pathways for progress in mentoring equality. Many of the first efforts with effective inclusion of virtual reality for teachers were on the university campus (Smith & Israel, 2010). While most of the programs described were designed to assist in the training of pre-service education students, the lessons learned in development are applicable to programs focused on new teacher induction. The assessment of these programs provides insight into the potential of mentoring strategies possible through the use of the Internet. Findings in Smith and Israel’s work revealed that support and
training in all technological tools, a knowledge of the unique nature of e-mentoring, and easy access to the program are necessary elements of importance when considering any form of e-mentoring plan. Their research also revealed an important need for more extensive research into the effectiveness of e-mentoring.

**Gaps in the Existing Body of Literature on Induction**

This literature review has presented multiple examples of research on the practice and programs of mentoring that link a new teacher with a more experienced colleague. Mentoring as a method for easing the entry of new educators into teaching has been demonstrated as an important factor in teachers’ continued success and growth as educators, and to facilitate their retention in the profession. However, this review reveals two gaps that exist in the current body of literature on the mentoring process: mentoring focused specifically for the music educator and the use of online synchronous or real-time video communication in mentoring programs.

**Mentoring Music Teachers**

Research into the mentoring of beginning teachers has revealed a number of pertinent factors that impact the effectiveness of support for the novice educator. Based on findings by Ingersoll and Smith (2004) from the 1999-2000 School and Staffing Survey, one of the more impactful elements in successful mentoring programs is when the mentor and mentee are paired based on shared grade level and curricular disciplines. Wang, Odell, and Schwille (2008) supported these findings and added that a new teacher’s ability to develop standards based best
practice lessons was improved when both mentor and mentee shared subject specific teaching environments. Their research has potentially important implications for the mentoring of music teachers, and remains in need of more study. Findings of a critical review of research on mentoring and induction programs revealed that observations of new teachers conducted during their participation in induction program demonstrated growth in teacher development (Ingersoll & Smith, 2011). Analyses of interviews with new music teachers indicated the mutual benefits that could be derived within mentoring programs that included observations by both parties, however no studies were found that examined the results of mentoring that included shared observational activities in programs for music teachers (Conway, 2003). Jacob (2008) proposed music mentoring that extended beyond the traditional induction programs be created by the local school district. He called upon states and national music teacher organizations such as the National Association for Music Education and local school districts to combine their efforts in a structured manner that provides more flexibility and greater access to needed resources for improved mentoring and induction. However, Conway (2006) stated that those who attempt the design of quality music mentoring must face the reality that not all school districts are able to provide what is necessary for successful implementation. Faced with such limitations, music mentoring and induction program designers should explore the potential of online communication structures that can bridge the gap for school
districts that are unable, for whatever reason, to provide an appropriate level of mentoring for new music teachers.

Use of Online Synchronous or Real-time Video Technologies

Research conducted by Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) expounded on the potential for online programs that can duplicate the face-to-face interactions between mentor and mentee. While the body of literature regarding synchronous video communication is minimal, it does legitimize the technology’s potential for improving mentoring in schools that lack the ability to provide full service mentoring for new teachers.

Reese (2015a) conducted a study to describe the perceptions of 21 pre-service music teachers participating in virtual field experiences and mentoring activities with eight experienced music teachers, as part of their elementary general music methods course. The pre-service teachers expressed three elements of the virtual observation experiences that were perceived as benefits. They reported that virtual experiences eliminated a need for travel to and from the observation sight, and appreciated the ability to interact with peers when discussing what they saw going on in the classroom. The pre-service participants found that the ability to observe student interaction in the classroom without being there and the ability to observe experienced music teachers using best practice teaching strategies were positive additions to their methods class. The experienced music teachers being observed perceived the use of virtual experiences as reducing the challenges of time demanded of practicing music teachers. The opportunity for the experienced music
teachers to interact with pre-service music teachers created co-learning experiences that were seen as strong professional development and growth opportunities for those being observed (Reese, 2015b).

Rock, Schoenfeld, Zigmond, Gable, Gregg, Ploessl, and Salter (2013) used Skype™ to create online virtual coaching to help new special education teachers improve classroom management skills. The use of real time video interaction allowed new teachers immediate feedback when help was needed.

One of the most promising studies combined the use of Blackboard and Skype™. The program was part of the Quality Teacher for Quality Students (QTQS) project at the University of Southern California (Hwang & Vrongistinos, 2012). Funded by the U. S. Department of Education in 2007, it was implemented to facilitate the Video Self-Reflection (VSR) activity of the QTQS in 2007-2010. The program developed an electronic mentoring program to provide support for teachers of the English Language Learners (ELL) curriculum. Findings of the study demonstrated that online synchronous video communication reduced the time constraints inherent in traditional face-to-face mentoring and allowed mentoring to happen at times that were convenient for the mentor and mentee. Two comments from participants help reinforce the possibilities that this technology provides in improved online mentoring: “Skype™ gave us the opportunity to communicate face-to-face during a time that met both our schedule needs, and “You were able to see facial expressions and gestures, which helps communication be more effective.” (p. 177)

The successful implementation in this study may have transferable implications for music mentoring in districts that lack the resources to provide
quality mentoring, and warrants further research regarding its potential in improving online music mentoring.

**Conclusion**

The necessity for quality new teacher mentoring is recognized in the educational community. However, while the bulk of existing research on the topic is directed to the understanding of issues more closely related to those who teach general or core subject areas at the elementary and secondary levels, very little research is focused on mentoring new teachers in the elementary or secondary music classroom. With the ever-growing presence of computer technology in public schools it is not surprising that there is an increasing body of research dedicated to the study of the implementation of online communication between mentors/mentees in the form of email, bulletin boards, and chat forums, with promising results. Unfortunately, as with other mentor related research, little research can be found with a focus on the use of online mentoring processes for novice music educators.

The recommendation that online mentoring can enhance new teacher induction to meet ‘unique needs’ has been echoed by research in other specialized areas, such as art and physical education (Cothran et al., 2009; Thompson, Jeffries, & Topping, 2010). Music education researchers have suggested that policy makers must be informed about the special challenges music teachers face in their classrooms (Conway & Holcomb, 2004). It seems logical to conclude that mentoring programs for beginning music educators should address these unique needs to
more effectively support the teachers’ growth, and that new music educators need access to well implemented, subject-specific new teacher support. With the rapid advances in modern computer technology, its potential for positive influences on innovation and new ideas related to mentoring practices should be explored. Research designed to further the understanding of online technological advances and their potential uses for music teacher mentoring may have important applications in the design of successful methods for providing new music teachers, especially those who are geographically isolated from other music teachers, with the best mentoring experiences possible.
Chapter Three

Method

This qualitative case study was designed to investigate the contents and effectiveness of videoconference mentoring for first year music teachers in geographically isolated locations. To address this, I based the inquiry on three research sub-questions. The first was designed to reveal the contents of music teacher mentor/mentee interactions during a series of mentoring sessions conducted within an online medium. The second addressed the comparison between the findings of this study and the results of prior research related to teacher mentoring. Each participant's reactions to the real time video mentoring (RVM) process were investigated to address the third sub-question. These questions were approached from analysis of the recorded mentoring interactions and interviews with the participants.

Design

The foundation supporting a properly rigorous qualitative study is built upon the richness of collected data. The nature of the research questions in this study dictated a need for data that provided detailed insights into how the RVM process functioned. Data were required that opened a window into the participant’s impression of the RVM construct and its potential for successful mentoring of new music educators. Based on these requirements, I decided data could most efficiently be collected using a case study design (Stake, 1995). A case study is defined as an intensive investigation of a bounded system comprising individuals or representing
a procedure (Creswell, 2005; Stake, 1995). For a collective case study, sometimes referred to as a multiple case study, similar cases are investigated with the intent to gain a more detailed perspective on the phenomenon in question. For this study, two mentor pairings were created that represented the cases. The participant assignment for each case was based on a set of criterion designed to provide a detailed understanding of the RVM experience (to be described in the section about participants).

**Data Collected**

To obtain the richest levels of data on the RVM process, I conducted one-on-one interviews with each participant at various points during the semester over which the study was conducted. Both participant pairs also recorded each mentoring session, which I transcribed for analysis.

**One-on-one interviews.** Interviews were used to obtain in-depth information from each participant, thus allowing an open window into the experiences and perspectives each brought into the case, not only in the beginning but also as the study evolved. I conducted three separate interviews for each participant. The interviews were conducted using online video communication software prior to the first RVM session, approximately at the midpoint of the study's timeframe, and at the end of the academic semester in which the study was conducted. The first interview comprised a structured set of questions designed to reveal the personal and educational experiences of each participant. The second interview contained fewer and more open-ended questions designed to allow the participants the
opportunity to express their perceptions of how the RVM process was developing and share thoughts concerning the content of the RVM interactions. The final interview also had a minimal questioning structure, and was designed to allow participants to voice their impressions of the complete RVM program concerning their potential effectiveness and concerns. A total of twelve interviews were transcribed using HyperTRANSCRIBE™ software. The completed transcriptions, including the interview questions posed, are found in Appendices B-D. A chronologic table of interviews is also included later in this chapter.

**Observations.** Although interviews are important, observation of the RVM interactions was the best way to adequately investigate what was actually happening in the mentoring sessions. Initially, each mentor/mentee pair was instructed to complete eight, one-hour sessions during the semester of the study. However, because new teachers are often unsure of the time requirements for their new job, each pair was also given the freedom to modify the RVM sessions to whatever time frame best fit their individual situations. The dissimilarity of mentoring programs found nationwide makes it difficult to find or recommend any consistent process to use (Benson, 2008; Conway, 2003; Ehrich et. al, 2004). Therefore, no specific instructions were given to mentors on how to conduct the sessions with their mentee, allowing for free and spontaneous interactions.

To allow for analysis, each RVM session was video recorded. Each mentee computer was equipped to video record all RVM interactions using live-stream video recording software: either Call Recorder for Skype™, developed by Ecamm, LLC. or Pamela for Skype™, developed by PamConsult, Inc. The video recording was
hosted on each individual mentee computer, thus allowing the mentee control of the recording content for the duration for RVM session. I considered this a non-invasive process, which maximized the authenticity of each session.

All interviews were transcribed in their entirety (see Appendices C and D). However, based on the extensive dialog among the pairs of participants, some of which was not pertinent to this study (for example, discussion of topics not related to teaching such as weekend plans or results of sporting events) I felt it unnecessary to transcribe the observation recordings verbatim. Therefore, only those video recorded interactions relevant to a greater understanding of teacher mentoring were transcribed and included in the data analysis of Chapter Four. A complete timeline for all RVM recordings is made available later in this chapter.

**Participant Selection Criteria**

The proper selection of case characteristics and participants was essential for collecting data necessary to understand this study’s primary inquiry. The cases chosen for this study were guided by a purposeful selection strategy utilizing the principles of homogenous samples (Patton, 2002). Thus, based on the desire for the pairs to be similar to the extent possible, as well as the specific purposes of this study, I sought participants to serve as mentees and mentors who met several predetermined criteria.

**Mentee criteria one: First year music teachers.** The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in the state in which my research was conducted requires that each school district provide novice teachers a mentor...
during both their first and second years in the classroom. The rationale behind this statewide educational requirement is based on research that supports the importance of mentoring during the first years in new teacher development (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Zerman & Conway, 2004). While, the data collected in earlier research literature were primarily focused on educators in their first year of teaching, I decided to focus my study on the first year music teacher. This provided greater transferability for comparing my findings to the existing research on new teacher mentoring practices.

**Mentee criteria two: Rural teaching environment.** As witnessed during my first years of teaching in a rural midwestern community, school districts located in geographically remote locations are often challenged to recruit new teachers. Current research lists a lack of readily available resources, few private instructors, and demanding teaching schedules as three factor that contribute to hiring issues faced by rural districts in need of new music educators (Hunt, 2009).

Once hired, new music teachers are seldom provided a mentor with teaching experience in the music classroom because smaller districts seldom have curricula that require more than one or two music specialists. Results of research investigating new music teacher mentoring programs point to the positive impact that a musically trained mentor, with similar teaching background, can have on reducing the anxiety for a novice music educator (Krueger, 1999). While mentors from a different discipline can be helpful in maneuvering numerous district policies and logistic issues, they typically lack discipline-specific knowledge and experience necessary to answer pedagogical questions critical to mentee success.
Based on my personal experience and relevant research, I chose to limit my mentee selection to those beginning their careers in a rural teaching environment. The definition of a rural teaching environment is as expansive as the number of governmental agencies commissioned to deal with the various issue of rural communities. For the purpose of this study, I decided to employ the definition used by the National Center for Educational Statistics, which defines rural in three categories: Fringe, Distant, and Remote. The first two categories apply to those areas that lie within a sphere of influence from urban economic clusters and populations above one hundred thousand. The NCES definition of the Remote category is described as a “Census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and is also more than 10 miles from an urban cluster” (Sonnenberg, 2006). For this study, I determined that mentees must be teaching in a community that would be defined as Remote.

In order to focus more directly on schools with smaller music programs, I used the district size assignment criteria designated by the state activities association to select participants. In this case the state information used was from the state hosting the study. This state’s high school activities association established school classification size criteria on a two-year cycle. During the time of this research they were on the 2008-09/2009-2010 cycle. According to the definitions in this cycle period, all schools whose grade 9-12 enrollment was 245 students or less would be classified as Class 1 or 2 (Urhahn, 2009). Districts of this size often hire music specialists who will be assigned multiple grade levels, vocal and instrumental classes and ensembles, or other similar combinations. All of these
teaching situations create challenging obstacles for a new music teacher. These new teachers are often unprepared for the demands of such complex programs and in greatest need of a music mentor. Therefore, I chose to limit my study to new music teachers whose first year placement would be in a Class 1 or 2 school district.

**Mentee criteria three: Prepared to teach.** Because participating in this study would require added expectations to the new teacher's first semester in the classroom, I was looking for participants who would be capable of meeting all of these expectations. Thus, candidates must have demonstrated a strong potential for becoming a successful music educator during their student teaching practicum, as determined based on a positive recommendation from a university supervisor.

**Mentor criteria One: Classroom expertise.** Good mentors need to be effective teachers. In a report on the New York State Mentor Teacher-Internship Program, Debolt (1989) listed eighteen characteristics that are important for mentors. Of these characteristics, teaching competence and teaching experience were used in my study as qualifiers for mentor selection. I felt that a reputation among their peers for educational excellence in the classroom, and a tenure of fifteen years or more experience, were sufficient determinant factors for inclusion as a mentor candidate.

**Mentor criteria two: Educational experience familiarity.** Good mentoring relationships are built from common experiences. Mentor and mentee interactions are strengthened when both individuals share common educational environments (Huling-Austin, 1992, Conway, 2003). With the mentee requirement of a rural teaching assignment, it was necessary that the mentor had a background with
similar experiences. Therefore, the mentors must have spent time in a Remote
category rural music teaching assignment.

**Mentor criteria three: Logistical similarity.** The diversity that can exist among
rural school districts can be extensive. Although RVM potentially has limitless
geographic boundaries, I focused the physical distance between the mentor and
mentee to no more than 100 miles. I felt this restriction would allow the possibility
of an on-site mentor observation if desired. I also believed that cultural and ethnic
similarities might contribute to strengthening the relationship between mentor and
mentee.

**Mentor criteria four: Mentoring experience.** Understanding the process of
mentoring is important for a mentor to be successful. Conway and Holcomb noted
that mentor training or experience was a key element in the success of new teacher
induction programs. For this reason, only those who possessed experience with
mentoring or had some form of mentor instruction qualified to participate.

**Participant Selection Process**

The process in which potential mentee and mentor participants were
identified was developed through informed recommendations. A three-tiered
organization was created to; 1) create a pool of participants; 2) enlist participant
cooperation; and 3) create mentor pairings. It was my intent to structure this
criterion-based selection process by gathering the best candidates to maximize the
effectiveness of each RVM case.
Mentees. I felt that individuals with primary experience in observing student teachers were in the best position to recommend mentee participants. Therefore, I contacted the leading music education professors from two same-state music education programs that had comparable curricula, which were also similar to the university in which this study was based. Each professor was informed of the criteria for study selection and asked to recommend qualified first year teachers from their program. From each university, I received the name of one potential candidate who had just completed student teaching and would begin teaching during the coming semester.

While in my PhD residency, my assignment to serve as a clinical experience supervisor provided insight into the complexity of determining the potential success of student teachers. I felt that this experience also qualified me to recommend candidates from the group of student teachers I had observed. During the time of the recommendation process, two candidates I had supervised met selection criteria and were added to the list of possible participants.

Once the recommendations were received, the four potential candidates, two female and two male, were ready to be contacted to determine their interest in participation. However, just prior to this initial contact, after mentor recommendations were received, I eliminated one candidate because of my distance requirement between mentor and mentee, thus reducing the pool to match the number of mentors recommended and available.

Mentors. I created the mentor candidate poll through a process similar to that used for mentee selection. I identified and contacted 5 colleagues whom I
respected and with whom I had established a professional relationship through numerous educational interactions during my public school teaching career. My selection of these individuals was based on my observations of their successful educational careers, the respect each garnered in the music education community, and a shared interest in the importance of mentoring new teachers. Each of these colleagues was contacted via phone, informed of the mentor selection criteria, and asked to recommend individuals meeting the selection qualifications and who they also felt would be interested in participating in the study. From this process, three individuals were selected, two females and one male.

Enlistment of Participants

Once all decisions were made regarding participant requirements and the selection process, case membership enrollment was begun. When the pool of potential mentors and mentees was collected the contact process was initiated.

Mentees. Potential mentees were contacted to determine their interest in participating in this study. I contacted each candidate by phone to explain the purpose and requirements of the research process and verify a genuine interest in participation by each individual. Everyone was informed of their rights to confidentiality and the IRB-approved procedures that were in place to protect them as research participants. They were also instructed of the right to withdraw from the study at any time. I provided them with written documentation that paralleled the information we discussed on the phone. A sample copy of the permission form may be found in Appendix A.
Once confident of their desire to contribute to the study, and as required by the IRB of my university, I obtained written permission from each selected mentee. I also explained the necessity for obtaining support from their school administration. Upon receiving the signed consent form from each mentee, I contacted each mentee’s building administrator to explain the purpose of the study, its potential benefits for their new music teacher and, finally, to request their support. Each district representative demonstrated a willingness to support the study. While not required, each agreed to install any needed software on school owned computers.

**Mentors.** As with the mentees, the potential mentors were contacted by phone to determine their interest in participation. Once they had indicated interest to serve as a new teacher mentor for this study, I thoroughly outlined the nature and parameters of the research and the role expectations for each mentor. At the conclusion of this introduction, each mentor expressed a willingness to become a participant.

Although each candidate had mentoring experience, none had experienced this role in a university IRB-sanctioned research project. This required additional instructions concerning confidentiality and the need to protect the rights of their assigned mentee. Each mentor participant was asked to complete a written permission statement and given a document that detailed their rights and protections under IRB and university guidelines (see Appendix A).

Each mentor was an established and tenured member of the school district for which they taught. A letter outlining the research study, mentor’s role and expectations was sent to each building administrator. As for the mentees, each
district administrator demonstrated a willingness to support the study. Each also agreed for the needed software to be installed on school owned computers.

All mentee, mentor, and district administrator responses were positive. Once the signed consent form was received from each participant, I was ready to begin creating the cases to be studied.

**Mentor/Mentee Pairing Process**

Proper pairing of mentor with mentee is an important factor in successful induction programs. Mentoring research reveals that when mentor and mentee begin interactions, success is dependent on how well personal characteristics contribute to the new relationship (Conway, 2002).

I matched each mentor pair to create the best possible pairing for each individual case. The criteria used were based on geography and common school culture. My intention was to keep each mentor located within the 100-mile radius of his or her assigned mentee. Keeping each mentor grouping within a predetermined geographic distance was important to try to maintain similar cultural factors and experiences, as well as to make it feasible for the pairs to meet in person if they chose, in order to strengthen communication and relationship building.

In the process of creating each study case, gender became an unplanned element. When forming the cases based on pairing criteria, I discovered that the process generated gender-homogenous pairings. I decided that while gender matching in mentoring has an inconclusive research foundation, its effect in this
study might be determined during data analysis (Alhija & Fresko, 2010; Blake-Beard et al., 2011; Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Sosik & Godshalk, 2000).

Given my participant pool, I was able to create three mentor dyads. However, within days of the initial RVM meetings of each pair, one mentee elected to withdraw from the study, leaving two pairs—one with both males, the other both females. I decided that two pairings would still provide enough rich data for proper and rigorous analysis.

**Participants**

Case study research is built upon an in-depth knowledge of each participant and how this impacts the data gathered during the study. The participants that accepted the invitation to participate in this study were purposefully selected based on recommendations by individuals with professional knowledge of each individual recruited. The following information will help the reader gain a deeper insight into the personality and character of each mentor and mentee, to help contextualize their responses and the findings of this study.

**Case One: Nancy and Karen (all names are pseudonyms)**

**Nancy, mentee.** At the time of her invitation to participate, Nancy was a 21-year-old graduate from a major Midwestern university with a degree in instrumental music education. She had been raised in a rural community that Nancy defined as a “small town.” However, she quickly became aware in her first teaching assignment that her definition of “small” would require reevaluation. Confident that her educational experiences as a rural school student, and the instrumental music
instruction she had received as a member of the band, had prepared her for success as a music education major in college, while in her first teaching assignment she realized her preparation would need supplementation for her to succeed in an educational environment that lacked both the staffing and logistical resources with which she was familiar. Nancy’s first position as a music teacher required her to implement a K-12 vocal and instrumental curriculum. This situation can be daunting even for a veteran teacher, and as a new teacher, Nancy soon realized that it could be overwhelming.

Karen, mentor. Karen, a veteran teacher with over twenty-five years of classroom experience as a music educator, agreed be the RVM mentor for Nancy. During her teaching career, Karen had taught all grade levels of both instrumental and vocal music. The schools in which she taught varied in size but were consistent in curricular development and expectations with Nancy’s assignment. Karen’s present assignment involved a part time position at a larger school where she assisted with the band program and taught a foreign language class.

Both Nancy and Karen shared similarities in their early education regarding both geographic and socioeconomic experiences. Karen’s background and educational experiences enabled her to understand and provide informed support for a new teacher like Nancy. In this new virtual world of mentoring, I expected that Karen’s ability to communicate a strong understanding of rural school district dynamics and how best to maneuver a successful path made her a strong candidate for a rewarding mentor experience for Nancy.
Case Two: Jeremy and David

Jeremy, mentee. Jeremy received his undergraduate degree in music education from a midwestern university at the age of 22. Although not the same institution as Nancy, both schools had garnered similar reputations for producing well-prepared music educators. Jeremy’s pre-collegiate experience was obtained in a rural school district within a community of approximately two thousand residents. When describing his high school environment, Jeremy indicated that he felt his educational experience was adequate, but he focused on the fact that in a rural school district students and teachers often lived in close proximity. A student’s classroom teacher was often encountered at the grocery store or gas station. He felt his teachers were very supportive and nurtured both his academic and musical pursuits. This environment was pivotal in Jeremy’s decision to become a teacher and established the frameworks for his educational philosophy.

However, in his first assignment Jeremy experienced a role reversal, as he was now the teacher who often saw his students outside the classroom in non-school related activities. He also found himself as the provider of both instrumental and vocal music instruction through all 12 grades. Just like Nancy, Jeremy realized the magnitude of the challenge and sought help to guide his path as a new teacher.

David, mentor. David served as Jeremy’s virtual music mentor. David accepted this new mentoring responsibility after completing twenty-three years of teaching in a variety of music education environments. These included both vocal and instrumental programs that served the music education needs at the primary and secondary levels in schools similar in size to Jeremy’s new teaching situation.
David’s present position required his implementation of a music curriculum for a K-12 vocal music program.

Both Jeremy and David shared similar experiences in their elementary and secondary music programs when growing up. This was important to developing a relationship that allowed a free and secure exchange of information during mentoring sessions. The challenges encountered by Jeremy in his first teaching environment closely resembled those faced by David when he began his career. When considering these factors, David had the potential to provide Jeremy with a virtual mentor who could understand and communicate within the multiple aspects of a rural music-teaching environment.

Data Collection

Data gathered for this research were obtained from individual participant interviews and the observation of mentoring interactions during video-recorded online RVM sessions. All data collected were analyzed both during and after the study's duration.

Interviews. I conducted individual interviews with each participant at the beginning, midpoint and after the completion of the online RVM sessions. Interview 1 was a three-part structured questioning process. The first section was designed to gather personal and cultural demographic information from each individual. The next section questioned participant attitudes and perceptions of mentoring prior to beginning their first sessions of the RVM process. The final section was constructed
to help clarify participant understanding regarding the RVM process and study expectations (see Appendix B).

The structure for interviews 2 and 3 was designed in an open response format. This allowed each respondent the freedom to express opinions, thoughts, and personal perceptions of how the RVM program was developing and to describe the mentoring interactions within their own case. Interview 2 focused on the process and how it was functioning. Interview 3 was designed to reveal the final perceptions of each mentor and mentee concerning RVM process effectiveness and whether participants felt RVM was beneficial to their personal mentoring experiences.

Data collection took place during the first semester of the 2010 school year. Each cased varied slightly regarding specific school district calendar parameters. The interview schedule is provided in Table 1.
Table 1

Schedule for Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time (hours: minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentee: Nancy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview One</td>
<td>September 22, 2010</td>
<td>00:31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Two</td>
<td>November 11, 2010</td>
<td>00:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Three</td>
<td>December 17, 2010</td>
<td>00:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentee: Jeremy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview One</td>
<td>September 22, 2010</td>
<td>00:41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Two</td>
<td>October 17, 2010</td>
<td>00:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Three</td>
<td>January 8, 2011</td>
<td>00:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor: Karen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview One</td>
<td>September 22, 2010</td>
<td>00:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Two</td>
<td>November 14, 2010</td>
<td>00:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Three</td>
<td>January 7, 2011</td>
<td>00:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor: David</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview One</td>
<td>September 23, 2010</td>
<td>00:26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Two</td>
<td>November 24, 2010</td>
<td>00:31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Three</td>
<td>January 8, 2011</td>
<td>00:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>06:01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations. The majority of new teacher mentoring activities take place outside the classroom. With this in mind, I structured mentoring session intervals to minimize interruptions of the hectic schedule required of both the mentee and mentor. I suggested to individual members of each case that they schedule a one-hour session every two weeks. I also explained that if this proved to be unrealistic, each pair was free to determine a more effective schedule based on their individual
circumstances. Thus, each pair was asked to provide a minimum of eight hours of video recordings of their mentoring interactions: the equivalent of two, one-hour sessions each month for four months of a traditional fall semester. The final result was two unique mentor session calendars that provide sixteen hours of video-recorded interactions (see Table 2).

Table 2
Schedule of RVM observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case One: Nancy and Karen</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time (hours: minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RVM Session One</td>
<td>October 4, 2010</td>
<td>1:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RVM Session Two</td>
<td>October 15, 2010</td>
<td>1:02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RVM Session Three</td>
<td>October 20, 2010</td>
<td>1:01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RVM Session Four</td>
<td>October 25, 2010</td>
<td>1:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RVM Session Five</td>
<td>November 3, 2010</td>
<td>1:02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RVM Session Six</td>
<td>November 11, 2010</td>
<td>1:05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RVM Session Seven</td>
<td>December 1, 2010</td>
<td>1:01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RVM Session Eighty</td>
<td>December 16, 2010</td>
<td>1:02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8:13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Case Two: Jeremy and David

| RVM Session One          | September 21, 2010 | 2:01                  |
| RVM Session Two          | October 7, 2010    | 1:33                  |
| RVM Session Three        | November 2, 2010   | 1:25                  |
| RVM Session Four         | November 11, 2010  | 2:38                  |
| Total                    | 4                  | 7:37                  |
RVM Communication and Data Collection Tools

The mentors and mentees communicated using dedicated computer software. The mentoring sessions were facilitated using voice over internet provider (VoIP) technology via the software program Skype™. Each session was recorded through proprietary video recording software programs, Call Recorder or Pamela for Skype™.

RVM Communication Software. The program Skype™ utilizes both VoIP and instant messaging technologies. It allows two or more computers running Skype™ software to remotely communicate through voice and text messaging. Skype™ is also capable of two-way video connection using each computer’s on-board or USB-attached webcam. The software was developed in 2003 and is a popular and accessible computer-to-computer communication program.

My selection of Skype™ as the primary communication tool was based upon characteristics of function and value. The software is a free downloadable program package and required only the activation of a no-cost registered account from each research participant. The program was developed for both PC and Macintosh operating systems, making it applicable to all participants’ computers. My university's Internet Technology department recommended the program as being user-friendly and reliable. I had been using Skype™ regularly, and my experience confirmed the advice I was given and provided important first-hand knowledge that would prove valuable when training each research participant to use the on-line communication process.
Each participant was required to download and activate a personal Skype™ account in order to begin the mentoring sessions. For the purposes of this study, personal Skype™ accounts were only shared between individual case members and myself. However, if participants wanted to share their account with others outside of their mentoring pair they were free to do so.

**RVM Video Recording Software**

The capability to capture real time video of each mentor session was a critical element in the data collection process. The post hoc analysis of the captured video allowed the creation of a non-intrusive environment for each mentor/mentee interaction, in an attempt to preserve the authenticity of data collected and coded. One feature of Skype™ is the ability to interface with third-party video recording software. Because participants’ used both PC and Macintosh format computers, two video recording programs were required. Pamela for Skype™ was used with all PC systems, while Call Recorder for Skype™ was interfaced with the Macintosh computers. All study participants needed the Skype™ software on their computers, but the recording software was only installed on the mentee computers. I did not want the mentees to feel any anxiety over a lack of control regarding the disposition of their recorded mentoring sessions. I therefore gave the mentees control over the recording process, thus eliminating any possibility of distribution without the mentee’s knowledge.
Data Analysis

The data collection process I used for this research was twofold, including a) transcribing each interview, and b) viewing each mentoring session video to determine and select the important events that reflected the salient characteristics in each case under study. Interview and video data were analyzed using qualitative coding processes.

Transcription. The data transcription and analysis process was assisted with the use of the Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) program HyperRESEARCH™. HyperRESEARCH™ was developed in 1990 by ResearchWare, Inc. to aid in data analysis for qualitative research. I used the included software HyperTRANSCRIBE™ to transcribe the interviews and the necessary dialogue from each video-taped mentoring observation. Each individual interview was transcribed completely and can be found in Appendices C and D.

The transcribing of the video recordings was not verbatim. The mentor/mentee discussions included conversations about topics that were not relevant to the data being collected (e.g., the weather, personal social engagements, and so forth). Thus, only the mentor/mentee dialogues pertinent to the research questions were transcribed, and are provided in Appendices E and F.

Analysis logistics. Data analysis began with coding of the individual interviews, utilizing the HyperRESEARCH™ software to facilitate the data coding process. The specific coding protocols used will be described in the sections that follow.
I felt that to more thoroughly understand each participant’s perceptions of the mentoring process and experience it was necessary to analyze their interviews prior to viewing any mentoring videos. Interview data coding was an ongoing process that progressed as each of the individual interviews was completed. Coding of the video-taped mentoring sessions was not begun until the completion of the 4-month research data-gathering period. Upon completion of all data analysis a total of 229 individual data examples from both interviews and video observations were gathered based on the 41 codes employed.

**Coding Analysis Schema.** One set of codes was used to answer research sub-questions 1 and 2.

**Research Sub-Question 1.** To what extent are the findings of this study consistent with the results of research on traditional face-to-face mentoring and induction programs?

**Research Sub-Question 2.** What were the contents of the RVM interactions by the participants in this study with respect to topics addressed and amount of time spent per topic?

Based on my review of relevant research literature, I had decided to compare the participants’ experiences to the twelve common mentoring concerns summarized from previous literature by Gordon & Maxey (2000). I used these twelve common concerns as the basis for establishing and organizing my coding schema. While some of the listed concerns were more singular in nature, other themes were more extensive and complex. This required the development of a flexible preliminary coding set capable of addressing the data gathered. This initial
set of codes provided a starting point for the data analysis regarding this research question.

Table 3 lists the twelve themes related to new teacher mentoring programs (Gordon & Maxey, 2000), as well as additional literature I found to support the use of each theme in my analysis.
Table 3

List of Literature Themes Based on Gordon & Maxey (2000), with Supporting Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Supporting Literature (in addition to Gordon &amp; Maxey 2000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing the Classroom</td>
<td>Huling-Austin, 1992; (Veenman, 1984)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquiring information about the school system</td>
<td>Veenman, 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining instructional resources and materials</td>
<td>C. Conway, Hansen, Schulz, Stimson, &amp; Wozniak-Reese, 2004; Ehrich, Hansford, &amp; Tennent, 2004; Veenman, 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning, organizing, and managing instruction and other professional responsibilities</td>
<td>Zerman &amp; Conway, 2004; Veenman, 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing students and evaluating student progress</td>
<td>Veenman, 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating students</td>
<td>Veenman, 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using effective teaching methods</td>
<td>Veenman, 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with individual students' needs, interests, abilities, and problems</td>
<td>Veenman, 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with colleagues, including administrators, supervisors, and other teachers</td>
<td>C. Conway et al., 2004; C. M. Conway, Hibbard, Albert, &amp; Hourigan, 2005; Ehrich et al., 2004; Huling-Austin, 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with parents</td>
<td>Veenman, 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusting to the teaching environment and role</td>
<td>Bates, 2011; C. Conway et al., 2004; C. M. Conway &amp; Holcomb, 2006; Gratch, 1998; Huling-Austin, 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving emotional support</td>
<td>Colleen Conway, Krueger, Robinson, Haack, &amp; Smith, 2002; Dempsey, Arthur-Kelly, &amp; Carty, 2009; Ehrich et al., 2004; Jacobs, 2007; Zerman &amp; Conway, 2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The process of creating an effective code list required that each of the twelve research themes be synthesized into simple one- or two-word descriptors. This was not difficult with themes that defined only one element of new teacher concerns. However, several themes contained multiple elements, all of which were relevant to the primary focus of the theme. Each theme of this type required the creation of a separate code to address each unique element. To prevent a loss of centrality with the original theme, each code was annotated with a descriptor that defined the connection between a theme and its assigned code or codes.

As the data analysis process progressed other codes were added to the initial list. These new codes were also annotated with a descriptor and then compared with the existing codes to diminish any possible confusion or redundancy. In Table 4 I have outlined the process used to create the initial codes. The table lists the original theme, the code or codes assigned, and the annotations/operational definitions used to insure consistent application throughout the coding process.
Table 4

List of research themes, assigned codes, and descriptive annotations. Codes in italics were added during data analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Assigned Codes</th>
<th>Descriptive Annotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing the Classroom</td>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
<td>Classroom management issues and challenges to teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquiring information about the school system</td>
<td>Traditional Mentor Interaction</td>
<td>Issues that deal with the process and quality of the interactions with the district assigned mentor when dealing with local district information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining instructional resources and materials</td>
<td>Informational Sources; Instructional Materials; Sharing Materials; Visual Description/Explanation</td>
<td>Issues regarding mentor guidance in locating support materials or methods; instructional material issues and challenges to teaching; mentor shared pedagogical methods or materials; utilization of webcam ability to share visual example and materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning, organizing, and managing instruction and other professional responsibilities</td>
<td>Curriculum; Facilities and Logistics; Program Logistics/Materials</td>
<td>Curriculum issues and challenges; school facilities (provided or lacking) and logistical issues and challenges to teaching; music literature and concert programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing students and evaluating student progress</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Issues of student assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating students</td>
<td>Student Motivation</td>
<td>Issues of student motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using effective teaching methods</td>
<td>Mentee Planning/Methods</td>
<td>Mentor-guided mentee planning and teaching methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with individual students’ needs, interests, abilities, and problems</td>
<td>Student Diversity</td>
<td>Issues of student interests, needs, abilities and problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with colleagues, including administrators, supervisors, and other teachers</td>
<td>Administrative Support; Networking; Traditional Mentor Communication</td>
<td>Administrative support and interactional issues and challenges to teaching; Networking experiences; Communication effectiveness of the district assigned traditional mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with parents</td>
<td>Interaction with Parents/Guardians</td>
<td>Communication effectiveness of mentee with students’ parents or other caregivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusting to the teaching environment and role</td>
<td>Confidence; Experiential Inadequacy; Socialization; Traditional Mentoring Similarity</td>
<td>Comments that address concepts of teacher self-confidence and success; Comments made by mentee concerning insecurity of ability, lack of experience, lack of pedagogic knowledge, or similar feelings of not being ready; Comments regarding how mentee is adapting to school culture and social environment; RVM processes that exist in almost the same way as traditional mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving emotional support</td>
<td>Inspiration; Experience Similarity, Life Similarity; Memorable Experiences; Mentor Advising/Consultation; Support and Encouragement</td>
<td>Experiences that inspire teacher attitudes or abilities; How closely the mentor’s experience matched with the mentee teaching assignment; Comments that reflect a shared common background between mentor and mentee; Comments shared by either mentor, mentee or both regarding positive common experiences; Comments made by mentor regarding advice on topics that deal with psychological factors of mentee confidence; Comments based on mentor past experiences that are designed to assist mentee to build coping skills based on success of mentor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Sub-Question 3. What are the perceptions of participants regarding the RVM mentoring process?

Code development for sub-question 3 provided a challenge because of a lack of relevant research literature from which to begin. While the use of traditional telephone consultation combined with a proliferation of available email capabilities in educational settings have been used as mentoring tools, the literature included limited data pertaining to individual perceptions on the quality of these types of remote mentoring experiences. There was little literature available regarding remote synchronous video communication for purposes such as in this study, and what was available provided data on the logistics of its use and not on the effectiveness and perceptions from those involved. Thus, this lack of supporting data required the use of an open coding process based on information revealed during the one-on-one interviews with each participant.

Open coding is the process of developing a coding list based on potentially relevant material taken from the data—in this case, the interviews or observations (Merriam, 2009). I developed a preliminary list of codes that helped organize individual perceptions and thoughts that emerged during question responses and free verbal interactions in the first round of interviews. During analysis of the second round of interviews relevant data were coded either from the preliminary list or by generating a new code as necessary. After each of the second group of interviews was examined, any new codes were compared to those of the original code list to determine if they should remain or be combined with a similar code already included. This process was repeated with the final round of interviews,
resulting in the terminal list of codes used during data analysis for research sub-question three. The nature of this list is mainly relevant to the specific research findings and, therefore, will be included in Chapter 4.

**Trustworthiness**

The issues of credibility and dependability underpin the strength and transferability of the conclusions drawn from qualitative data analysis. As each element of the study was analyzed, it was fundamental that I maintained a minimally biased perspective when using established methodological procedures and data collection.

My own background relevant to this study included my new teacher experience, which was in a rural community not unlike those of my research participants. This provided me with an in-depth understanding of, and empathy for, the challenges faced during the first years as a small-district music teacher. As an experienced teacher, I had also served as a beginning teacher mentor. Those experiences took place in a large school district, and included professional development sessions where mentors and mentees interacted in a structured environment, as well as individual conversations. In addition to my previous teaching and mentoring experiences, I had experience hosting student teachers in my classroom, and had supervised numerous student teachers for several different universities during my doctoral studies.

My data collection process was triangulated in both design and implementation. I chose to use multiple case studies so that data would include
richer detail into the phenomenon of mentoring practices implemented through video technologies. Data were compiled based upon established interview and observational techniques. In my collection process, I critically evaluated my perspectives and analysis of data by discussing my assumptions and interpretations periodically with professional colleagues. I maintained a vigilant attitude toward data that deviated from my assumptions and included discussion of their implications in my peer review processes.

Each interview was transcribed and presented to all research participants for feedback and any necessary clarification. This participant check system ensured a more complete understanding of mentor and mentee perspectives on important details concerning the research study and interactions. Once a final coding of all interviews was completed, the coding was peer reviewed by an independent colleague for accuracy and comprehension. The peer review process consisted of a comparative analysis of coding assignments in which questions or conflicting interpretations were discussed and resolved to eliminate or significantly reduce possible research bias.

**Ethical Considerations**

The factor of risk to each participant was minimal. This research was approved and monitored by the IRB of the research institution through which the project was conducted. All printed analysis and interpretations of this research identified each participant with a pseudonym to provide confidentiality. Each participant signed a letter of consent, outlining the requirements of all research
processes and procedures, participant rights, permissions for recorded sessions, and procedures for reporting comments or concerns to outside authorities. A sample copy of this letter is provided in Appendix A.

**Limitations of the Study**

The existence of research limitations is a factor in determining the applicability for all research. Careful thought and planning was initiated to determine all constituent elements and their potential for effect on the results of the study. The procedures for participant selection, data collection, analysis, and triangulation were designed to minimize possible bias and anomalies. While a constant process of procedural dissection was implemented, there are limitations that naturally exist in research of this type.

The thoughts and decisions I made were ultimately based upon subjective criteria. I was concerned with the possibility that my preexisting perceptions concerning new teacher issues and mentoring programs would create unwanted research bias. Therefore, I used published research findings as the initial basis for coding, plus peer consultation and participant check methods to confirm my interpretations, as described in the section about triangulation.

The potential for unforeseen bias existed within the research participants, as well. Each person who agreed to cooperate in the data collection likely had his or her own preconceptions about mentoring. Factors that can affect research credibility vary with the uniqueness of each individual and therefore are often unpredictable. A number of measures were implemented in recognition of these
potential research limitations. Each participant was fully informed both verbally and in writing about the planned research agenda, including timetables and participant expectations. Also included was a disclosure of possible types of implications that might be drawn from the research. The coding process was carefully examined by advisors and peer-reviewed. Analysis of all video-recorded sessions and interview transcriptions were strictly guided by the approved coding criteria. I remained constantly vigilant for any and all influences on participant responses and consciously created an interview environment that was conducive to honest and open dialogue. My prior mentor training and experiences that focused on listening and sensitivity to the special concerns and needs of new music educators was helpful in providing secure research conditions for participants.

An additional limiting factor in this study was the small number of participants. However, the use of extensive and rich description and detailed information, gathered over an extended period and based on multiple interactions, provided a substantial knowledge base from which applications could be made, implications provided, and additional questions generated.
Chapter Four

Findings

The purpose of this case study was to obtain a greater depth of understanding with regard to non-site based mentor programs by observing and evaluating the use of synchronous video technologies for mentoring of first year music teachers. I also sought to document how the technology affected the real time video mentoring (RVM) interactions and communication. In this chapter, I will present the findings from each participant pair regarding processes and contents of the mentoring sessions, with the intent to provide answers to each research question. The narrative presented will help the reader to create a portrait of each participant’s interactions and responses, and to assess how closely their mentor and mentee processes modeled research regarding site-based induction programs.

The data collected the coding of the participant interviews and the mentoring session transcripts are reported in this chapter, organized by research sub-questions. As described in Chapter 3, the data were obtained from interviews with each participant both before and after the mentoring process, and from observations of real-time video recordings of each RVM session.

Research Question Discussion

How effective is the use of real-time video mentoring (RVM)? as a tool for mentoring new music teachers in geographically isolated schools?

The research reviewed in Chapter 2, revealed a number of factors that new teachers find challenging. To assess the effectiveness of RVM as a mentoring tool, I
sought to compare the mentor/mentee discussion topic with these challenges, to help determine the extent to which the issues being addressed in this setting were those generally of concern to new teachers. Data relating to each of the twelve themes identified from the literature will be presented.

**Research Sub-Question 1.** To what extent are the findings of this study consistent with the results of research on traditional face–to-face mentoring and induction programs? For the analysis of Research Sub-Questions 1, I created a set of codes initially based on the findings in relevant research on mentoring, and then expanded as additional themes emerged during the data analysis process. The complete set of codes and their relation to the research literature may be found in Chapter 3, Table 4. The codes are summarized in Table 5.
Table 5

Code List for Research Sub-Question 1: To what extent are the findings of this study consistent with the results of research on traditional face-to-face mentoring and induction programs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with parents</td>
<td>Interaction with Parents/Guardians; Experiential Inadequacy; Socialization; Traditional Mentoring Similarity</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving emotional support</td>
<td>Inspiration; Experience Similarity, Life Similarity; Memorable Experiences; Mentor Advising/Consultation; Support and Encouragement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Under each theme, Participants’ quotations were used to illustrate each theme. Each quotation was headed with the code given that particular quotation, and identification of the specific session during which the quote was recorded. All sessions were indicated by the abbreviation RVM (Real-time Video Mentoring), followed by the session number and video recording time stamp (hour:minute:second). A number of RVM interactions were coded under multiple themes. When and if this occurs the heading will include all codes assigned to the transcribed conversation.

**Theme: Receiving emotional support**

The need to feel valued and empowered as a novice music educator is frequently documented in mentoring research (Conway, 2003; Haack & Smith, 2000). A perception that they have minimal importance in the classroom can hinder new teachers from developing in a healthy and productive manner. The findings of this study parallel the results presented in relevant literature regarding new teacher concerns of emotional support.

During David and Jeremy’s first RVM session, David wanted to assure Jeremy that he would be available for RVM sessions. He and Jeremy were opening the lines of communication necessary for a meaningful mentoring relationship. David’s helpful attitude and encouragement provided Jeremy a safe environment to share:

**Support and encouragement: RVM session one 1:48:24**

David: For right now, whenever you’ve got the time just send me an email... I am usually here in the evenings, Wednesday is church night, but most of the time I am here. I sent you my telephone number so call me sometime. I just want you to always feel open so that once we get here and in two days from
now something major happen and you think, "I think I need to talk to him or somebody". I like to listen and don’t know if I have all the answers but I will tell you what I think. We can go from there.

Jeremy: Even after our conversation this evening, I feel very empowered to keep on keeping on. I feel very good about that and most of the time all I need is a little pick me up and a few pointers or the athletic little pat on the rear end and I am good to go.

David: One thing I have noticed is that you are a very bubbly person. You have such a good attitude about it. If you had not said to me, or I had not been told prior this is your [Jeremy] very first year, I don’t know that I would have picked up on that right away. I would have picked up that you’re a newer teacher, based on your age alone, but talking to you and listening, no you don’t seem like a first year teacher …

Jeremy: Yep! (Both laughing)

Support and encouragement; Mentor advising and consultation: RVM session four

16:41:122

Jeremy: I have written a piece for our conference honor choir... I told them that I do have a degree in composition and they said, “could you write something SAB” [Soprano, Alto, Bass]. I said “yes.” They will be premiering one of my pieces for the conference honor choir. I am super pumped about that.

David: Awesome, I would love to hear it so record it

Jeremy: Me too... (Both laugh) The other directors in the conference have given me good feedback and pointed out a few typos... I am trying to have a good showing from our high school. I put it in the bulletin [mentee’s school] and asked all those who can sing or think they can sing, sign up. It is a day off of school, and I am going to buy you pizza. I told them that they are going to do one of their director’s compositions and that you will like it and have a blast.

David: I think that is great. That is the way you have to do that.
Theme: Planning, organizing, and managing instruction and other professional responsibilities

New music teachers in smaller districts are normally assigned a demanding workload. Planning and implementing a K-12 music curriculum requires numerous lesson preparations across a full grade level spectrum. A lack of experiential knowledge with how best to structure teaching increases the stress level of even the most promising new music educator (Zerman & Conway, 2004).

Nancy consulted Karen frequently on logistical issues regarding options for successfully organizing her classes and groups when planning co-curricular musical activities that functioned outside the classroom. In RVM session two, Nancy was concerned about the most educationally sound approach she should take with a parade invitation for the high school marching band. While Nancy felt that a traditional marching experience would be a valuable educationally, time and the demands of her first year required the planning of an alternate activity if the process of marching in a parade would prove beyond the band’s level of development. Karen’s experience provided needed support while boosting Nancy’s confidence concerning the wisdom of her decision in planning and preparations for this event.

Mentee planning/methods; RVM session two 00:03:30

Karen: Will there be any time where they can march together before or after school?

Nancy: That is a difficult thing; I don’t know how that is going to happen. I think when I talk to the principal then that is going to be a lot better. I’ll have a better understanding because they have not done this before. I don’t how you feel, but last year they were on a float and they played. I don’t know if
we can do that but I am keeping that as an option if I feel I can't pull this together because it is getting a little late and the weather is getting colder.

Karen: You may just want to go with that.

Nancy: It is still visual and they are still playing. I feel like that is the lesser of the two. I don't prefer that but if I need to, that still is a way they will be involved.

Karen: To ride on the float, right?

Nancy: Yes, to ride on the float.

Karen: And it may be the best option this first year until you get things rolling. You may just want to do that.

Nancy: I think I will figure that out a little more until I talk to my principal and see where we stand and how it would work.

The theme’s reference to “other professional responsibilities” for music teachers includes public performances. Public performance logistics create a set of management and student behavioral issues that often present numerous problems for a new teacher.

In December, Nancy was concerned about her planning of the elementary pre-concert rehearsals. For the elementary music teacher, concert logistics are challenged by the complex scheduling demands characteristic of the modern primary school curriculum. Often the concert is held within the elementary school building, but not always. Not only was Nancy facing the challenge of preparing her first public performance with students, but also the extensive planning required to transport them to the only available performance location, the high school gym. The following conversation outlines Nancy’s preparations for the rehearsal. In the exchange, Karen listens to Nancy explain her logistical preparations and responds
with supportive comments intended to confirm her understanding and support of Nancy’s efforts to create a successful rehearsal environment.

**Facilities and logistics: RVM session Six 00:11:09**

Nancy: I am going to bring them over a bus at a time and, I am hoping that, it is really only about two minutes between schools, but I hope that does not string it out too much with getting them there and in place. I think that is what the principal kind of liked so I am going to do it this way. She was thinking about buses and bus drivers and that was her best situation and I can work with that. I left forty-five minutes for that rehearsal but I think at least half of that is going to be practicing how to get them on the risers and off and practicing how they are doing that. They only have their three songs and so I will get through the songs as much as I can. We have been practicing standing and singing and knowing the words in here [classroom]. If I could just get them standing on the risers, how do I stand on the riser and how do I get off and in and out, I think that is the biggest part. Hopefully then we can get through the songs as many times as I can, as many reps as I can and out the door. Then grades three, four, five comes after the forty-five minutes and are there for an hour. An hour is really most of the time I could even get because they [teachers] wanted to send them over right after the last lunch shift, after they have already eaten. We can’t take them in the morning because they have important reading stuff and I understand that. We have to wait…and then we take them over and that only leaves, with all the transition... really an hour for the third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade choir. ... As long as I can get them all there and in the right place and up and down off the risers, I don’t know if that’s the right way to think about it, right?

Karen: Yeah

Nancy: ... get them used to what they need to do in the gym and then do the music because you’ve been practicing the music

Karen: ... because anytime you do something that is new, they are going to be very distractible, excited and rowdy. Get them used to the routine and they will be fine.

Jeremy was challenged early in the year with how to structure an effective curriculum when finding the experience background of his class to be extremely diverse. David’s responses were positive and supportive while at the same time,
encouraged Jeremy to reflect on the knowledge and skills required to teach each lesson.

_Curriculum: RVM Session One 00:10:00_

Jeremy: I have thirteen nice electric keyboards. In one of my classrooms I have a keyboard lab and in my other classroom, I have a rehearsal room. With my jazz class, the kids that sort of play instruments this that and the other, they have a self-guided curriculum like you would get at a music store. A few days a week those kids have a their own self-guided tutorials with the DVD teacher. I don't play guitar so the kid that does has the DVD teacher on the video and that works really well... The kids that don’t have any instrumental background are in the keyboard lab working on basic music reading and laying the ground work so eventually later in the year we can do a little bit of jazz piano with those students.

David: Okay [nods approval]

Jeremy: Two or three days a week, every other day is what it is, they are either in the lab with headphones or with their workbooks and DVD teachers. The other day we have music appreciation and jazz history. We do listening and lecture.

David: Okay, are you comfortable with jazz?

Jeremy: Yeah, especially at the extent I am teaching this year. I am a good piano player and read lead sheets pretty well. I feel good about that. I am a saxophone player and that was my instrument in college.

David: Okay, okay

_Theme: Obtaining instructional materials and resources_

Beginning music teachers are constantly challenged to find time for study of instructional materials found available in their new school. While some new teachers find valuable materials left behind by their predecessors, others may find that they lack sufficient or effective teaching resources. This ‘reality shock,’ as
described by Veenmann (1984), is the result of a teaching candidate going from an undergraduate pre-service music education program with readily accessible resources, to a district that not only lacks these same materials but also has no budget to obtain them.

Although Nancy had passed the state required exam to receive a teaching endorsement in vocal music along with her certification for instrumental music, her experiences were primarily draw from high school experience and methods courses in her undergraduate program. She asked Karen to help her find materials that could supplement her vocal warm-up techniques.

*Instructional materials: RVM session four 11:14:52*

Karen: What kind of a repertoire do you have as far as warm-ups?

Nancy: I just sing different warm-ups with them and then talk technique. Let’s see, articulation warm-ups like Zing A Momma, Double Bubble Gum, Red Leather, Yellow Leather and things like that. Also some melismatic things and things with octave jumps just modulating up by half steps and them making sure I warm them down. Do you have any other warm-ups?

Karen: There is a terrific book that we used a few years ago. [Karen steps away from computer to get the book and holds it up to the computer cam for Nancy to see] It is called *The Complete Choral Warm-up Book* [holding up book]. It is hard for me to figure out if you can see it.

Nancy: That is good. Okay

Karen: It is a whole collection of everything you might ever want to use, such as, intervals, melodic, articulation, and intonation. It is a really handy work. It has lots of ways you can use it. It is an Alfred Publication.

Nancy: Everything I do now is just what I have been taught by rote.

Karen: ... there are rounds and all kinds of stuff.

Nancy: Okay
Karen: I really liked it when I was doing choirs.

During another session, Karen advised on possible composers and choral arrangements that would generate needed motivation in Nancy's choir. As is often the case, music teachers must counteract some negative previous experiences of their students when introducing new materials. In this interaction, Karen shared information on a composer that specialized in writing appropriate literature for small choirs and the positive experience it had on her choir program. Karen also named other composers who might be useful.

Informational Sources: RVM Session Four 00:16:17

Nancy: In your experience is there any like names that you really like and does good stuff?

Karen: Mary Lynn Lightfoot

Nancy: Yeah, I have done some of her stuff.

Karen: One of the times, when I first came here as a choir director I followed a teacher here who was much, much beloved. They were all sad when she left and the teacher came in was kind of a sacrificial lamb that kids really did not like. When I came it was hard to win them over. When I passed out something from Mary Lynn Lightfoot one of the leaders of the group said, I just love Mary Lynn Lightfoot music, and I got my foot in the door. She recognized that name and was literature she loved to sing.

Nancy: okay

Karen: [others composers] Brad Prince, Mark Hayes. Spirituals are fun and I don't know how many are arranged just for women's choir.

As David listened to Jeremy describe his curricular frustrations with limited available materials at the elementary level, he suggested that Jeremy investigate a
pre-packaged program that would be affordable and easy to implement in Jeremy's elementary classes. David’s personal experience and success provided needed encouragement for Jeremy.

*Instructional materials: RVM Session Two 00:34:11*

Jeremy: …take some things that I have written that fits their vocal range and start there, I think.

David: …and that is good. I will tell you that *Musical Play* is a really good place to work also.

Jeremy: *Musical Play?*

David: *Musical Play* is a complete curriculum actually. A colleague from a neighboring school turned me on this. I went to observe him…. My colleague told me his district was looking at the Musical Play curriculum to replace the existing curriculum. He said that you could get the K-12 curriculum very reasonably…. What I like about the Musical Play curriculum is that everything is laid out for you. You have all the songs that deal with solfeggio. It has Orff arrangement in there that you can use. It is a really good system and the author pulls in a number of experts to provide supplemental material. Not all the supplemental materials are useful in every situation but they are separate and you don’t have to use it. The authors also give you permission to record and sell the recordings of songs from the curriculum. It has sound teaching strategies also. It also includes Smart Board lessons for you to use.

**Theme: Using effective teaching methods**

The population demographic in small rural communities can present a challenge for a new teacher who is faced with developing an understanding of the culture and educational expectations in a new school district (Veenman, 1984).

Nancy became concerned with her choral experience and preparedness for meeting the needs in her choral class. Even though Karen was not involved with vocal music
in her present teaching assignment, her past experience was helpful with providing advice and suggestions to help Nancy plan appropriately in her choral classroom.

*Mentee planning/methods: RVM Session Four 00:09:01*

Nancy: How long has it been since you worked with high school choir?

Karen: Oh, probably twelve years.

Nancy: I was just going to get your ideas on different activities you can do with them that will help. I have been doing the a cappella singing thing and I think that is helping a lot. Also, I don’t know it is just so awkward how to have them stand. There are no risers in there like I said, the floor is tiered which helps, then all the chairs and stands are there from band. I guess I could, but my whole life at this school is like putting things away and getting them out. So at the high school I just let them leave it out because it makes my life easier. Then they have all that, so sometimes I will have them [choir] warm up over there and then they’ll kind of turn and face the piano and sometime I will have them around the piano. . . I like to keep a routine the same of what I do with them every day but don’t want it to get monotonous. I didn’t know if you had any ideas of choir activities that were helpful.

Karen: I used to do that; of course I had a little bit more of a mixed group. I had all four voices then I had them mix up and stand by someone who doesn’t sing their part. Sometimes I would have them sitting in groups and they sit in their groups and let them work their parts.

Nancy: So give them individual time and let them lead each other?

Karen: Yeah

Nancy: We were talking about that in my district meeting and some of the other teachers were talking about that. I kind of had forgotten about that and that is a really good idea. They were talking about letting them do that during the sight reading session at contest.

Similar to many new teachers, Jeremy felt his undergraduate preparations in long range lesson planning were sufficient to get him started but soon found that continuity depended on implementing quality lessons until curricular goals are met.
He discovered his experiential knowledge lacking in the techniques needed to solve the problems that occurred along the way. One of these problems was how best to teach music reading with his choir. David was able to encourage and support Jeremy by sharing that he was also faced with similar music literacy issues early in his career. He then went on to guide Jeremy’s planning with a description of how he addressed music reading with his students.

Mentee planning/methods: RVM Session Three 00:24:55

Jeremy: I am now about three weeks into my Junior Singing Wildcat group, my after school 4-6th grade honor choir. I don’t know what to do with them anymore. I want to pick your brain. What is a good process? Here is what they do very well. They call and respond songs very well. They cannot read music yet because they never had to. Now I have started doing Solfeggio with them. I started on Sol Mi songs and then we added La. In rehearsal with those kids, I have been doing Sol La and Mi songs with everybody (all classes) and then just recently added Do, afterschool we have done call and response all the way through Do to La. They are doing really well with that. They do the hands signs super well and then are on pitch for the most part. They get the patterning and that is really great. We have been doing some call songs, little folk songs with a lot of rhythmic activity and have a lot of Sol Mi intervals, those folky things that the kids catch on to. The question is how can I make the transition into happy little folk to like legitimate pieces of music to them.

David: Okay... In the first year, honest, I spoon-fed everything. I would say, I need to you sing this and here is how it goes. La, la, la, la [sung stepwise upward] and then the words with it. Then I would do, just like you did, tied a lot into the classroom work by doing the Sol, Me, La and Do and we used that a lot too. Then the first thing I did, I took a piece of music, a real piece of unison music and had them look at this. I had them take their finger to follow along with me and when I stopped I had them tell where I was. I did that so they would get familiar with following the line. We talked contour. I asked them that if the notes are going up on the staff what do you think the voice is going to do. I had to stop and think. In ways, teaching elementary has made me a better musician. They have always come to me prepared and I would just pick music we could start sing or playing in band. With elementary kids, I had to stop and think, well what if they don’t understand what a quarter note it? If they don’t understand how that works and you have to think of
several different ways to do it. I start with the unisons; something that is good too and you have the technology to do this. If you find some rounds, rather than just doing it all in unison lines, write it out like part one and part two. This way they see the how the lines move musically. They see that this group follows this line and you take those baby steps. You could teach them the Row Row Your Boat type of round and then show them the written form of what they were singing in the round. Show them that this is what it looks like and what you are singing for me. What I noticed in the kids that I now have in my Junior High choir and have come through that process is that they understand how to read better. They might not read it correctly all the time but they know where to be. We were singing the Turtledove and my men were struggling. I kept thinking what is going on with this and why are they not getting this. Finally, one of my boys said, "I am confused what line we are supposed to sing on?" I said right there where it says part 3. He replied, "Well there is not a part three, there is a part one, a part two and another part two." I looked and found that the publisher had misprinted the music. I had not caught it but the guys did. To me I was thinking, good questioning and good observation from my boys. You are able to see that click in them.

Jeremy: That is awesome.

David: Sometimes you have to remember that you can only eat an elephant a bite at a time. You just have to keep breaking it down into smaller bites for them. You can then add the bigger pieces as they come.

**Theme: Adjusting to the teaching environment and role**

As a new in-service educational specialist entering the classroom in a new school for the first time, a novice music teacher begins the process of adapting to both real and perceived expectations (Gratch, 1998). As Nancy and Karen worked together as a mentor team, their relationship was strengthened by the similarity of Karen’s teaching experience with Nancy’s new educational surroundings. Many of Nancy’s questions centered on issues, such as frequent teacher turnover, work load as the single music teacher, recruitment, etc., which present unique problems in rural school music programs. Karen was able to draw on her knowledge of the socioeconomic and cultural factors in a small community that contribute to teacher
effectiveness in the classroom. While not always providing a solution, Karen’s close familiarity with Nancy’s situation provided viable suggestions to strengthen her mentee’s confidence and self-efficacy.

**Confidence: RVM Session One 00:43:32**

Karen: What has been the track record of teachers and how long do they seem to stay on average?

Nancy: I don’t know really far back and I don’t know all the details but I know some of it is a little bad. I don’t want to ask too much because I don’t want to get wrapped up in something really negative that someone is telling me and have all these things, you know like, “Oh we [school administrator] fired her because of this.” I don’t want to sit here and worry, I don’t know, just try to keep a little indifferent but know as much as I need to. It is not easy to do. [Laughing] The person last year, which has made my life a little easier now and one of the reasons I took the job, was right out of college, young, first year teacher. I felt that made it a little easier, I was not following up a retiring male or something. That is a big dynamic change and can be hard. Also, if they haven’t had the same thing all the in the past, I could make changes...

Karen: Like two to five years on average maybe?

Nancy: Yeah, I guess and before that the lady was here for five years. I don’t know anything before that really. I know that in the past there was a guy who was here for a bunch of years and he had a lot of numbers [students].... that is kind of what has happened...can’t do anything about that. It is tough. [Laughing]

Karen: Yeah, just curious. You run into that. It is a lot of turnover and nothing consistent as far a keeping track or keeping records.

Nancy: Yes, it is a nightmare. It is a big puzzle.... The first thing I did when I came in was address the huge inventory. I kept a record up because there wasn’t one already for me. I don’t know if she didn’t do it or what the year before.... I don’t know when I am leaving here and how that’s gonna work or anything. You don’t know the future but it is early but I feel I owe it completely to the kids, if I leave, to leave something that makes the transition easier.

Karen: Yeah, that is the object.
Nancy: It was really hard. The superintendent was very polite in the interview and he was like, "I am going to make my rounds in the building if you guys want to talk." I was able to kind of get real with her to some questions about what it was really like to work here.... I got a lot of comments from students and parents, "Well I hope it is not like last year." What I did is smile and say, "I am going to do the best I can and know you have been through a lot and I am going to make some changes, this is what I am doing now." We are going forward.

Karen: That is great and then keep documentation of everything you do, programs, trips, purchase orders, and put them all in filing cabinets. Like you were saying, if you happen to leave when somebody else steps into your job then they have all that information.

Nancy: Yes, of course, that is considerate to that person.

Karen... another thing too with burnout, is be sure you give yourself some time to do some things you want to do. Don't live at school or live school all the time up here even though it is hard to that first year.

Nancy: Yeah, I feel like that is really good advice. One of my college professors, is like, you need to have a hobby. Right now my hobby is Netflix [laugh]. There are so many things that people enjoy that aren't music. It has been since I started, this is like week seven I think, and ever so gradually I feel like it is getting a little easier. Some days I can leave a little earlier but it is a very slow, gradual process.

Karen: It'll get better.

Nancy: It is better than like the first week.

Nancy: I think that is a big deal for the hometown parades.

Karen: Sometimes that is the only time the community ever sees your program. There are people out there that never come to a concert but will come to a parade or a basketball game.

Nancy: Yeah, it is a different demographic. Especially I guess for recruiting too a lot of kids will see it that may have not before. So that is kind of neat.

Karen: You already have the fifth and sixth graders saying, "you mean we don't get to march in the Christmas parade yet?"

Nancy: They are still so excited. How long does it take for that to wear off? [Laughing] Do new things. [Laughing]
It is not unusual for a new teacher upon arrival at their new posting to find expectations have been modified or changed without prior consultation. Jeremy discusses with David his surprise when notified he would have instrumental classes not previously expected. David helps Jeremy understand that unfortunately this happens to many new teachers, and how these changes can provide rewarding experiences and opportunities for professional growth.

Experiential Inadequacy: RVM Session One 00:19:47

Jeremy: I was hired with the thought that eventually I would start a band. I am certified in both and actually did a double major. I did not just get the endorsement. I am adept at both. I was hired as the choir director and general music teacher at the elementary. Two days before you begin your teacher meetings, I got a thing in the mail that said my classes and it said jazz band. I said, "Oh crap, what is this!" I called my counselor and asked what was going on. She replied that they thought it would be cool. I thought to myself, you thought it would be cool, I am the music teacher; ask me if it is going to be cool. It has turned out to be one of my favorite classes. I have mostly upper classmen with good attitudes and they are very laid back students, which fits the idea of jazz. It is one of my favorite classes now. Some of the things that I went into dreading have really become my favorite things. In my elementary for instance, there is no middle school where I am, I teach K-6 in one building and 7-12 together. They just don't have the numbers to make a middle school. I always saw myself as a high school director. I am hard-core high school. I absolutely love the little kids.

David: This is really funny. When I graduated from college, the first thing I said was, "I will never teach elementary and don't think I am going to touch junior high groups." [both laughing] I didn't want anything to do with junior high or middle school but every job I have had has been everything from 6th grade to 12 grade and both instrumental and vocal. I am certified in both and playing in band all through high school. ... I never thought I would teach band. I thought it would just all be vocal. I am in my fifth year at this district and it is my first time to ever teach elementary. They are just wonderful and so easy to work with. I have had more success at that end then anything I have ever done.
New music teachers in small districts often experience feelings of isolation from others who share similar backgrounds. Relocating to a new environment in a rural community often leave them in a situation where they are possibly the only professional music instructor in the area. Jeremy shared his concerns with David regarding how he fits socially into his new school.

*Socialization: RVM Session One 00:44:14*

Jeremy: The problem is everybody that teaches is the kid of somebody else that teaches there.

David: Oh, okay, [smiles]

Jeremy: Everybody is married and has kids except for the athletic director, a young guy about my age, and is single. He is the athletic director and we are cut from very different cloths. There is an elementary teacher; she is real nice, real sweet and about my age. I was thinking, well I can be buddies with her but she is married, which is not a big deal, I am not saying that. [both laugh]. They have families...I am just in a different set-up. I don’t know, I am trying to figure it out… There are just not a lot of teachers my age, mostly older teachers and certainly not very many people in their twenties.

David: That is very odd; as they retire I imagine there will be because districts are going for younger teachers right now with all the budget issues and stuff. I understand what you saying about that. I drive 40 miles both ways to my school so that I can live in a larger town.

*Theme: Communicating with colleagues, including administrators, supervisors, and other teachers*

Developing networks of communication with professional colleagues either locally or within a broader educational community is seen to have positive impacts on new teacher development (Ehrich et al., 2004). However research shows that
beginning music teachers are challenged to find time to build productive lines of communication with colleagues and administrators while struggling with the demands of a first year music program (Conway & Holcomb, 2006).

For many first year teachers, issues regarding the understanding of administrators and their role in school structure is often confusing and sometimes frustrating. Nancy was able to share with Karen her feelings that the administrators in her buildings were helpful and supportive of her work.

Administrative/Colleague Support: RVM Session Four 00:36:35

Nancy: ...Our Christmas parade...I think I am just gonna do the float idea for now just because there is so many other things going on. I just don't feel like I can get them outside enough to really get somewhere. There is not a good place at the elementary school for them to march, really. Maybe up a side street but then recess is going on outside. I don't know, so, for now I think that is what I will do.

Karen: Okay, that is probably a good idea. I think you can kind of think about it for next year.

Nancy: Yeah, when I talked to the principal he said whatever you want to do is fine. [laugh] I was like, okay. That makes me feel good.

New teachers are often reluctant to ask for administrative assistance with challenges in the classroom for fear of being considered ineffective as a teacher. Jeremy described for David the events that let up to his decision to discuss a classroom management issue with his superintendent. Jeremy expressed his satisfaction with the way his administration addressed the problem and the support he received for his efforts.
Jeremy: The students are now starting to get on each other because a lot of them really want to learn. I put that out and I went to my superintendent the very next hour. I told her what was going on and, it might have been the very next day after we talked.

David: Oh boy

Jeremy: I went to my superintendent in a very respectful manner, "this is a set up that almost ensures trouble." I have all forty of these kids every day, all at once, is just not conducive to learning and not building a program. She said,"you are right and we need to something about this.” We really do and I want the best for these students and I can barely get them quiet enough and friendly enough to teach let alone be receptive to the information. She said, "Well what can we do?” I told her the situation and how the students acted. She and my high school principal spent the next day in my room during the lesson, both of them.

David: Really?

Jeremy: They told me that they really wanted me to be successful and just want to come out and see what you are doing. I told them please come on. They were both out there the very next day and spent all hour with me, both of them.... I have a really cool lesson planned about ragtime where I had some midi files on the board and they could listen to the music as they went by....

David: Oh cool

Jeremy: I played along because I am good pianist and pulled some jazz stuff off line and played a little ragtime for them.... They were really in control and it was because the principal and the superintendent were there—duh! My principal said this was the coolest thing ever .... My superintendent said, [to the class] "we hired your teacher because he was the best.” She told them that they don't expect any more discipline issues from you or else. My principal said normally I want you to handle your own discipline problems, but send them to me and I will discipline them also.

As with many novice teachers, developing networks with more experienced teachers in the larger music educational community was a challenge for Nancy.

While the materials and training provided in any undergraduate program is
extensive, seldom can it meet the specific needs of a particular curriculum or musical ensemble. Karen allowed her protégé access to her professional network when questions or concerns arose that Karen felt were in need of a more extensive knowledge base.

 Networking: RVM Session One 00:49:45

Karen: I still need to get you in touch with 3 directors but I have not heard back from all of them yet. One may have some really good suggestions for Christmas programs too.

Nancy: That would be good

Karen: She is the one in Neinburg so if you get something from Neinburg, that is her. She has been doing K through 12 vocal instrumentals for a long time and really likes it and is really good at it.

Nancy: That’s a big complement. [laughing] Likes it and is good at it. That is like wow, someday [laughing]

Nancy: I got your emails from those and I haven't contacted those other directors yet, but I will and appreciate that. That is going to help. I will probably ask, was it the director at Mayberry to ask about the elementary music?

Karen: She has the SSA choir tunes and things like that.

Nancy: At Mayberry?

Karen: Yes, the elementary music

Nancy: Kathy Flower at Neinburg is one?

Karen: She is the one who does K-12.

Nancy: So she will have ideas on that

Karen: Yeah
Nancy: Okay. I will fully make it point to contact her next week before I talk to you and then that’ll kind of give me a good idea of what we are looking at together if we get some music online.

Karen: Okay. I have been asking around and trying to get some ideas to pass along to you so I’ll get that together.

Nancy: Great.

Karen: ...the director who I recommended to you helped me out when I came here as a choir director. I had not taught high school choir before and I ran into her at a choir convention, I think it was ACDA [American Choral Directors Association], and I was complaining about not knowing the literature. She said I have taught choirs your size. I have some good ideas and I will send you a list. It was a lifesaver. Everything I used on that list was a winner.

Nancy: Okay

Karen: She will be able to help you a lot.

While a music mentor with similar experiences would be the logical choice for help with locating others who can provide assistance with new teacher issues, it is sometimes of greater importance for the mentor to encourage the mentee to develop a proactive attitude when searching for answers regarding individual challenges. In this interaction David was unfamiliar with the elementary teachers in Jeremy’s area that could prove helpful with experienced answers to guide Jeremy’s development. Therefore, David encouraged Jeremy to search out support from successful teachers near his district.

*Networking: RVM Session One 00:38:03*

David: I don’t know many teachers in your area but just get with someone that you know that has a really successful elementary program and talk to them. Find out how they achieved this and where did you notice this success
taking place in your choir and at what level. Ask them how many years did you work on this before you noticed your kids were actually reading.

**Theme: Managing the classroom**

Classroom management is one of the most critical elements for success as a new music teacher (Huling-Austin, 1992). Research reveals that administrators see effective classroom management as a common cause of poor teaching results (Veenman, 1984).

Even when confident of their pre-service teacher preparation, new teachers often become overwhelmed when placed in classroom environments that would be challenging to even the most experienced educators. Small rural school districts may not have the resources to provide curricula flexible enough to meet the unique musical needs of middle school students. Jeremy found himself the music teacher to a class of eighth graders with very diverse needs and levels of motivation.

David listened intently as Jeremy outlined his planning strategies for presenting his lessons in this environment. He provided Jeremy with advice on additional measures he may need to improve learning in his classroom. David was also careful to guide Jeremy through the potential problems that can develop when teacher and administrator do not share similar discipline styles.

Jeremy: I had sequenced steps laid out in the book and put the camera on the music and followed along with my finger. Whenever we played they could see my fingers playing on the keys. All they had to do was play along with me and follow along. Well the stinkers weren’t doing it. I put my foot down and told them you do this. This is what you are to do. I was not overly a jerk about it. I just told them I worked hard to prepare this for you. You need to do what is right. They would not stop talking. They would not stop talking
long enough to do it. I am back at the drawing board and I don't have tables in my room. I really don't need tables for my keyboards. I got some extra tables and some extra desks. I brought those into my classroom yesterday because I think these eighth graders need the structure of having a desk. We are trying a new thing, where we are doing two-week units as a whole class because splitting them up and giving them any sort of independent work didn't work for the two and a half weeks we did it. Maybe I need to be more persistent, I don't know.

David: It sounds like they are in a challenge mode right now. Be careful about changing too much too quickly because they are going to think they have you on the run. Like if we do this and he sees this is not working he is going to do something else. Number one, that is a lot of kids and to just throw them at you like that is tough. Some administrators don't understand this with such numbers. I know my principal, I don't have forty kids, [administrator] would say just put the ones who don’t want to sing on the back wall. What do you want me to do with them? I don't teach like that.

Jeremy: I don’t either.

David: Do you have a written behavior policy?

Jeremy: Yeah, I do and there is one laid out in the handbook, the school handbook...

**Research Sub-Question 2.** What were the contents of the RVM interactions by the participants in this study with respect to topics addressed and amount of time spent per topic?

To answer this question, I generated a numerical overview of the coded data. First, data will be presented by theme, allowing for comparisons between the two pairs. Then, the data will be presented by case, which will provide insights into each pairs’ use of the mentoring sessions.
Data by Theme and Time Spent

Three types of data are reported in the tables that follow for each theme coded and for each mentor/mentee pair: 1) the number of related interactions, 2) the amount of time spent in the interactions (hours:minutes:seconds), and 3) the percentage that the number of interactions for the theme represents of the total number of coded interactions, per each case (total number of coded interactions: Jeremy and David = 232; Nancy and Karen = 258).

As can be seen in Table 6, both pairs of participants spent more than a third of their total interactions addressing issues regarding the emotional needs of the mentee. Note that while the percentages of interactions did not differ by much between the two cases, Nancy and Karen spent considerably more time engaged in discussions related to the Emotional Support theme.

Table 6
Theme: Emotional Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Interactions</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>% of Total Interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy and David</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>4:48:53</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy and Karen</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>3:37:22</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>8:26:15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data reported in Table 7 reflect the common concerns related to how to effectively plan and organize a music program as a first year teacher. While spending only about 14% of their total interactions in this area, these data reveal important similarities with issues discussed in traditional mentoring environments.
Table 7

Theme: Planning, Organizing Instructional Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Interactions</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>% of Total Interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy and David</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2:40:38</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy and Karen</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2:24:12</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>5:04:50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data indicate that the cases varied quite a bit with respect to total interactions and time devoted to discussing instructional resources (see Table 8). Nancy and Karen interacted about this much more frequently and for almost twice the amount of time as Jeremy and David.

Table 8

Theme: Obtaining Instructional Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Interactions</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>% of Total Interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy and David</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0:49:56</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy and Karen</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>1:32:06</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals for Both Cases</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>2:22:02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the data reported in Table 9, Nancy interacted with her mentor about teaching methods almost twice as many times as did Jeremy. The total amount of time spent in these discussions was similar, however.
Table 9

Theme: Using Effective Teaching Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Interactions</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>% of Total Interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy and David</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0:56:46</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy and Karen</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1:08:57</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals for Both Cases</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2:05:43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jeremy and David spent more time and had a greater number of interactions relating to the issue of adjusting to the teaching environment than did Nancy and Karen (see Table 10).

Table 10

Theme: Adjusting to Teaching Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Interactions</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>% of Total Interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy and David</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0:43:47</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy and Karen</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0:27:33</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1:11:20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data presented in Table 11 reveals that Jeremy spent considerably more time with his mentor discussing issues of effective communication with district faculty and administration than did Nancy.
Table 11

Theme: Communication with Colleagues, Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Interactions</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>% of Total Interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy and David</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1:31:50</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy and Karen</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0:09:36</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1:41:26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jeremy and David interacted about classroom management much more frequently and spent much greater time on this topic than did Nancy and Karen (see Table 12).

Table 12

Theme: Managing the Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Interactions</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>% of Total Interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy and David</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1:21:48</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy and Karen</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0:12:18</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1:34:06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tables that follow present the same data as in the preceding tables. Here, however, the data are organized by case, and tables sorted in descending order of the time spent on each theme.

Jeremy and David. Table 13 provides insight into the topics addressed in the mentoring sessions between Jeremy and David. The pair spent from 43 minutes to almost 5 hours in discussions that reflect these 7 themes. The most time, and the greatest number of interactions by far, was spent addressing Emotional Support.
The more procedural, day-to-day issues of the job received attention, but to a lesser extent.

Table 13

Interactions and Time Spent Per Theme by Jeremy and David

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Interactions</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>% Per Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Support</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>4:48:53</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning, Organizing Instructional Materials</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2:40:38</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with Colleagues, Administration</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1:31:50</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the Classroom</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1:21:48</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Effective Teaching Methods</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0:56:46</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining Instructional Materials</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0:49:56</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusting to Teaching Environment</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0:43:47</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Totals</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>12:53:38</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nancy and Karen. The data presented in Table 14 reveal that Nancy and Karen’s interactions per theme ranged from only 9 minutes to about 3.5 hours. Similar to Jeremy and David, this pair also spent the majority of interactions and time related to Emotional Support, and both pairs spent similar amounts of time dealing with Planning, Organizing Instructional Materials. Nancy and Karen spent relatively little time discussing Adjusting to the Teaching Environment, Managing the Classroom and Communication with Colleagues, Administration, both in comparison to the time they spent regarding the other themes, as well as in comparison with the other study case.
Table 14
Interactions and Time Spent Per Theme by Nancy and Karen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Interactions</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>% Per Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Support</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>3:37:22</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning, Organizing Instructional Materials</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2:24:12</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining Instructional Materials</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>1:32:06</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Effective Teaching Methods</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1:08:57</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusting to Teaching Environment</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0:27:33</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the Classroom</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0:12:18</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with Colleagues, Administration</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0:09:36</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Totals</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>9:32:04</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of Findings, Research Sub-Questions 1 and 2

The coded responses for Research Sub-Questions 1 and 2 provide a window into how RVM reflects the established constructs of traditional mentoring. Seven of the twelve issues in the research from Gordon and Maxey (2000) were addressed in the RVM mentoring sessions. Given that a purpose of this research is to determine whether RVM is an effective mentoring tool in mentoring, the data reported here provide evidence of the potential effectiveness for RVM to provide opportunities for communication between mentor and mentee related to issues critical to novice teachers. The analyses revealed that RVM interactions were generally consistent with face-to-face mentoring with respect to the nature of interactions and the issues addressed. However, the patterns of interactions and time spent on the various topics differed between the two pairs of participants.
Research Sub-Question 3. What are the perceptions of participants in this study of the RVM process?

The use of technology has only begun to be investigated as a tool in new teacher mentoring. In this research, the use of synchronous video interactivity was designed to expand the role the Internet could play in induction programs for teachers in geographically isolated school districts. Given that there was a lack of relevant literature addressing the use of synchronous video communication in mentoring from which to derive an initial set of codes, the analysis related to Research Sub-Question 3 was based on an open coding framework. I created an initial set of codes based on the participant responses from the first set of interviews. Once this was complete, the coded responses were used to help develop and organization the framework for a more focused coding scheme in the next interviews and video observations.

As I examined the codes that emerged, I realized that they were consistent with two of the five themes identified by researchers Kilburg and Hancock (2006). They had approached the mentoring process with a unique lens that focused on the elements in mentoring that created problems when mentoring was not being effective. The two relevant themes around which I decided to organize my codes were Matching and Selection, and Communication and Coaching.

Matching and Selection speaks to the effectiveness of the pairing of each mentor/mentee. Communication and Coaching focuses on how the mentor and mentee communicated concerns and remediation processes. Table 15 presents
each theme, coding assignments and the annotations given each code to strengthen consistency during the interview analysis.

Table 15

Code List for Research Sub-Question 3: What are the perceptions of participants in this study of the RVM process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coded Themes</th>
<th>Assigned Code</th>
<th>Descriptive Annotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matching and Selection</td>
<td>Being a Mentor; Good Mentoring; Good Teacher; Mentoring Environments</td>
<td>Comments that pertained to the RVM process when developing mentoring relationships. How well were the mentor and mentee paired? Did the mentor provide effective strategies and resources? How reliable was the RVM process in providing a safe and comforting mentoring environment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication and Coaching</td>
<td>Effective Mentor; Mentor Utilization; Mentoring Communication; RVM Interactivity; RVM vs. Traditional Mentoring</td>
<td>Comments that reflect the RVM process effectiveness with issues of communication. How clear and comprehensive is all communication between both the mentor and mentee? How reliable was the RVM process in regard to the mentoring environment? What issues and challenges exist in the virtual mentoring process?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theme: Perception of RVM case catching and selection

As part of teacher induction mentoring programs, each beginning teacher is challenged with the process of establishing a professional relationship with an experienced, but previously unknown, member of the faculty who is assigned as the
district mentor. The process of building this relationship may present challenges, and a number of factors affect the quality of the mentoring experience. Authors have reported that proper matching of mentee with mentor is a critical element to building strong mentoring relationships. (Conway, Hibbard, Albert, & Hourigan, 2005; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003)

Given that Nancy and Jeremy were each the only music teacher in their small districts, the only way that individuals with experiences similar to theirs could serve as mentors was by connecting them with someone in a different location. Both mentees commented in their interviews about how important they found that the common factors of contextual and experiential knowledge were between themselves and their mentors. This helped them establish confidence in the effectiveness of their mentoring interactions.

**Good Mentoring: Interview One**

Nancy: It definitely helps me, to be able to talk to anyone on a regular basis [laugh] and who has been brought in. It helps my school know that something is being provided that they can't provide that will help with that upper level knowledge of music and what to do with the program, all the things that come with that . . . It will really interesting to talk to someone who was specifically picked to be a mentor that was, sort of, had a background in music education like I am entering into now. That already puts my mind at ease a little more.

Jeremy: After chatting with my online mentor, the other evening, I felt, not only energized, but also justified in some of my feelings and frustrations. Just more like I feel your pain, it okay, don't freak out, as well as some helpful suggestions.
**Good Mentoring: Interview Two**

Jeremy: I always come out of the process, especially with him, I think that because of our personalities we get along very well, and because of our personalities that click so well that we can talk for several hours and feel that was not labored or forced.

---

**Good Mentoring: Interview Three**

Nancy: Any other experienced educator in band or in choir or elementary music would be wonderful but I had specific addresses and concerns for K-12. She was able to really help me. Those answers really had to come from her and nobody else.

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**Theme: Perception of RVM communication and coaching**

Although Nancy and Jeremy were provided a mentor within their districts, the RVM mentor became an important source of support for the discipline specific questions that may have remained unanswered based on the district's induction program. The participants also appreciated the visual component and found it to be useful.

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**Mentor Utilization: Interview Two**

Nancy: Karen is my number one person to ask questions to that I didn’t really know. In your first year you obviously have questions about state based rules and guidelines and you have someone who has been through all that, even though we are not in the same district, she is able to help me out with stuff. She has helped me on time lines, which is really helpful. It was something the school board president was discussing with me, he said the teacher last year would always ask him what the deadlines were and he had to say he did not know any of that information. I have someone so that I don’t feel lost on stuff like that.
**Mentor Utilization: Interview Three**

Jeremy: Music teachers talk because they get what music teachers do. Having a mentor from the district who teaches math or science or English or any other sort of content area really isn’t what I need. It just isn't what is best for me. This process of having a virtual mentor really does connect me with another music professional.

**RVM Interactivity: Interview Two**

Nancy: If she were talking about something, Karen would go get that resource and hold it up to the camera so that I could look at and see what it looks like... if I am talking about conducting or something... that is really cool that Skype™ can capture that as well.

**RVM Interactivity: Interview Two**

Jeremy: It really is a big like half pep talk session and it is an opportunity for me to go, "am I doing this right?, am I on the right track?, am I teaching what I am supposed to be teaching?, does that sound like what should be happening now?, am I starting early enough for my Christmas concert?, did I deal with this discipline thing the right?, can you believe my roof is still leaking, it is second quarter, come on, it is that type of thing... He (mentor) has been tremendous about, saying "let me know whenever you want to meet, you just send me an email," the next night (because I think he is a single guy too) he is always available and it is really tremendous. Our last conversation I said, "I really on have about half hour to talk," and two hours and twenty minutes later we got off the phone. I told my mentor, " Oh, sorry, the researcher has got to watch all of this" (laughter).

**Mentoring Communication: Interview Three**

Nancy: Throughout the week I would make a list of things that would come up that I had questions about. Especially a first year teacher and being where there is not a whole lot of other resources, it was really helpful to know that I had someone there to ask questions to.

**Mentoring Communication: Interview Three**

Jeremy: In terms of the way the interactions really developed, it did develop, absolutely, it developed just like you would develop when you needed someone...When you talk about issues or situations you just kind of let
inhabitations go and let your complete thoughts out. I think that probably does parallel the way it would work if you were meeting face-to-face. I don't think that changed

**RVM vs. Traditional Mentoring: Interview Three**

Nancy: Have a Skype™ mentor helped me have that opportunity. As far as helping me and talking to Karen every week through Skype™, looking back on it, it made all the difference. It was almost like a make or break thing. I can't imagine what it would have been like if I had not had that resource. I think I would have been a lot more frustrated.

**RVM vs Tradtional Mentoring: Interview Two**

Nancy: . . . the only negative thing I have ever had with this whole experience is that sometimes the technology wasn't working and you had to trouble shoot and figure out the problem. It would eat up some of our talking time sometimes . . . The technology of Skype™, I think is really neat, and being able to see someone instead of just listening to them. You have the added elements of facial expression and reaction and things like that.

**RVM vs. Traditional Mentoring: Interview Three**

Jeremy: The Skype™ experience was a really good one and it really did its job effectively. I do think that the application Skype™ has some issues... The idea of video conferencing is a great even though I don't think Skype™ is very user friendly... Even though Skype™ was effective if took a little more time to get the programs downloaded and get the accounts going

**Summary**

Based on the comparative analysis of these findings with existing mentor research, the data reveal that the effectiveness of the RVM interactions between the two mentor/mentee pairs was comparable to the effectiveness of interactions that occur in traditional face-to-face induction year mentoring. Both new teachers were confronted with many of the same problems and challenges faced by other
beginning educators. They appeared to benefit from the possibilities that RVM provided for mentorship from a teacher with expertise in the same content area and a background of similar teaching experiences. Thus, it seems evident that the RVM resulted in successful mentoring experiences for these music teachers in their first year of teaching in small rural school districts.
Chapter Five

Summary and Discussion

Beginning teachers struggle with a unique set of issues that, if unresolved, may lead to a migration into non-classroom related educational positions or, for some of most talented candidates, the complete rejection of an educational career (Ingersoll, 2001). Researchers have found that approximately thirty percent of new teachers left the profession after the first year (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001), and that music teachers left the profession at nearly the same rates as teachers in other disciplines (Hancock, 2009; Ingersoll, 2003).

Research focused on the reasons new teachers leave teaching have revealed several problems that face novice educators. Upon comparing the findings of a number of research studies, a pair of researchers identified a number of common themes that plagued new teachers during their first years in the classroom (Gordon & Maxey, 2000). These included problems with classroom management, the complex nature of school district policy, properly obtaining teaching materials and resources, organizing and managing teaching combined with other professional responsibilities, assessing learning, motivating students, being an effective teacher, understanding and effectively working within a diverse student environment, communicating with colleagues and administrators, working with parents, adjusting to the role of teacher, and obtaining the emotional support needed to provide the strength to endure their first years in education. The extent to which each of these themes affects new teachers is complex and varies with the context of each individual circumstance. However, their impact on novice educators appears to be
real and has stimulated several preventative initiatives to help stem the tide of new teacher attrition, including teacher mentoring. This study was designed to examine the use of real-time video mentoring (RVM) as a tool for providing mentor support for music teachers beginning their careers in small rural districts, where there is not another music teacher to serve in a mentoring role.

Mentoring

Mentoring has historically been utilized to help new practitioners develop skill related proficiencies and cultural attitudes necessary for both personal and professional growth within their chosen field. The definition of mentoring from its origin has been one of providing guidance to those who lack the practical experience necessary to maneuver complex situations or environments. Its effectiveness is time tested and the implementations of mentoring programs are found extensively in both the private and business sector. While informal constructs of mentoring have existed, it has only been within the last three decades that education has recognized that structured mentoring programs can provide needed assistance to new teachers. The goal of providing quality mentoring for all new teachers has prompted school districts and states to provide formal induction and mentoring programs as a primary element in beginning stages of new teacher professional development.

Growth of technology in mentoring

Research into the use of technology-enhanced mentoring practices is growing each year. Studies on the use of Internet-based new teacher
communication forums have emerged rapidly as school districts, both large and small, gain access to the information-sharing resources of the World Wide Web (Muehlberger, 2007; Muller, 2009). The use of email and the development of content-focused online forums have provided a wealth of data to researchers, demonstrating the value of this type of communication during the formative years of new teacher development. Although the value of these activities is evident based on research finding, most educators agree that it does not provide a suitable alternative to face-to-face mentoring programs (Muller, 2009).

Research into the use of RVM to enhance mentoring interactions has been surprisingly absent from the knowledge base of emerging technologies being implemented in mentoring and induction programs. Just as the Internet has grown, so has the technology on which it depends. A number of software programs have been developed to allow online video communication; however, at the time of this study, very little was known about the effectiveness of using this emerging technology to facilitate mentoring.

**Unique issues for rural music teachers**

Music educators who begin their teaching career in a rural school system may be challenged to find effective mentoring environments. Rural school systems are often unable to provide mentors experienced with and capable of understanding the unique needs of the music classroom (Babione & Shea, 2005; Berry, 2004). While research has revealed that mentoring relationships are strengthen when a novice teacher is paired with a mentor who has experience in the same discipline,
age level, and culture as the mentee, few rural districts have the faculty available to meet such specific criteria. This may especially be true for new music teachers, because there may be no other music teacher in the district. Therefore, I sought to examine whether synchronous video communication could be utilized as an effective tool for linking new music educators with remotely located music mentors who possessed an experiential background like that of the new teacher.

Case study

The use of case study investigation has proven to be a valuable tool in opening a window into the working of specific actions or phenomenon (Stake, 1995, 2010). For this research, I created two cases to participate in and help determine the effectiveness of the RVM process. The participants were purposefully selected and paired, based on criteria consisting of a teaching in a rural school district, the mentees in their first year of teaching, and experienced teacher mentors with a background of successful teaching experiences that permitted them to be familiar with the mentees’ teaching environment. Data were collected over a sixteen-week period equivalent with the average public school semester. Data comprised video-recordings of all online RVM sessions, and participant interviews conducted at the beginning, midpoint, and conclusion of the sixteen-week period.

Discussion

Traditional public school mentoring programs place a mentee under the guidance of a mentor from the same school building or district. From that vantage point the mentor can provide the protégé with vital instruction regarding best
practice techniques and information essential for a new teacher's success in the classroom. In an ideal environment, the mentor’s experience and knowledge would match those required by the mentee’s teaching assignment. The mentor would be provided time to observe the mentee in the classroom, and the mentee would have opportunities to observe this master teacher. Both mentee and mentor would be given time to discuss and reflect on all aspects of teaching, thus building and strengthening the mentee’s skills and understanding of what it means to be a teacher.

Traditional mentoring pairing ideals are seldom met in public school induction programs in small school districts. Therefore, a number of alternatives have been explored with the intent to create more equitable environments when the ideal, for varying reasons, is not possible. In this study RVM was the process used to connect the most ideal music mentor possible for a new music teacher mentee, with the intent to determine if the RVM process provided a viable alternative for effective new teacher induction in ideal mentoring environments where a more suitably matched mentor is not available.

The findings reported in Chapter Four provide insights into the effectiveness of the RVM process for mentoring new teachers. Using the original research questions for guidance, the similarities and differences of the findings of this study when compared to traditional mentoring practice will be discussed here. Include in this discussion will be a comparison of the extent to which the RVM interactions reflected new teacher concerns that had been observed as topics of discussion in traditional face-to-face mentoring, as well as examine how each participant viewed
RVM effectiveness. The implications and recommendations for RVM practice and suggestions for future research will also be included.

The primary research question guiding this study was; How effective is the use of real-time video mentoring (RVM) as a tool for mentoring new music teachers in geographically isolated schools? Based on the data presented in Chapter Four, it appears that RVM was an effective tool for providing mentor support for the beginning music teachers who participated in this study. Support for this conclusion is based on the findings related to three sub-questions, as will be presented in the sections that follow.

**Research Sub-Question 1:** To what extent are the findings of this study consistent with the results of research on traditional face-to-face mentoring and induction programs?

To compare this study's findings with what is known about traditional required, I established benchmarks based on the findings from existing research on beginning teacher mentoring and induction processes. Gordon and Maxey’s (2000) summary of the most commonly discussed issues during traditional mentoring interactions as identified from the collective findings of various studies provided a foundation for the comparative analysis. As discussed in the findings of Chapter Four, seven of the twelve issues Gordon and Maxey identified were evident in the RVM interactions analyzed. While the implications for only these seven will be discussed later in this chapter, I content that the frequency and intensity of the participant interactions in both cases from this study support an assumption of
similarity between RVM and traditional face-to-face mentoring with respect to new teacher concerns discussed.

**Emotional Support.** The need for emotional support is one of the most common issues facing new teachers. The transition from a pre-service university-based environment to the in-service classroom experience is one fraught with anxiety and uncertainty. Questions regarding what to teach and how to present lessons to a group of unknown students are only some of the many challenges faced by novice educators.

New music teachers may be faced with a lack of emotional support. Larger than normal class sizes, absent or superficial curricula, a lack of needed equipment and supplies, and unknown administrative expectations all may compound the difficulties of beginning a new career. New music teachers in smaller schools can become overwhelmed by the many co-curricular activities required. First year music educators may face all this while making the transition from college student to practicing professional living in a new and often unfamiliar community.

Research into the interactions between mentor and mentee during mentoring sessions provides insight into how important induction programs can be when properly planned and implemented to provide emotional reinforcement necessary during the first year in a music classroom. Findings revealed that both first year teacher participants demonstrated a need for emotional support. A total of over 8.25 hours (see Table 6), slightly more than one third of the total interactions for each pair of participants, was spent addressing the emotional needs of the mentee. The substantial time involvement in this study supports the existing
research that conversation concerning emotional deprivations are a dominant part of mentor/mentee interactions (Giebelhaus & Bendixen-Noe, 2000; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

**Planning, organizing, and managing instruction and other professional responsibilities.** Findings of this research reveal that Nancy and her mentor, Karen spent one fourth of their interactions on the topic of program planning and organization, while Jeremy and David spent one fifth of their interactions discussing the same subjects. Although the time spent collectively varied between the two mentoring cases, it supports the findings of previous research which has presented evidence that mentors and mentees frequently interact on the subject of the complex organizational challenges in general education and music programs (Blase, 1986; Byrne, 1994; Conway, 2003; Conway & Holcomb, 2008; Linda Darling-Hammond, 2004; Haack, 2003; Hamann & Gordon, 2000; Kilburg & Hancock, 2006; Veenman, 1984; Zerman & Conway, 2004).

Rural music programs are often under the leadership of one music instructor. While the primary responsibility of a teacher is the complex process of teaching and learning within the classroom, many teachers become distracted by other obligations required by school districts (Conway, 2006). These duties may be building related, such as student organizational sponsorships or building management activities. However, some are district or state-driven mandates implemented to improve educational processes, or for professional development.
The numerous co-curricular elements of the programs combined with teaching a K-12 music curriculum challenge the organizational skills of even the most experienced educators.

**Obtaining Instructional Materials and Resources.** Over 90 total interactions related to instructional materials were reported in the findings of this study. This accounts for over ten percent of the total time spent together as mentor and mentee. These findings parallel those of research into the trials faced by new teachers who are in need of advice regarding how best to obtain needed educational materials (Bates, 2011; Beeson, 2001; Benson, 2008)

A deficiency of needed resources is a common theme among music educators. However, this is seldom more evident than during the first year of teaching. As described previously, is not uncommon for a new teacher to find that departmental and district inventories are not complete or accurate. A new teacher may find that items listed on an inventory no longer exist, are out-of-date, or in poor condition. Although new teachers should be utilizing valuable time planning appropriate lessons, they are often forced to spend their limited budgets and personal time to find appropriate texts and materials. Combined with the fact that new teachers have less experience finding sources for their classroom this may heighten the anxiety that may be felt by any teacher faced with a similar situation.

The differences in time spent between the two cases highlights the uniqueness or individuality between their school districts and music programs. Teachers new to an unfamiliar cultural environment seldom understand the complex history of the existing music program dynamics and district support for
obtaining needed teaching materials and supplies. The differing frequency of these discussions between the mentor pairs may reflect a perceived need by each mentee to prioritize mentoring time based on a growing understanding of the needs of their students. However interpreted, an important element for understanding the findings of this study is that it reflects similar discussions in traditional mentor sessions (Beeson, 2001; Conway et al., 2004; Ehrich et al., 2004; Haack, 2003; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2007; Veenman, 1984).

**Using effective teaching methods.** The data show that the participants in this study spent as much time interacting about the most effective teaching methods for their classes (Table 9) as they did in discussions about how to obtain the materials from which to teach those lessons (Table 8). Slightly more than seven percent of Jeremy and David’s sessions were spent on the subject of best practice teaching techniques. Combined with Nancy and Karen’s over one hour of discussions, music teaching methodology accounts for almost ten percent of the total mentoring interactions dealing with.

The most effective mentoring environments are those that encourage new teachers to analyze and reflect on their teaching practice and process (Bell-Robertson, 2015; Harrison, Lawson, & Wortley, 2005). While many new music educators leave their schools of education confident they are ready to teach, few are completely equipped to face the diverse educational challenges of their students (Bates, 2011; Benson, 2008).

As with discussions about gathering needed resources, Jeremy and David spent less time discussing effective teaching methods than did Nancy and Karen.
However, this does not reflect a disregard by Jeremy and David for best practice techniques because, while the number of coded interactions is almost double, Nancy and Karen only spent approximately ten more minutes talking about this subject. Their interactions demonstrate that conversations about effective teaching methods were present in each case’s RVM sessions.

**Adjusting to the teaching environment and role.** Findings reveal that both participant cases spent approximately the same amount of time in individual mentoring sessions on issues regarding their new position and adjusting to the teaching environment (Table 10). Jeremy spent over 40 minutes discussing this with his mentor, while Nancy spent just under half an hour discussing issues of how to understand her new teacher identity.

The transition from music education student to a practicing professional is not unlike that of most new occupations. First year music teachers leave the comfort of the university setting and enter a world that is often unfamiliar both geographically and culturally. The process of moving from pre-service music education student to an in-service music professional requires a redefining of personal habits and environment. This transition is compounded with the complexity of decoding the logistics and expectations that accompany a novice educator’s first school district. The data reveal that the discussions on how best to maneuver new expectations as a music teacher, and the significant changes this imposed on each mentee’s personal life, were consistent with the findings of previous research about the contents of face-to-face mentoring (Bates, 2011; C.
Communicating with colleagues, including administrators, supervisors, and other teachers. Findings reported highlight the differences that the mentees had regarding communication with other teachers and administrators (Table 11). Jeremy and David spent over a tenth of their sessions discussing this topic, while Nancy and Karen spent less than two percent. Although Nancy was assigned to teach in two separate buildings located approximately 4 blocks apart, her classrooms in each building were located within the same structure as all other classrooms. In Jeremy’s school district the music classroom was in a separate building from the rest of the classrooms. While a large discrepancy existed regarding time spent in mentoring interaction between cases, the fact that this topic was included in their discussions supports the effectiveness of how the RVM process facilitated discussion.

Finding the time to interact with other building faculty and decipher the expectations of district administrators may be an unexpected challenge for the novice teacher unfamiliar with the logistics and policies of a new school district. Feelings of insecurity during their first teaching position may create a self-imposed isolation for new music teachers (Akin, 2001). This lack of professional interaction also may be the result of an archaic sink-or-swim expectation from other building faculty (Lortie, 1975; Newberry, 1977). Whether real or only perceived, new teachers may be reluctant to expose their lack of experience and insecurities with their peers (Gratch, 1998). For the new music teacher, often isolated to an area
more conducive to a musical environment, this separation can easily evolve into feelings of insignificance (Akin, 2001).

**Managing the classroom.** The data revealed that Jeremy spent over 10 percent of his interactions with David about classroom management (see Table 12). However, Nancy spent less than three percent of her time with Karen on this issue. The factors that may have influenced this difference are discussed below, but do not affect the result that the RVM process provided a venue for important discussions about techniques for improving classroom management, similar to the contents of traditional mentoring sessions (Blair, 2008; Huling-Austin, 1992; Veenman, 1984).

Research into the issues of teacher attrition reveal that struggles with classroom management is a reason many young teachers leave education after their first year (Gareis & Nussbaum-Beach, 2007; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). The challenges presented with planning and implementing a successful instructional program require attention to the unique needs of each student. First year teachers not only lack the experiential knowledge of working with students but also the background information about the students’ prior experiences. New teachers often begin the planning process without this information, and may find that their lessons are less effective than anticipated.

As evident in the data, Jeremy and David spent more time on issues of classroom management than Nancy and Karen. Jeremy was faced with a poorly designed and less-than-effective curricular structure for his middle school music program that he could not change. He needed help from his mentor with the development of strategies for effective classroom management and techniques to
enhance his teaching and student’s learning. Nancy, however, found that previous music teachers had established and left for her a music curriculum that was effective. While still faced with issues of how best to run her classes, this preexisting structure allowed her to spend more time with other important areas of her planning.

**Conclusions.** The findings of this research reveal that seven of the issues frequently discussed by new teachers with their mentors were represented by the interactions of the participants in this study. The other five, acquiring information about the school system, assessing students and evaluating student progress, motivating students, dealing with individual student’s needs, interests, abilities and problems, and communicating with parents were absent from the discussions between mentor and mentee in both cases. The fact that during their first year both mentees were posted in schools that were geographically separate and existed within unique school organizations raise questions as to why these five issues never received attention during the mentoring sessions described in this study.

State mandated induction and mentoring programs are required for all new teacher in the state that hosted this study. While this research project was designed to provide a novice teacher with a mentor who was experienced and familiar with their teaching discipline and location, the school district was still require to provide a mentor who was within the system. This presents a potential answer as to why the issue of acquiring information about the school was not a topic of discussion between the mentoring pairs. The mentees in each of the cases under study were likely getting district-specific information from their district assigned mentor. A
comment from Jeremy during his second researcher/mentee interview may shed light to support this premise:

These are things that my district mentor would know that my virtual mentor would not. She is aware and told me countless times, "I can't help you with what to do in the music classroom." All I can help you with is classroom discipline, classroom management, and the logistical things. She is very much about the professional development things. . . .

During her interviews, Nancy did not specifically respond as to what information she received from her district assigned mentor. It is possible she received much of the same information but felt it was not pertinent to the questions asked during the interview.

Knowledge and application of the provisions outlined in the Federal Educational Record Protection Act or FERPA is required by all teachers. The basic mandate in this law is that school districts and the those employed are required to maintain strict confidentiality with all personal student records and information. While this case study's mentees would naturally have benefited from a discussion regarding assessing students and evaluating student progress or dealing with individual student's needs, interests, abilities and problems, it is possible that concerns over violating FERPA regulations prevented mentees from venturing into these topics.

The absence of discussion about student motivation and communicating with parents was not addressed in the data collected. In my rural teaching experiences, I frequently witnessed that newly hired teachers were given a period of grace or “honeymoon,” allowing time for the teacher to adjust to the new situation. This transition period often reflected the level of support and tenure of the previous
teacher. In both cases studied here, the former teacher was supported by both the parents and the students. Students in music performance classes, especially at the secondary level, often have made time and financial investment in music activities, and they may not suffer from a lack of motivation that may be found in their other required classes. Parents may also be more involved, providing transportation to rehearsals, attending performances, participating in booster groups and so forth. It is possible these factors contributed to a lack of need by the mentees to discuss these items, and that they had other issues of greater importance and priority to discuss with their music mentors.

The fact that discussion of five issues that other researchers have found to be concerns facing new teachers were not evident in this case study does not diminish the potential value of RVM in mentoring to new teachers in rural communities. It is quite possible that the issues missing from this study’s cases would have materialized in the mentoring interactions if circumstances or were different, or if the study had continued into the second semester of the school year.

What is interesting is that in both cases the same five themes were missing from their interactions. Possible reason for this could lie within the frameworks of Gordon and Maxey’s research. Gordon and Maxey (2000) completed a survey of the available literature addressing issues that arose during new teacher mentoring. The pool of literature was drawn primarily from surveys, as frequently used with national and regional data gathering initiatives. The nature of the survey format may have allowed for more topics to be identified a priori and rated by participants, whereas my research process was designed to examine the issues that arose
without prompting during the ongoing discussions between the members of the mentoring pairs.

The bulk of the data reported by Gordon and Maxey dealt with issues common to teachers in the regular classroom. However, as addressed in Chapter Two, the needs of teachers in the music classroom differ from those in other content area classrooms. Gordon and Maxey addressed possible differences among teachers in their article by warning those who design mentoring programs to be sensitive to the needs of the individual teacher.

...your teachers may have vital needs that differ from those of the general population of beginning teachers. In reality, each new teacher probably has some needs similar to most beginning teachers everywhere, some needs unique to the group of beginners in the same work setting, and some needs unique to that teacher alone. (p. 11)

It is probable that rural music teachers in K-12 vocal and/or instrumental programs will share unique characteristics. The K-12 rural music program requires planning and implementation of public performances, cross-grade-level curriculum design, resources and organization, plus communication with faculty, staff and administrators for multiple grade levels. The time demands are often overwhelming for the new teacher without disciplined time management and prioritizing skills. The similarity of new teacher issues found in this study likely resulted from the common demands faced by the mentees in both cases, and it is not unreasonable that the discussions did not include some of the issues identified in the large-scale survey studies.
**Research Sub-Question 2.** What were the contents of the RVM interactions by the participants in this study with respect to topics addressed and amount of time spent per topic?

The time spent on specific topics seen in both cases reveal the salient characteristics of interactions in the mentoring process. The mentors in both cases seemed to be cognizant of the importance that mentees be allowed to guide their own discovery of knowledge necessary to develop as teachers. In Tables 13 and 14 that were presented in Chapter 4, the individuality of each case is evident in the differences between the number of interactions and times spent addressing aspects of the 7 themes regarding issues that challenge new teachers (Gordon and Maxey, 2000).

Emotional support and lesson preparation were issues that received considerable attention during mentoring for both cases. The reasons behind the attention given to these areas in the mentoring is supported in existing research. Sindberg and Lipscomb (2005) stated that music teachers felt isolated inside their assigned school buildings and especially because they taught a subject outside the traditional core subject areas. Their research also concluded that an unfulfilled need for support both emotionally and professionally was detrimental to teacher satisfaction. Jeremy and Nancy were both the only music teacher in their respective districts. They were isolated from the support of family and professional contact both by their singular teaching role and geographic distance. Akin (2001, p. 7) summed up the frustration that can exist for a new teacher in a new school.
I'm always on the hunt for a willing audience. It depresses me that I can't find anyone to take an interest in looking at this stuff that so fascinates me. I realize I'm starved to simply talk with someone about my thoughts and ideas.

Jeremy and Nancy had mentors who provided a safe and supporting environment that encouraged both to share experiences, whether successful and unsuccessful. Both mentors were also familiar with the challenges and rewards of teaching in a rural school district. This expertise consistent with the environment of their mentees gave added strength to their support and encouragement when interacting in each mentor session. Conway (2001) revealed that mentees benefitted when their assigned mentor shared the mentees’ academic discipline and had teaching experience that paralleled the mentees’ new environment.

The creation of online communities that provide emotional support for new teachers is not without precedent. Bell-Robertson (2014) designed a research project to determine the possible benefits of using online communities of new music teachers in the area of emotional support. The findings from that study support the use of online communities of practice to combat the lack of emotional support often experience by new music educators. The similarity of findings between Bell-Robinson (2014) and this study lend credibility to the potential for RVM to support new music teachers on their first-year journey.

While emotional support is important, new teachers also seek guidance with planning and implementing effective lessons (Gareis & Nussbaum-Beach, 2007). Carroll (2005) stated that novice teachers need to hear about the teaching strategies and methods that have been successful employed by others. The fact that both mentors in this study possessed extensive time in the classroom, had developed
successful programs, and were considered master teachers by other music
educators gave confidence to their mentee charges when discussing how best to
develop and execute their lessons. As Nancy stated in her interview at the
conclusion of the study:

When I had questions I wanted to ask some who had been doing it for a long
time and knew the ins and outs. Karen was very helpful. . . . She is really the
only other person I could talk to. Any other experienced educator in band or
in choir or elementary music would be wonderful but I had specific
addresses and concerns for K-12. She was able to really help me. Those
answers really had to come from her and nobody else.

Similarly, when asked about his final perceptions of virtual mentoring at the final
interview, Jeremy stated:

Yes, it absolutely was helpful. It is always helpful to have another qualified
teacher to bounce ideas off of and to run ideas with.

Jeremy spent a considerably greater amount of time in discussions with
David on topics of communication with administrator and classroom management.
A comparison between Nancy’s almost twenty-two minutes in discussion of these
topics with her mentor to Jeremy’s almost three hours of interactions with David
reveal Jeremy’s challenges with these issues. As stated above, Nancy was hired into
a program with greater support and existing structure. David, unfortunately was
hired into a position that lacked a historical foundation and that had an
administration that, while well intentioned, struggled with how to best support a
novice music teacher.

Nancy and Karen spent over a third of their time dealing with obtaining
materials and how to organize and present instruction. The fact that so little of the
total time was spent on interactions concerning Nancy’s adjustment to the environment, classroom management, and communication with her colleagues and administration may reflect that Nancy was either less concerned or more confident with her ability to communicate and adjust to the new situation than was Jeremy. Managing the classroom was discussed for only a little over 12 minutes in total, which may reflect the fact that Nancy was hired into a position that had established a more stable classroom structure, thus requiring less support than Jeremy, who spent over 1.3 hours discussing this with David.

The interpersonal dynamics of mentoring are dependent on the personal and professional characteristics of the participants. In Chapter Three, I described the process of matching the mentee to the mentor. The intent was to enhance communication and foster the development of a strong professional relationship between both parties. No matter the accuracy of the matching process, the individual personalities of both the mentor and mentee can introduce factors that effect how well the mentoring process succeeds. While Jeremy and Nancy both testified to the fact that they communicated well and were satisfied with their mentor, the path each took in the communication process differed based on their unique characters.

The design of this study’s parameters also may have influenced the process of mentoring. Limited guidance was provided regarding how to structure the mentoring process, with the intention of allowing flexibility and permitting the process to proceed with limited bias being unintentionally introduced. Upon extensive observation and coding of data gathered it was discovered that both cases
developed a path to success that was unique. However, the interpersonal dynamics of the interactions were never intended to be included in the analysis process. The study of how pairs’ individual personalities, prior experiences and training might affect the RVM mentoring process requires more study in future research investigations.

The data gathered appear to support that conclusion that RVM interactions reflect what happens in traditional face-to-face mentoring and induction, with respect to the seven themes identified in the research literature. The differences in time spent discussing the various issues between both cases in this research support the unique characteristics of individual mentoring pairs and the challenges inherent in each teaching environment. RVM can be an effective part of the induction program that allows mentees and mentors to utilize interaction time to address new teacher issues and meet the teachers’ personal and individual needs.

**Research Sub-Question 3.** What are the perceptions of participants regarding the RVM mentoring process? In this study, the information gathered from each case through one-on-one interviews created a lens for viewing what each participant expressed about RVM. This assessment data should be useful for evaluation and improvement of the RVM process.

The success of mentoring may be directly related to the careful process of matching mentee and mentor based on experiential and teaching discipline criteria (Conway, 2006). The findings revealed in Chapter Four describe how participants felt concerning the process of mentor and mentee selection. Both mentees in this study expressed their satisfaction with how well their individual mentors
understood what they were going through daily. In both cases, the fact that each mentor was deeply immersed in the content knowledge of music and had spent considerable time in a classroom environment much like that of the mentee provided a level of comfort and confidence to the new music teachers.

The ability to communicate clearly on multiple levels is an essential element to effective mentoring. While traditional mentoring relies on the presence of both mentor and mentee in the same geographical location, online mentoring is not constrained to a specific point in time and space. Email, cell phones, online forums and chat rooms have all proven valuable to facilitate communication in mentoring new teachers (Conway, 2002). With any format, the ability to communicate questions from the mentee or guidance from the mentor are critical for success. Findings from this study indicate that although Skype™ was noted by Jeremy as not being very user-friendly, the ability to communicate was seldom hindered by the RVM process. Examples from the coded data demonstrate repeatedly that mentor guidance was perceived by the mentees as both applicable and essential to their success.

Although research has shown that other electronic means of mentor/mentee communication has been successful, RVM added the component of face-to-face chatting. Research into nonverbal communication by Mehrabian (2007) reveals that while seven percent of communication dealing with emotion or feeling is verbal, and only thirty-eight percent through vocal inflection, over fifty percent of the communication of emotion is through facial expression. RVM’s synchronous video enhances the ability to communicate both verbally and nonverbally. Data from
findings in this research show that mentee perception of the importance of face-to-face video interaction was important to their success as a new teacher. The ability of the video format to be used to share and view resources also was valued by the participants.

**Implications**

Findings presented in this study support the use of RVM as a tool in new music teacher mentoring and induction programs. Its use should be considered and encouraged for new music teachers hired into districts that are unable to provide music teachers as mentors.

The complex schedule faced by all teachers creates a dilemma for providing mentor and mentee interactions. While all teachers battle daily with the demands of their respective disciplines, the after-school responsibilities of music teachers often make it difficult for scheduling mentoring sessions. RVM allows the mentor and mentee to meet with greater flexibility. Online interactions can take place in any location with a viable Internet presence.

The RVM communication software used in this study opens the possibility for new teachers to be observed in the classroom by their online mentor. Alternatively, the software allows the video recording of teachers engaged in classroom activities, thus providing mentors with live observational opportunities from any Internet active location. This observation can then be viewed and discussed allowing in depth mentor/protégé analysis and reflection. Mentors could also video record their own classroom instruction to provide models for their mentees.
Music teachers in small rural instrumental or vocal programs seldom have equal resources when compared to the extensive resources available to large urban and suburban school districts. This lack of needed materials may contribute to new music educator’s perceptions of a lack of administrative support. However, with the use of RVM, mentor/mentee networking may potentially provide opportunities for sharing desired teaching materials from sources unknown to the beginning teacher. Bell-Robertson’s (2011) findings as the result of research into beginning music teacher online communities revealed that new music teachers found support and encouragement when interacting with other beginning music teachers connected by an Internet chat forum. However, her research also revealed that novice music teachers within these groups seldom interacted much beyond issues of emotional reinforcement. While new music teachers are provided praxis experience opportunities as pre-service educators, it is only possible for them to receive exposure to a small subset of resources being utilized in the music classroom. The RVM process allows mentors to provide information and visual demonstration of materials useful that may be purchased or shared between schools. RVM can provide opportunities for beginning teacher observation of best practice teaching technique in remote music classrooms. The opportunities for discussion and reflection of beginning classroom experiences between the mentor and mentee provide a strong foundation for a novice teacher’s future professional development, in addition to the needed emotional support.

Implementing successful mentoring programs may place a strain on all public school districts. Small and rural districts may feel this financial burden with
the ability to provide only the minimal elements required for compliance. Federal programs over the last two decades have provided extensive funding for public education systems to connect to the World Wide Web. The use of RVM programs utilizing Internet based and free synchronous video technologies, such as Skype™, Google+™ and other comparable software, can greatly reduce the cost of providing enriched induction programs as districts can share faculty knowledge and experience through RVM interactions. This would permit districts to pool or exchange resources—for instance, a new music teacher might be mentored by an experienced music teacher in the next county, while that county’s new art teacher is being mentored by an experienced art teacher from the other county school district.

The success of students in the classroom should be a consideration in any school initiative. Although the effects of mentoring on the achievement of students in new teachers’ classrooms has yet to be demonstrated via data-based research, it is logical to assume that teacher success and retention would impact student learning. Thus, the design and implementation of successful RVM programs in rural school districts holds promise for strengthening the potential for enhanced student accomplishment in music classes.

**Additional Connections to the Research Literature**

Data collected in this study show that the structure and philosophical foundations of traditional mentoring were not hindered by the RVM process. All new teacher induction and mentoring initiatives are founded on effective communication between the mentor and a novice teacher. Participants in this
research conveyed satisfaction when asked questions about their ability to communicate with each other.

Upon review of the transcribed interviews and video interactions, it was possible to determine the philosophical approach taken by both mentors in the case study. The accepted definitions of traditional mentoring require that the mentee trust and respect the greater experience and understanding of the mentor. Jeremy remarked in his second interview of his confidence in the professional way his mentor interacted with him:

...the relationship between a teacher and a student should allow a student to be weak in front of me without me judging them, for them to be vulnerable without me exposing them or being disrespectful. That is the same sort of thing that you gain when you know somebody for a long time but then there is also, especially for David and me, there has been a natural sort of click, at least for me, to feel comfortable, respected and cared for but in a less sappy way.

Nancy, in her second interview, revealed her confidence in Karen’s knowledge and experience.

Karen is my number one person to ask questions to that I didn’t really know. In your first year, you obviously have questions about MSHSAA [Missouri State High School Activities Association] and you have someone who has been through all that, even though we are not in the same district, she is able to help me out with stuff. She has helped me on time lines, which is really helpful.

Both mentees could rely on the information and professionalism of their assigned mentor.

Data coded in the video transcriptions and interviews revealed examples of other mentoring philosophical framings. Gold (1996) and Bell-Robertson (2011) both expounded on the importance of emotional support and development of
professional identity for new teachers. Jeremy felt emotionally supported and encouraged by the RVM interactions with his mentor. In his second interview, he shared his assessment:

It has been tremendously helpful and I always get done with the conversation and always feeling amped about my teaching and more enthused about what I am doing. A whole lot more at ease in my heart and thinking for the most part I am doing okay. I am comfortable with what is going on and okay if he (mentor) were here, he would be doing something pretty much the same.

Wang and Odell (2002) stipulated the importance of encouraging novice teachers to analyze and reflect on their process for improving teaching and learning. During her second interview, Karen revealed her process of encouraging Nancy to begin analyzing what she done during her first year in the classroom and how it might be done more effectively in the future:

We have talked about scheduling and I have encouraged her to look at the schedule this year and see what kind of things she would want to change next year. To starting getting some ideas together to present to her administration. I know that in a small school like that, that can be not as flexible as in a larger school. Maybe there are some ways that they can change some things around that would make things more effective for her.

In both cases, we can see that multiple strategies based on differing philosophical constructs are possible when using RVM. The use of a critical constructivist approach to mentoring was seen more in the interactions of Nancy and Karen than Jeremy and David. The reasons for this could be the result of the limited time frame of only one semester, and the extensive new teacher enculturation process. However, I speculate it is more likely the result of the personality characteristics of the individual cases. To be more precise would
require additional future research into the interpersonal nature of RVM participants’ situations.

Both mentee participants expressed satisfaction with RVM and a desire to remain in the music classroom in the future. This supports research that shows effective mentoring increases the likelihood that a new teacher will remain in the classroom (Feiman-Nemser, 1996; Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Scherer & Berliner, 2001). During the third round of interviews, each mentee was asked the same question, provided here with their replies:

Interviewer: On a personal note, are you going to continue as a music teacher next year?

Jeremy: I am going to stay in teaching for a very long time. I was planning on staying in teaching regardless of this process, but this definitely did strengthen them and bolster my resolve to stay in education.

Nancy: Yes

However, in Nancy’s case the response was qualified based on her intention to leave her present position and move to another school district:

While I am not really sure I want to give up band, which is kind of weird, but I kind of think I want to specialize in elementary music more. . . . I was really interested in a position I saw and the principle interviewed me and she offered me a job. It is in a really small school again, [laugh] which isn’t bad because, obviously, I know how that works at this point. (Nancy, interview 3)

Jeremy and Nancy’s comments regarding their intentions to stay in music education are consistent with research that described the importance of pairing a new music teacher with a similar experienced master music teacher to reduce the
risk of a new music teacher attrition (Conway, 2003). Nancy’s decision to move to a
music teacher position in a new school district the following year parallels research
that reveals that female music teachers are at greater risk to leave teaching or
migrate to a new position (Madsen & Hancock, 2002). The lack of recent research
specific to music teacher migration reveals a need for future research to determine
the impact that both music based traditional mentoring and RVM may have on
teacher migration.¹

Limitations of the Study

In my design, a multiple case study approach was used to provide insight into
the RVM process. Although I felt that two cases were sufficient to begin the
exploration of this topic, it is possible that a larger case pool would have provided
data that could have shed new light on the topic.

For this study, each mentor/mentee pair provided data from RVM session for
the first semester of a traditional public school. It likely that it is during this period
that new teacher is in the greatest need regarding the issues and challenges that lie
ahead. It was also my intention to gather the richest RVM data that could be

¹ Where the mentees are now: Jeremy is still teaching music. He spent one year at
his first placement and is now the elementary music teacher in rural school district
about 80 miles away. Nancy also left after one year at her first position. She is now
teaching elementary music in a slightly larger district about 200 miles from her
original placement.
collected with a minimum amount of time taken from both the mentor and mentee’s demanding schedule. A longer period for data collection would have provided insights into how RVM could be utilized during the complete school year, including the demanding period of music festival participation. It is possible that a time frame of a full-term school year would have addressed more of Gordon and Maxey’s (2000) original twelve mentoring issues beyond the seven witnessed in this study. However, I believe that the timeframe of this study was adequate for assessing the effectiveness of RVM as a tool for music teacher mentoring.

One factor that is constant when working with technology is the extent to which it will work as planned. Skype™ as chosen for its cost and user-friendly format. Since the beginning of this research, synchronous video technologies have improved in efficiency and ease of use as Internet resources. During some RVM sessions, case participants struggled with technological issues that hindered session interaction. It is possible that other forms of Internet video technology could perform more effectively.

Each case pairing was allowed autonomy with setting their own structure and management of the time requirements for the study. This permitted the data collected to be representative of the reality of the participants’ experiences. My intent with this freedom also was to reduce any possible unintended bias that might be introduced had I set out more specific expectations or guidelines. However, the lack of structure may have introduced a level of unnecessary stress on the participants, if they were concerned about meeting ambiguous research parameters.
Future Research

There are several suggestions for future research relative to the findings of this study. Research could take divergent courses relating to the findings, including exploring issues of quality and quantity of distance mentoring interactions with or without more structured expectations or guidelines, or improved use of RVM procedures and technology.

Research is needed on the specific elements of the RVM process. Data from this research raises questions on how best to structure RVM programs. Future studies into best practice approaches to the RVM process would benefit existing online programs. This could include issues of what level of structure and scheduling are most effective. The uses of RVM technologies in allowing a mentor to remotely observe a mentee’s classroom and then provide immediate feedback provides another viable research direction.

The importance of establishing strong and secure relationships between mentor and mentee is a common theme in research on new teacher mentoring. The use of RVM opens a line of research that could broaden the understanding the significance of non-verbal communication within mentoring relationship, especially if compared with mentoring done onsite with face-to-face communication.

As mentioned earlier, existing research has supported the creation of professional learning communities (Bell-Robertson, 2015; Harrison et al., 2005). However, that research is based on data collected through asynchronous technological methods, including email or group forum bulletin board formats. Studying the possibility of combining RVM interactions with the use of email or
Internet forums is a line of research that could add interesting information to the existing bodies of knowledge about mentoring and induction.

This study focused on the use of RVM within a one-on-one environment. In small school districts, professional development that utilizes resources outside the local district may be restricted by budgetary constraints and/or distance. Research into the use of RVM processes to facilitate discipline specific professional development for beginning teacher, or any level of teachers, could prove valuable for enriching teacher development. Research in this area, combined with data from studies on the effective use of online video technology, would help reveal program strengths and weakness that could guide improvements in RVM and other professional development activities utilizing similar real-time video strategies.

**Summary Remarks**

The lack of effective mentoring to new music teachers in rural school districts is not the single root to the problem of keeping beginning teachers in music classrooms. However, the findings in existing research provide evidence that teachers with strong mentoring experiences remain in teaching longer. In this study, the RVM process was analyzed to determine its effectiveness in helping new music teachers meet the challenge of their first years in the classroom. While findings from this research support RVM as a tool for new music teacher induction, I think it best to allow the mentees from each case to express their feelings concerning interactions shared with their mentors in the RVM environment.
Interview Two

Nancy: The best word I would use to describe it [RVM] is lifeline because, well it might have different had I gone back (began teaching) to an area I was near to where I went to college. I have been transplanted into an area that I don't have any connections in.

Interview Two

Jeremy: It [RVM] has been tremendously helpful and I always get done with the conversation and always get done feeling amped about my teaching and more enthused about what I am doing. A whole lot more at ease in my heart and thinking for the most part I am doing okay . . . the same sort of thing that you gain when you know somebody for a long time . . . to feel comfortable, respected and cared for but in a less sappy way . . . it is a very freeing thing.

It is evident that RVM was considered effective by the research participants.

RVM provides the opportunity for appropriate matching of mentor and mentee when a subject-specific mentor is not available locally. When RVM is combined with school-based induction programs, new teachers who are the only music teachers in their schools may be provided with the support of mentors who understand the most relevant and unique issues and challenges they may face as they begin implementing their music teaching careers. RVM combined with district supported mentor programs, while not a guarantee for music educator retention, should be considered an important resource for the improvement of existing induction programs, thus providing enriched support for the success and professional development of novice teachers in rural music programs.
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APPENDIX A

RESEARCH CONSENT FORMS

1. Research Participant Consent Form
2. District Information and Consent Form
3. Institutional Review Board Approval Documentation
1. Research Participant Consent Form

Part I: Research Description

Principal Researcher: Kenneth C. Jeffs

Research Title: E-mentoring: Using Synchronous Video Technology in the Mentoring of New Music Specialists in Rural School Districts

You are invited to participate in a research study that explores new technologies that may potentially improve mentoring programs for beginning music teachers. Your participation in this study will involve the use of online synchronous video technology (Skype) as the primary mode of communication between you and your mentor. You and your mentor will “meet” online for a minimum of nine (9) one hour sessions during a period of 4 months. The principal researcher will interview you 3 times during this same period. The duration of the interviews will be approximately sixty (60) minutes. The interviews will be undertaken at a time and location that is mutually suitable and may be conducted in an onsite or online format. With your permission, the interviews will be audio/video taped and transcribed, the purpose therefore being to capture and maintain an accurate record of the discussion. Data collection will also include analysis of video taped interactions between you and your mentor while connected synchronously on-line. The format of any reflective documents will be your decision and will also become part of the data collection. At the conclusion of the data collection period you will be asked to assist in essential data triangulation and member checking procedures by reviewing written interpretations of data collection and analysis materials for accuracy and palatability. The researcher, Kenneth C. Jeffs, a doctoral candidate at the University of Missouri, will conduct this study.

Risks and Benefits:
This research will contribute to understanding the virtual or e-mentoring experience, and the potential benefit for improvements in mentoring programs available to novice teachers. Mentees should benefit from the shared experiences of the mentor. Mentors should find it rewarding to make a positive contribution to the success of a younger member of their profession. Participation in this study carries no more risks than an individual would encounter in any professional mentor/mentee relationship. There is no financial remuneration for your participation in this study.

Data Storage to Protect Confidentiality:
Under no circumstances whatsoever outside your mentor pairs will you be indentified by name in the course of this research study, or in any publication thereof. No interaction or interview information will be accessible to ANYONE other than the researcher, and doctoral advisor. On all transcriptions and collected data you will be referred to only by way of a pseudonym. All information provided by you will be treated as strictly confidential. All data will be coded and securely stored on the researcher’s personal computer in password-protected files, and used for applicable research purposes only. This computer will be located in a remote location and inaccessible to anyone but the researcher.

How the Results Will Be Used:
This research study is to be submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri. The results of this study will be
published as a dissertation. In addition, information may be used for educational purposes in professional presentation(s) and/or educational publication(s).

Part 2: Participants Rights

- I have read and discussed the research description with the researcher. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures regarding this study.
- My participation in this research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardy to future employment, teacher status, or other entitlements.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his professional discretion.
- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available that may relate to my willingness to continue my participation, the researcher will provide that information to me.
- Any information derived from the research that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- If at any time I have any questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the researcher, Kenneth C. Jeffs who will answer my questions. The researcher’s phone number is (314) xxx-xxxx. I may also contact the researcher’s faculty advisor, Dr. Wendy Sims, at (573) xxx-xxxx.
- If at any time I have comments or concerns regarding the conduct of the researcher, or questions about my rights as a research participant, I should contact the University of Missouri Institutional Review Board. The phone number for the IRB is (573) xxx-xxxx. Alternatively, I can write to the IRB at the University of Missouri, 483 McReynolds, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri 65211.
- I should receive a copy of the Research Description and Participant’s Rights document.
- Audio and videotaping is part of this research. Only the principal researcher and his faculty advisor will have access to written and taped materials. Please check one:
  
  - [ ] I consent to be audio and videotaped.
  - [x] I do NOT consent to being audio and videotaped.

My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Signature __________________________________________ Date ______ / ______ / ______

Name: (Please print) __________________________________________

Researcher's Verification of Explanation

I, __________________________ (Researcher), certify that I have carefully explained the purpose and nature of this research to __________________________ (participant's name). He/she has had the opportunity to discuss it with me in detail. I have answered all his/her questions and he/she provided the affirmative agreement to participate in this research.

Researcher's signature: __________________________________________ Date _____ / _____ / _____
2. District Information and Consent From

7 Greymore Drive  
Chesterfield, MO 63017

August 25, 2010

Dear Principal/Superintendent,

I am sending this document, per our earlier phone conversation, to provide further details regarding my research project involving your new band director. The research is a case study of first year music teacher interactions with a mentor and is the focus of my PhD dissertation. Without boring you with extensive details, current research into mentor practice indicates that mentoring programs are more effective if new teachers and their assigned mentors share the same teaching disciplines. This is an unrealistic expectation in small school districts that may have a limited number of music specialists available to serve as mentors. My research is directed toward a possible solution to this problem but utilizing newly available face-to-face communication software that allows immediate synchronous interactions via the Internet. With this software, music mentors can be provided from other locations statewide that share discipline specific criteria with new teachers. As a teacher who taught in a small school district for more than half my career, I remember how important a more experienced music teacher was for my success early in my experience. I also remember the time and expensive involved in traveling to see that person. With the added responsibilities of new teachers in our present educational environment, time is a persistent issue. The utilization of this new technology can potentially make time management less of a problem while at the same time creates more effective mentor pairings.

Your district’s support and involvement is important. The project will create no added financial or time burden to your already strained budget. All that will be needed for Jamie to participate is access for her personal computer to your district’s Internet structures that will allow her to communicate with her research assigned mentor. She may also need to have district permission to install software on her assigned district computer. The program is Skype © and is a free online synchronous communication program. Skype has an excellent track record and is consistently used at all levels. The time necessary for installation is very minimal (only a few minutes) and has little to no maintenance requirements. If she decides to use her district computer for communicating with her mentor, she will also need to attach her webcam for the face-to-face elements included in the research data collection. Outside the assistance required from district technology support, no staff member, other than Jamie, would be necessary or involved in any other area of the project. Her interactions with her distance mentor (referred to as an e-mentor in the research) will not involve any disruption of her normal district duties or responsibilities. She and her mentor may decide to do an online observation of the mentee’s teaching that may or may not require video taping. If videotaping is required, the contents will only be available to your new teacher, her mentor and myself for the purpose of professional development.

My dissertation complies with all University of Missouri Institutional Review Board requirements regarding participant rights and researcher regulations. While not an official participant in the research and therefore not covered by IRB guidelines, I will at no time use your district’s official title in any possible publication of this research, outside my final dissertation. You will be identified only as a mid-western public school system in the United States.

As stated, your support is important and appreciated, not only by myself but also all who could potentially benefit from this research in the future. I hope that your district can comply with these requests for
assistance. If for any reason you require additional information, do not hesitate to contact me at this email address.

Professionally,

Kenneth C. Jeffs,
PhD Candidate - Curriculum and Instruction, Music Education
University of Missouri
3. Institutional Review Approval Documentation

Available upon request only
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Interview One Questions: Mentor
2. Interview One Questions: Mentee
3. Interview Two Questions: Mentee
4. Interview Two Questions: Mentor
5. Interview Three Questions: Mentee
6. Interview Three Questions: Mentor
1. Interview One Questions: Mentee

Background:

☐ What did you see as the characteristics of a good teacher from your perspective as a student?

Traditional Mentoring:

☐ What were your thoughts when your district first discussed the mentoring program set up for new teachers?

☐ How would you define the word mentor?

☐ What do you feel are important characteristics of a good mentor?

☐ How would you describe an ideal, or what you feel is a very good, mentoring situation with regard to what you feel would be most effective for you?

☐ What do you feel are important interactional elements in an effective mentoring session?

E or Virtual - Mentoring

☐ What were your thoughts when I first discussed the mentoring program set up for this research?

☐ Describe your thoughts on online video communication?

☐ What is your experience with online video communication?

☐ What are your perceptions of an e-mentoring or virtual mentoring experience?

☐ What are your thoughts as to how this type of mentoring process will function structurally?

To-date Experiences:

☐ Describe how your district has organized the state mandated mentoring program?
What are your job responsibilities for the district?
2. Interview One Questions: Mentor

Background:

☐ Tell me about your experience as a teacher.

☐ What do you see as the characteristics of a good teacher?

Traditional Mentoring:

☐ Have you served as a mentor prior to this research?

☐ If so, and without names, describe that experience or experiences.

☐ How would you define the word mentor?

☐ What do feel are important characteristics of a good mentor?

☐ How would you describe an ideal, or what you feel is an effective, mentoring program or situation?

☐ What do you feel are the most important interactional elements in an effective mentoring session?

E or Virtual - Mentoring

☐ What were your thoughts when I first discussed the mentoring program set up for this research?

☐ Describe your thoughts on online video communication?

☐ What is your experience with online video communication?

☐ Describe your perceptions of how an e-mentoring or virtual mentoring experience should or would function?

☐ What are your thoughts as to how this type of mentoring process would be most effectively logistically? Should it happen on site, off site, etc?

Experiences:

☐ Describe how your district has organized the state mandated mentoring program?
What are your job responsibilities for the district?
3. Interview Two Questions: Mentee

(This series of questions should be conversational and open ended to allow time for discussion. If additional questions present themselves in the interview process they will be included. They should be present not as questions but as conversation starters and guides.)

Topics for discussion:

☐ Describe how you feel the sessions with your Skype mentor are going? Are they helpful? Are there issues of concern?

☐ What seem to be the most common issue or issues that arise in your sessions regarding teaching or the classroom?

☐ Do you feel you are able to communicate effectively with your mentor? Do his/her responses demonstrate an understanding of your questions? Do you understand what he/she is trying to convey?

☐ How do you feel about being mentored so far?

☐ Have you changed as a teacher since the last interview? How? Can you attribute any of this change to the mentoring process?

☐ How are you feeling about yourself as a teacher? Do you think working with a mentor has affected those feelings?

☐ How are you feeling about using Skype? How does Skype improve effective communication? How is it detrimental?

Do you see any similarities/differences with your district provided mentor program?
4. Interview Two Questions: Mentor

(This series of questions should be conversational and open ended to allow time for discussion. If additional questions present themselves in the interview process they will be included. They should be present not as questions but as conversation starters and guides.)

Topics for discussion:

☐ Describe how you feel the sessions with your Skype mentee are going? Do you feel you are being helpful? Are there issues of concern?

☐ What seem to be the most common issue or issues that arise in your sessions regarding your mentee’s questions on teaching or the classroom?

☐ Do you feel you are able to communicate effectively with your mentee? Do you understand his/her questions or issues? Do you feel he/she is understanding you?

☐ How do you feel about your mentoring so far?

☐ Have you changed since the last interview? If so, describe how.

☐ How are you feeling about using Skype? How does Skype improve effective communication? How is it detrimental?

Do you see any similarities/differences with your past mentoring experiences?
5. Interview Three Questions: Mentee

(This series of questions should be conversational and open ended to allow time for discussion. If additional questions present themselves in the interview process they will be included. They should be present not as questions but as conversation starters and guides.)

☐ Now that you have completed 14 weeks with your e-mentor, tell me about the progress you have made as a teacher that relate to your virtual mentoring experiences?

☐ Describe how your district assigned mentor sessions are progressing?

☐ Describe your thoughts regarding the two mentoring programs?

☐ Describe/compare the communication process in both programs?

Finally, share your thoughts about virtual mentoring.
6. Interview Three Questions: Mentor

(This series of questions should be conversational and open ended to allow time for discussion. If additional questions present themselves in the interview process they will be included. They should be present not as questions but as conversation starters and guides.)

☐ Now that you have completed 14 weeks of virtual mentoring, describe how you feel the sessions with your Skype mentee progressed?

☐ Based on both your past mentoring experience and what you have learned from virtual mentoring, describe your thoughts regarding the two mentoring programs?

☐ Describe/compare the communication process in both programs?

☐ Finally, share your thoughts about virtual mentoring.
APPENDIX C

CASE ONE

JEREMY AND DAVID INTERVIEW RESPONSES

1. Interview One: Jeremy, mentee
2. Interview One: David, mentor
3. Interview Two: Jeremy, mentee
4. Interview Two: David, mentor
5. Interview Three: Jeremy, mentee
6. Interview Three: David, mentor
1. Interview One: Jeremy, mentee

Interviewer: Tell me about your educational experience as a student growing up?

Jeremy: Well I grew up in a small town of about two thousand people. I was always a really good student. I was always a straight A student in high school. Even as a grade school student, I was a pretty good student, in the gifted program, and I always thought that my education, were I grew up in my home town was pretty good. I always felt good about it, you know there's always the student's that are going to do well no matter where you put them. I really liked it. It was a small school. We were all on one campus, we had several buildings, but we were all on one campus. In terms of just plain academics, you know, the normal types of things. My plain old academic education was pretty good. I learned to read and write and spell, math, I had all the classes I needed to take. I had a lot of teachers that also, like they were my Sunday school teacher. The typical things that come with a small town. The teacher you saw was also the person that you saw at the grocery store. Pretty similar to here (town of district employer) actually, not as small as here (laugh).

In terms of music, I had a really cool elementary music teacher that was a, I don't remember a single thing from elementary music except for the elementary honor choir that I did. That was always a fun, I guess it was a fun thing, I don't know. It turns out the clinician would eventually be one of my music professors in college. It was really cool in college to have a chance to inform them that I was in an honor
choir they conducted. When I was fifth grade I started band and started on clarinet and really like it. The band director was really stiff, you know, real firm with us. A lot of kids didn’t like that but I did. I actually quit after 5th grade because I thought the payments were a little steep for my parents, we were on the rent to own type of thing, and so I said I want to do band anymore. I told my parents it was because the band director was mean, but in reality it was because I didn’t think we couldn’t afford the instrument. In eighth grade my band director begged my mother, who worked in the cafeteria, to have me come back. I came back in eighth grade, you know sixth and seventh grade are pretty big years for developing band kids. I came in eighth grade and played bass clarinet. It was a lot more technically easy, less challenging, rather less. I did band all the way through high school. I eventually went to baritone sax and my band director was the same from fifth grade to twelfth grade. In college my emphasis wasn’t instrumental, it was vocal. I only ever ended up in choir was during my sophomore year of high school because I got kicked out of another class. I showed up the first day, sophomore year, and got kicked out of a class for fighting. For fighting, believe it or not, and I don’t even know what about (sic) I got kicked out and the only other class that was open that I had not already taken was show choir. I ended up in a show choir and fell in love with vocal music and said that is the only thing I want to do and then went to college and did that. I had a really fantastic set of teachers that were consistent with me. They were consistent, not only as teachers, but as people. They really supported me as an individual, supported all their students really, but the reason I ended up being a music major is because of my band director. He was consistent and a stand up guy.
I had really good teachers even though the school was small. They were consistent people and I said, I really want to touch some students the way my teachers touched me. I know that is kind of hokey, but it’s true.

Interviewer: From the perspective of a student, what do see as the characteristics of a good teacher?

Jeremy: From the perspective of a student, oh man I am going to have to think back, like last year I was a college student, what made good professors. Well, my best teachers were organized. I had some really wonderful teachers that were completely disorganized, papers everywhere, and piles of junk everywhere. They were effective teachers, but in terms just the logistics of running a class and getting papers returned on time and being consistent with grading procedures and discipline policies and resources. Having their lessons planned consistently, well that sounds like a teacher thing not like a student thing (laugh). From a student’s perspective, my best teachers were organized people. But more importantly, they were caring people. They were consistently caring. It wasn’t like, when the teachers were feeling good, that gave the students permission to feel good. My best teachers were consistently there no matter what. They were consistently available to meet with students and consistently available to kick students in the rear end if they needed it. I don’t know, those are two really important qualities of really good teacher and, I don’t know, some of my elementary teachers, they were just really hard on us. Some students that didn’t set well with them but for most students, it
was, okay, I better get my stuff together and do what I need to do. They were persistent. They were consistent and they were with a loving manner firm with us at all points.

Interviewer: When did you know you wanted to be a teacher?

Jeremy: Oh, junior year, January of junior year, I know this to pit point. I can pin point almost the minute. It was when I was selected to the 2004 Missouri All-State Choir with Jerry Blackstone. It was my junior year, from a tiny little school were the men’s section was me all year (sic). I remember getting into to all-state choir and going, oh man, I am so scared because I know all these people from all over the state. These St. Louis kids and these kids from bigger places with huge programs (sic). I was terrified and Jerry Blackstone stood up on the podium, I was already kind of thinking what am I going to do with my life. I was a junior, I wanted to do engineering, I was going into law for a while and teaching was, hey I might be a teacher, hey that might be kind of cool. The second we did our warm ups and Jerry Blackstone to the effect of I want you here and I am proud of you for being here. You have worked hard, you know that little shpeel you give the kids to get them pumped up, he gave that speech to me and I said, okay, I think this is it. I have been completely steadfast in wanting to be a teacher from that particular point onward.

Interviewer: Did you have any teachers that inspired you to make decision?
Jeremy: In combination with Blackstone, that very same week, a cherished older educator from our state, he got up and said you are the cream of the crop and the best singers that the state has to offer. We need you and you are the future of music education in this state. He said he wanted us to consider teaching music. Consider getting involved and passing on your passion on other kids, ones younger than you. I challenge you. I am just sitting there drooling, oh yea, yea, yea. (laugh) I was kind of a combination that and this pep talk and, during junior year of college I had the chance to tell him that, I still did not know him and the choir was somewhere in the Northeast, somewhere in New England prepping for a concert. It was like the last day of tour of last couple of days tour and we were tired. Our conductor was being a pain and we were ready to get home. We were singing our rehearsal before a concert and in walks that cherished older educator from my all-state experience and sits down in the back. I went I think I know him, our director turns around, calls out his name and they stand up and hug. I am thinking, where do I know this man and hits me like a ton of bricks. After our rehearsal is over and go to change. I go up to him and say you don't me and tell him my name. I told him that story from all-state and how important his words were, how intently I listened, how deep they sunk in. Tears welled up in his eyes and tears welled up in my eyes and he gave me big hug. We had a moment together and it was one of the coolest things that I ever had the opportunity to do was to tell him what he meant to me. Little things like that.

On a more consistent basis, when I was in high school, I had those teachers who were good and good at what they did. They loved being there and it was a job. They treated it like a job but it wasn't a job, it was what they did. They inspired me not
just to think about math or science or whatever thing it was. They taught me just to think more critically about everything and I was just so supported and my peers were supported by those teachers. I was shown that, I care for you, and I say how cool it made the teachers feel. I said, I feel good because you feel good, and, you know, I might want to make some kids feel good because I see how it makes you feel good. Many people say, I want to teach because I want to touch students, and that's true, but also I want to teach because when I give to my students, in turn, they give back to me. It is kind of a selfish thing to, I want to feel good and if I can feel good by making others fell good, to me that is a win, win. I was that and you can do that in a thousand ways, but the way I saw that most consistently was with my teachers. To me, it was just a natural step.

Interviewer: Did you have any members of your family who were teachers?

Jeremy: I was actually, in my immediate family, I was the first person to ever go college. I was really cool for me. I have some a great aunt who was a librarian at my elementary school. She used to be a PE teacher and then she retired and kind of went part time elementary librarian. It was not like my parents were teachers or anything. I come from a farming community. We are farmers and my parents said, Josh don't be a farmer, go to school and do anything else. What ever it is, just go. I am a really logical person and so the idea of getting a degree that trains to do a specific thing seems very logical. Like doctor, lawyer, those hard core type of things instead of getting a random degree in something and then getting a job that kinds of
associated with that. To me, being a teacher was a very logical set. I will get a degree to be a teacher and then I will be a teacher. I don't really have any family, besides her (great aunt), that was a teacher at all.

Interviewer: What were your thoughts when your district supervisor discussed the mentoring program they had planned for you?

Jeremy: Well, um, it was interesting. I found out about this process (virtual mentor research project) before I found out anything about the mentoring at my school. I threw off what my mentoring was going to be like at my school. I kind of went, okay, okay, it's no big deal, whatever, I have plenty of friends around the area I can call. My administration were very upfront and we're okay because we can't do anything about that. We know that your mentor is not really prepared to mentor you to the best of their ability to meet all your needs. They were very upfront about that which I thought was very cool. I found about the process, you know, you kind of hear it through the grapevine as a student, I am going to have a mentor teacher. I did not exactly everything, but I just knew it would be somebody who would kind of keep tabs on me and make sure I did not burn down the building (laugh). Probably, help with a bunch of paper work, which is true, and documentation. I did not what it meant exactly, but when they explained it to me, it was more and less than what I thought it was going to be. What I mean by that is, it is more paper work, at my particular school I guess. What more paper work than I thought but a lot less different stuff. It is basically one thing and paperwork. They said you have to do
this for two years. Which is fine but then I kind of went, oh bummer, whatever.

There is a huge packet of stuff and bunch of check lists, month by month that our school has to do. I mean that’s fine, but really I responded pretty positively to it. Fully aware they (district) could not meet all my needs and they know that, which almost made it easier.

Interviewer: How would you define the word mentor?

Jeremy: Well, you know, throughout my life I have felt it in a couple of different ways. Originally, I felt the idea of a mentor was somebody you just kind of looked up to. It was very, I don’t, just kind of floated around, you sort of attached yourself to someone and they were your mentor. They might not even be aware of it. Which makes some sense and there is some validity to that. Now, in terms of were talking about, oh I have a mentor teacher, well that didn’t just happen, they were assigned to me. They were picked either probably, you know, with their consent, but maybe not (laugh). So you know now I define a mentor as almost like a teacher teacher (sic). My mentor is a teacher teacher. Not only a colleague but somebody I am supposed to go it I have issues. I guess that is what a regular mentor would be but it doesn’t quite have the same soft of, highfalutin (sic), sort of like spiritual meaning that it did when I was a kind of a younger kid, when I had this idol mentor. It is not more of a practical thing and that I, as a new teacher, do not have knowledge that experienced teachers have. It is my duty as an effective newcomer to look at people that know what is going on and pull all I can from them. It just happens to be that I
was assigned someone.

Interviewer: What do you think the characteristics of that good mentor should be?

Jeremy: They need to be, on a very logistical sense, a very practical sense, they need to have some years under their belt. First and foremost, I don't care how good of a teacher they are unless you have years under your belt, you just don't quite have the experience, you have not seen it all. You don't have as many cool stories to tell at the lunch table (laugh). Some number one, they need to have some experience under their belt, but number two, there are experienced teacher that are not effective teachers, and they need to be judged by their administration as an effective teacher. Somebody that knows their curriculum well, has effective discipline and class management idea and procedures. Somebody who is ultimately open-minded because I am going to teach way differently than you teach, and I am going to teach way differently that my mentor teaches no matter the content. Somebody that is open minded and can say, alright this is how you teach and this is way different from me, but I can you see what you are going for and lets see if we can make something happen. So somebody that is open minded in general. I guess those would be the most important things.

Interviewer: How would you describe an ideal mentoring situation for you?

Jeremy: For me? Well....hum. They most ideal mentoring situation. Really I am not that far off from my ideal mentoring situation. What I mean by that is that, often
times new teachers don't know enough other teachers that teach their content area
that they feel comfortable with to go to. They might have the person they student
taught with or a college professor. If they are lucky enough to be in a bigger district
that where I am, another music teacher where they are. Really, my opinion of an
effective mentoring program, logistically you need to have a mentor, the other initial
on the sign-in sheet (laugh). I think in a more effective way, it is more of a web that
way if I am teaching K-12 and I have a problem with my elementary. I need to be
able to go to an elementary teacher, more appropriately an elementary music
teacher. I have kind got a go to person for that and if I am having a hard time with
my jazz band, I have a go to person for jazz. They is not like one source for
information. That is more of a web and I have happen to be, I guess fairly fortunate
enough several different people that I have worked with in choir camp, student
teaching, through the grapevine, and friends in my district that when I went to the
district meeting and went "I have no idea what I am doing" they said "here is my
email please, please call me anytime." It is more of a web and so I feel very good
here with the other music teachers in my conference. I feel very good with the
people I student taught with and other friendly people and it is because I have made
those acquaintances at conferences and see them at this that and the other that I
could just call them up and say, hey I don't really know I am doing with this, please
help me. So my ideal mentoring situation, you know and that is kind of a can you
kind of just help me out sort of situation thing. That is mentoring right there, asking
questions and finding answers and so I am really not that far off from my ideal
mentoring situation. The only thing I wish I had a little bit more of was a tangible
person that I saw on a consistent daily basis that I could say, my junior high are just stinking up today, what would you do. Can you give me a quick warm-up that we might be able to do real quick. That can be instantaneous feedback over lunch, you know, between duty of something. Other than that, I feel pretty good. The people in my district, my (district assigned) mentor teacher is wonderful, she is science teacher and she is very, very good. She is very helpful in just basic things and I have called up other people in my conference and neighboring towns we will have lunch. I am having lunch with one of my neighboring teachers tomorrow (the day after this interview) and we are going to talk about things. In my opinion, it is more of a web. I am not that far off, it is kind of cool.

Interviewer: What were your thoughts when I first talked to you about this research (e-mentoring) program.

Jeremy: Before I answer that question, I think we should jump of the apple band wagon and call iMentoring (laugh). The mentoring process, well, when you first came up to me, I had mixed, my instantaneous thought was, oh yeah bring it on, that is going to be great. The more we got into it al little bit more, I quite honestly went, oh crap, this is going to be a lot more work for me. This is just going to an extra think that I going to have to do and I am already swimming in paper and bus duty and gate duty. I thought this going to more work. This is probably just going to be more trouble than its worth. To be honest, I had a phase when I went, what is all this junk, I'll do it and it will be okay. Then I went through a phase were I thought, I
could have used this earlier. I had already been into class several weeks and went, AHHHHH, what do I do! I went to a phase where I went, I could have used this about a month and a half ago. After chatting with my online mentor, the other evening, I felt, not only energized, but justified in some of my feelings and frustrations. Just more like I feel your pain, it okay, don't freak out, as well as some helpful suggestions. Like, wow, if I was in this, I would be doing this, if I was in your shoes, I would be doing this. Things I am struggling with as a teacher and so after that, after feeling that, I am thinking, you know what this is going to good. Yet it will be some work, burning some disks and sending off or whatever, different thinks like that. What I am finding is, the more opportunities I have to vocalize what I am doing and bounce that off of somebody, whoever it is, be it a regular effective teacher or a music teacher, of anybody, its healthy. If that happens to be on a very electronic iVersion on my computer, who cares. My original reaction was this is going to be cool, and then I thought no this is going to be work and not really worth it and now I am going, this is going to be worth it because this is what I need.

Interviewer: Describe your thoughts on on-line video communication.

Jeremy: Well I think that in the absence of people being hours and hours away, I think it is a very effective way. Really to be honest, would hate typing out big long emails about this that and the other. I would much rather talk about it, much, much rather talk about it. I am a pretty tech savvy guy. I pride myself on being tech savvy and are students are tech savvy. We as teacher need to tech savvy and go that next
sort of a thing. To be honest, you know, I of the generation that made popular
instant messaging and so it was a very natural thing for me. I already had a Skype
account, I have a web cam built into my computer. I was like, oh sure, give me your
info and I will sign you on and we will be up and running. It was very natural for me.

Interviewer: What are you experiences for online communication?

Jeremy: Mostly in college, I am very familiar with instant messaging and web cam
conversations. When I was a student, some of my friends were on it for ever and
hours and hours. That was never me, but I was always very familiar with it and had
a pretty good background about it. Even in my program that we use to keep our
grades at school, there is an instant messenger component. I can see what teachers
are online and can communicate instant message. It is a very effective tool.

Interviewer: Reflect on your perceptions of traditional mentoring, and describe
your concept of an effective video mentoring experience.

Jeremy: Well, umm, an effective video mentoring experienced for me? ... let me start
by saying the things that are pit falls to the process. Instead of picking things that
are awesome, I will pick out some out some of the opposites (laugh). The one
difficult thing for me is that, for like you and I to meet up online, we have to go
through a couple different levels of communication. You have to make an
appointment to make an appointment. So that is kind of a pain, not really a pain,
just a hurdle that you have to through (sic). Part of that because we want to have the video thing and you have to do that. Overall, like an e-mentoring sort of set up, I would assume could include video conferencing, email, and other non-visual electronic communication. A combination of that is very effective. I will say that probably one of the hardest things that we can over come almost any barrier via electronic communication except the instantaneous sort of a thing, like hey I have a quick question, can we chat about it. Well no, because we don’t live in the same town. Secondly, if I had a mentor that was only electronic it would be very difficult to be able to watch them teach or pick through their library. It would really be best if I walked over there and did it, you know. borrow materials. You can make special arrangements to, if I wanted to observe my video mentor’s classroom or he mine, we have a camera and stuff, but that is kind of artificial. The kids will know that that’s a camera and there being, know matter what you tell them, they know that that’s a camera and someone is watching. No matter you spell it out or preface it, it is always going to have a little bit more of a on-guard feeling that a random teacher just coming in and sitting down. The other thought is, if I could get my mentor to watch my classroom via web cam but technology takes time to set up and most schools don’t have the most up-to-date technology and that is going to take so finagling and a little bit of a hassle to get that to work. While that is fine, but to do that on a consistent basis would be kind of a, uggg (sic). It might be kind of taxing. So those might be the pit falls. Some of the advantages is, heck we can talk at nine o’clock at night and it is no big deal. We can record this, that way if you said something really cool or gave some really cool advice, I can go back and see it again.
I have the opportunity to meet with, depending on the set up, you can have a group a conference with six or eight teacher and have a round table type of thing. There is a lot of cool that make every body portable, so the most effective e-mentoring program for me, I think, would kind of be, well I can't imagine anything better than what we have here. It does not mean that there isn't better way to do, but I can't think of anything better. I really can't think of anything that would be more effective than this.
2. Interview One: David, mentor

Interviewer: Tell me about your educational experience as a teacher?

David: Okay, well this is my twenty-third year of teaching. I started in a small school and taught there for five years. I taught six through eighth grade band and choir. I was laid off from that job after my fifth year. I then taught two years at another small school and there I taught vocal music six through twelve. From there I moved to a district closer to my present location and taught for seven through twelve, instrumental and vocal, for eleven years. I had marching band, pep band, good sized choirs, everything. It was a very tiresome job. (laughter) After I left there I came to my present location where I have been teaching K through twelve vocal for five year. I have all the elementary, one junior high choir, and one high school choir.

Interviewer: What are the characteristics of a good teacher?

David: Well, I think it has to be someone who is comfortable with what they are doing. If you are not comfortable with it or don't understand you are not going to be good at this. There is no success in that. You need to be able to relate to kids and to parents as well. You need to be a good PR person for sure, especially in the field that we work in. I think, well, no I don' think, I know this; you have to have a great passion for music to be a good music teacher. My mentee actually made me think about this the other night in an session, if you are not able to convey that passion to
them (students), sometimes we get so rapped up in the performance aspect that sometimes we lose sight of the fact we do this because we love music.

Interviewer: When did you know you wanted to be a teacher?

David: Probably my junior year of high school. We had a, and I have always had really good teachers in school, teacher in High School my freshman and sophomore year and she was wonderful. She was very old school and we sang lots of madrigals and things like that. But she retired my sophomore year and we got a new gentleman and he was ON fire. He was just right there and organized and just brought a totally different style than my first teacher was. He had a lot of enthusiasm and the department just boomed. Right then, I thought, that is what I want to do. So when I graduated, I enrolled in college to become a teacher. That gentleman was the person who influenced me.

Interviewer: What were some of the things in your inspirational person's personality that you though were really important in inspiring you?

David: He had a way, we always had fun, but boy when the hammer needed to fall, he knew how to do that. There was a really good balance, you always felt safe and you always felt welcome, and like you were a really important part of what he was doing. You could also watch if someone got out of line, he knew exactly how to deal with it and you still felt comfortable in the class, but he took it into control and when
that student came back to class the next day all was forgotten. (laughter)
Everything was good and class went on just like it always did. I always thought that was a really important, a good skill. That always impressed me about him.

Interviewer: Do you have any members of your family who are teachers?

David: No I do not.

Interviewer: Have you served as a mentor prior to this research?

David: I actually started for the first time last year in my district. I am mentoring; this is my second year, mentoring our art teacher. We are a small district so this is really my first time with it. I did not have a mentor when I first started teaching; they were not even doing this.

Interviewer: Can you describe how that experience has transpired?

David: It has been a real positive experience. I was a little hesitant when they first asked me to do it. Number one, I didn't know who this person was. I knew of them because I have acquaintances that know this person who said, "Hey you are getting a really good art teacher coming into your district, you are going to love her." When I meet her for the first time my principal said,"Oh, by the way, you are going to be her mentor." I don't how to teacher art so what do you want me to do. We kind of went
through the process and it was a little overwhelming last year due to the fact that we did not have any training. So they just kind of threw this at me and, so to me, mentoring was, okay, I am going to talk to her about how I deal with discipline, this is how I follow the procedures and those general type things. When we actually got the training this year, we found out there was a ton of stuff we were supposed to be doing and documented. It was like, okay, we really have our job cut out this year. It has been fun; she and I work together very well. We probably see each other, I would say on the average I go by and visit with her about everyday and definitely three times a week.

Interviewer: How would you define the word mentor?

David: Um, (laughter), someone with experience, who is willing to share that experience. To be open with someone and understand that sometimes the things you are going to talk about are definitely not something you are going to discuss anywhere else, out in the open with someone else. There has to be a lot of a confidential relationship and a lot of comfort there. It is someone with that experience and the willingness to share that experience.

Interviewer: What do that think are good characteristics in the personality of a mentor?

David: Like a teacher in a lot of ways (laughter). You need to be able to set that
person (mentee) at ease pretty quickly, feel comfortable and know that you can talk to them about whatever and being approachable. Just being approachable.

Interviewer: Would you describe what you feel is the most effective mentoring environment?

David: Ideally, it is good to have a mentor who teaches the same subject matter you do. Where in the case with me, that is not the case with my district assigned mentee. Hopefully, that person who is going to be that mentor is going to be a seasoned teacher, someone that, I do not know if I would go as far as to say master teacher, you know, someone who knows what they are doing and been doing it for awhile. I think that is the idea situation, but that does not always happen. I think that your schedules need to be pretty flexible and your side by side as far as being able to get together, allowing that person time to come and observe you and vise versa, being able to interact like that.

Interviewer: What do you think are the most interactional elements in a mentor/mentee relationship?

David: A lot of listening, at least on my end, to hear where they are coming from, trying to figure things out, not being hasty to speak and let them voice what their concern is or whatever it is they are trying to deal with and go from there. Oh course, there is always set addenda’s for us in the type of face-to-face mentoring
with the art teacher. We now have a guideline that we need to follow at a certain schedule and I think that is important. Listening and sometimes you just do have to deviate from the schedule. We may be meeting to talk about a professional development plan but she has had a really bad day and maybe she needs to talk about something else, so you just put this off to the and we will do this another day. I guess some flexibly with that.

Interviewer: What were your thoughts when you first heard about this research project?

David: (laughter), when you told me it was going to be online, my first thought was, "oh, I am not that technically savvy." I thought well, I might as well give it a try. There was that technical aspect of it that I went, "oh, I don't know." My next thing my mind went to was my schedule, "do I have time for this?" Those were really the only two things that came to me.

Interviewer: Describe your thoughts on online video communication?

David: Umm, well this is the first experience I have had with it at all. I am not much of a chatter online or anything like that. I have never really participated in anything like this. It is kind of interesting. It's, uh, kind of personable in a way, but then there is still that aspect of it that is really impersonal at the same time. It is weird. It is not as strange with you, but getting to know my online mentee for the first time, I did
not quite know what to expect. His personality certainly came through. I was able to see facial expressions and read body language. I guess from that standpoint it is just like talking face to face, but I guess the technological part of it is kind of, I don’t know. Now that I have said that, talking to you it does not feel real technical. With Josh, at first, I think it did feel like that because I did not know him. As time goes on that probably will not be the case. It will be interesting down the road if he and I ever get to meet in person sometime and see what that meeting feels like. That will be interesting to kind of look back on.

Interviewer: Can you give me your perceptions of what makes the most ideal virtual-mentoring situation?

David: I think to some extent some of the same characteristics we talked about, umm, it is somewhat different maybe, even though I commented that I could still see my online mentee and read body language but I am not sure, ummm, being in the same room with someone is different than like this. So unless sometimes, maybe, he just comes right out and say to me, "this is what I am asking you," I still maybe sometimes would miss some of that and not pick up some of that possibly. I don't know, really don't know and I don't know if I fully answered your questions. (laughter)

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on this type of mentoring process? Which way would feel is the most effective application?
David: Well, definitely not a school. I don't think, to speak in person at school is one thing, but do something like this on a school computer or something that I would have fear that someone could trace something with, this is my home computer someone would have to break in and take it. I could a situation where, what if I would say something in earnest to my mentee that I feel is really important that they know, like, you need to watch for these things or these signs. I would not want that coming back and my administrator saying, "what are you doing, are you slamming me?" I have heard cases where that have tracked things like that on the computer, whether it be through and email or whatever. I would not want to do it in a setting like that, I would rather be setting in my comfortable chair right here.
3. Interview Two: Jeremy, mentee

Interviewer: Describe your experiences with your mentor and the use of virtual mentoring?

Jeremy: It really is a big like half pep talk session and it is an opportunity for me to go, "am I doing this right?, am I on the right track?, am I teaching what I am supposed to be teaching?, does that sound like what should be happening now?, am I starting early enough for my Christmas concert?, did I deal with this discipline thing the right?, can you believe my roof is still leaking, it is second quarter, come on, it is that type of thing. (sic) It is a chance for me to talk with somebody, like that's not, even in just a non-professional way, I am kind of a chatty person. I like to talk a lot. It is even heightened by the fact that I am alone and don't see anything, see tons of students, but don't see a lot of anybody else. It is a really an awesome opportunity to have, it's like a half pep talk, half motivational sort of a speaker type of thing. The process is working really well. The only problem is, like in my particular house the Internet is a little slow. Sometimes there's a, like a frozen picture and the audio still coming, and then picture will, but who cares. (smile) It is nothing more that just normal technical stuff. I will say that being the only music teacher around and people being super busy, some of my other (music) teacher friends, asking about even just like little things; hey, can I ask you a question? do you have this piece of music? I won't hear back from them for several days. A lot of time they do not hear back from me for several days. He (mentor) has been tremendous about, saying "let
me know whenever you want to meet, you just send me an email," the next night (because I think he is a single guy too) he is always available and it is really tremendous. Our last conversation I said, "I really on have about half hour to talk," and two hours and twenty minutes later we got off the phone. I told my mentor, "Oh, sorry, the researcher has got to watch all of this" (laughter). It has been tremendously helpful and I always get done with the conversation and always feeling amped about my teaching and more enthused about what I am doing. A whole lot more at ease in my heart and thinking for the most part I am doing okay. I am comfortable with what is going on and okay if he (mentor) were here, he would be doing something pretty much the same. That makes me feel good because I have had a lot of great music teachers and a lot of people that knew what they were doing. Half of my opinion is, well that works for you so why don’t I do that, I will just do that, it seems to work, so lets do that. The composer in me says, well this form worked for him so why don’t I use that. As a teacher, well, what’s working for them works really well, why don’t I just do that and modify it as you go. We are making progress and I have not actually had a chance to tell him (mentor) about this. He gets to hear me vent about my eighth grade all the time, "I have thirty-eight, they are not paying attention, they are crazy, AHHH! He (mentor) is super kind to go, " yeah, that’s right, that’s how it is." It would really be nice to tell him we are making some progress, he (mentor) will be really excited. (smile) The process itself is really great, I think, especially because I am a pretty tech savvy guy and the technology was not new to me. I had a web cam and I already had Skype. I just had to familiarize myself with it and I can do it at home. I love doing that. A lot of times
there is a lot of stuff you have to do at school and a lot of times when 3 o'clock hits, I
don't want to be at school anymore. I am tired and it is really nice that at 7 o'clock
we can chat and it's right there and I don't have to drive in. Not that it is that big of a
drive, of course (laugh). The process is really good. There is something lacking
because I have not met him in person. There is something that, I don't know, he
and I chatted about being able to finally meet at MMEA (Missouri Music Educator's
Association) and actually physically shake hands, sit down and have something to
eat. There is a lot of communications that happens with your body that is out of the
picture frame, that I can't see. A part of it, I think, is because it looks like he has the
laptop sitting on his tummy so all I see is like up to his head. This is what I see of
him and so I know there is stuff, I see stuff moving and I know he is using his hands
and while I understand what he saying and I always do, there is just a tiny 2 or 3
percent that I know I am not getting because of the limits of a video conference.
Depending on quality of the video camera, it can sometimes be a little grainy and so
I miss some facial expression, I miss some little, little things that I know could be a
tiny bit of meaning, but a tiny bit of meaning none the less. Other than that it is
pretty good. I always come out of the process, especially with him I think that
because of our personalities we get along very well, and because of our personalities
click so well that we can talk for several hours and feel that it was not labored or
forced. I always get done going, woo hoo! So it is really pretty nice. I feel that
whatever thought went into the process of matching us up, which was part of the
research deal, has really been great. He (mentor) is a tremendous guy and teacher
and very not like you talk to an all-knowing ethereal somebody who you are afraid
to be real with. I can be really 'real' with him and know that he is going to be very respectful even if I am doing something that he would never do. He is respectful enough to me to go "how did that work" and what about this" or "try this instead" or "I wouldn't have said that," instead of making me feel I can't tell him everything because I am afraid he is going to judge me or something.

Interviewer: Along that line, do you feel like that type of interaction is important for you in the process?

Jeremy: Oh, yeah, my mentor only knows what I tell him. If I feel any pressure, like "I don't know, I don't really want this to be on the video and don't want him to know that about me or about my teaching, I just don't tell him. If you don't want someone to know it is no big deal. It is that sort of freedom to be both strong and weak with somebody that is really a hinge point for a relationship. Honestly, the relationship between a teacher and a student should allow a student to be weak in front of me without me judging them, for them to be vulnerable without me exposing them or being disrespectful. That is the same sort of thing that you gain when you know somebody for a long time but then there is also, especially for David and me, there has been a natural sort of click, at least for me, to feel comfortable, respected and cared for but in a less sappy way. I don't know how to put it exactly but it is a very freeing thing. I don't fell like there are experiences that I have had that I better not ask him about. There has been stuff I have not told him but for no other reason than I didn't think it was important, had already gotten an answer to it, or been talking
for an hour and a half. That kind of thing. It has been a very emotionally decompressive sort of a thing, you know I teach and am I doing this right or I have sixty billion things to do. We will talk and I just go, I am doing okay, and let's not stress out about everything. Just keep doing what you are doing and modify here and there type of thing.

Interviewer: You have a mentor here for your district?

Jeremy: I do.

Interviewer: Can you make some comparisons there?

Jeremy: Oh yeah, basic things, my mentor here is a lady and a science teacher. She is the basketball coach but she is the sweetest woman and we have very similar classroom discipline styles, where things are a little more free and more loosy goose. I hate to say that. When my high schoolers walk in, I don't make them all sit down exactly where they should be. They walk in and I tell a joke or a funny story and as we are getting our instruments put together. It is a fun environment and I like to learn in that type of environment and honestly I don't feel like being that way (facial/hand expressive moment to indicate focus and tough) all seconds of the day because that just stresses me out. She is that way too. As a science teacher, I have seen her teach and she has seen me teach, which the school makes you do, and I have only ever gotten positive feedback from her. I have gotten a lot of feedback and
I am almost feeling "are you guys not telling me something." I don't know what I am doing and I need some constructive things too. All I could get was a lot of positives, which I know everyone is trying to build me up, which I really appreciate. She, it’s the same way, she is the same as my ementor in a lot of ways, saying when you need me give me a holler. Well I don’t know, I wish I had somebody who is keeping me, just like my eighth graders, "you need to get this done; I need to talk with you; and you need turn this in, and I think in a little way with my mentor teacher. You have to meet with me, lets figure this out, instead of when you need me come to me. I will neglect that part, part of it is when I chat with another teacher, really having a chance to chat it is a decompressing thing for me, it builds me up and it gives me more emotional security than what I am doing. I at times neglect myself and own emotional sanity. I am working and working and working and so I need somebody to almost say "alright, you are going nuts and you need to come and chat with me. I chatted with her last week and I told her the whole Christmas concert and the logistics about how we were going to get the students where and how we were going to keep the elementary kids parents from yanking their kids and leaving after their part was over. Physically how were going to seat the kids and how we were going to set up the Gym. I just ran all that all by her and said "what do you think?" She said, “what about this and what about that?” That has been really helpful. She is a really awesome teacher from what I hear and I have seen her teach but my prep hour is during her study skills so I don’t really teach, teach, teach, like I would want to. She does what I think teachers should be doing, kids are up, they are working in groups, they are moving around, their are working with their hands, and they are
doing something physical. They are not just sitting and listening. They are not just sitting and listening and taking notes all the time. That is a music class right there. That is what you should be doing. You (students) are up doing something. Something physical where I can immediately give you feedback on whether or not you are doing it right. It is just like if I am giving a test and it takes me all weekend to grade the stinking things and I get them back to you four or five days later. You don’t care at that point, most people don’t, I didn’t. It is really cool, she gives kids instant feedback on what they are doing because it is something physical that you can see or hear. It is completely different but I think between her and my online mentor, most of it is just because of personality. I chat with her more than I chat with my online mentor but I chat with her a lot less time. It is like two or three minutes in the hallway. I see her a lot but only in little snippets but I have as much communication all together with both the same amount, but it a much different personality and so it has a lot different characteristic. There are a lot of fantastic teachers but I think in the mentoring process, matching teachers up, matching a young teacher with a teacher that they can trust and has a personality that can build an open line of communication with no inhibitions, with no sorts of "I am the mentor teacher and you are the student" and that sort of power, where there is a complete balance and open flow of information, emotion and professionalism. That, I feel is more important than watching and having a master (emphasis) teacher. You want to have the best teacher at your school to be your mentor. There are good things to get from everybody and I would rather have a teacher who is an "A-" teacher who I got alone with, who I respected and who respected me, than the "A++"
teacher that was a stick-in-the-mud that I didn't feel comfortable with and didn't feel honest with. That is the most important thing. I used to think, "I don't care if they are an old stick-in-the-mud, I'll watch those master teachers and see what they do. Now I am fluid with it that, in a school there has to be good attitude and not just good teachers. You can have really awesome teachers but there needs to be a feeling of learning and hard work with the teachers and the students. Not just these little towers of good power. You can have a whole team of teachers who care about each other and want to help each other. That to me is more important than having the most solid strength.

Interviewer: Following those thoughts, how do think you first experiences would have gone if you had just had one mentor and not the other?

Jeremy: Well, to be honest, I would probably have done most of the same things, in terms of classroom activities, in terms of the music I picked, in terms of music I programed for the concert, that type of thing. What will have changed is how I felt about it and how comfortable I was with the decisions I was making. How comfortable and stressed out I was about it. It is because it is really helpful to hear, "you are doing a good job, I like it, I am impressed with what you are doing." For example, on Friday, my principal and my mentor teacher were here and heard the Handbell choir, she was there for basketball reasons because she had an announcement. I asked her to stick around and hear the handbell choir. They both heard and they went Woo Hoo. That is so cool for me to have them there. I was
building up the handbell choir and they built me up by saying "go students." I probably would have done the same stuff, just about the same way, said the same stuff, and handled things about the same I just wouldn't have felt as good about it. I would have felt a lot more of "am I going this right" and a whole lot more unsure.

Interviewer: You have mentioned that at times the video (Skype) is fuzzy. Do you think that is keeping you from communicating effectively with your online mentor.

Jeremy: Oh no. Oh no, not really. I would rather sit with somebody face-to-face over lunch then write a letter any day. It is faster, you get a lot more information in the same amount of time and its a lot more tangible. Of course a letter is tangible (laugh), but its only mentally tangible and you can't get every inflection. Obviously, 98% of what my online mentor means, I can get. I can get distracted by the environment that surrounds him on the screen. I am missing the full picture just a tiny bit. It is pretty negligible to be honest.

Interviewer: Would you say you and your online mentor are communicating at about 98%, Can you make a similar comparison if you were talking on the phone and not on Skype?

Jeremy: A whole lot less. I am a visual learned. I think more students now are visual than ever before with video games and computers. I think that students in my generation and the kid I teach are super, super visual. To be honest, if I just had the
auditory stimulation I would not get as much. I like looking at him. I like being able to see him. Even if now every now and then the picture stops and catches up (laugh) or if we have to go because we think the computers are being weird. Whatever, that is no problem. To me it is worth it. If I had a quick five-second question, I would not Skype. I would just call. I need information and I need it quick. These are a little more formal meeting and in eliminate the need for traveling and the extra time required. I would have no hesitation to call my mentor if I had a real quick question.

Interviewer: So it is nice to be able to immediately talk in person if I had to. With regard to your school assigned mentor and your online mentor, is there one thing that you seem to talk to both of them about?

Jeremy: Really what I talk to them about most is, I just tell them what I am doing and go "does that sound okay". Or I tell them experiences. Part of it is because other teachers get (understand) teacher stories better than people who aren't teachers. I will talk to my mother and tell her a teacher story and she'll say, cool or neat. She gets it but she really doesn't understand it like another teacher would. A lot of time I end up talking to my virtual mentor about teacher stories. This happened and I said this to this, and this kid happened here and blah, blah, blah. I am well aware of that. A lot of it may be a little bit extra to the whole process and may be a bit unnecessary, but whatever. So a lot of times I say to my virtual mentor, "this is what we are doing, is that okay?" More or less that is consistent for both mentors. However, with my virtual mentor it is the musical aspect and the like and I have put
logical thoughts about it until now. With him, "we are going to do this song and what do you think about these rounds for the kids will they work the them. With my district mentor, she knows the school, she knows what has happened in the past, she knows the community, and she knows what has been around. So my question are "will the community like this or how do I get this in the local paper?" These are things that my district mentor would know that my virtual mentor would not. She is aware and told me countless times, "I can't help you with what to do in the music classroom." All I can help you with is classroom discipline, classroom management, and the logistical things. She is very much about the professional development things. She is always asking me if I have completed my paperwork for this and are you going to attend this conference. She is keeping me up on new teacher stuff through emails and ways like that. That is willing to cool. She is very willing to come and listen to a group perform and give some feedback and to be honest, just having another body in the room is helpful. The kids love an audience other than me. Anytime I can get her in here, which has only happened a few times this semester, just to hear something or ask her what she thinks. I am fully aware she is going to go "woo hoo" but the kids do a better job because she is there. They put on there game faces when there is somebody watching. I need to have those experiences to know how they are going to do when we are having a concert or the principal walks by and stops in. They are both tremendously use full but in slightly different ways.

Interviewer: On a personal note, think back on our first interview, how have you
changed?

Jeremy: I am a whole lot less head in the clouds. I think a lot of teachers come out of college and think we are going to change the world and we teach all students and they are going to love learning in three weeks and they are going to love everything. (laugh) Pffft! No way, I hate to sound and don't mean to sound negative. I just want to be aware that the real world and the textbook practicum world is not the same. When you go out and see a master teacher who has been there ten or fifteen years, that is ten or fifteen years of their work. I don't mean the first kids they taught, I mean you put the attitude in those kids when they are little, when they get bigger that is training. You are training them to be what you want them to be. August to November. (another pffft), I am a whole lot less naïve and a whole lot more, "I am in charge, you are my student, I know what is best for you and you don’t". You don’t tell that to the kids of course, but I am a whole lot more of that. I am a whole more, "sit down, pay attention, do what you are told, across the board. In an area like this where kids do not have a much home support as they need, kids don’t have the supplies they need, parents don’t have jobs, kids don’t have lunch money. I used to think that was a non-issue, you know it is everywhere, but I did not realize the reality of it. I really didn’t. There are two kids in eighth grade not allowed to sit next to each other because one has abused the other. That is not in my class but is an example from our school. These kids are not allowed to talk to each other in the hallway. These kids are not to sit next to each other and it you see them together something bad is going to happen. They always fight but for some
reason they always pick each other to be together. It is little things like that make me go, "this is insane, how is this education?" A lot of times until the students are trained to sit in their desks and be respectful, do their homework, and turn in their stuff, you can not teach them. There is so much structure of school that has to happen before teaching can happen. A lot of times, up until, or maybe through high school and into college and forever. When you get a job you learn the structure of how stuff is supposed to work before you can do your job. The kids in some of my classes are still learning, like the elementary kids. Kindergarteners don't know to sit down when they come into your room until you tell them. They don't know to stay in a line down a hall until you train them. You just don't know to do those thinks, so a lot of times you spend a lot of time going "this is how you line back up in the hall, we are going to try it again." Every time you come into my room you have to be that quick and I will not spend five minutes for you find your seats." I am whole lot less naïve about it and I believe that, I harken back to the movie Sister Act Two, when she goes into the school and the head master goes, "what's the one thing I can get from you and the response is discipline" I believe there is truth in that. If your school does not have discipline your do not have learning at all. I used to think we will get right to the learning but you need to spend time upfront making sure your kids can find their seats. You need to spend time upfront making sure the kids will bring their things to class and they know when you give them something with blanks on it, they are supposed to fill those blanks in. I am a whole less naïve about it. I know in three months I will continue to be a lot less naïve about it than I am this very moment. This is the biggest thing.
Interviewer: Summarize the activities or processes of the mentoring experience.

Jeremy: My district, of course, gave me a mentor but they are a non-music person and they are a really wonderful teacher in the district. They don't teach in my content area and unless they make a certain amount of time, like set aside, I never get a chance to talk with them. Maybe in the hall or during lunch period. In my experience, the district provided mentor is not really super effective for a couple of reasons. Number one, they don't teach in my content area and they really don't know what I do. Secondly, unless we both consciously say, let's talk at this time, we just don't talk. There is not that sense comradery that music teachers have. Music teachers talk because they get what music teachers do. Having a mentor from the district who teaches math or science or English or any other sort of content area really isn't what I need. It just isn't what is best for me. This process of having a virtual mentor really does connect me with another music professional. Now there is not a level of intimacy that can't have because you are physically not in the same location. There is a certain amount of human element you miss because of that. Considering the fact that my mentor lives on the other side of the state it really does provide the very next best option.

Interviewer: Summarize your thoughts on your final perceptions of virtual mentoring.
Jeremy: Yes, it absolutely was helpful. It is always helpful to have another qualified teacher to bounce ideas off of and to run ideas with. It is a really awesome way to touch base with people who are not in the area or to get ahold of people when it is convenient with them. Sometimes distance makes it impossible to have the opportunity to touch base with people regularly because they either don't work in your school or you don't see them in your building. The other music teacher you might not see them in your building, even if there is another music teacher in such a rural district. It really connects people from across the state. There are quality teachers all over the state and it gives small rural teachers the opportunity to touch base with those people from where ever they are. It is a tremendously helpful experience. The whole process really did meet my expectations. Meeting a teacher over Skype isn't quite as effective as having a face-to-face discussion with them. However, considering some of the distance and time constraints it really is an effective means of communication. It really does bridge the gap that a lot of teachers in small rural schools do feel. It did make me, help to fell more connected to another professional in my field. It did meet my expectations and I felt it was really effective.

Interviewer: As the mentoring developed did the way you interacted with each mentor situation evolve or remain static?

Jeremy: In terms of the way the interactions really developed, it did develop,
absolutely, it developed just like you would develop when you needed someone.

When you first meet someone new, the conversations are more formal and its more professional and as you get to know the person through the course of the process, you let your guard down and you really start to open up. When you talk about issues or situations you just kind of let inhabitations go and let you complete thoughts out. I think that probably does parallel the way it would work if you were meeting face-to-face. I don't think that changed. The fact that it was over Skype didn’t really change the fact that as you get to know someone you let your guard down and your true colors show. At the beginning of the process you are very formal and professional. It was a little bit awkward just because it was kind of a new thing for me, but as the process went on you really kind of let those inhabitations go and just became your real self. Just like in real life. I think that process was accentuated because of the media form, the Skyping but you get over that pretty quick and let your true colors down. Like if I were dealing with a student issue, if I were talking about a group of students that really were being terrible, I might talk with him early on and be very formal and choose my words very carefully but at the end I would just let it all out and say, "these kids were crazy today!" And so, I don't that is any different than in normal life, but there definitely was an evolution in the tone, I think, but definitely in the formality level as the process when on.

Interviewer: Summarize the Skype experience?
Jeremy: The Skype experience was a really good one and it really did its job effectively. I do think that the application Skype has some issues. I don't think it is the best way to do it. I think there are others new ways to do it. The idea of video conferencing is a great even though I don't think Skype is very user friendly. Facebook chat might be a better way to do it. Even though Skype was effective if took a little more time to get the programs downloaded and get the accounts going. A lot of people don't have Skype. Newer technologies are becoming more popular. So I would advise making going to a different platform but the process of video conferencing was effective.

Interviewer: What are you future plans? Do you plan on remaining in teaching? How has the RVM process influenced any decisions you are planning?

Jeremy: Having support in the professional field alway encourages people to stick with there are doing. Teacher burn out is super high and having someone to talk and bounce ideas off of really did allow me to remain encouraged and remain engaged, to keep my energy level up in the classroom. I did not become as bogged down or stressed because I had an outlet when I felt stress. I had someone, {laugh} to encourage me when I was feeling kind of down, or when a certain lesson or certain activity or certain piece of music just tanked. Then I had someone to celebrate with when things went really well. I am going to stay in teaching for a very long time. I was planning of staying in teaching regardless of this process, but this definitely did strengthen them and bolster my resolve to stay in education. I
will not remain in this district forever but for reasons unrelated to the district or the job itself. Just life situations, I am a little far away from family so I am, of course, going to remain in teaching. This process does encourage me. I would highly advice it to anyone who is in a rural school district.
6. Interview Three: David, mentor

Interviewer: Summarize the activities or processes of the mentoring experience.

David: While participating in this study, I would make contact with my mentoring partner through Skype. During these times we would discuss different things going on in his classroom. For example, how his day had gone, successes, student issues, both good and bad, such as discipline, motivation and cooperation, administrative issues, both good and bad, and how to work with colleagues and peers. At times the conversation dealt with the frustrations of being a first-year teacher and dealing with those frustrations while living away from your support system. We followed no specific agenda or procedure during our sessions we just casually spoke in a friendly manner discussing whatever topics would arise during the conversation. We were never rushed, taking our time to discuss topics to completion.

Interviewer: Summarize your thoughts on your final perceptions of virtual mentoring.

David: I found virtual mentoring an interesting concept. It would appear to be a very useful tool in situations where a school system is small and perhaps has only one music teacher. In that regard I would say yes it is helpful. In hindsight, however, I can see where a face-to-face, in-person mentoring session might work better. In my experience with this, I found that my person was able to hide a lot, and
was not completely honest. I feel it would have been harder to hide different issues that were going on in this particular classroom. Some of these issues displayed great immaturity on the part of the teacher as well as poor decision-making. Some of these issues could have led to student injury, legal issues for the district and some issues were reportable offenses. All of these issues were easily hidden from me while we skyped.

Interviewer: As the mentoring developed did the way you interacted with each mentor situation evolve or remain static?

David: I believe the mentoring sessions did evolve. In ways, it was like developing a friendship or a relationship, so each session appeared to grow longer in length, more casual and more comfortable.

Interviewer: Summarize the Skype experience.

David: The experience with Skype was great. It was not hard to learn to do, but again, I feel there still needs to be a physical, face to face, meetings from time to time. If using Skype mentoring only, it might help to include some contact between the mentor and a supervising teacher/advisor.
APPENDIX D

CASE TWO

NANCY AND KAREN INTERVIEW RESPONSES

1. Interview One: Nancy, mentee
2. Interview One: Karen, mentor
3. Interview Two: Nancy, mentee
4. Interview Two: Karen, mentor
5. Interview Three: Nancy, mentee
6. Interview Three: Karen, mentor
1. Interview One: Nancy, mentee

Interviewer: Nancy, tell me about your experience as a student growing up.

Nancy: As a student, well I went to elementary school in a small town and by that I mean about 5000 people. Recently I have leaved that is not w small town (laugh) and so I grew up there in school. I would say I had a positive experience in elementary school and through high school and my higher education can go as a positive experience. I do not know what else you want there (laugh) I was happy with that experience. I don’t know if my high school prepared me for college, in a small town, as much as other people I was with my peer group in college. I had really good teachers and a support community so that is an important part to me.

Interviewer: What did you see as the characteristics of a good teacher from your perspective as a student?

Nancy: As a student it is not something you really, to me, that I really ever thought about. It was more you just thought they were a good teacher. You don’t sit down and think why, but it is that teacher’s class that you want to go to and the class you enjoy being in. That teacher you feel comfortable asking extra help from or whatever it may be, things like that. And so, that is my student perspective (laugh). Later on my adult perspective as a teacher now looks a little different, but as a student that is the way I felt about it.
Interviewer:  When did you know you wanted to be a teacher?

Nancy:  Oh, that's a bid one. I guess some people have that defining moment. When I was in high school I though I wanted to study music education, I wanted to be a band director and then when I got to college I kind of had second thoughts on that. I came back to it and decided, and I think that really my student teaching was the time when it really, really sealed the deal. I was really getting in there and working working with the kids and doing a lot of stuff. I was really, you know, hands on everyday this is what it is really like, and for me, I'm a realist, so at that point in time is when I really, I guess, know then (laugh) the whole process is like eight years that brought me here (laugh).

Interviewer:  Did you have one teacher or teachers that inspired your decision to be a teacher?

Nancy:  I guess I did when I was in elementary school, I always said I wanted to be a teacher. At the time I wasn't even into music so it was like I want to be a, school teacher type, of deal. I had a 5th grade teacher that was really good and then a couple of high school teacher, they actually weren't music teachers that were really good, and a really good piano teacher. All of those people together influenced me and kind of drew me to the idea of being a teacher and leading kids and doing stuff like that. I guess being a teacher.
Interviewer: Describe that teacher and teachers and why they were inspiring. You can pick just one if you like.

Nancy: Well when I think about the great teacher, there is one high school teacher I talk about, I guess I will talk about the high school teacher. This high school teacher, I think, just about every student in the building really enjoyed this teacher and this teacher's class. He was very strict but you knew there was order in his room but he also created an environment where there could be entertainment or fun or laughter at the same time. We were always up on the board, it was a chemistry class, doing problems and everything. He would come around and help us. It was the class that most prepared me for college and the most challenging in my high school experience. I would come in for help before school and he was always there and always wanted to help me. He had a good relationship with his students and always knew what was going on in their lives, on a professional level of course. That was the sort of thing as a student that drew in to want to be in his class. Wanting to give me extra help and caring about me other than in his class. Those were the characteristics I think.

Interviewer: Do you have any members of your family who are teachers?

Nancy: I have an aunt who was an elementary teacher but now she is a stay-at-home mom but I think that is it, besides my sister, who just started teaching this year with me. So we are both in our first year of teaching.
Interviewer: Did you aunt have any influence on your decision to be a teacher?

Nancy: Not an influence on my decision, but I remember her talking about it because I used to go stay at her house every summer when I was a lot younger, in sixth grade of so and I remember her talking about teaching. I have been talking to her since I have been teaching. We connect on it now. I would not say it directly influenced anything.

Interviewer: Lets talk about traditional mentoring and when I say traditional, I am talking about what you are doing with your school district. What were your thoughts when the district first discussed the mentoring program they had set up for you?

Nancy: The one that they are doing here at the school?

Interviewer: The one the district is providing not the one that is part of the research.

Nancy: Okay, since I have been here, right here at the school. I have to say the first conversation, here at school, she was a little uneasy about me being a music person. To me, there is so much I can get from her because she is in the building and easily accessible like that. Then all the stuff that every teacher has to deal with, like
classroom management, organization, policy, and all that. I told her, I was going to need help with that and I so glad you are here. I told I was too more comfortable that I would have someone else that has either been where I am or knows anything about music because at this point in my life this is the most isolated I have ever been in terms of like culture and music. I think I feel relived that I do have all kinds of other networking and people I can talk to. It will really interesting to talk to someone who was specifically picked to be a mentor that was, sort of, had a background in music education like I am entering into now. That already puts my mind at ease a little more.

Interviewer: How do you define the word mentor?

Nancy: I guess it would be, early on I thought it was someone who teaches and stuff, sort of like an apprenticeship, but that really just focuses on the mentors role. The whole definition of the word mentor includes the definition of mentee and so just that entire relationship of sharing, I was reading somewhere where they were talking about mentor training and how people were just asked to be mentors and they did not have any training and so that is another part of that relationship that they are specifically designed to do that to and had some education on it.

Interviewer: What do you feel are the important characteristics for a good mentor?
Nancy: Well, I think a listener is important because, in order to know what I need, or what I am having trouble with, or what they can help me through which is part of that definition of a mentor. They should able to key in on what my needs are, or my fears, or my disorganization, or whatever it may be that I need advice or help on, or reassurance. I think all that goes back to being able to listen and know what the person is trying to say and what that person needs. I guess, listening. What else, reliability, knowing that we are going to be able to connect and that person is going to have some time for me. To set aside that time, to put a little commitment on it. (laugh) Both of us are really busy and so it is going to be hard that way and that is on both side. Knowing that is going to be available is another thing too.

Interviewer: How would describe is an ideal or what you feel is a good mentoring situation, in regard to what would be most effective to you? Think about setting, environment, conditions and what is best for you.

Nancy: If there was like nothing that could get in the way and you could choose what you wanted? Okay, I guess personally I am more a face-to-face person and so, I think doing this, Skyping, is an improvement from like telephone or email that I would have with someone being in an isolated area like this, but I think I would always prefer in person. To me, this is the second best thing. I have never had an AIM account. I don’t have a Facebook. I don’t have a MySpace. I am not into all that so I more of a face-to-face person and taking technology, I think that is the closest that Skype is the closest that comes to face-to-face. I prefer face-to-face first though.
Interviewer: What do you feel are important interactional elements in an effective mentoring situation between you and your mentor. Consider either here, on Skype, or in your district program.

Nancy: I guess I will start with, because my mentor and I did not meet before school started, and I was just running around like a chicken with my head chopped off trying to get everything done and be ready for that first day. We did not actually get to meet but we talked a little bit and saw each other in passing. But the important interactive thing, to me with her here, was first to be able to sit down and set aside a time to just talk. That seems like the obvious, duh, that is what we are doing and that is what mentoring is. Being able to just sit down and talk and have that time and know that it is there and I can ask her any question I need. That is probably the most important thing to me.

Interviewer: What were your thoughts when I first discussed the mentoring program set up for you with this research?

Nancy: When you first described it and wanted me to be a part of it? I think I was a little bit excited and relieved at the same time to have just sometime. To me, it helps parties out. Obviously, I am helping by being part of your research study and that helps you. It definitely helps me, to be able to talk to anyone on a regular basis (laugh) and who has been brought in. It helps my school know that something is
being provided that they can’t provide that will help with that upper level
knowledge of music and what to do with the program, all the things that come with
that. I was really too happy to have an opportunity was the best way to put it, to
experience this. Even it is my first time doing it, I am just happy to be part.

Interviewer:  Describe your thoughts on online video communication?

Nancy:  Well, the first time was two or three years ago, a friend, she was in Ireland.
The situation was, we were really good friends and know we could catch up after
she got back, but she was going to be living with me when she got back so we
needed to apartment search. I needed to read to her the lease information and we
used it [video communication] for the first time. I think for that problem [ sharing
information during the search], for me to communicate those things to her, it
worked really well. I was happy with my first experience with video communication
and she also called me on my phone using here Skype connection. I think, in my life,
it has been a positive experience so far. I don't feel frustrated by it and it enhances
my life and communication with people who are not near me in a good way.

Interviewer:  What are perceptions of an e-mentoring or virtual mentoring
experience?

Nancy:  I don’t really know. I don’t know when I am going to meet with her and so
I need to know before I meet with her the first time because I want to right down my
questions. I already have a bunch (laugh). There are always things that come up and there are other people in the school who are like me, the art teacher, one of the PE teachers is kind of like me and see K through 12 in a day. I can talk to her (the PE teacher) about it and I have. I went to her the first time I meet her and I was like, tell me you do this (K-12 in a day). Asking some who maybe has done this before in music and can relate to those questions and has something to say of comment on. Even someone to say I know how it feels is going to feel better to me too, working with a group that is really small. Instrumentation all the things that come up with my choir and making it all work. Making the best situation out of it ahead of time is, me, having everything ready to ask her.

Interviewer: How did your district approach you with their mentoring program?

Nancy: They approached me and told me who it was going to be. I guess they had discussed it with a couple of people, the superintendent and the elementary principal, maybe, and the high school principal. The elementary principal came to me and she said we had a couple of options but I think they actually wanted to use the art teacher because she has a schedule a lot like mine. She has some personal issues (a car accident) and did not want to put more on her. It ended up being a teacher who’s been here a while, but they had just decided that and let me know.

Interviewer: What teaching area is your district mentor?
Nancy: She is the reading-first person at this school. She is a reading specialist. As a person, she has mentor qualities and is approachable. That is reason they decided and she has been doing it (teaching) a long time. I guess I could have said that earlier (laugh)

Interviewer: How have the first weeks gone?

Nancy: During the beginning weeks, people here have been asking me how it is going. I am grateful and everyone has been really, really friendly and nice to me. I would say it has been a positive experience so far. I am working so hard and I am still behind and I am barely keeping up. There is so much stuff but I maintain a positive experience. Even if everything is not perfect right now, its not going to be, and just taking things for what they are right now and thinking about how they can improve for the future. Just looking at the positive parts of it, it think, has really been good so far. People have helped and supported so that is also what has made it a positive experience.

Interviewer: How have you changed since that first moment you walked into the classroom?

Nancy: The groove we talked about when I was teaching, you have to find it everyday. You have to find it every year and you have to find it, with me, every week too. I come in on Monday and say here I am again, "alright" (laugh). I have
changed since that first day in that finding that groove comes a little easier to me and teaching, I wouldn't say that I was, a lot of people kept asking me if I was nervous. I do not think I was overly nervous for the first day. I think part of due to that I was overly nervous when I went into that first substitute teacher experience. I was really nervous there, it was a big program and this is too (Lockwood). I got a lot of that out of the way at first and that put me more at ease. Just feeling more comfortable and knowing how I am going to do things. I have a routine now at that is something you can feel a little more relieved about. I keep saying because my parents (mentee's) will ask me about it, I am working really hard but I won't be able to enjoy a weekend or have a whole night to myself until I have it more under my belt. It is still not there yet.
2. Interview One: Karen, mentor

Interviewer: Tell me about your educational experience as a teacher?

Karen: The first year I taught strictly elementary music. I did not have anything over older that grade 5, kindergarten to grade 5. Then I went to another town and taught elementary music most of the day, K-5 again, and I assisted with the high school band. I had the Junior Varsity band, so for most of fourteen years that's what I did. Although the longer I was at that school, the less elementary music and the more band did. So by the time I left, I had fourth, fifth, Sixth grade music and then I assisted with the bands, grade 6 through 12. Then I came to my present location where I had, all the elementary music and the high school choir. After two years went by, the band director left for personal reasons, I took over the band position. So I had, basically, one hour of elementary music a day and, to make up for when the choir director came over to the high school, I go do the elementary music, and then band the rest of the day. Now, I retired a few years ago. I got a terrific student teacher and wanted to hang onto him, he is everything I am not, he is a cool youngster that is a brass player, while I am the older mom kind of figure that does elementary music and woodwinds. He is really into marching and I was more into concert band so we make a really good team. The kids really loved him, so I had twenty-six years and I am willing to take my early retirement and volunteer my services part time, if you (the district) would consider him as the band director and they went for it. So right now I am teaching two hours of Spanish a day and assisting
him with the high school band.

Interviewer: What the characteristics you see as a good teacher?

Karen: Wow, where do we start? Organized, personable, compassionate, knowledgeable of your subject matter, as far as music goes, I think it helps if they still person on the side and keep their performance chops up. Someone who is articulate and can approach learning problems from different directions, you know, like if this doesn't work well what's another way I can this, so they can quickly on their feet. They know whom to go for help; they know when they need help and who to go to for that help. They know what resources are out there and how to access those resources. They know how to keep good appropriate boundaries between them and the students, to know to be friendly but not be a friend, to be approachable, so it a students feels like they struggling, they feel like they can approach you and get help. That is about it right off the top of my head. That is a tough question.

Interviewer: When did you know you wanted to be a teacher?

Karen: When I was in middle school band, my Mom, well my home life was really disrupted then, she had divorced my father and married a man who was very abusive and was going through a divorce from him. So, her life was in turmoil and she was working two jobs a day just trying to keep food on the table and roof over
our heads and I just kind of found family in band. I found something I was good at, felt accepted, and valued there. I loved music, I had just always loved music, and I thought well, you know, I think I could live in band forever and that kind of what’s happened.

Interviewer: Was there one teacher or teachers in particular who inspired your decision to teach?

Karen: It would be a combination. I was another school district earlier in my career and from the time I started 5th grade band until I graduated we went through four different band directors. It was kind of combination of those directors plus my drama teacher and another teacher that I took word study and English four from. It was a combination of a lot of teachers that I really looked up to and thought, yeah; I would like to be that person.

Interviewer: Can you describe some of the characteristics that you like in those teachers?

Karen: Over all, one outstanding thing to me was that they believed in me and encouraged me. They say something in me that they thought was valuable, some talent in me, and they went out of their way to help me develop that and by them believing in me it made me believe in myself more.
Interviewer: Were any members of your family teachers?

Karen: No, actually my Mom got a nursing degree, she got a LPN degree but other than that I am first person in my family that went to a four-year college and graduated.

Interviewer: Have you served as a mentor prior to being in this research?

Karen: Only to a young man who was my student teacher and now is the band director where I am working. His first two years I was also his mentor.

Interviewer: Is there anything about that experience that stands out while you were serving as a mentor for that person?

Karen: Something that I feel a little, how do I say, I am not up on is the certification requirements. When I got my certificate, it was a lifetime certificate. I am not up to speed on what they’re required to do to get their (the mentee) certification. But you know that is easy enough to find out and encourage my mentee to know you need to be getting some PDC hours and you need to be doing this paperwork, or whatever.

Interviewer: How would you define the word mentor?

Karen: A teacher, an encourager, a confidant, showing them the ropes and you are
there maybe to be a parent a little bit. I have never been a parent but just looking at it from the outside, you want them to try things on their own and fail without being there to rescue them all time. Try to make sure catch before they go to far down the wrong path.

Interviewer: What characteristics do think an important in the personality of a good mentor?

Karen: A sense of humor, empathy, maturity, and patience.

Interviewer: Thinking about what you did serving as a mentor and even thoughts you might have had while doing that and since we have talked about this research, can you describe what you think would be an ideal or most effective mentoring program or situation?

Karen: To me, the ideal situation is what I had while my last student teacher. I was basically teaching with him or I had a lot of time with him, watching him work and time talking to him about what he was doing. Basically as lot of contact and watch them in action with time to follow up that later. I think that is just the most important, whether it is live and in person or via Skype. I think you just really need to have that. They need to be able to watch me work too, if possible. If we could sit in on each other's classes and then have some follow up time and time outside of that if there is something that comes up and they need to contact me. That would be
Interviewer: When I first contacted you about this research project what were your thoughts?

Karen: At first I was really excited to try it. I still am excited, I am thinking it has so many possibilities. A big concern of mine is the new teacher that is out there in the sticks, they have nobody in the school that knows anything about teaching music. Nobody within sixty miles that even help them. Nine times out of ten we are going to lose that person and this is such a wonderful way to use the technology to help them out and keep them going, helping them be effective? First I ways really excited and second I was going, wow, I am such a technological idiot, I am not sure if I will be able to do this. It seems to be pretty easy actually.

Interviewer: Describe you thoughts on on-line video communication?

Karen: This is the first time I have ever tried it. I have noticed there are some little glitches with it, but I think it is workable. I was wondering how this was going to work, if she could set up her computer in her music room and be teaching and I could actually virtually sit in on the class and how that would work. I know there is a little time delay sometimes and when you are moving sometimes things freeze up. I think for the most part is will be useable; it will be workable (sic). I think it is very valuable to be able, how else I am going to be able to, without sitting in her
classroom, watch her work. This is amazing to me. When I was going up this was science fiction. Who knew this was ever going to happen.

Interviewer: What has been your answer to on-line video communication?

Karen: I have none (laugh).

Interviewer: What are perceptions of how an online video mentoring experience should or will function.

Karen: I am hoping that, like I said before, there will be some times when I will be able to observe her in action and then have some time to talk about it afterwards. Maybe, even her observe me in action, if that is something that would of value. Once again have some follow up time to talk later and then if a question comes up or something she needs to ask me or show me, this is a lot easier way to do than email, I think. She could show it to me or ask me about it.

Interviewer: How do think online video mentoring could be most effectively done logistically? Should it be onsite in the school or should it be more informal?

Karen: I kind of envisioned it as a combination. A time when it could be on sight virtually sitting on each other’s classes and then maybe have a more informal setting where you discuss what went on. What was good about what happen? What
are some ideas to make it better? That sort of thing. To me a little bit of both would be good.
3. Interview Two: Nancy, mentee

Interviewer: Describe how the mentoring sessions have gone.

Nancy: I think really well

Interviewer: Do you see any similarities between you district and your work with Karen?

Nancy: You mean my mentor here? I guess, but like I said before, I have been relying on Karen primarily and have not met with my mentor here.

Interviewer: Most of your mentoring has been with Karen?

Nancy: Yes, like 90%.

Interviewer: Do you feel like it has been successful with you and Karen?

Nancy: Yeah, completely successful.

Nancy: Give me some thoughts on that and why you feel they are successful
Nancy: The best word I would use to describe it is lifeline because, well it might have different had I gone back (begun teaching) to an area I was near to where I went to college. I have been transplanted into an area that I don't have any connections in. Karen is my number on person to ask questions to that didn't really know. In your first year you obviously questions about MSHSAA (Missouri State High School Activities Association) and you have someone who has been through all that, even though we are not in the same district, she is able to help me out with stuff. She has helped me on time lines, which is really helpful. It was something the school board president was discussing with me, he said the teacher last year would always ask him what the deadlines were and he had to say he did not know any of that information. I have someone so that I don't feel lost on stuff like that.

Interviewer: Were there issues of concern with your Skype mentoring?

Nancy: I think, I really like need her help and appreciated it, the only problem that I have was that sometimes I just needed to talk to her and would have trouble making a connection. That was sometimes frustrating but we had a lot of trouble with that last night.

Interviewer: What were some of the most common issues that arose in your sessions regarding teaching?

Nancy: I think some I talked about before was, it has kind of been a hodge podge of
things, we do come back to, not necessarily specifically classroom management, but just the type of things that aren’t little fuzzy details like rules, logistics, or scheduling. We have talked about just like student perspective, student moral and classroom management and behavior and those sorts of things quite a bit. It is something I can get with my mentor here to because she what kids I work with as well and so she might be able to help me with thing I can try with the kids I have trouble with. For a large part it has been a lot of different things that I have asked Karen about. All the way from scheduling things to switching kids to different instruments to choir literature questions. She has given me several ideas on band literature and the timing of a concert and preparing for a concert. All kinds of things like that.

Interviewer: Do you feel like you are able to communicate effectively with Karen through Skype?

Nancy: Yes, I think it is really awesome. It’s more than a phone and a little less than face to face in person. It captures still a lot of elements that you have between face to face in real life. You can still see facial expressions and, like I have said, we have actually both been in our offices when we Skyped. If she was talking about something, Karen would go get that resource and hold it up to the camera so that I could look at and see what it looks like. It was easy to get the publisher information and that sort of thing. It makes it easier and can’t do that over the phone. One other thing, something you can’t do over a phone as well, if I am talking about conducting
or something and that is really cool that Skype can capture that as well.

Interviewer: How do you feel about your teaching to date?

Nancy: It's good. I don't have any major problems with it to be honest. I come everyday and put in everything I have. I try to keep a smile on my face and be positive. I think I am seeing at least some of the out pay of that from different areas. I am just approaching that.

Interviewer: Do you feel like you are making progress and growing as a teacher?

Nancy: Yes I do. I thought about this the other day and don't think I have shared this with anyone yet. Some days I feel more like a magician and so just think just better making it all work. Getting into that groove of things and turn out things faster sometimes. It is always nice after you that first semester down; you know your timeline better for the next time around. It is really hard to know a timeline because stuff like starting to rehearse too early and if I start too late then it's going to be bad. Getting all that timing down so I think I am improving on those types of things as well.

Interview: How have you changed since your last interview?

Nancy: Quite a bit. I guess you know I have learned a lot more about my kids and a
lot more about how the best way to run each type of classes. I think I have gotten better at one of the issues of this type of job is knowing which group of students you are addressing because you have to switch drastically through out a day. I think that is a skill you have to build and work on. I find myself less now, depends on what kind of day I am having (laugh), and to your first grade class because you just had the last thing was high school choir. There is one day I teach high school choir and them come teach first grade general music and you using some big words and you like "no, cant do that".

Interviewer: How do you feel about being a teacher? Good or not good?

Nancy: To be honest, when I came down here I was convinced that I maybe would not like teaching K-12 and, I feel kind of bad or negative for saying this but, I feel like that is pretty good assessment if you take on a K-12 vocal/instrumental/general music job. You kind of think this really gonna kick my butt and it hard not to think that. It is hard to prepare yourself what you walking into because it is quite lot for anyone and much less not having a lot of experience. I think it is reality and that is just my personality too and I tend to think and like to be surprised in a good way. I think I have been quite wrong and am enjoying what I am doing here so far I think.

Interviewer: Can you think of one thing that has been your highest moment this semester?
Nancy: Oh geez, this is hard. I'll talk about the most positive thing so far. I have gotten quite a few negative comments about the teacher before, and I look at that like it's not really any of my business and try to stay pretty neutral, but with that always comes a lot of positive comments from parents, administrators, and from other staff members and teachers who have been really supportive with comments for example "we like what you are doing here" and we can see you are trying really hard." The community has been really supportive and I feel that people have really stood behind me and supported me. It would have been a much different situation if it had not been that way.

Interviewer: Is there is one thing you look back on you think, "I can't believe I did that, or can't believe I said that?"

Nancy: I can't think of any off the top of my head but I know there have times I almost said that  (laugh).
4. Interview Two: Karen, mentor

Interviewer: Tell me how the mentoring sessions are going?

Karen: I think they are going really well. She always comes prepared with some questions and or some situations to ask about. That really helps. We get about once a week and spend about an hour together.

Interviewer: Can you describe some of the things you have discussed?

Karen: In some of the first sessions, she was preparing for a trip, a big trip with kids. We talked a lot about that, how to prepare, what kind of paper and documentation to have. We talked about some options for her to look into for her to get her elementary Christmas program together. We talked a little about discipline questions. Particularly those that focused on special needs kids and BD kids. There's been a lot.

Interviewer: Has there been one thing you feel like she is focused more on in her questioning?

Karen: Not really, I think that she probably feels the amount of expertise required part of her job. The choir literature and especially with the girls' choir. I think we
have talked a bit about that. It has been pretty much across the board. We have
touched on everything from elementary to high school band.

Interviewer: Has everything been pedagogical in nature or have you talked about
other things. For example, scheduling, dates, outside activities, etc.

Karen: Most of it has involved classroom situation. We have talked about
scheduling and I have encouraged her to look at the schedule this year and see what
kind of things she would want to change next year. To starting getting some ideas
together to present to her administration. I know that in a small school like that,
that can be not as flexible as in a larger school. Maybe there are some ways that
they can change some things around that would make things more effective for her.
I have talked a little bit to her about taking good care of herself and making some
time to do some things that are fun for her. Also that she should get plenty of rest
and eat right. She has been sick once and you expect that a lot that first year of
教学 when you are exposed to all those bugs from the kids that you haven't been
for quite a while. She seems to be doing well. She had a little bit of time there when
she didn't have a voice. We talked a little about how to handle that in a classroom
situation. Most of it has been classroom things and related.

Interviewer: Has she been receptive to you suggestions?

Karen: Absolutely, yes.
Interviewer: Has she shared any successes she has had with some of the suggestions you provided?

Karen: She did say that some of the things I told about getting ready for a trip, as far as getting paperwork together and thinking about insurance issues. For example, in our school they really don't like the parents to ride the buses to places because of liability insurance and not having coverage. She said that was very helpful. They were something else she mentioned the other day that she said she was glad I told her but now I can’t remember it.

Interviewer: Now you mentored other people. Can you make some comparisons between mentoring this setting (virtual) as compared to face-to-face?

Karen: It hasn’t been as much contact, obviously, because the other time I have mentored in was someone in the school. It was easy for me sitting on their class and them sitting in my class. Also having more time before and after school or some time during the school day when we could talk. This is pretty much once a week. The only thing I feel is kind of lacking is just being able to see her in action in the classroom and vis-a-versa. We have been talking about how we can make that happen. We have coming up with ideas where we could Skype that.

Interviewer: Except for the time factors as far as being able to do things more
spontaneously, as opposed to a more rejumented and strict schedule. Is there anything else, as far as the interaction between you and Nancy, that you can compare with your in-district experience?

Karen: I have to give Nancy a lot of credit for being very organized. We do have limited but when we get together, I feel that time is used very efficiently because she has topics she wants to cover. It is all laid out and ready to go. When you see people everyday it is kind of hit or miss and a little looser than that. Like I said, we have limited time but she uses it very effectively.

Interviewer: Would you say that the majority of our time then is spent talking strictly school related pedagogical issues or logistical as opposed to more social.

Karen: Absolutely not.

Interviewer: When you talk about the issues Nancy is bring you as questions, has she shared with you at any time district policy issues or structural things with the way her district operates that you have been able to help her with?

Karen: Not that I can remember right now, other than just talking about the schedule. Her desire to see her kids more often.

Interviewer: Do you feel like when you are communicating with you are able to get across your point?
Karen: Yes

Interviewer: Is there something that when using Skype could be more effective not using Skype?

Karen: I don’t think so. I think this is pretty great. The only time we have emailed each other is when you have to change the time to get together, but I feel like this is very effective. She just had her first evaluations and we talked about that a lot. I was happy about that.

Interviewer: So you talked about the observation process with her?

Karen: Not so much but just a little bit. We talked about what she did. She had given her high school principal some information about what he was going to see when he came into the classroom and seemed very surprised and pleased about that. As you know, you have administrators come into music classrooms and sometimes they really don’t understand why we do some of the things we do. Why it is not like everything in a curricular classroom. She took the initiative to give him that information ahead of time. I thought that was terrific. We talked a little bit about the difference between the observation process between elementary and high school levels. She seems okay with both of them. She said anytime they want to come to my class I am okay with that. It is good that she feels real comfortable with
Interviewer: Are you able to understand her and her questions? What the ability to read body language?

Karen: Not at all. I think it (Skype) is very helpful, as you know in email you don’t get immediate feedback like you do here. Another thing is that in email you can’t hear the tone of voice. This is really good I think.

Interviewer: Is there anything with Skype that is a concern? Bothers you when you use Skype?
Karen: Not really, the calls have been really good quality, except maybe twice. One time we had an issue she kept freezing up and we just hung up and called back and it worked. One time there was a lot of background noise. Other than that, the quality is very good.

Interviewer: How do feel about your mentoring so far?

Karen: Well I really hope so. I can’t really see that she needs that much help, actually (laugh). She is pretty self sufficient. I am not sure I am making that big an impact other than her feeling more secure that she has got somebody to lean on maybe. So I hope I have given her suggestions that would really help. I have tried to hook her up with some other people to. I gave Nancy the email address of a
colleague who was an expert in Nancy's area and who said she would happy to communicate with her and help her. I am trying to get her aquainted with others for contact. We talked about after this is over (the Skyping project) maybe I could go to her school and sit in with her for a day and see how this are going. She thought that would be a good idea.

Interviewer: Do you feel like in your work as a mentor on Skype that you are approaching the process of mentoring the same way as if you two were in the same district?

Karen: Pretty much, but once again I have to give her alot of credit for being so organized and know what she wants to talk about when we get together, having the ideas in mind already. So, yeah pretty much.

Interviewer: Do you ever feel in the process of being a mentor that you need a talk to other mentors to see how they are dealing of the issues of their mentees?

Karen: Yeah, sure.

Interviewer: Did you recieve training from your district on being a mentor?

Karen: Not really. They gave me handbood with some procedures and said you are a mentor. Okay Backing up here as far as Skyping sessions, I don't get to show her
things. Do you know what I mean. I have not seen her conducting technique or show her things. If she had question on how to play percussion instrument or piece of literature. Those things are limited with Skype although it is still way better that just email or phone calls.

Interviewer: How do thing you would approach using Skype to do that?

Karen: I think I will know more after we try the observation. If I get to watch her in action and maybe I can give her suggestions and show her how I might do something. As far as looking at a score together of something like that would be a little trickier. I think we could probably do it.
5. Interview Three: Nancy, mentee

Interviewer: Summarize your the activities and the processes of your mentoring experiences for this project.

Nancy: I didn't ever meet with my mentor (district) at school regularly. When I started out with Karen I didn't really have time to meet with them (district mentor). I ended up just kind of using Karen at first and then I didn't follow up and start meeting with my district mentor after that. We had lunch almost everyday at least two day a week. I spoke with her then if I had any questions or concerns.

Interviewer: Was she (district mentor) helpful?

Nancy: Yes, she came into my room and observed me and then wrote me a really long email with feedback. She had the right personality to be a mentor. She was neutral when she needed to be and had been at the school for a long time. She also taught special needs students so it was easy for her to help me address any of those students I had in my class. She knew those same students as well.

Interviewer: How often did you meet?

Nancy: We (district mentor and I) we had lunch about twice a week but it was with other people there. I knew she would answer my questions.
Interviewer: She was available whenever you needed her if it something outside that time period?

Nancy: She also helped with supervision at my concert and the end of the year.

Interviewer: Is there anything you can think of about the time with Karen when you were working?

Nancy: It was really helpful that I knew that was going to be there every week. Throughout the week I would make a list of things that would come up that I had questions about. Especially a first year teacher and being where there are not a whole lot of other resources, it was really helpful to know that I had someone there to ask questions to. One to the important thinks, like when contest season came around. I had some question about that and she was able to help me with that. I read the manual (Missouri State High School Activities Association music manual) online and then went back over it again. It’s a lot of stuff for your first time and a lot of little things that can go by and can get in trouble and disqualified. When I had questions I wanted to ask some who had been doing it for a long time and knew the ins and outs. Karen was very helpful when it came to contest season. Even at the time we were not meeting regularly on Skype but I would email her questions here and there and she was very helpful.

Interviewer: You are saying you met with her more frequently on Skype at the
beginning?

Nancy: Yes

Interviewer: Second semester was mostly just text-based communication?

Nancy: In don't think we actually Skyped at all second semester but I emailed her questions.

Interviewer: Do you think it was just as effective second semester using the emails?

Nancy: Yes at the point, I had got a lot of the major things worked out. It was just little stuff that would come up. I could have Skyped with her then as well. That way I had the extra hour in the week where I did not have to worry about having an appointment of something like that.

Interviewer: Did you think it was important for you to keep that regular schedule first semester?

Nancy: Oh yes, very, very important.

Interviewer: Can you expand on that? Why do think it was important?
Nancy: Just because I was the beginning and that was when I had the most questions. I probably learned a lot and grew a lot and it solved a lot of problems having that weekly time for the first semester.

Interviewer: I would like you to reflect now on your personal perceptions. On our first interview I asked you to give me your perceptions of what the process of virtual mentoring would be like. Now I want you to look at from the point of going through the process. Was it helpful to you? Were some of the expectations you had at the beginning meet?

Nancy: One of the biggest thinks was that when you are moving to a new area and you don't know anyone and haven't networked with people, the was one of the major thinks she helped and got me in touch with the K-12 teacher. I don't think I have told you this yet. She got me in touch with a K through 12 teacher who had 18 years experience. I don't think I would have set out to do that and it would have taken me some time to get in touch with this lady. Nancy put me in touch with her and we were able to meet at Tan-tar-a to meet. That was a very important point in the year. The first semester was hard getting through things, but I think second semester was even harder just all the extra that was through on like contest, concerts, MAP testing. I think the second semester was a little harder but she (K-12 teacher resourse) was kind of addressing this at the beginning of the semester and I was able to ask her some things and listen to her. She is really the only other person I could talk to. Any other experienced educator in band or in choir or elementary
music would be wonderful but I had specific addresses and concerns for K-12. She was able to really help me. Those answers really had to come from her and nobody else. Have a Skype mentor helped me have that opportunity. As far as helping me and talking to Karen (virtual mentor) every week through Skype, looking back on it, it made all the difference. It was almost like a make of break thing. I can't imagine what it would have been like if I had not had that resource. I think I would have been a lot more frustrated. I do have other people that I are in my network that I could address and ask. If was invaluable having a music person there once a week for an hour that talked to me about anything I needed. She gave me the heads up on so many things and it allowed me to be more professional and act preemptively and be prepared for everything that was coming.

Interviewer: Was there anything that happened with your virtual mentoring with Karen that you did not expect? Were you surprised with anything?

Nancy: Well anytime you go into something new and you don’t know someone you are not sure what to expect. I was pleasantly surprised at how much she really reached out to me and how helpful she really was. That connection was probably a little closer because we were face to face instead of just on the phone of emailing back and forth. It was a really positive experience.

Interviewer: Had you met Karen in person before Tan-tar-a?
Nancy: Yes, we both signed up for this class that MSU was offering an arts integration thing. She saw my name on the mass list in the email (mass email for class) and said I will see you there tonight. We met up there and it was so interesting seeing her for the first time. It was so weird (laughing).

Interviewer: Weird good? Weird bad?

Nancy: It was just strange because we were making jokes and I should move in choppy motions like we were used to seeing each other (laughing). It was good to actually meet and move to a higher level (laughing).

Interviewer: As the mentoring developed, both district and virtual, did the way you interacted with both your mentor situations evolve or remain static?

Nancy: I think that with Karen (virtual mentor) it definitely evolved. I got to know her better through mentoring and she gave me a lot of recourses and opportunities. We went to see a movie together also. It was a documentary on education reform. It was really cool experience and knowing her give me that opportunity. I think that it evolved for me personally because I had the reassurance and positive reinforcement from her every week. I built me up and helped me grow as an educator. I was not same from the first time we met and then the middle and last time we met. Our relationship grew in getting to know her and the recourses as an experienced educator she had to offer. With my in district mentor, she also offered
me positive reinforcement from being in my classroom and some at the end of the year as well. I got to know her more as well but just didn’t have as much conversation time with her as I did with Karen.

Interviewer: Why did you have more contact time with Karen than you did with your district mentor?

Nancy: It was because we (Karen and Nancy) had a time to meet every week, definitely.

Interviewer: So you and your district mentor did not set up a schedule to meet?

Nancy: No. As I first went in I felt like I did not have time to meet two mentors every week. It was definitely was going to be Karen because she was going to be able to help with a lot or stuff. She could help me with the music and classroom stuff. My district mentor had discussed with me how she was uncomfortable about not being able to provide me with the information I needed to be a music teacher. She was still able to provide me with information from knowing the students in the school. I talked with her at lunch so I did not have one on one time with her. We did not have as much chat time as Karen and I did.

Interviewer: I am not talking about mentoring now but please summarize your thoughts about the physical process of using Skype? Was it effective? Not effective?
Nancy: I think the process is really, it is really the only negative thing I have ever had with this whole experience, is that sometimes the technology wasn’t working and you had to trouble shoot and figure out the problem. It would eat up some of our talking time sometimes. However, I think that is a small price to pay to be able to use the recourse and that just how technology works sometimes. Obviously the more you use it the more you going to know how work with it. The technology of Skype, I think is really neat, and being able to see someone instead of just listening to them. You have the added elements of facial expression and reaction and things like that.

Interviewer: With your experience now as a new teacher mentored using Skype, how do you think the process could be improved?

Nancy: As far as the mentor side, I can’t think of any ways to improve it. I know that sound crazy but just knowing once we had that time and someone was going to be there, there is not a lot more I can say about that.

Interviewer: Was more training or orientation necessary?

Nancy: As far as mentor experience I would have to say no. I think she had had mentor experience before and had student teachers. She (Karen) was obviously very knowledgeable and experienced in mentoring. That is very important before
you go in because even if there is someone who has been doing things for a while and if they don’t know how to address and mentor relationship I am sure that can be challenging. She does that in a very, very awesome way by offering feedback without being above me. One of my biggest problems was the Pamela software. Sometimes I had trouble shoot it and it would not record or not get a section recorded.

Interviewer: Project yourself into your future as an experienced music educator. How do you think this experience would affect you as mentor to a first year music teacher?

Nancy: I think me more familiar with an alternative process to face to face. I one thing I do want to say about Pamela because it was my biggest frustration is that it was the first time I had used it and that was pretty typical of most people. The first time you are using a software you are going to have to have more trouble with it.

Interviewer: How do you think having a music specialist as music mentor will effect your teaching in the future?

Nancy: Well I guess I will address that question by trying to imagine what it would have been like if I hadn’t had her this year. It was even like I was looking in to future when I was talking to the school board president and he was telling me a lot of things that the teacher before me had trouble when was a first year teacher in my
position. He was kind of asking how those things were going and I said I am not having problem with any of those things because I have someone who is able to address that each week. In the future it is going to effect my teaching because I have this broad base of knowledge that she has helped me get and helped me come to it on my own and suggested to me. She has helped me see a lot of things I will take out into my teaching for a long time.

Interviewer: Do you think you could have found out that information without having a music mentor?

Nancy: Yes, I think it would have been a nightmare though. The fact that she was matched with me because she had had experience teaching in a lot of the areas I was teaching in. She was able to give me everything I in one place. If I hadn't had her I would have had to ask this person, that person, read an article about this, email this person and I am sure I could have come up with all the answers but it taken all the time I didn’t really have teaching K-12. I was have been a big mess.

Interviewer: Do you think it would have been as effective if we had paired you with a mentor that was just an elementary or secondary music educator?

Nancy: I don't think it would have been as effective at all. Some of the stuff she couldn't remember like when I would ask her an elementary question, she had a good perspective on teaching it and the kids, or something about literature or the songs, because she had taught that was able to help me get in touch with a person
who could help me. She had those recourses and connections. If I had only been
with a secondary teacher, they wouldn't be able to put me in touch with someone as
easily, maybe the elementary teacher at their building or something like that. She
(Karen) just had, here is who helped me when I was there. That was helpful

Interviewer: Would you say that someone who was not paired with your situational
criteria but was still a music mentor would have been as effect as your time with
Karen?

Nancy: I think Karen was more effective. I believe a music mentor is more effective
because they can help with music things that are such a large part of the job. Now
obviously a big, if not a bigger part, is student interaction and any teacher can help
you with that if they have been around for a while. It is so much more sense to have
it all in on place when teaching K-12.

Interview: On a personal note, are you going to continue as a music teacher next
year?

Nancy: Yes

Interviewer: Are you going to teach in the same location next year?

(Interviewer note here: at this point I am going to piece together what Nancy said to
clarify her response. For the purpose of confidentiality I have not included any details Nancy revealed regarding locations and situations. However, I have included pertinent information the may help clarify her reasoning for leaving her present teaching situation.

Nancy: No I am not. While I am not really sure I want to give up band, which is kind of weird, but I kind of think I want to specialize in elementary music more. Which is interesting with the history because I went straight out (from college) and filled in with a colleague on leave who had a great middle school band. Elementary music was actually the only area I didn’t student teach in. Once I actually got out there and taught K-12 I really feel that’s the best for me and it's me my favorite part. I wasn’t quite ready to give up beginning band because I really enjoy beginning band as well. I am not as fond at a secondary level. There are a few that still have the mix between elementary music and some beginning band. I was really interested in a position I saw and the principle interviewed me and she offered me a job. It is in a really small school again, (laugh) which isn't bad because, obviously, I know how that works at this point. I think there are a lot a rewards teaching at a small school but I would like to work up to a bigger district as some point.

Interviewer: Did having a music mentor effect your decision to remain in teaching?

Nancy: That is tough question (laughing). I don't know if I have a clearly defined answer for that. I guess I would say that I don't how much harder this year would
have been without her. I don’t know how that would have put me mentally. At the same time, I don’t think I could see myself at this point no matter what. I do believe I am doing what I am supposed to be doing. Which was a really long road to arrive at that. It was not an automatic thing for me. I am not the type of person who doesn’t do things for a short period of time and then moves on. I feel like I have to really, really give it a chance I guess.

Interviewer: Why did you decide to leave your present teaching position?

Nancy: Yes, I think it was a really hard decision. It was for a lot of reasons and the hardest part of it (the decision to leave) because they’ve had three music teachers in three years. That was the hardest part for me. I felt like I was choosing me before them. One of the things though was that the job that came up was a better fit for me. I also struggle a lot with the area I was in, first of all being in the middle of nowhere not having a connection with family of friends or anything. I just didn’t feel like a place where I could settle down in. With this being said I could have stayed a little longer but when the job came up that I felt was a better fit and that was going help me specialize in things more that I can now. I will go from 27 lesson plans a week and will go to 15. I feel so bad because when I talked to the K-12 music teacher (mentor recourse person mentioned earlier in the interview) she was really excited as an advocate of being a K-12 teaching and talking to someone that would maybe stay maybe doing for a while. I have not talked to her about leaving yet.
Interviewer: If your principal or superintendent had presented you with the question, "how could we have kept you here?" How would you respond?

Nancy: I think that question was asked to me because the school board president did not like me or the job I was doing, which is a little rattling at first but I think it is very normal for new teacher or young teacher. Accepting that was normal, was how I was addressing it and then finding the fact that everyone else backed me up except him. It helped a lot. I think that sort of turned into this conversation with my two principals and my superintendent were the three people to talk to me about this. It was an opportunity for them to tell me how well they thought I was doing and not to get discouraged. My high school principal actually used the phrase; "I would fight to the death for you. " It was really reassuring to hear all that and the superintendent came to me after the decision went public that I was leaving and asked if I would still stay now. I don't know if there was anything they could have offered me really. It was really a thing in my personal life that I needed to do.
6. **Interview Three: Karen, mentor**

Interviewer: Summarize the activities or processes of the mentoring experience as a virtual mentor.

Karen: I met with the young teacher I was mentoring at least once a week via Skype. She usually had a question or list of questions for me, or a situation she wanted to discuss. I was able to help her take care of some MSHSAA requirements as far as accessing the online "rules meeting" and taking the assessment. I was also able to show her some materials that I thought she might find helpful in the classroom.

Interviewer: Summarize your thoughts on your final perceptions of virtual mentoring (e.g. was it helpful and did it meet your expectations?)

Karen: I think that virtual mentoring is an invaluable tool for helping out new music teachers in small schools where there are no other music teachers (experienced or otherwise) and the school's location is far from experienced teachers who could act as mentors. Those young teachers can feel so isolated in that situation, and can get discouraged without the support of a mentor that understands the unique requirements of the music department. The virtual mentoring overcomes the problem of distance and gives the young teacher the support and information they need. While it doesn't completely replace actual visits by a mentor to the young teacher's classroom, it is very definitely helpful. I can see in retrospect how this
could have been used for a mentor to actually observe the young teacher teaching in their classroom or the young teacher observing the mentor as they model teaching techniques in their own classroom via Skype, and I wish we would have set that up for our situation.

Interviewer: As the mentoring developed, did the way you interacted with each mentor situation evolve or remain static?

Karen: I think it mostly remained static. We set up a time to meet via Skype and discussed her questions or situations. The only thing that was different was that during one "meeting", I was able to actually show her some materials that I thought she could use. I think since virtual mentoring was a new thing, we didn't really realize the potential it had. Once again, in retrospect, I think we could have used it much more effectively.

Interviewer: Summarize the Skype experience.

Karen: Overall, I was very impressed with the idea and I think it has tremendous potential. If I were to mentor via Skype again, I would have a better idea of ways I could use it more effectively in observing and modeling teaching techniques in real time in our own classrooms. It is great, too, for the young teacher to have an experienced teacher they can lean on and learn from. The Skype experience is much more effective than mentoring via e-mail or phone calls. I think that, if possible, it
should be supplemented by a visit or two by the mentor to the young teacher’s classroom, but I know this is sometimes difficult due to distance and schedules.
APPENDIX E

JEREMY AND DAVID MENTORING TRANSCRIPTIONS

USED IN CHAPTER FOUR DATA ANALYSIS

(ordered chronologically)

CASE ONE

Curriculum: RVM Session One 00:10:00

Jeremy: I have thirteen nice electric keyboards. In one of my classrooms I have a keyboard lab and in my other classroom, I have a rehearsal room. With my jazz class, the kids that sort of play instruments this that and the other, they have a self-guided curriculum like you would get at a music store. A few days a week those kids have a their own self-guided tutorials with the DVD teacher. I don’t play guitar so the kid that does has the DVD teacher on the video and that works really well... The kids that don’t have any instrumental background are in the keyboard lab working on basic music reading and laying the ground work so eventually later in the year we can do a little bit of jazz piano with those students.

David: Okay [nods approval]

Jeremy: Two or three days a week, every other day is what it is, they are either in the lab with headphones or with their workbooks and DVD teachers.
The other day we have music appreciation and jazz history. We do listening and lecture.

David: Okay, are you comfortable with jazz?

Jeremy: Yeah, especially at the extent I am teaching this year. I am a good piano player and read lead sheets pretty well. I feel good about that. I am a saxophone player and that was my instrument in college.

David: Okay, okay

*Experiential Inadequacy: RVM Session One 00:19:47*

Jeremy: I was hired with the thought that eventually I would start a band. I am certified in both and actually did a double major. I did not just get the endorsement. I am adept at both. I was hired as the choir director and general music teacher at the elementary. Two days before you begin your teacher meetings, I got a thing in the mail that said my classes and it said jazz band. I said, "Oh crap, what is this!" I called my counselor and asked what was going on. She replied that they thought it would be cool. I thought to myself, you thought it would be cool, I am the music teacher; ask me if it is going to be cool. It has turned out to be one of my favorite classes. I have mostly upper classmen with good attitudes and they are very laid back
students, which fits the idea of jazz. It is one of my favorite classes now. Some of the things that I went into dreading have really become my favorite things. In my elementary for instance, there is no middle school where I am, I teach K-6 in one building and 7-12 together. They just don't have the numbers to make a middle school.... I always saw myself as a high school director. I am hard-core high school. I absolutely love the little kids.

David: This is really funny. When I graduated from college, the first thing I said was, "I will never teach elementary and don't think I am going to touch junior high groups." [both laughing] I didn’t want anything to do with junior high or middle school but every job I have had has been everything from 6th grade to 12 grade and both instrumental and vocal. I am certified in both and playing in band all through high school. ... I never thought I would teach band. I thought it would just all be vocal. I am in my fifth year at this district and it is my first time to ever teach elementary. They are just wonderful and so easy to work with. I have had more success at that end then anything I have ever done.

Networking: RVM Session One 00:38:03

David: I don't know many teachers in your area but just get with someone that you know that has a really successful elementary program and talk to them. Find out how they achieved this and where did you notice this success
taking place in your choir and at what level. Ask them how many years did you work on this before you noticed your kids were actually reading

Socialization: RVM Session One 00:44:14

Jeremy: The problem is everybody that teaches is the kid of somebody else that teaches there.

David: Oh, okay, [smiles]

Jeremy: Everybody is married and has kids except for the athletic director, a young guy about my age, and is single. He is the athletic director and we are cut from very different cloths. There is an elementary teacher; she is real nice, real sweet and about my age. I was thinking, well I can be buddies with her but she is married, which is not a big deal, I am not saying that. [both laugh]. They have families...I am just in a different set-up. I don’t know, I am trying to figure it out.... There are just not a lot of teachers my age, mostly older teachers and certainly not very many people in their twenties.

David: That is very odd; as they retire I imagine there will be because districts are going for younger teachers right now with all the budget issues and stuff. I understand what you saying about that. I drive 40 miles both ways to my school so that I can live in a larger town.
Support and encouragement: RVM session one 1:48:24

David: For right now, whenever you’ve got the time just send me an email. . .

I am usually here in the evenings, Wednesday is church night, but most of the time I am here. I sent you my telephone number so call me sometime. I just want you to always feel open so that once we get here and in two days from now something major happen and you think, "I think I need to talk to him or somebody". I like to listen and don't know if I have all the answers but I will tell you what I think. We can go from there.

Jeremy: Even after our conversation this evening, I feel very empowered to keep on keeping on. I feel very good about that and most of the time all I need is a little pick me up and a few pointers or the athletic little pat on the rear end and I am good to go.

David: One thing I have noticed is that you are a very bubbly person. You have such a good attitude about it. If you had not said to me, or I had not been told prior this is your [Jeremy] very first year, I don't know that I would have picked up on that right away. I would have picked up that you're a newer teacher, based on your age alone, but talking to you and listening, no you don't seem like a first year teacher . . .

Jeremy: Yep! (Both laughing)
Jeremy: The students are now starting to get on each other because a lot of them really want to learn. I put that out and I went to my superintendent the very next hour. I told her what was going on and, it might have been the very next day after we talked.

David: Oh boy

Jeremy: I went to my superintendent in a very respectful manner, "this is a set up that almost ensures trouble." I have all forty of these kids every day, all at once, is just not conducive to learning and not building a program. She said, "you are right and we need to something about this." We really do and I want the best for these students and I can barely get them quiet enough and friendly enough to teach let alone be receptive to the information. She said, "Well what can we do?" I told her the situation and how the students acted. She and my high school principal spent the next day in my room during the lesson, both of them.

David: Really?

Jeremy: They told me that they really wanted me to be successful and just want to come out and see what you are doing. I told them please come on. They were both out there the very next day and spent all hour with me, both
of them.... I have a really cool lesson planned about ragtime where I had some midi files on the board and they could listen to the music as they went by....

David: Oh cool

Jeremy: I played along because I am good pianist and pulled some jazz stuff off line and played a little ragtime for them.... They were really in control and it was because the principal and the superintendent were there—duh! My principal said this was the coolest thing ever.... My superintendent said, [to the class] "we hired your teacher because he was the best." She told them that they don’t expect any more discipline issues from you or else. My principal said normally I want you to handle your own discipline problems, but send them to me and I will discipline them also.

Instructional materials: RVM Session Two 00:34:11

Jeremy: …take some things that I have written that fits their vocal range and start there, I think.

David: …and that is good. I will tell you that Musical Play is a really good place to work also.

Jeremy: Musical Play?
David: *Musical Play* is a complete curriculum actually. A colleague from a neighboring school turned me on this. I went to observe him.... My colleague told me his district was looking at the Musical Play curriculum to replace the existing curriculum. He said that you could get the K-12 curriculum very reasonably.... What I like about the Musical Play curriculum is that everything is laid out for you. You have all the songs that deal with solfeggio. It has Orff arrangement in there that you can use. It is a really good system and the author pulls in a number of experts to provide supplemental material. Not all the supplemental materials are useful in every situation but they are separate and you don’t have to use it. The authors also give you permission to record and sell the recordings of songs from the curriculum. It has sound teaching strategies also. It also includes Smart Board lessons for you to use.

*Managing the Classroom: RVM Session Two 01:05:50*

Jeremy: I had sequenced steps laid out in the book and put the camera on the music and followed along with my finger. Whenever we played they could see my fingers playing on the keys. All they had to do was play along with me and follow along. Well the stinkers weren’t doing it. I put my foot down and told them you do this. This is what you are to do. I was not overly a jerk about it. I just told them I worked hard to prepare this for you. You need to do what is right. They would not stop talking. They would not stop talking
long enough to do it. I am back at the drawing board and I don't have tables in my room. I really don't need tables for my keyboards. I got some extra tables and some extra desks. I brought those into my classroom yesterday because I think these eighth graders need the structure of having a desk. We are trying a new thing, where we are doing two-week units as a whole class because splitting them up and giving them any sort of independent work didn't work for the two and a half weeks we did it. Maybe I need to be more persistent, I don't know.

David: It sounds like they are in a challenge mode right now. Be careful about changing too much too quickly because they are going to think they have you on the run. Like if we do this and he sees this is not working he is going to do something else. Number one, that is a lot of kids and to just throw them at you like that is tough. Some administrators don't understand this with such numbers. I know my principal, I don't have forty kids, [administrator] would say just put the ones who don't want to sing on the back wall. What do you want me to do with them? I don't teach like that.

Jeremy: I don’t either.

David: Do you have a written behavior policy?
Jeremy: Yeah, I do and there is one laid out in the handbook, the school handbook...

Mentee planning/methods: RVM Session Three 00:24:55

Jeremy: I am now about three weeks into my Junior Singing Wildcat group, my after school 4-6th grade honor choir. I don’t know what to do with them any more. I want to pick your brain. What is a good process? Here is what they do very well. They call and respond songs very well. They cannot read music yet because they never had to. Now I have started doing Solfeggio with them. I started on Sol Mi songs and then we added La. In rehearsal with those kids, I have been doing Sol La and Mi songs with everybody (all classes) and then just recently added Do, afterschool we have done call and response all the way through Do to La. They are doing really well with that. They do the hands signs super well and then are on pitch for the most part. They get the patterning and that is really great. We have been doing some call songs, little folk songs with a lot of rhythmic activity and have a lot of Sol Mi intervals, those folky things that the kids catch on to. The question is how can I make the transition into happy little folk to like legitimate pieces of music to them.

David: Okay... In the first year, honest, I spoon-fed everything. I would say, I need to you sing this and here is how it goes. La, la, la, la [sung stepwise upward] and then the words with it. Then I would do, just like you did, tied a
lot into the classroom work by doing the Sol, Me, La and Do and we used that a lot too. Then the first thing I did, I took a piece of music, a real piece of unison music and had them look at this. I had them take their finger to follow along with me and when I stopped I had them tell where I was. I did that so they would get familiar with following the line. We talked contour. I asked them that if the notes are going up on the staff what do you think the voice is going to do. I had to stop and think. In ways, teaching elementary has made me a better musician. They have always come to me prepared and I would just pick music we could start sing or playing in band. With elementary kids, I had to stop and think, well what if they don’t understand what a quarter note it? If they don’t understand how that works and you have to think of several different ways to do it. I start with the unisons; something that is good too and you have the technology to do this. If you find some rounds, rather than just doing it all in unison lines, write it out like part one and part two. This way they see the how the lines move musically. They see that this group follows this line and you take those baby steps. You could teach them the Row Row Your Boat type of round and then show them the written form of what they were singing in the round. Show them that this is what it looks like and what you are singing for me. What I noticed in the kids that I now have in my Junior High choir and have come through that process is that they understand how to read better. They might not read it correctly all the time but they know where to be. We were singing the Turtledove and my men were struggling. I kept thinking what is going on with this and why are they
not getting this. Finally, one of my boys said, "I am confused what line we are supposed to sing on?" I said right there where it says part 3. He replied, "Well there is not a part three, there is a part one, a part two and another part two." I looked and found that the publisher had misprinted the music. I had not caught it but the guys did. To me I was thinking, good questioning and good observation from my boys. You are able to see that click in them.

Jeremy: That is awesome.

David: Sometimes you have to remember that you can only eat an elephant a bite at a time. You just have to keep breaking it down into smaller bites for them. You can then add the bigger pieces as they come.

Support and encouragement; Mentor advising and consultation: RVM session four

16:41:122

Jeremy: I have written a piece for our conference honor choir... I told them that I do have a degree in composition and they said, “could you write something SAB” [Soprano, Alto, Bass]. I said “yes.” They will be premiering one of my pieces for the conference honor choir. I am super pumped about that.

David: Awesome, I would love to hear it so record it
Jeremy: Me too... (Both laugh) The other directors in the conference have
given me good feedback and pointed out a few typos... I am trying to have a
good showing from our high school. I put it in the bulletin [mentee’s school]
and asked all those who can sing or think they can sing, sign up. It is a day off
of school, and I am going to buy you pizza. I told them that they are going to
do one of their director's compositions and that you will like it and have a
blast.

David: I think that is great. That is the way you have to do that.
APPENDIX F

NANCY AND KAREN MENTORING TRANSCRIPTIONS

USED IN CHAPTER FOUR DATA ANALYSIS

(ordered chronologically)

CASE TWO

*Confidence: RVM Session One 00:43:32*

Karen: What has been the track record of teachers and how long do they seem to stay on average?

Nancy: I don't know really far back and I don't know all the details but I know some of it is a little bad. I don't want to ask too much because I don't want to get wrapped up in something really negative that someone is telling me and have all these things, you know like, "Oh we [school administrator] fired her because of this." I don't want to sit here and worry, I don't know, just try to keep a little indifferent but know as much as I need to. It is not easy to do. [Laughing] The person last year, which has made my life a little easier now and one of the reasons I took the job, was right out of college, young, first year teacher. I felt that made it a little easier, I was not following up a retiring male or something. That is a big dynamic change and can be hard. Also, if they haven't had the same thing all the in the past, I could make changes...
Karen: Like two to five years on average maybe?

Nancy: Yeah, I guess and before that the lady was here for five years. I don’t know anything before that really. I know that in the past there was a guy who was here for a bunch of years and he had a lot of numbers [students].... that is kind of what has happened...can't do anything about that. It is tough. [Laughing]

Karen: Yeah, just curious. You run into that. It is a lot of turnover and nothing consistent as far a keeping track or keeping records.

Nancy: Yes, it is a nightmare. It is a big puzzle.... The first thing I did when I came in was address the huge inventory. I kept a record up because there wasn’t one already for me. I don't know if she didn't do it or what the year before.... I don’t know when I am leaving here and how that’s gonna work or anything. You don’t know the future but it is early but I feel I owe it completely to the kids, if I leave, to leave something that makes the transition easier.

Karen: Yeah, that is the object.

Nancy: It was really hard. The superintendent was very polite in the interview and he was like, " I am going to make my rounds in the building if
you guys want to talk." I was able to kind of get real with her to some
questions about what it was really like to work here.... I got a lot of comments
from students and parents, "Well I hope it is not like last year." What I did is
smile and say, "I am going to do the best I can and know you have been
through a lot and I am going to make some changes, this is what I am doing
now." We are going forward.

Karen: That is great and then keep documentation of everything you do,
programs, trips, purchase orders, and put them all in filing cabinets. Like you
were saying, if you happen to leave when somebody else steps into your job
then they have all that information.

Nancy: Yes, of course, that is considerate to that person.

Karen... another thing too with burnout, is be sure you give yourself some
time to do some things you want to do. Don't live at school or live school all
the time up here even though it is hard to that first year.

Nancy: Yeah, I feel like that is really good advice. One of my college
professors, is like, you need to have a hobby. Right now my hobby is Netflix
[laugh]. There are so many things that people enjoy that aren't music. It has
been since I started, this is like week seven I think, and ever so gradually I
feel like it is getting a little easier. Some days I can leave a little earlier but it is a very slow, gradual process.

Karen: It’ll get better.

Nancy: It is better than like the first week.

Nancy: I think that is a big deal for the hometown parades.

Karen: Sometimes that is the only time the community ever sees your program. There are people out there that never come to a concert but will come to a parade or a basketball game.

Nancy: Yeah, it is a different demographic. Especially I guess for recruiting too a lot of kids will see it that may have not before. So that is kind of neat.

Karen: You already have the fifth and sixth graders saying, "you mean we don't get to march in the Christmas parade yet?"

Nancy: They are still so excited. How long does it take for that to wear off?

[Laughing] Do new things. [Laughing]
Karen: Will there be any time where they can march together before or after school?

Nancy: That is a difficult thing; I don’t know how that is going to happen. I think when I talk to the principal then that is going to be a lot better. I’ll have a better understanding because they have not done this before. I don’t know how you feel, but last year they were on a float and they played. I don’t know if we can do that but I am keeping that as an option if I feel I can’t pull this together because it is getting a little late and the weather is getting colder.

Karen: You may just want to go with that.

Nancy: It is still visual and they are still playing. I feel like that is the lesser of the two. I don’t prefer that but if I need to, that still is a way they will be involved.

Karen: To ride on the float, right?

Nancy: Yes, to ride on the float.

Karen: And it may be the best option this first year until you get things rolling. You may just want to do that.
Nancy: I think I will figure that out a little more until I talk to my principal and see where we stand and how it would work.

*Mentee planning/methods: RVM Session Four 00:09:01*

Nancy: How long has it been since you worked with high school choir?

Karen: Oh, probably twelve years.

Nancy: I was just going to get your ideas on different activities you can do with them that will help. I have been doing the a cappella singing thing and I think that is helping a lot. Also, I don’t know it is just so awkward how to have them stand. There are no risers in there like I said, the floor is tiered which helps, then all the chairs and stands are there from band. I guess I could, but my whole life at this school is like putting things away and getting them out. So at the high school I just let them leave it out because it makes my life easier. Then they have all that, so sometimes I will have them [choir] warm up over there and then they’ll kind of turn and face the piano and sometime I will have them around the piano. . . . I like to keep a routine the same of what I do with them every day but don’t want it to get monotonous. I didn’t know if you had any ideas of choir activities that were helpful.

Karen: I used to do that; of course I had a little bit more of a mixed group. I had all four voices then I had them mix up and stand by someone who
doesn’t sing their part. Sometimes I would have them sitting in groups and they sit in their groups and let them work their parts.

Nancy: So give them individual time and let them lead each other?

Karen: Yeah

Nancy: We were talking about that in my district meeting and some of the other teachers were talking about that. I kind of had forgotten about that and that is a really good idea. They were talking about letting them do that during the sight reading session at contest.

*Informational Sources: RVM Session Four 00:16:17*

Nancy: In your experience is there any like names that you really like and does good stuff?

Karen: Mary Lynn Lightfoot

Nancy: Yeah, I have done some of her stuff.

Karen: One of the times, when I first came here as a choir director I followed a teacher here who was much, much beloved. They were all sad when she left and the teacher came in was kind of a sacrificial lamb that kids really did
not like. When I came it was hard to win them over. When I passed out something from Mary Lynn Lightfoot one of the leaders of the group said, I just love Mary Lynn Lightfoot music, and I got my foot in the door. She recognized that name and was literature she loved to sing.

Nancy: okay

Karen: [others composers] Brad Prince, Mark Hayes. Spirituals are fun and I don't know how many are arranged just for women's choir.

Administrative/Colleague Support:  

Nancy: ...Our Christmas parade...I think I am just gonna do the float idea for now just because there is so many other things going on. I just don’t feel like I can get them outside enough to really get somewhere. There is not a good place at the elementary school for them to march, really. Maybe up a side street but then recess is going on outside. I don’t know, so, for now I think that is what I will do.

Karen: Okay, that is probably a good idea. I think you can kind of think about it for next year.

Nancy: Yeah, when I talked to the principal he said whatever you want to do is fine. [laugh] I was like, okay. That makes me feel good.
Karen: I still need to get you in touch with 3 directors but I have not heard back from all of them yet. One may have some really good suggestions for Christmas programs too.

Nancy: That would be good

Karen: She is the one in Neinburg so if you get something from Neinburg, that is her. She has been doing K through 12 vocal instrumentals for a long time and really likes it and is really good at it.

Nancy: That's a big complement. [laughing] Likes it and is good at it. That is like wow, someday [laughing]

Nancy: I got your emails from those and I haven't contacted those other directors yet, but I will and appreciate that. That is going to help. I will probably ask, was it the director at Mayberry to ask about the elementary music?

Karen: She has the SSA choir tunes and things like that.

Nancy: At Mayberry?
Karen: Yes, the elementary music

Nancy: Kathy Flower at Neinburg is one?

Karen: She is the one who does K-12.

Nancy: So she will have ideas on that

Karen: Yeah

Nancy: Okay. I will fully make it point to contact her next week before I talk to you and then that’ll kind of give me a good idea of what we are looking at together if we get some music online.

Karen: Okay. I have been asking around and trying to get some ideas to pass along to you so I'll get that together.

Nancy: Great.
Karen: . . . the director who I recommended to you helped me out when I came here as a choir director. I had not taught high school choir before and I ran into her at a choir convention, I think it was ACDA [American Choral Directors Association], and I was complaining about not knowing the
literature. She said I have taught choirs your size. I have some good ideas and I will send you a list. It was a lifesaver. Everything I used on that list was a winner.

Nancy: Okay

Karen: She will be able to help you a lot.

Instructional materials: RVM session four 01:14:52

Karen: What kind of a repertoire do you have as far as warm-ups?

Nancy: I just sing different warm-ups with them and then talk technique. Let's see, articulation warm-ups like Zing A Momma, Double Bubble Gum, Red Leather, Yellow Leather and things like that. Also some melismatic things and things with octave jumps just modulating up by half steps and them making sure I warm them down. Do you have any other warm-ups?

Karen: There is a terrific book that we used a few years ago. [Karen steps away from computer to get the book and holds it up to the computer cam for Nancy to see] It is called The Complete Choral Warm-up Book [holding up book]. It is hard for me to figure out if you can see it.

Nancy: That is good. Okay
Karen: It is a whole collection of everything you might ever want to use, such as, intervals, melodic, articulation, and intonation. It is a really handy work. It has lots of ways you can use it. It is an Alfred Publication.

Nancy: Everything I do now is just what I have been taught by rote.

Karen: ... there are rounds and all kinds of stuff.

Nancy: Okay

Facilities and logistics: RVM session Six 00:11:09

Nancy: I am going to bring them over a bus at a time and, I am hoping that, it is really only about two minutes between schools, but I hope that does not string it out too much with getting them there and in place. I think that is what the principal kind of liked so I am going to do it this way. She was thinking about buses and bus drivers and that was her best situation and I can work with that. I left forty-five minutes for that rehearsal but I think at least half of that is going to be practicing how to get them on the risers and off and practicing how they are doing that. They only have their three songs and so I will get through the songs as much as I can. We have been practicing standing and singing and knowing the words in here [classroom]. If I could just get them standing on the risers, how do I stand on the riser and how do I
get off and in and out, I think that is the biggest part. Hopefully then we can get through the songs as many times as I can, as many reps as I can and out the door. Then grades three, four, five comes after the forty-five minutes and are there for an hour. An hour is really most of the time I could even get because they [teachers] wanted to send them over right after the last lunch shift, after they have already eaten. We can't take them in the morning because they have important reading stuff and I understand that. We have to wait...and then we take them over and that only leaves, with all the transition... really an hour for the third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade choir. ... As long as I can get them all there and in the right place and up and down off the risers, I don't know if that's the right way to think about it, right?

Karen: Yeah

Nancy: ... get them used to what they need to do in the gym and then do the music because you've been practicing the music

Karen: ... because anytime you do something that is new, they are going to be very distractible, excited and rowdy. Get them used to the routine and they will be fine.
Vita

Dr. Kenneth C. Jeffs was born November 18, 1952 in St. Louis County, Missouri. Upon graduation in 1971 from Lafayette High School, Ellisville, Missouri, he began studies in church music at Missouri Baptist College, St. Louis, Missouri. He transferred to the University of Missouri, St. Louis in 1975 and received a B.M.E. in 1978. Dr. Jeffs was conferred an M.M. in choral performance from Southwest Missouri State University in 1998. He went on to earn a Ph.D. in Learning, Teaching and Curriculum with an Emphasis in Choral Music Education from the University of Missouri (2016). As a public school teacher, he taught vocal music education at Salem High School in Salem, Missouri for eighteen years. In 1998 Kenneth Jeffs joined the Parkway School District music faculty as choral director at Parkway Central Middle School and Director of Choral Activities at Parkway Central High School, Chesterfield, Missouri. In 2007, he began his doctoral studies at the University of Missouri and served as graduate instructor in music education. While there he also conducted the University Men’s Chorus. Dr. Jeffs is currently serving as an adjunct professor for Lindenwood University, Missouri Baptist University, and Missouri State University. His teaching responsibilities include music education methods, composition and arranging, and the directorship of the Lindenwood University Men’s Chorus. He is married to Karen Curtis Jeffs and they have one daughter, Kimberly.