

Principals Supporting Aspiring Principals Whilst Attending a Development Programme

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ABSTRACT

In New Zealand in 2007 the National Aspiring Principals Pilot (NAPP) was designed to provide professional learning for aspirant principals in an attempt to prepare them for principalship. As part of selection for the programme the applicant needed a recommendation from their principal outlining commitment for support throughout the programme. The establishment of a supportive learning context in the participant's own school was seen as a vital element of effective development and the aspirant's principal was important to that support. The purpose of this study was to investigate a retrospective view of the role of the principal's support for aspiring principals whilst they were attending NAPP development programme and to suggest how such support could be enhanced.

In this qualitative study 60 aspirants took part in a self-completion questionnaire. Attached to the questionnaire was a request for a show of interest in a later interview and from the seven who responded, three were randomly selected to take part in an individual semi-structured interview. Their three principals were also interviewed.

The findings revealed eight significant issues which impacted on the success of the support received by aspirants, from their principals, while on the NAPP. The issues were: the existing good relationship between the aspirant and the principal; the suitability of the principal for the role; respect for the principal as a role model; understanding of mentoring or training for principal role; principal support for development generally; principal ability to both challenge aspirant and mentor them for difficult conversations; time for mentoring and availability of principal, effective mentoring process overall. The quality of the relationship between the aspirant and the principal emerged as a major catalyst for the success of the mentoring relationship.

The relationship and the respect held for the principal as an educational leader, appeared to determine how successful the programme was perceived to be, and whether it resulted in aspirants feeling they had been supported to grow in their

leadership roles. Therefore high on the list of recommendations for future programmes is a consideration of screening principals for their suitability to mentor aspirants on a programme such as the NAPP, and that only experienced and successful principals be accepted as mentors.

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CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Prior to 2007 there was no nationally funded aspiring principal development programme in New Zealand and indeed prior to the mid 1990s there was little importance placed on development programmes for principals outside the United States (Sentocnik & Rugar, 2009). In New Zealand in 2007 the National Aspiring Principals Pilot (NAPP) was designed to provide professional learning for aspirant principals in an attempt to prepare them for principalship. As part of selection for the programme the applicant needed a recommendation from their principal outlining commitment for support throughout the programme. While the programme was facilitated by an external provider of leadership development it also supported the inclusion of internal, school, context-based experiences to consolidate leadership development. The establishment of a supportive learning context in the participant's own school was therefore seen as a vital element of effective development and the aspirant's principal was important for that support. Research by Barnett and O'Mahony (2008) and Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2006) also suggests that the support of the principal is crucial for enhancing the preparation of aspirants for principalship.

The NAPP evaluation (Piggot-Irvine, Bruce Ferguson, & Youngs, 2008-2009; Piggot-Irvine & Youngs, 2011) identified gaps and areas for improvement in the programme and of particular interest to this study was an issue in the results concerning the variation of support from principals for aspirants. A distinctive finding in the NAPP evaluation was that when the principal both encouraged aspirants to apply for the NAPP and also supported them throughout the programme, those participants found the programme more relevant and were more likely to effectively apply the NAPP curriculum to their school. This finding is similar to research completed by Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2006) who found that some aspirants linked the success of their preparation for principalship to the ongoing support received from their principal.

The focus of the study reported in this thesis was primarily on the role of the principal in supporting aspirants on programmes such as the NAPP. Grogan and Crow (2004) suggest that for an aspirant to move into the role of principal, the socialisation that mentoring provides helps transform them into leaders. Research by Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2006) and Timperley, Wilson, Barrar and Fung (2007) states that aspirants need to be mentored by their principals in order to effectively develop their leadership skills and aspirants in the NAPP depended on their principals to fulfil the role of mentor. Consequently how aspirants viewed being assigned their principal as their mentor, and how effective this mentoring role was in relation to them feeling supported, was explored in this thesis.

It was suggested by aspirants in the NAPP evaluation that there be an initial combined meeting with principals and aspirants to establish clear expectations of the principal's role in order to enhance principal support. Feedback from aspirants in the NAPP evaluation suggested that those principals who had a good understanding of their role in the NAPP also understood the aspirant's role. Part of this study in this thesis investigated aspirants' perceptions of what those expectations could be and opinions were sought on how to improve the support provided by their principals. Their principals' perceptions of how they viewed their support role during the NAPP were also examined.

Therefore the overall purpose in this thesis was to investigate a retrospective view of the role of the principal's support for aspiring principals whilst they were attending a development programme and to suggest how such support could be enhanced.

RESEARCH AIM

To investigate the role of the principal's support for aspiring principals whilst they are attending a development programme.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What principal support was utilised in aspiring principal development in New Zealand in the NAPP?
2. Four years post-programme, what are the NAPP participant's perceptions of how principal support could have been increased?
3. What are their principal's perceptions of how they could have provided enhanced support?
4. What are the implications for principal support for future aspiring principal programmes in New Zealand?

AN OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Chapter One has presented an overview of this research project, a rationale that justifies the study and an outline of the research aims and questions.

Chapter Two presents a literature review that critically evaluates the literature relevant to the study. The key areas reviewed were: the changing role of the principal in New Zealand; leadership mentoring programmes both for principals and aspiring principals; mentoring in leadership programmes; the role of the mentor and the issues associated with mentoring.

The research methodology and design are examined in Chapter Three. I have justified the reasons for selecting a qualitative methodology and for using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as the two data collection methods. Sampling and data analysis are discussed, as well as reliability and validity in research, and the implications of ethical considerations are outlined.

Chapter Four describes and analyses details of the data that was collected. First the findings from the questionnaires are presented and then the findings from the semi-structured interviews.

In Chapter Five this data is then used to draw conclusions that are related to the research questions and the eight themes that emerged. The relationship between the research questions, the themes, the data collected and the literature are discussed.

Chapter Six concludes this study with an overall summary of the findings, a brief overview of the limitations of the research, and final recommendations for further research with are related to the eight themes that emerged from the findings.

CHAPTER TWO : LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this literature review overall is to discuss the role of the principal in supporting aspirants on programmes such as the NAPP and to explore ways to improve this support role. To do this I will begin by looking at how the role of the principal has changed over the last fifty years in New Zealand and what current perceptions of the principal role are. I will then discuss leadership programmes generally, and then specifically leadership programmes which develop future aspiring principals both in New Zealand and overseas. This will be followed by examination of the inclusion of mentoring as a form of support on leadership development programmes. I will finish by discussing the role of experienced principals as mentors in such programmes, and how this role has been used to enhance the support for either new principals or aspiring principals in preparation for a principal position.

PRINCIPALSHIP

How principalship has changed in New Zealand over the last 50 years

Principals are educational leaders and their role is viewed by some as crucial for achieving and sustaining quality education (Blase & Blase, 2000; Sergiovanni, 2001; Southworth, 2002). The focus now on educational leadership is a shift from the prior emphasis of generic leadership and management, which is a style of leadership that can be applied to any type of business organisation, and which was prevalent in schools in the eighties and nineties (Robinson, 2006).

In the 1980s the decentralisation policy of Tomorrow's Schools (Government of New Zealand, 1989), which the Labour government derived from the 1988 Picot Report, entrusted schools with managing their own operational funds, giving them responsibility for property, personnel decisions and for staff development (Wylie, 1997). As a result, the role of the principal became wider and they were expected to

learn new business skills in order to self-manage their schools. Wylie (1997) states that the changing role of the principal, immediately post Tomorrow's Schools, could be compared to that of a manager of a business. Ramsay (1992) discusses the Picot Report, in relation to the changing role of the principal, and states that the report saw the principal mainly as the instructional leader, with an emphasis on collegial management processes, and envisioned boards buying in managerial expertise as required. However the Labour Government, with 'Tomorrows Schools', modified the original Picot recommendations and placed more focus on the managerial role of the principal and the board (Bennett, 1994). A number of research projects have examined the effects of the administrative changes on principals (Mitchell, Jefferies, McKeown, & McConnell, 1991; Ramsay, Hawk, Harold, Marriott, & Poskitt, 1990; Wylie, 1992) and the major change that emerged was the increased workload for principals. Principals felt frustrated that the extra effort had little impact on learning and teaching within the school and principals were left feeling "stretched and pressured" (Bennett, 1994, p. 38). The increased workload was seen as due to the speed of change, constant changes being made in the direction of policy, and Mitchell (1991) includes financial management tasks, consultation with the community and policy formation to this list of increased tasks for principals. Also adding to this workload was the need for the principal to educate boards, which was an ongoing task with the triennial elections and the high turnover of new members on their boards (Bennett, 1994).

To clarify this series of statements as a consequence of these changes principals had less time to spend on being effective instructional leaders, and the actual promotion of teaching and learning in schools. There was little emphasis on principals updating or expanding their knowledge of curriculum, assessment or pedagogy (Stein & Nelson, 2003). It was assumed that as experienced teachers, principals already had sufficient knowledge of teaching and much of the educational leadership was delegated to senior staff while principals focused on management (Robinson, 2006). Research shows us that this assumption may have been associated with a disadvantage because it is through having quality time and the space to have learning conversation with teachers, that effective principals can promote both reflection and promote professional growth (Blase & Blase, 2000).

On the positive side, according to Bennett (1994), the New Zealand principal, post-Picot and since Tomorrows Schools, has “emerged as a key person in the evolution of a more effective and efficient education system” (p. 43). Bennett (1994) continues by stating that while nobody would argue that the old system with its cumbersome bureaucracy needed to change, many would argue however that “the model of corporate managerialism is not well suited to education and that extensive modifications will be needed in implementing policy derived from such a model” (p. 43). This is confirmed by Firestone and Riehl (2005) who say:

in the past, educational leaders were judged routinely on their effectiveness in managing fiscal, organisational, and political conditions in their schools and school system. In essence, they were expected simply to set the stage for student learning. Now leaders are increasingly being held accountable for the actual performance of those under their charge (p. 2).

Therefore principals are not only accountable for the performance of their students, as the previous writers suggest, but also the performance of teachers, and for supporting the leadership development of aspiring principals within their schools (Timperley, et al., 2007). Bennett (1994) concludes by saying that the role of the principal, post-Picot, is not for the faint hearted and that only those with a clear vision and firm determination should apply.

Principalship today

After 15 years of the focus being on the effective management of schools, there has been a more recent shift with attention now on the role of principals as educational leaders. Educational leadership is known by a variety of terms such as the ‘leadership of teaching and learning’ (Robinson, 2006), the ‘guidance and direction of instructional improvement’ (Elmore, 2000), ‘instructional leadership’ (Southworth, 2002), and ‘curriculum leadership’ (Cardno & Collett, 2003). However Robinson (2006) informs us that while the spotlight is currently on the leadership of teaching and learning there is still a need for principals to run efficient, safe and caring

environments. This suggests that the role of a principal is now expanding to encompass not only leadership and management in a generic sense but also educational leadership in terms of leading teaching and learning within their own schools.

The literature that I have discussed demonstrates that the role of a principal is unlike any other leadership role. It is multi-dimensional and it is the combination of educational leadership, with the focus on leading teaching and learning, and generic leadership and management with its focus on business skills, which poses a challenge for future leaders. This reinforces the need for specific principal development programmes to be designed which are aimed at nurturing these skills in future leaders. Collins (2002) also reiterates that the principals' job is a complex and important one and that at all points in their careers they need to seek to learn on a continual basis. He comments on a statement made by Trevor Mallard in 2001 and says that this Minister of Education made it clear that "there are two central aspects to the present principal development problem - the ineffectiveness of many first time principals; and the need to motivate experienced principals to continue to learn"(p. 3).

PROGRAMMES FOR LEADERSHIP

Leadership development programmes

Until the last decade, few countries other than the United States paid close attention to the systematic development of school leaders (Brundrett & Dering, 2006). In many countries training was not viewed as a requirement for future principalship and the assumption was that good teachers could become effective leaders without specific training (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1996). Barnett and O'Mahony (2008) claim that recent research on leadership development shows that many countries are introducing programs which "tend to address issues related to instructional leadership, school improvement, change management and skill development" (p. 232). While it is encouraging to read that the need for leadership and management development is becoming accepted in some countries, Bush, Briggs and

Middlewood (2006) state that the 'training needs to be appropriate to meet the needs of school leaders and the wider educational system' (p. 189). The writers continue by suggesting that a mainly process-based model, set in participants' schools, may be more successful in promoting leadership learning than traditional content-based courses.

Bolam (1999) argues that leadership development programmes can be grouped into four modes:

- Knowledge for understanding;
- Knowledge for action;
- Improvement of practice; and
- Development of reflexive mode. (p. 196)

Content development programmes, such as those offered by universities, are aimed at knowledge for understanding. Each programme has a curriculum which gives an indication of topics to be included and Bush (2009) gives the example of a programme in the United States, by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, where the content is linked to the Standards for School Leaders. Bjork and Murphy (2005) claim that such programmes "tend to place greater emphasis on the application of knowledge to improve practice than on theoretical issues" (p. 14). Bolam's (1995) next two categories, 'knowledge for action' and 'improvement of practice' suggest a focus on the process rather than content. Bush (2009) suggests that this way "leaders are developed through a range of action modes and support mechanisms, often customised to the specific needs of leaders through what is increasingly referred to as personalised or individual learning" (p. 380). An action mode such as action learning, which provides for continuous learning and reflection using an experiential cycle, can contribute to leadership development through the development of the individual leader and the organisation as a whole (McGill & Beatty, 1995). This might involve mechanisms such as the support provided by individual mentoring which Pocklington and Weindling (1996) claim speeds up the process of transition to leadership.

Bush (2009) informs us that in the twenty first century the emphasis for principal development has shifted from content to process because of an emerging recognition that classroom learning, on its own, has a limited influence on leadership practice. The aforementioned researcher says that “finding an appropriate balance between content and process remains a very real challenge for those who design and those who experience, leadership and management development programmes” (p. 382). Brundrett, Fitzgerald and Sommefeldt (2006) sum this up well when they say “if school leadership courses are to be successful they must integrate the best of academic programmes and take full account of emerging research evidence; they must also reflect the unique context and characteristics of each individual principal or headteacher” (p. 102).

In New Zealand it was only when the 1998 report from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) revealed the fact that New Zealand was lagging behind its western counterparts, with no specific induction training for New Zealand principals, that the national Education Review Office (ERO) made recommendations that there be national requirements for qualifications and training for those applying for principal positions (Brundrett, et al., 2006). As a result the First Time Principals Programme was developed. Collins (2002) discusses the First Time Principals initiative, in New Zealand, which was offered initially to new principals in 2002 and included a residential programme for 14 days. It was run by experienced principals, included one-on-one mentoring, and matched experienced principals with inexperienced principals. They also received professional development related to the themes of vision and leadership, striving for excellence, and building community relationships (Collins, 2002). All of the content aimed to help principals focus more effectively on lifting the quality of teaching and learning in their schools (Southworth, 2001).

The First Time Principals’ Programme is now in its ninth year and has evolved into an 18 month induction programme designed to promote deep learning for novice principals (Palmer, 2007). The specific mentoring component of the programme has

been enhanced in response to ongoing evaluation findings and is designed to “support and challenge each first-time principal to develop their capability and thereby improve their performance as the leader of learning in a learning school” (Palmer, 2007, p. 1). There is personal benefit and satisfaction for both members of the partnership and only proven successful principals are accepted for the role of mentor in the programme.

Moving beyond principal development, Bush (2009) claims that it is no longer appropriate for school leaders to be only qualified for the very different job of classroom teacher. Hence the need for programmes which develop future aspiring principals. While Collins (2002) agreed that the First Time Principals initiative would improve principal retention he believed it would have minimal impact on enhancing principal recruitment. One way of addressing this, says Collins (2002), is by achieving a ‘comprehensive and multi-faceted programme of principal development and it was suggested that New Zealand should consider introducing a pre-principal training initiative similar to the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) in England’ (p. 4). Barnett and O’Mahony (2008) discuss the international trends in leadership development and the growing recognition of providing support for aspiring school leaders, as does Huber (2004) who describes preparation programmes for aspiring school principals as having become a global enterprise. It is this area of New Zealand aspiring principal development that I will discuss next.

Development Programmes

There is a view that successful programmes for developing future principals should include context-based support (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2006; Cowie & Crawford, 2007; Fitzgerald, Gunter, & Eaton, 2006; Hill, Harvey, Harrison, & Clarke, 1999; West-Burnham & O’Sullivan, 1998). All of the latter researchers tell us that support for leadership development works best if it happens, or is at least practised, within the school setting. Such an approach provides future leaders with the opportunity to practise the skills that the job demands, in preparation for the leadership and management issues they are likely to face on appointment (Cowie & Crawford, 2007). This view is also supported by Bush and Glover (2003) who say that the

inclusion of a context-based approach is underpinned by a philosophy that links leadership development to personal and professional learning. In this situation the role of the aspirant's principal is a vital component of context-based support.

The NAPP programme conducted in 2007-2008 was part of the wider government and New Zealand Ministry of Education policy priority to strengthen professional leadership in schools and the evaluation of the pilot programme was to be used to inform future work aimed at developing aspiring principals. Optional mentoring by and shadowing of an experienced principal, or the aspirants' own principal, was one of the approaches to be adopted to engage aspirants in a diverse learning experience. The evaluation of the NAPP programme identified the need for greater principal support for aspirants who were involved in the programme, with a stronger emphasis to be placed on the management roles of principals (Piggot-Irvine, Bruce Ferguson, & Youngs, 2009; Piggot-Irvine & Youngs, 2011). The evaluation revealed that the role of the principal before and during NAPP influenced the impact of the programme and that principals who understood their role in the programme also understood the participants' role. This reinforces the need for principals to be actively involved in a programme such as the NAPP in order to be able to offer appropriate support to their aspiring principals. The findings also support previous research on the need for aspirants to be mentored or supported by their principals in order to effectively develop their leadership skills (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2006; Timperley, et al., 2007).

MENTORING

The inclusion of mentoring in leadership development programmes

In context-based programmes there is opportunity for the principal to actively support the professional development of the aspirant as they practise their leadership skills. Timperley, Wilson, Barrar and Fung (2007) claim that this is a crucial role for school leaders. The writers continue by stating that having the opportunity to discuss and share theories of practice, and the implications of this

with someone more expert, leads to a deepening of professional understandings and skills for aspiring principals

Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2006) add that 'leadership mentoring and situated learning are important components in the effective preparation of candidates for school principalships' (p. 275). Participants in a case study by Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2004) cited encouragement from, and support by, their principals as the most important influence in their learning engagements. Another study in 2006 conducted by the previous researchers found that some aspirants linked their readiness for principalship to the leadership opportunities provided by their principals, as well as the regular interactive conversations that took place on their leadership performance. The link between Browne-Ferrigno and Muth's (2006) findings on aspirants' perceptions of their readiness for principalship and the support received by their principal, is also mirrored in the findings of the NAPP programme evaluation.

Studies discussed by Grogan and Crow (2004) suggest that "for an aspirant to move into the role of principal, the socialisation that mentoring provides helps transform the teacher into a potential administrator" (p. 464). Socialising, in this instance, is referring to the support given by the mentor to the aspirant, through discussion and reflection on practice within a real context, which assists the development of the aspirant's role as a leader. Further Riley (2009) claims that it is the process of mentoring which takes students from rich theory to expert practice.

Lauder (2000) comments on a trend in principal preparation programmes in the USA is the inclusion of a trained mentor to support each participant. It is reflective practice with a trusted mentor which gives participants the opportunity to gain insight into ways to improve their future experiences (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993). The value of mentoring was also highlighted in the NAPP evaluation (Piggot-Irvine, et al., 2009). The questionnaire given to participants in the evaluation rated the effectiveness of mentors/coaches as 3.87 on a 0-5 scale and noted "that coaches had contributed an enormous amount through their sharing of their knowledge and

experience with aspirants” (p. 177). While many aspirants in the NAPP evaluation found their principals to be supportive, there were aspirants who expressed a degree of frustration with the lack of communication with their principals “which suggests that principals could have played a more vital role in the profession development of their colleagues” (p. 177). Ideas that were offered by aspirants to enhance principal support included having a combined session with principals and NAPP participants, where clear expectations of the principal’s role would be established, and also inviting principals to a residential session.

Lashway (2003) supports the strategy of building a connection between theory and practice in aspiring principal programmes by having aspirants work collaboratively with practitioners, and by using mentoring to support the aspirant. However for mentoring to be successful Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2006) say that mentoring principals need to be effective in their own practice, skilled at providing aspirants with appropriate levels of oversight and independence, and most importantly they need to be fully committed to supporting their aspiring principals. This would suggest that principals too need guidance on how to best support their aspiring principals.

The role of experienced principals as mentors

Daresh (2004) states that principals need to become more active in the development and maintenance of mentoring programmes for inexperienced colleagues. The writer found in his study that mentoring appeared to occur spasmodically and stated that “effective mentoring requires that both partners in the interactive process—mentors and protégés—would be ready to engage in this teaching and learning activity” (p. 512). While the writer’s focus here was mainly on experienced principals mentoring new principals, the same could be said for experienced principals mentoring participants in principal preparation programmes. Well designed programmes for aspiring principals should provide opportunities for aspirants to apply acquired new knowledge in authentic practice and also the opportunity to reflect and discuss those experiences with a mentor (Muth, 2002). Robertson (2009) agrees that leadership learning requires a context that encourages dialogue about the learning experience but says it is important to note that spaces for effective adult leadership learning do

not just happen. “Research has shown that educational leaders do not necessarily have the required skills or theoretical frameworks or the time or the experience to be able to design effective professional learning spaces, for reflection on practice to occur” (p. 42). I will now discuss issues concerning mentoring, that is mentor selection, mentoring relationships, sufficient time for mentoring, and training.

Mentor selection

Daresh (2004) found that principals who were selected for mentoring beginning principals, as part of mandated mentoring programmes in the USA, were often chosen purely on seniority and with no form of training provided. He noted that “often selection had been based on availability rather than quality” (p. 510). The latter could be a concern for aspirants in programmes such as the NAPP, who are relying on their own principal to mentor them while they are preparing themselves for future principalship. Reyes (2003) claims that while many universities do not require that aspiring principals work with qualified mentors, the consequence of this not taking place is a weak link in the principal preparation process. Hansford and Ehrich (2006) argue that an inexperienced principal cannot be described as a supportive mentor but more as peer support. This would suggest that an inexperienced principal, as a mentor, would also contribute to the weak link previously mentioned in principal preparation programmes. This has implications for those who take on the responsibility for initiating mentoring programmes in terms of the way that mentors are firstly selected and then later prepared to develop as effective mentors (Daresh, 2004).

Research, discussed by Reyes (2003), on the selection of principal mentors in the University of Houston and the Houston Independent School District in 1999, identifies the process used by one institution in choosing suitable principals as mentors. They decided to recruit principal mentors who would guide aspiring principals by sending out a call to nearly 300 principals in the district. Thirty five of those principals applied for the 20 principal mentoring positions available. Principals, who were self-nominated and who were approved by 13 area superintendents, were invited to send in applications, resumes and portfolios. These applications went

before a committee made up of university representatives and central office administrators. The committee then selected 20 aspiring principals (the intended protégés), from a pool of 150, and asked them to review the material and rank the principal mentors on a scale of 1-5. Reyes (2003) believes this is a good example of how organisations can be more selective in identifying dynamic mentor principals to guide aspiring principals. Unfortunately while the research describes the process it does not discuss the criteria used for selection.

Crow (2001) also identifies the issue of mentor selection and describes it as a crucial part of a mentoring programme. He expands by stating the importance of the match between the mentor and the protégée, and also the training provided for the mentor. He lists the following four characteristics of effective mentors which need to be considered when selecting a mentor:

1. The school leader needs to have the respect of other school leaders, otherwise they are not likely to be able to advance the aspirants career;
2. They need to be committed to mentoring and their own development as a mentor;
3. They need the ability to encourage reflective practice and model it themselves; and
4. There also needs to be sufficient time for mentoring.

Crow (2001) is therefore suggesting that it is vital to select a mentor who is an experienced and respected leader in their own field, who is prepared to commit the time to effectively mentor a protégée, and who believes in the value of reflective practice. Recommendations in the NAPP evaluation (Piggot-Irvine, et al., 2009) note the need for greater inclusion of the host principal (the mentor) at an initial meeting so that a shared understanding of the programme is formed, and that expectations and roles are made clear. The outcomes are intended to be greater engagement of principal support throughout the programme via extensive early communication in order to engage the principal mentor support for the aspirant. In keeping with this, Grogan and Crow (2004) suggest to us that that “mentoring would more likely be successful if the parties knew better what was expected of them” (p. 465). Mentoring expectations are referred to again in the next section.

Mentoring relationships

Just as Crow (2001) mentioned the importance of the match between the mentor and the protégée, Barnett and O'Mahony (2008) also discuss the importance of the relationship between the two. They state that for the mentoring relationship to be successful there needs to be a strong relationship between the two partners. For a strong relationship to emerge there needs to be: a view of the mentor as a good role model in their field; respect; honesty and trust; a sharing of different perspectives; an ability to view problems as learning opportunities; good communication; emotional support and an agreement of goals (Bloom, Castagna, Moir, & Warren, 2005; Hodges, 2009). Neary (2000) goes as far to say that the personal qualities of the mentor is the key to effective mentorship. However Cesa and Fraser (1989) believe that while a good mentor-protégé relationship is determined partially by the initial choice, they believe it can be strengthened if both parties are aware of each other's changing needs, and have the flexibility to accommodate these needs. The suggestion that the initial choice of mentor selection is only part of the equation for a successful mentoring relationship is also discussed by Walker and Stott (1993) in the later section on training.

It can be too easy to apportion blame when a mentoring relationship is failing and thorough exploration of the issues needs to be explored to try and resolve differences. This requires "empowering ... by creating equilibrium in the relationship". (Hodges, 2009, p. 35). The writer continues by saying it needs to be acknowledged that mentorship is a reciprocal process and the protégée also needs to engage in the relationship to create a partnership. While the writer claims there is extensive literature on protégée expectations of the mentor there has been little written about what mentors expect from their protégées. This is an area that Hodges (2009) believes should be addressed as it contributes to the lack of clarity for protégées about what is expected of them. One sided expectations can cause an unnecessary burden for the mentor in the relationship and Neary (2002) suggests setting up a learning contract that allows for the negotiation of goals and clarifies the expectations and responsibilities of the learner and the mentor.

Price (2002) presents another view point on the mentoring relationship and suggests it need not always be harmonious, “it can be useful to have disagreement because it can help each party to reflect on situations; demonstrating anger, boredom or sympathy can lead to a more honest, strengthened relationship” (p. 42). However this would not work for everyone and Charnock (1993) suggests that if the conflict is unresolved the protégée should be allowed to change to another mentor. This could prove difficult for aspirants who are relying on their own school principals to mentor them.

Having time is an essential component in a mentoring relationship (Neary, 2002) and neither mentor or mentee should make excessive demands. With this in mind however Jackson (2005) claims one way that mentors can demonstrate their commitment to making the relationship work is by arranging specific times to meet and by preparing an agenda.

Sufficient time for mentoring

A study by Bolam and McMahon (1995) indicated that finding sufficient time for mentoring was cited by both mentors and their protégées as one of the major problems of a mentoring scheme. Research by Hansford and Ehrich (2006) and Reyes (2003) also found that mentors had difficulty devoting sufficient time to the demands of a mentoring role. With regards to planning a mentoring programme, one of the suggestions made by Sullivan-Brown (2002) is that consideration be given to how the programme structures time and space for mentoring interactions to take place. Riley (2009) discusses the issue of time, in relation to developing a mentoring programme, and describes it as ‘time limitation’. The writer suggests that with both the mentor and the protégée being busy people, it is vital that time be well spent and that the mentoring process begins and progresses with the end in mind. He suggests that “this knowledge generates an underlying sense of the importance of progression. As the time together is limited, it should not be wasted by either party” (p. 237). Later when I discuss difficult conversations I will refer to Riley (2009) again and how the researcher claims these can also be affected by the issue of time limitation.

Training

While the selection and match presents a problem for aspirants in a programme such as the NAPP, the training of the principal as a mentor could be addressed. Walker and Stott (1993) actually argue that while the selection of a mentor is important, the training of the mentor is even more important to the success of the mentoring relationship. Crow (2001) recommends that “mentor training should prepare mentors to assess the quality of the mentee’s experience and to use that assessment to create more effective learning opportunities” (p. 12). The mentoring process is about growth, not cloning, and mentors need to be skilled in helping aspirants gain insights into trends, issues, and social realities that go beyond existing practice (Daresh, 2004). According to Reyes (2003) mentors need to be skilled in “providing support through advice, guidance, practical applications, listening, and reflection” (p. 46). Crow and Matthews (1998) add to this list and include the ability to develop leaders who can be creative risk takers with confidence and competence, and the ability to be reflective.

Difficult conversations

While mentoring conversations are relatively easy when all is going well, mentors need specific skill training in managing difficult conversations so that they are prepared when difficult situations arise (Riley, 2009). Riley notes that difficult conversations, such as those that involve some form of embarrassment, “are difficult to begin, and the protagonists often find it easier to skirt around rather than directly address the central issue” (p. 238). The avoidance of having difficult conversations, and therefore not dealing effectively with problems, is described by Argyris (1990) as part of defensive reasoning. “Defensive reasoning is concerned with blocking information which we personally feel will create unpleasantness or lessen our control of a situation” (Cardno, 1998, p. 3). Two of the strategies used for defensive reasoning are giving indirect or mixed messages, or cloaking negative feedback with a positive opener in order to avoid unpleasantness.

For mentoring in difficult conversations to be effective the mentor needs to develop strategies for using productive reasoning. The purpose of productive reasoning is to build trust in the relationship by discussing the issues honestly and with a view to jointly solving the problem. It is “concerned with generating information in an effort to increase the possibility of critical reflection-in-action” (Cardno, 1998, p. 3). Cardno (1998) defines reflection-in-action as being able to think about what we are doing while we are doing it and being able to change actions mid-way through a performance. Four strategies the previous researcher suggests the mentor adopts, to help promote productive reasoning are checking assumptions, being forthright, disclosing the reasoning, and asking questions as genuine inquiry. However Piggot-Irvine (2010) does say that not only are defensive routines an anti-learning response they are also “deeply conditioned and therefore extremely difficult to change” (p. 316). This would suggest that professional development on productive reasoning should be included in the mentor training programme for experienced principals, in preparation for effectively mentoring aspirants.

An action research project by the Auckland Maungakiekie Principals Group, and researcher Piggot-Irvine (Piggot-Irvine, et al., 2011), outlines the learning journey the group went through to explore how to improve the way they addressed problems with staff. The principals confirmed that from their own experience dealing with staff issues and having difficult conversations was often left in the too hard basket. After exploring what the literature had to say on addressing problems with staff, which included reference to the research of Robinson (2002) on learning conversations, and research by Argyris (1991), Cardno and Piggot Irvine (1996), Piggot Irvine and Doyle (2010) on productive dialogue, the principals then spent some time reflecting on what the literature had to say about overcoming defensiveness and being more productive by engaging in productive dialogue. They followed this up by practising having these dialogue-based conversations. The following shows the type of steps, based on the work of Argyris (1991), that the researcher and principals (Piggot-Irvine, et al., 2011) used for addressing an issue:

- Preparation for the conversation (gathering evidence, negotiating uninterrupted time etc);

- Advocacy (stating the concern clearly using evidence and revealing reasoning but taking care to have little 'easing in' or introductory unrelated chat);
- Inquiry (allowing responses from the other person, mutually checking assumptions- staying low on the ladder of inference- getting reactions, inviting challenge/encouraging others views, summarising key understandings and continually checking understanding);
- Mutually agreeing on the situation;
- Joint solution generation and identification of priorities;
- Planning for improvement/change; and
- Monitoring of improvement- following through/follow-up and support identification (p.10).

This process could be used with principals in preparation for them to effectively mentor aspirants for having difficult conversations.

The subject of difficult conversations also leads back to the issue of time limitation, previously discussed by Riley (2009), who claims that often a difficult disclosure is made in the last five minutes of a meeting, due to the anxiety associated with the meeting finishing, overriding the anxiety of feeling embarrassed. Another issue identified by Riley (2009) as affecting the outcome of difficult conversations, is the level of trust afforded to the mentor, and also whether the mentor can hold back on making judgments while the protégé works through an issue. "Trust, and therefore judgements, determines the strength of the working alliance that can be formed between the mentor and protégé" (p. 238). Riley concludes by saying that principals found this aspect of mentoring training particularly challenging. Adopting a non-judgmental stance, when principals are used to making judgments in their own roles, requires specific training and practice. Stowers and Barker (2010) maintain that mentoring does not involve telling people what to do but it does require a relationship built on honesty and trust.

While the afore-mentioned literature has focused on what training is necessary in order to be an effective mentor, Daresh (2001) does say that there are principals who do not have the characteristics to be good mentors. Daresh (2001) does not expand on these characteristics, however previous literature suggests that principals need to be honest and trustworthy (Stowers & Barker, 2010), highly respected by their colleagues and committed to the mentoring process (Crow, 2001), and non-judgmental (Riley, 2009). Previous discussion of Cardno's (1998) work on the use of productive reasoning in order to gain trust and successfully conduct difficult conversations, also implies that principals need to be open to checking assumptions, willing to seek and give valid information, and also have the confidence to share control and solutions with the person they are mentoring.

LITERATURE REVIEW CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have reviewed the changing role of the principal in New Zealand, leadership development programmes, both for principals and aspiring principals, mentoring in leadership programmes, the role of a mentor and the issues associated with mentoring. While Daresh (2001) claims that the foundation for a good mentoring relationship is a good match, and aspirants in the NAPP programme depended on their principals to fulfil this role regardless of considering the match, what needs to be explored is how effective this mentoring role was and how it could have been enhanced. I am suggesting that there is gap in the research on how protégées view the issue of being simply assigned mentors and the affect this has on the success of the mentoring relationship. Therefore a focus of my research is to address this gap.

In the next chapter I will discuss the rationale and justification for choosing a qualitative methodology for data collection and analysis for this study and two methods of investigation will be introduced.

CHAPTER THREE : METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines and justifies the choice of qualitative methodology to investigate the role of principals in supporting aspirants who were on the NAPP and to suggest how this support could have been enhanced. Questionnaires and interviews are discussed as my chosen data collecting methods alongside sampling and data analysis. Reliability and validity in the research are explored and the implications of ethical considerations are outlined.

METHODOLOGY

I will briefly discuss both the qualitative and quantitative approach to research in order to justifying the methodology I have chosen. “Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied...they seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 10). In contrast to this, the quantitative researcher focuses on “measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes...their work is done within a value-free framework” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 10). This latter approach considers that the research should be value-free with the researcher’s values having no place at all. The researcher’s role is to observe and measure, with steps in place to keep the researcher from contaminating the data through personal involvement with the research subjects and to limit them making any theoretical assumptions (Davidson & Tolich, 2003).

My research questions required me to gain considered, long term, reflections from aspirants and selected principals and therefore provide me with rich data and an insight into the long term effect of the support they received from their principals during the programme. I also needed to draw meaning from their experiences, all of which led me to selecting a qualitative approach.

The qualitative research took the form of a single case study as my research focused on a single community (Bryman, 2008), the community being ex-NAPP aspirants and their principals. Adding to this concept of a single community is Merriam's (1998) definition of a case study which he likens to a single entity, around which there are boundaries. One aspect of this is having a limited number of respondents. If there is no end to the number of people who could be interviewed, Merriam (1998) tells us that the "the phenomenon is not bounded enough to qualify as a case" (p. 27). My research was focused purely on collecting data from ex-NAPP aspirants and their principals, which did limit the data collection and therefore qualified as a case study. Coupled with this is further discussion from Merriam who claims that "the decision to focus on qualitative case studies stems from the fact that this design is chosen precisely because researchers are interested in insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing" (p. 29). In this study I was interested in how the aspirants viewed the support they received from their principals during the NAPP and also their perceptions on how that support could have been enhanced.

RESEARCH METHODS

The two qualitative data gathering methods that I chose to use were questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

Questionnaires

The questionnaire was piloted with a deputy principal and an assistant principal, who were not part of NAPP, in order to check for clarity as suggested by Hinds (2000). Questionnaires were chosen because, according to Hinds (2000), they are an ideal way of gathering information from large numbers over a relatively large geographical area, they are ideal for studying particular groups and also where barriers such as language and literacy are not an issue. It was believed that this would not be an issue for the aspirants who would complete the questionnaire in this study. An electronic self-completion questionnaire (Appendix 1) was created which included a rating scale for responses with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 6 strongly agree. Comment boxes were also added to most questions for further responses. I chose to use a horizontal format, as opposed to vertical, because it would have taken up too

much space on the questionnaires. The Likert scale provided answers for closed questions which are easier to code, and the comment boxes allowed for open question responses. The inclusion of open questions in the questionnaire did allow for aspirants to insert their own views and opinions. There were 23 questions in total in the questionnaire in this study. There were 10 closed questions which required using a rating scale to provide an answer and nine of these closed questions also had a comment box after them. The final four questions were open and required a response in a comment box.

Sampling for questionnaires

In terms of the sample, questionnaires were sent to 129 of the 180 aspirants who had been involved in the NAPP in 2007. This is called purposive sampling which Bryman (2008) defines as the researcher sampling “on the basis of wanting to interview people who are relevant to the research question” (p. 458). Since it had been four years since the programme completion it was not possible to make email contact with all of the aspirants who were originally listed on the programme.

The questionnaires were issued three times. The first time the questionnaire was sent out there were 43 responses, the second time another 10 were completed and after a carefully worded plea for more I received a total of 60 completed questionnaires. Attached to the questionnaire there was also a request for a show of interest in a later interview and included was the possibility of interviewing their principal too. The aim was to randomly select from the responses three aspirants for a semi-structured interview and also their original three principals. Random sampling is defined by Bryman (2008) as sampling where the inclusion of a unit of population occurs entirely by chance. From the 60 completed questionnaires seven aspirants indicated they would be interested in an interview at a later date. From this seven I randomly asked my principal to choose three from a hat.

Data Analysis For Questionnaires

The closed questions, which were a response to a Likert scale, were easy to code with the codes being derived from the fixed choice answers on the actual questionnaire (Bryman, 2008). Comments in the open questions were coded for key words and themes that emerged. This process of coding is described by Lofland and Lofland (1995) as generating an index of terms that will help in relation to interpreting and theorising about the data. From here codes were reviewed by reading over the responses and checking to see if there were two or more words that described the same phenomenon. Consideration was taken for changing codes to concepts and categories shown in existing literature, if they fitted. Therefore it was expected that initial codes would most likely change into more selective coding, in order to lead to conclusions which fulfilled the study aims and answered the research questions. This is described by Charmaz (2006) as moving from initial coding, where the codes are usually more numerous and varied, to focused or selective coding which tends to knit the data together in chunks.

Semi-Structured Interviews

One to one semi-structured interviews were chosen, which Fontana and Frey (2005) describe as an “individual, face-to-face interchange” (p. 698). By conducting individual, semi-structured, interviews with three aspirants and their principals, I was able to build on initial responses to my set questionnaire questions by following up with extra questions. This gave me a deeper insight into their thinking beyond the initial set questions. A purely structured interview could have possibly left me with a similar result as the questionnaires, where I could still have had questions that needed answers, as opposed to a semi-structured interview which gave me the flexibility to go more in-depth to address specific issues as they appeared. Bryman (2008) states “there is a growing tendency for semi-structured and un-structured interviewing to be referred to collectively as in-depth interviews or as qualitative interviews” (p. 438).

Telephone interviews were conducted due to the participants living some distance away. Bearing in mind Hinds (2000) discussion of the importance of the setting for the interview, participants choose whether to be interviewed at work or home. The belief here was that participants would be more relaxed if they chose their own environment and more likely to engage in the interview. In-depth knowledge was sought, which required rich detailed answers-an important outcome note by Bryman- (2008) and therefore an hour was allowed for each interview. Interviews were taped, which Bryman (2008) maintains “opens up the data to public scrutiny... and therefore helps to counter accusations that an analysis might have been influenced by a researcher’s values or biases” (p. 451). Recording the interview subsequently gave a correct account of what had been said and helped to minimise problems of bias that are noted by Bryman (2008) and Hinds (2000), which I will refer to again when discussing validity.

Sampling for Interviews

From the seven aspirants who expressed an interest in being interviewed, three were randomly selected by asking my own principal to draw three names from a hat. This conformed with Bryman’s (2008) definition of sampling where the inclusion of a unit of population occurs entirely by chance. I then sent letters and information sheets (appendices 4 and 6) to the aspirants’ principals requesting to interview them as well. This made a total of six interviews.

Data Analysis for Interviews

In order to analyse the data I transcribed the interviews and thematically coded the data using the themes identified in the literature and the questionnaires. Relevant quotes were extracted from the interviews and added to the information on the thematically coded sheets from the questionnaires.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability in research is concerned with issues of quality, consistency and accuracy of the research tools being used in the study. Davidson and Tolich (2003) define the issue of consistency by saying “a measure is reliable if it produces the same results when repeated at a different time, in a different place, even when used by other than the original researchers” (p. 32). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) comment on the contentious issue of attempting to apply to qualitative research the label of reliability of quantitative research and suggest that “in qualitative research reliability can be regarded as the fit between what researchers record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting being researched” (p. 149).

Cohen et al. (2007) claim that questionnaires are more reliable because they produce a more honest answer due to the anonymity of a questionnaire. However they do say it is essential to pilot questionnaires to refine their contents, wording and length as appropriate for the sample being targeted. Another word of caution from Cohen et al. (2007) on the reliability of questionnaires is associated with sampling. If the sample is too small or too big it can distort the data. My sample was originally 180 aspirants, from which 129 current email addresses were found, and from that 60 finally chose to complete the questionnaire after two reminders were sent out. This resulted in an approximate return of 47% from the 129 emails sent to aspirants, or 30% of the original 180 aspirants who participated in the programme. While Bryman (2008) states the decision around sample size is not straight forward he does claim that a large sample does not necessarily guarantee accuracy, however it does increase the likely accuracy of a sample, meaning “as sampling size increases, sampling error decreases” (p. 179).

In terms of reliability in interviews, Silverman (1993) suggests one way to control this is to have a highly structured interview with the same format, wording and questions for each respondent (cited in Cohen, et al., 2007). However the researcher also argues the importance of open ended interviews as this gives interviewees the opportunity to express their own unique view on a topic. Silverman (1993) also

suggests that reliability in interviews can be enhanced by carefully piloting the interview, making sure that each interviewee understands all the questions and in the extended use of closed questions (cited in Cohen, et al., 2007). Since semi-structured interviews were used in this study, and a range of closed questions were employed to help improve the reliability, it is acknowledged that the inclusion of impromptu questions would have affected the overall reliability to a certain extent.

Research may be reliable but not necessarily valid. Bryman (2008) defines validity as “a concern with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research...when used on its own, validity is usually taken to refer to measurement validity” (p. 700). In the questionnaires in this study, the first research method used, it was essential that all items were worded in ways which were absolutely clear to respondents and which were measurable, Bell (2007) supports such an approach. In this study using a Likert scale also assisted in assuring clarity and aided measurability. Another issue of validity with electronic questionnaires is whether those who actually complete the questionnaires do so honestly, and also whether those who do not return their questionnaires would have given the same distribution of answers as did the returnees (Cohen, et al., 2007). I had no control over these issues in this study. However Cohen et al. (2007) tells us it is possible to improve the validity of qualitative data by addressing the honesty and depth of the data achieved, the participants approached, through the objectivity of the interviewer, and the extent of triangulation. These issues I could address in this study.

Cohen et al. (2007) define triangulation as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour so that findings may be cross-checked. Triangulation was addressed in this study through the use of questionnaires and then follow-up interviews. In questionnaires, it was the choice of questions and in particular avoiding leading questions, which helped to deal with the issue of bias which has been raised by Bell (2007). However the main possible source of low validity in interviews is bias and in particular the objectivity of the interviewer (Bryman, 2008; Cohen, et al., 2007; Hinds, 2000). “In qualitative data the subjectivity of respondents, their opinions, attitudes and perspectives together

contribute to a degree of bias” (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 133). In order to minimise bias in this study, interview questions were piloted to ensure that no leading questions were used to influence the answers of the interviewees.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical concerns have traditionally revolved around the topics of informed consent, right to privacy and protection from harm (Fontana & Frey, 2005). The Unitec research ethics committee (UREC) granted ethics approval for this study in compliance with the requirements for undertaking a Master's thesis study. Overall Wilkinson (2001) says “the key topic in ethics is how we should treat others” (p. 13).

Informed consent requires that possible interviewees are given relevant information about the research, and that they understand this information before they agree to take part in the interview (Wilkinson, 2001). As noted earlier I gained informed consent from each research participant by giving detailed information about the research project, including the contribution that they would make to the research, the extent of their involvement, and also gave an assurance as to how I would address the issues of invasion of privacy and lack of harm. In order to honour the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, I gained permission from my school's kaumatua for her involvement and guidance should a Maori participant be involved in order to assist me with conducting my research in a culturally acceptable manner.

In relation to harm to participants and invasion of privacy, I assured all participants of the degree of confidentiality and pointed out that they would not be identified. The electronic questionnaires did not ask for their names and responses were anonymous. The invitation for a follow up interview was requested at the end of the questionnaire and required a separate email to be sent to me. Participants were assured that they had the right to turn down the invitation to participate in the study and that they could withdraw from the study up to one month from the collection of

the data. I also reassured them that the data would be confidential and securely locked in a cabinet.

Bell (2007) warns us when ensuring confidentiality and anonymity to be careful what it is you are promising. If promising anonymity this then implies no numbering of questionnaires to record which number applies to which respondent, which Bell (2007) therefore says means it is impossible to send out reminder letters to those who have yet to respond. In order to send out reminder emails I therefore had to send the questionnaire out to all participants again, but included an apology to those who had already responded, and explained that due to anonymity I had no idea who had already sent in their completed questionnaires.

Bryman (2008) defines harm to participants as physical harm, harmful to participant's development, loss of self-esteem, and stress. This, in turn, relates back to issues of confidentiality in ensuring that the identity of individuals is not made visible in published findings. Added to this is another problematic issue, identified by Fontana and Frey (2005), which is the researcher's involvement with the group under study. I had no involvement with any of the aspirants in the NAPP programme so this minimised the harm that could have potentially been caused by compromising confidentiality or anonymity.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed and critiqued the justification for using a qualitative approach to investigate the role of principals in supporting aspirants who were on the NAPP, and to suggest how this support could have been enhanced. The two qualitative data gathering methods, questionnaires and interviews, have been justified and outlined, with sampling and data analysis discussed. Reliability and validity in research was also discussed and the implications of ethical considerations outlined.

CHAPTER FOUR : FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings from the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews that were carried out as described in the previous chapter. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section presents the findings from the questionnaires that were completed by aspirants who participated in the 2007 NAPP. In the second section, findings from the semi-structured interviews that were conducted with three aspirants and three principals are presented and summarised.

QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

In total 60 aspirants responded to the questionnaire, out of a possible 129, with 48 (80%) completing every question of the questionnaire, and the remaining 12 answering only some questions. The findings in this section are organised around each of the 25 questions. The questions, which are noted as statements in these findings, are presented in a series of subheadings with tabulated summaries of participants' ticked likert scale responses from 1 indicating strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree. The open questions which required a comment are summarised together in relation to the themes which emerged.

The questionnaire asked aspirants to begin by stating their current leadership role. This resulted in 21 aspirants (35.6%) identifying themselves as now being in a principal role.

Aspirants understanding of the support role of principals during the NAPP programme.

Out of the 60 aspirants that responded to this question 17 commented on the principal's role as that of a mentor and included comments associated with guidance and support with the programme, meeting regularly and principals acting as a sounding board. There were also 15 comments related to the issue of time. These

ranged from time allowed for meetings with the principal for discussions, to actual release time from teaching to attend the programme, or time to complete work associated with the programme.

Aspirants were asked to rate their perception of their principal’s understanding of the level of support required for them during the programme using a likert scale as shown in Table 4.1

Table 4.1: Aspirants’ perceptions of their principals’ understanding of the level of support

Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	Rating Average	Response Count
	1.9%	15.1%	7.5%	18.9%	30.2%	26.4%	4.40	53
	(1)	(8)	(4)	(10)	(16)	(14)		

Responses to this statement show that 75.5% of aspirants believed their principals had a good understanding, to varying degrees, of the level of support that was required of them during the programme. Aspirants were asked to explain their responses and of the 53 that responded, 38 comments were positive about their principal’s understanding of the level of support required and 15 were negative. Generally these comments could be grouped under the themes of ‘time for mentoring’, and the ‘availability of the principal’. Three of the respondents with positive responses expressed their opinions in the following way on the availability of their principal for meetings and discussions:

Had many discussions and meetings with my mentor.

We had a regular time to meet and discuss relevant aspects of the programme.

He made himself available for chats and gave me time to pursue areas of need.

Comments by respondents who expressed dissatisfaction at their principals’ level of support for them during the programme, also relate to the themes of ‘time for mentoring’, and ‘availability of the principal’. Two respondents noted:

*My principal had no direct discussion with me about what I was doing.
I didn't receive any mentoring from my principal.*

Aspirants were asked to rate their perception of how well their principal took on the role of mentor, using a likert scale and their responses are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Aspirants' perceptions of how well their principal took on the role of a mentor

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Rating Average	Response Count
Rating	11.3%	17.0%	11.3%	17.0%	17.0%	26.4%	3.91	53
	(6)	(9)	(6)	(9)	(9)	(14)		

While the rating average to this question was not quite as favourable as that shown in Table 4.1, 26.4% of aspirants did however strongly agree that their principal had taken on the role of mentor well, while 11.3% strongly disagreed. Respondents who disagreed with the statement, put it down to the following factors: lack of time or availability of the principal; lack of understanding of the support role; and unsuitability for the role. The latter themes of 'understanding of mentoring for the principal role' and 'suitability of principal for the role' that emerged added to the previously noted themes of 'time for mentoring', and 'availability of the principal'.

Three of the 52 aspirants who added follow up comments cited the issue of time as a contributing factor. An example of one of these comments was:

Principal was too busy running the school to give me the time.

Another three aspirants claimed it was due to a lack of understanding by the principal of their support role. A respondent noted:

Was unaware of the requirements and always perceived me as able without support!

Three other aspirants said that their principal was new to the role and inexperienced with another two claiming their principals were unsuitable for the role. Two respondents expressed their opinions the following way:

He was a new principal himself and was still getting to grips with his own role.

He was not a good role model and was struggling with the role himself.

Of those aspirants who responded favourably to their principals taking on the role of a mentor well, availability and time to meet regularly for discussions was mentioned 14 times. Three respondents expressed their opinions in the following way:

He offered his time regularly and gave me opportunities to put in place things I learnt during the programme.

Because he was always available to talk to and communicated with me regularly.

By always being available to talk through issues, offer feedback, reflective questioning.

Aspirants were asked to rate their perception of the effectiveness of the mentoring offered by their principal, using a likert scale, with responses shown in Table 4.3

Table 4.3: Aspirants' perceptions on the effectiveness of the mentoring

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Rating Average	Response Count
Rating	9.4%	15.1 %	11.3%	18.9%	18.9%	26.4%	4.02%	53
	(5)	(8)	(6)	(10)	(10)	(14)		

This response shows that 65.2% of aspirants found the mentoring, to varying degrees, to be very effective. Comments made by aspirants who responded in this way mentioned being given feedback, guidance, being challenged yet affirmed and having a critical friend. These comments come under the themes of 'principal support for development generally' and 'effective mentoring process overall'. An example of one of these comments is:

Being delegated responsibility and offered feedback was the very best way to learn the responsibilities of principalship and to develop my own leadership style.

The values of the principal were cited in two of the 46 comments as having a positive effect on how they were mentored and another one credited the principal's experience in the role as resulting in effective mentoring. These comments relate to the theme of 'suitability of principal for role'. Here are two examples of comments that relate to this theme:

We had great discussions. He values improvement and growth, recognising the resulting improvements will benefit the school as a whole.

He has a wealth of experience (20 years a principal) and always shares and gives advice on a daily basis.

Half of the 46 comments demonstrated dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of the mentoring offered by their principal with eight of the respondents claiming that no mentoring took place. Others expressed that the mentoring was limited and one put the lack of mentoring down to the principal being of the old school. These comments relate to the theme of 'suitability of principal for role'. Two respondents expressed their opinions the following way:

Quite a bit of the programme, requirements and thinking was quite new. He is of the 'old school' and not into really wanting to know about new challenging things. I had to compensate by talking to others.

Aspirants were asked to rate their satisfaction with the amount of time set aside for meetings with their principal, with responses shown in Table 4.4

Table 4.4: Aspirants' satisfaction with the amount of time set aside for meetings

.	1	2	3	4	5	6	Rating Average	Response Count
Rating	11.3% (6)	15.1 % (8)	17.0% (9)	18.9% (10)	13.2% (7)	18.9% (13)	3.87	53

Here the rating average dropped to 3.87 indicating slightly less satisfaction with the amount of time set aside for meetings with principals, in comparison to how aspirants viewed the actual support and effectiveness of the mentoring they received. A regular theme of complaint in the follow up comments was the lack of time for meetings due to the busyness of principals and school life, interruptions from other staff, and also a general lack of interest from the principal for the meetings. Comments made referring to a lack of interest have been grouped under the theme of 'availability of the principal'. Out of the 38 respondents nine offered ideas on how the time set aside could have been improved. Three respondents suggested regular meetings to be timetabled at the beginning of the process, which relates to the themes of 'time for mentoring', and the 'availability of the principal' with another four suggesting it should have been made clearer to principals exactly what was expected, which relates to the theme of 'understanding of mentoring or training for principal role'. Two examples of these suggestions are:

They needed to know more about the significance of the role before the programme started.

Maybe a combined meeting with the principal, aspirant and facilitator, to outline expectations.

Aspirants were asked to rate their perception of how well their principal mentored them having difficult conversations with likert scale responses shown in Table 4.5

Table 4.5: Aspirants' perceptions of how well their principals mentored them in terms of having difficult discussions

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Rating Average	Response Count
Rating	20.8% (11)	9.4 % (5)	20.8% (11)	18.9% (10)	17.0% (9)	13.2% (7)	3.42	53

This response shows that to some degree, 51% of aspirants did not feel that they had been mentored well in terms of difficult discussions. This question has a rating average of 3.42 which is the lowest in the questionnaire. From the 46 follow up comments 31 aspirants either claimed they had no mentoring on having difficult

discussions or their response indicated that it did not happen. Two of the comments made relate to the theme of 'suitability of principal for the role' and also the theme of 'principal ability to both challenge aspirant and mentor them for challenging conversations'.

Principal doesn't enjoy being critical personally and probably needs to be more challenging.

This was a weakness of my principal so he was unable to mentor me in this area.

There were nine other comments which indicated that this was an area of weakness for their principals.

The issue of the relationship between the principal and the aspirant, and how this affected the mentoring role was also mentioned. This relates to two more themes: 'respect for principal as role model' and 'existing good relationship". One respondent noted:

I honestly can't remember- I don't see him as a great role model therefore find it difficult to be mentored by him. I am a person who learns by watching someone I can relate to. I do not always agree with how my principal handles situations.

There were only five responses which indicated that aspirants had been mentored well on having difficult conversations and an example of one of these responses is:

He would put me through a trial 'difficult discussion' and then comment on my handling of it before I did the real thing.

Due to the nature of the responses given on mentoring difficult conversations I included further questions on this topic in the interviews which took place later.

Aspirants were asked to rate their perception of how effectively their principal encouraged them to reflect on their practice as shown in Table 4.6

Table 4.6: Aspirants perceptions of how effectively their principals encouraged them to reflect on their practice.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Rating Average	Response Count
Rating	3.8% (2)	22.6 % (12)	11.3% (6)	28.3% (15)	13.2% (7)	20.8% (11)	3.87	53

This response shows that 62.5%, to a varying degree, found their principal to be effective in encouraging them to reflect on their practice. The 20 comments which had favourable responses, relate to the theme 'effective mentoring process overall'. An example of one of these responses was:

My principal promoted being reflective with all staff as well as with me.

The remaining 22 comments related to the themes of 'time for mentoring' and the availability of the principal' with the issue of not enough time or the principal being too busy mentioned five times. One respondent commented:

He was pretty busy in his role, always living in the here and now unfortunately

Reflection not being part of the school's or principal's practice was mentioned nine times and the following would suggest is related to the theme of 'suitability for the role':

Reflection is not really part of his practice. Rather scathing of reflective practice.

Aspirants were asked to rate their perception of how the support they received from their principal influenced their leadership practice, with results show in Table 4.7

Table 4.7: Aspirants' perceptions of how the support they received from their principals during the programme influenced their leadership practice.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Rating Average	Response Count
Rating	9.4% (5)	20.8 % (11)	9.4% (5)	11.3% (6)	28.3% (15)	20.8% (11)	3.91	53

While 60.4% of aspirants agreed to some degree that the support they received had a huge influence on their leadership practice, 20.8% rated this quite low with a further 9.4% giving it the lowest rating. While 22 aspirants from the 46 who commented, directly attributed the influence on their practice coming from positive role modelling from their principal, another five claimed that the role modelling they received had more of an influence on what not to do. Having opportunities to observe good leadership practice was described by three aspirants as helping them to define their own practice. Good role modelling of distributed leadership was discussed twice and included how it allowed them to build on their own strengths and that of others. Positive role modelling and observing good leadership practice all relate to the themes of 'respect for principal as role model' and 'suitability for principal for the role'. An example of one of these responses is:

The support of the principal; altered my practice but not only because of the programme. Leadership development was something he was highly committed to. He supported: broadened my experience widely: made me consider carefully my thought, actions and approaches; provided an excellent role model for leadership.

Being mentored by their principals made two aspirants aware of how important it was to mentor others and give time to people in their teams. Another five aspirants commented on how being given feedback on their practice gave them confidence to know they could do the job. This relates to the theme 'effective mentoring process overall'.

Aspirants were asked to rate their perception of how well their principal had prepared them for the role of principal. Responses are in Table 4.8

Table 4.8: Aspirants' perceptions of how well their principal's support prepared them for the role of principal.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Rating Average	Response Count
Rating	5% (1)	5 % (1)	10.0% (2)	5% (1)	40.0% (8)	35.0% (7)	4.75	20

The response, which was only for aspirants who had since gained a principal position, had an average rating of 4.75, indicating that most aspirants believe that their principal prepared them well for their principal role. Good role modelling was cited by four of the 18 aspirants, who are now in principal roles, as being specifically the support that prepared them for the role. Understanding leading learning and curriculum was mentioned three times. Being shown how to manage finances and other management tasks were described by four other aspirants as preparing them for the role. Clarifying budget expectations, Staffing Utilisation and Expenditure (SUE) reports and bank staffing were specifically mentioned. The following response, by one aspirant, basically summarises what most of the other aspirants had to say:

The finer points of principalship, such as bank staffing, budget preparation, dealing with staffing issues, employment, working with a BOT, leading curriculum and change were all parts of the roles I undertook as DP, which was guided and developed by my previous principal.

Good role modelling by the principal and the ability to lead learning would come under the themes of 'respect for principal as role model' and 'suitability of principal for the role'.

Aspirants were asked to rate their perception of how crucial the support role of the principal is in preparing them for principalship, with responses shown in Table 4.9

Table 4.9: Aspirants' perceptions of how crucial the support role of the principal is in preparing aspirants for principalship.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Rating Average	Response Count
Rating	0% (0)	1.9 % (1)	9.4 % (5)	18.9% (10)	26.4% (14)	43.4% (23)	5.00	53

This statement showed the highest level of agreement in the questionnaire with an average rating of 5.00. Only 11.3% disagreed to some extent that the role of the principal was crucial in preparing aspirants for principalship.

Aspirants were asked to rate their perceptions on whether it would have been more effective if they had been able to choose their own mentor rather than their own principal being placed in the role. Responses are in Table 4.10

Table 4.10: Aspirants' perceptions on choosing their own mentor

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Rating Average	Response Count
Rating	18.1% (9)	8.3 % (4)	18.8% (9)	12.5% (6)	18.8% (9)	22.9% (11)	3.73	48

The results for this statement shows a very mixed response. From the 48 aspirants who added further comments to this response, 15 of them specifically claimed that having their own principal as a mentor was more effective. These responses were supported by suggestions that it depended on the mentoring ability of the principal, having a positive relationship with the principal, and the commitment of the principal to the role, all of which relate to the themes of 'suitability of the principal for the role', and 'existing good relationship. The following is an example of such a comment:

This would depend upon the relationship you had with your principal and the credibility of your principal. Because mine was so positive, encouraging and professional I could not have asked for a better mentor.

There were 18 aspirants who were not in favour of having their principal as their mentor and the reasons given for this were the reverse of those that were previously mentioned by those who were in favour of the idea. They also relate to the same theme, 'suitability of the principal for the role' and also the themes 'respect for principal as role model' and 'understanding of mentoring or training for principal role. Three examples of these comments are:

There was a huge assumption that the principals of the aspirants had the ability to mentor and wanted to mentor when in my case this was not the case at all.

Would have chosen someone who was a positive role model.

In situations like my own there was no support from the principal. Somebody I had chosen would have had more 'buy in'.

Other responses suggested that someone with current up to date knowledge, as well as an interest in what you were doing, was more important than simply the principal taking on the role.

Barriers that were cited as being associated with the level of support offered by principals included: insufficient time; a poor relationship between the aspirant and the principal; the principal's inability to lead or mentor; and a general sense of disinterest by the principal for their support role in the NAPP. All of these issues relate to the themes of: 'time for mentoring'; 'availability of principal'; 'suitability of the principal for the role'; 'existing good relationship'; 'understanding of mentoring and training for principal role'; and also the theme 'principal support for development generally'. The issue of time was mentioned 30 times out of the 53 responses given. Comments about time included a lack of time in terms of the principal not being available for meetings and also included the time constraints that the aspirants had themselves which resulted in them being unavailable for meetings. Two examples of these comments were:

Time as usual. My principal always had more 'urgent' jobs that needed taking care of.

Time. I was a teaching DP at the time with little release.

The skill of the principal as a leader and their inability to provide support was mentioned 19 times as a barrier to the level of support received. Degree of expertise, lack of professional respect and a poor relationship were also mentioned. Three respondents expressed their opinions in relation to the themes 'suitability of principal for the role', 'understanding for mentoring and training for principal role' and 'existing good relationship', in the following way:

Lack of credibility, lack of knowledge, lack of respect, and lack of approachability.

His expertise and inability to be an effective mentor

Relationships, it depended on what your relationship with your principal already was.

Three comments were also made on the limited support they perceived their principals had received during the NAPP in terms of what was expected of them which relates to the theme 'understanding of mentoring or training for principal role'.

The importance of a good relationship with the principal was mentioned 34 times out of 53 as being the main enabler associated with the level of support they received during the NAPP, from their principal. Mutual respect and a genuine interest in supporting the aspirant in the programme were included within comments about having a good relationship. All of these relate to the themes of; 'suitability of the principal for the role'; 'existing good relationship'; and principal support for development generally. Two examples of these comments are:

Working closely together, having compatible personalities, being fortunate to work with a principal who believed strongly in developing the leadership of others.

Our relationship. Shared view of leadership and high expectations. Trust.

There were other comments about having regular discussions, being asked challenging questions and being mentored which suggested that these too grew from a respectful relationship. It would appear that the relationship between the aspirant and the principal, and the respect that was held for the principal in his/her leadership

role, was pivotal in determining how well the support role was carried out. This relates to the themes of 'existing good relationship', and 'respect for principal as role model'.

In terms of how the principal support role could have been improved 16 out of 53 aspirants suggested that the principals could have been invited to more NAPP sessions, and that the principal's role in the programme be more defined right at the beginning. These comments relate to the theme of 'understanding of mentoring or training for principal role'. An example of one of these comments is:

Providing more information for the principals about what their role in this involved was not clearly understood. A meeting right at the beginning with principals and aspirants would have been valuable. They would have had a better understanding and probably understood the seriousness and demands of such a great opportunity.

The themes of 'time for mentoring' and 'availability of principal' and the issue of more time needed, was mentioned five times: time for regular meetings and more release time to visit other schools. Three aspirants suggested a screening of principals for their suitability to mentor aspirants on the programme, and that only experienced and successful principals be accepted as mentors. Four suggested that the option to choose another principal as their mentor be made available. Two examples of these comments are:

I strongly recommend that the aspirants are able to select their own mentor- someone that they have a relationship with and who is a suitable mentor.

The mentors offered by the programme itself, varied in competency. Just because someone has been a principal does not necessarily make them a great mentor. I was initially very disappointed with the mentors we were asked to work with.

From these findings in the questionnaire I decided to ask more questions in the semi-structured interviews on: the importance of the relationship between the

aspirant and the principal and how this affected the mentoring process; perceived qualities required by principals to be effective mentors and how this could have been improved; the mentoring skills required for leading difficult conversations; and issues related to time and suggestions on how this could have been improved.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FINDINGS

The semi-structured interviews were carried out individually with three aspirants and their three principals. In these findings the aspirants have been labelled 1A, 2A, and 3A. Their principals have been labelled 1P, 2P and 3P. Interviews took place by phone and followed the structure in the interview schedules (see Appendices 2 and 3). However, due to the interviews following a semi-structured format the actual wording of the questions was at times changed depending on the context of the interview, or in response to something one of the participants had said. The findings are reported under subheadings based on the questions asked in the interviews.

The importance of the relationship between the aspirant and the principal

All three aspirants claimed that a good relationship with the principal was paramount in the mentoring process and to them feeling supported.

1A: It had a large affect because of the support I was getting and the fact that I could go and talk to him at any time over issues that were coming up over the time of the course. At the same time he wasn't controlling at all or constantly asking me what I was doing. It was an easy kind of relationship. He didn't put any pressure on me but gave me the support I needed.

3A: You really do have to have a very good relationship. I don't think I would have gone for the principalship if I hadn't had such a supportive person. What he did was constantly support me and during my time on aspiring principals I got very good critical feedback that I could work on, so I think it is essential.

The three principals that were interviewed also stated that a good relationship between the aspirant and the principal was crucial for the mentoring process to be successful. As two principals explained it:

2P: A lot of it depends on the relationship between people. A good relationship is critical. If there is a good relationship then everything else becomes easy.

3P: A good relationship has a huge effect, you have got to have some sort of relationship or it's not going to work. We had such a good relationship that I knew it would take our professional relationship to a new level.

The comments made in this section, by the aspirants and the principals, relate to the theme of 'existing good relationship'.

The qualities and skills that made the mentoring role successful

All three aspirants cited the fact that their principals recommended them for the programme and were committed to supporting them in their leadership development as being significant in making the mentoring role successful. This relates to the theme of 'principal support for development generally'. Qualities that were discussed as being important for a mentoring role were being an experienced, effective and credible leader, being trustworthy, honest, and having a sense of humour. Specific skills that were mentioned were: being a good listener; a good communicator; giving critical feedback and being open to feedback; and being reflective, which relates to the theme of 'suitability of principal for role'.

1A: Because he was a very experienced Principal and he had worked outside of principalship, he had worked for Group Special Ed and Ministry; he had a really good idea of what principals should be doing and was able to communicate that to me. He was a very affable, kind, experienced person who was willing to help. He also recommended me for the course so he had an inbuilt commitment to making sure that I was successful.

2A: She is open to feedback and is quite reflective. She is an effective communicator.

3A: He listened, he was prepared to take a risk with me and he was an effective leader himself. He had effective teaching and learning practices himself which made him credible. He had a sense of humour. The relationship had to be really good. He and I trusted each other. He was a really good critical friend.

The principals expressed their views on the skills needed for successful mentoring in a similar way to the aspirants:

1P: The principal needs to be experienced in a wide range of educational aspects. Needs to have a degree of empathy for the role and position of the person who is undertaking the training programme. You can't provide assistance or mentoring unless you are able to have a good communication level

2P: An absolute commitment to the other persons' professional learning. To provide opportunities and experiences for that person to grow. As a principal I see that as part of my responsibility for my staff.

3P: You need to be open, prepared to explain your practice, willing to examine something of the things you do and be able to talk about them in a more open way than you normally would.

Comments made by the principals also relate to the themes of 'principal support for development generally' and 'suitability of principal for role'.

Mentoring for having challenging conversations

The majority of the findings in this section relates to the theme of 'principal ability to both challenge aspirant and mentor them for difficult conversations'. Two of the aspirants said they role played having difficult conversations with their principals, which also involved discussion and feedback. Critique and feedback was also given to all three aspirants following difficult discussions with staff. One aspirant mentioned

attending, with her principal, a few leadership and management workshops which included having 'difficult discussions' and said that the two of them learnt from each other. In terms of support that would have been helpful in preparing for difficult conversations, all three aspirants cited having reflective discussions with their principals afterwards to discuss their performance. One aspirant said for this to happen the principal needed to be a good communicator, which relates to the theme of 'suitability of principal for the role', and both needed to be open with each other. All three aspirants agreed that a good relationship with the principal was essential for this specific mentoring to be effective, which relates to the theme of 'existing good relationship'. One aspirant listed the specific skills that she was encouraged to develop for having difficult conversations:

2A: In terms of the mentoring just being very direct, not beating around the bush, being really open to the other person's perspective, having really good communications skills, understanding where a person is personally in terms of their home situation, things that might impact on how they are feeling outside of the school situation.

The principals who were interviewed shared how they mentored their aspirants for having difficult conversations and identified the need to focus on the issue of concern rather than be distracted by personal issues that may emerge.

1P: The first part is setting an example on how to do it because people need to know you can have those conversations without it becoming a personal matter and that is it focused on the issues rather than on the person. In assisting others to have that role it is important that you can go through that process with somebody and helping them to identify the issues that need to be talked about and steering clear of all of the personal stuff that gets raised and interferes...the excuses and all of those things and keeping to the point.

2P: We have spent a lot of time working on effective team functioning between our staff. Being open to learning conversations. How to progress with an issue without damaging the relationship. Rehearsing what needs to be said and different ways of saying things...less confrontational but don't beat around an issue.

Improving the issue of time

The majority of findings in this section relate to the theme of 'time for mentoring' and availability of the principal'. All three aspirants agreed that it was crucial to have regularly set times for meetings. Two aspirants would have liked more classroom release time which one suggested could have been paid for by the NAPP. The amount of release time that aspirants were given to work on the programme, or have quality time with their principals for mentoring, appeared to depend on the generosity of their principal. Two of the aspirants explained it this way:

1A: I didn't have any extra release time which would have been good. That release time would have allowed me to go to other schools to shadow other principals. It depends on your principal...I think if I had pushed it he would have given me the time but then I was conscience that I wouldn't have been doing other things because I would have been out.

3A: I was released for half a day. What would have been really good would have been opportunities for the aspirant and the principal to actually have a day or half a day a term release...it's trying to get all that stuff done and teaching and your normal management stuff...it was hard so yes release time, paid release time would be useful. We always had management meetings on a Thursday morning and if I needed extra help well we would organise time...it was always after school.

The three principals that were interviewed did not view time as an issue however one principal did say it would be good if at the beginning of the programme an overview of the year was shared and it was made clear how often the principal and aspirant should meet.

CONCLUSION

This study has identified eight significant issues which impacted on the success of the support received by aspirants, from their principals, while on the NAPP. The issues being: the existing good relationship between the aspirant and the principal;

the suitability of the principal for the role; respect for the principal as a role model; understanding of mentoring or training for principal role; principal support for development generally; principal ability to both challenge aspirant and mentor them for difficult conversations; time for mentoring and availability of principal, effective mentoring process overall. Discussion of these key findings will occur in the following chapter alongside a critique against the theory base.

CHAPTER FIVE : DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings presented in Chapter Four, in relation to the literature introduced in Chapter Two. From the data that has been collected and presented in Chapter Four, eight key themes have emerged, these are: the existing good relationship between the aspirant and the principal; the suitability of the principal for the role; respect for the principal as a role model; understanding of mentoring or training for principal role; principal support for development generally; principal ability to both challenge aspirant and mentor them for difficult conversations; time for mentoring and availability of principal; effective mentoring process overall. These themes provide the headings in this chapter, in which the relationship between the research questions, the data collected and the literature are discussed.

THE EXISTING GOOD RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ASPIRANT AND THE PRINCIPAL

The quality of the relationship between the aspirant and the principal emerged as a major catalyst for the success of the mentoring relationship. Mutual respect and a genuine interest in supporting the aspirant in the programme was considered vital. This became evident in both the responses to the questionnaire and in the interviews with the aspirants and the principals. The relationship and the respect held for the principal as an educational leader appeared to determine how successful the mentoring would be, and it resulted in aspirants feeling they had been supported to grow in their leadership roles. Responses in the questionnaire showed that 34 out of 53 aspirants perceived the main enabler associated with the level of support they received during the NAPP, from their principal, was due to the good relationship between them.

The aspirants and principals who were interviewed who felt good about the mentoring claimed to already have a pre-existing good working relationship between them before being involved in the NAPP, and believed that it was critical for the success of the programme. It was mentioned that if the relationship was good then everything else became easy. This was also made evident from those aspirants who did not feel supported. They cited a poor relationship with their principal as being the main barrier affecting the support they received and would have preferred to have chosen another principal to mentor them. In relation to the research question on NAPP aspirants' perceptions of how support could have been increased, and their principals' perceptions of how it could have been enhanced, both agreed that a good relationship was an essential requirement before starting the programme.

The majority of researchers in this field agree that for the mentoring relationship to be successful there does need to be a strong relationship between the two partners (Barnett & O' Mahony, 2008; Bloom, et al., 2005; Cesa & Fraser, 1989; Crow, 2001; Hodges, 2009; Neary, 2000).

THE SUITABILITY OF THE PRINCIPAL FOR THE ROLE

While the aspirants in this study believed that a pre-existing good relationship was critical for the success of the programme, there are researchers who believe that the initial choice is only a partial factor in determining the success of the relationship (Cesa & Fraser, 1989; Walker & Stott, 1993). Such authors claim that the qualities required for a good mentoring relationship can be strengthened providing both parties are aware of each others' changing needs. However Daresh (2001) argues this point and states that there are principals who do not have the characteristics to be good mentors. In this study the same opinion came through strongly from the 18 aspirants in the questionnaire who would have preferred to have chosen someone else to mentor them. Neary (2000) agrees with Daresh (2001) and the aspirants, and views the personal qualities of the mentor as being the key to effective mentorship.

One aspirant explained there was an assumption that the principals wanted to be mentors and that they actually had the skills to be mentors when this was not always the case. Aspirants who were unhappy with the support they received from their principal not only blamed it on the poor relationship they had with them but also they perceived their principals to be inadequate leaders, and in some cases believed that the principal's lack of experience in the role was responsible for affecting the support they received. Being of the 'old school' was also cited as having a negative influence on the principal mentoring role. One aspirant expanded on this comment by adding that the NAPP programme requirements and thinking were quite new and that the principal did not like new challenging ways. This would suggest that experience in the role of principal, in terms of longevity, is not the only deciding factor in selecting a principal for mentorship. The actual skill of the principal as a leader and their inability to provide support was mentioned 19 times as a barrier to the level of support received.

The three principals who were interviewed were experienced leaders; they were committed to supporting their aspirants on the programme, and were in turn respected by their aspirants. These were principals who had either previously been involved in mentoring, such as in the First Time Principals Programme, or had attended various workshops on mentoring, and mentoring teaching staff was part of their everyday practice. Several responses from aspirants suggested a screening of principals for their suitability to mentor aspirants on the programme, and that only experienced and successful principals be accepted as mentors. In the First Time Principals Programme potential mentors are screened through a quality assurance process. "They must be successful leaders of learning in their own schools and this success must be confirmed in their school's most recent Education Review Office report and endorsed by a reputable third party" (Palmer, 2007, p. 4). In this study this is a process that aspirants suggest be considered for aspiring principal programmes.

The consensus amongst most researchers is that a mentoring principal needs to be an experienced and respected leader in their own field (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2006; Crow, 2001; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Reyes, 2003). An inexperienced

principal, suggests Hansford and Ehrich (2006), is best described as a peer support rather than a supportive mentor. Responses from aspirants in this study who had inexperienced principals, would generally confirm this statement although it is mentioned later that two aspirants found their inexperienced principals to be poor role models also. As well as being experienced principals, Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2006) and Crow (2001) say the mentor principals need to be effective in their own practice, skilled at providing aspirants with appropriate levels of oversight and above all fully committed to supporting their aspiring principal. The three principals who were interviewed in this study agreed with this statement and believed that an absolute commitment to other person's professional learning is essential. Crow (2001) also adds that principals needs to believe in the value of reflective practice.

The three aspirants who were interviewed in this study included reflective practice as one of the specific skills their principals used in their role as mentor. However in the questionnaire nine aspirants said reflection was not part of the school's or principal's practice with one aspirant saying their principal was rather scathing of reflective practice. The ability of the principal to encourage reflective practice and model it themselves is seen by Crow (2001) as an important characteristic that mentors need to consider when selecting a mentor. Qualities that were discussed by the aspirants as being important for a mentoring role were being an experienced, effective and credible leader, being trustworthy, honest, and having a sense of humour. Included also were being a good listener and communicator.

RESPECT FOR THE PRINCIPAL AS A ROLE MODEL

As with the aspirants, many researchers also believe that for a strong relationship to emerge there needs to be a view of the mentor as a good role model and a sense of mutual respect in the partnership (Bloom, et al., 2005; Daresh, 2001; Hodges, 2009). Lack of experience was mentioned by two aspirants as affecting the mentoring they received, due to their principals still struggling in their own leadership positions, as well as viewing their principals as poor role models. Five out of 46 aspirants went as far to say that the role modelling they received from their principal influenced them

more about what not to do. This comment related to both experienced and inexperienced principals. It was mentioned by an aspirant that it was difficult to be mentored by the principal when they did not view them a good role model. Aspirants who had since become principals indicated that it was the good role modelling they had received from their principals that provided them with the specific support they needed to prepare them for their new role as principal. The three principals who were interviewed were viewed by their aspirants as having credibility in their roles with current up to date knowledge, and were seen as good role models of leadership.

UNDERSTANDING OF MENTORING OR TRAINING FOR PRINCIPAL ROLE

Responses in the questionnaire showed that only 26.4% of aspirants believed their principals took on the role of mentor very well. The 39.6% who were less than happy with the mentoring they received put it down to unsuitability for the role and a lack of understanding of the support role required by the principals in the NAPP was seen to have contributed to this dissatisfaction. One aspirant claimed the principal was unaware of the requirements of the support role and that he perceived her as capable and not needing support. It was also mentioned by some aspirants that there was an assumption that the principals of the aspirants had the ability to mentor and wanted to mentor which was not always the case. Some aspirants viewed the support their principals had received as limited in terms of what was expected of them during the NAPP and therefore some principals lacked an understanding of how important their support role was for the success of the programme.

The lack of understanding of the support role was also discussed in the NAPP Evaluation (Piggot-Irvine, et al., 2009) and again later by Piggot-Irvine and Youngs (2011). Both aspirants in the NAPP evaluation, and in this study, suggested conducting an initial combined meeting with aspirants and principals to establish clear expectations of the principal's support role. Grogan and Crow (2004) agree that mentoring would more likely be successful if expectations were made clearer.

PRINCIPAL SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT GENERALLY

As mentioned before the aspirants who were interviewed all had a positive relationship with their principal and they cited the fact that their principals recommended them for the programme and were committed to supporting them in their leadership development as being significant in making the mentoring role successful. Aspirants cited being given feedback, guidance by their principal, and the principal acting as a critical friend, as all contributing to their development as leaders. A genuine interest in supporting aspirants on the programme was viewed by aspirants as one of the main enablers associated with the level of support they received and one aspirant claimed to be fortunate that their principal believed strongly in developing the leadership of others.

The three principals who were interviewed agreed that the principal support role was crucial for supporting leadership development and believed that an absolute commitment to another person's professional learning is an essential role for a principal. Supporting leadership development with their staff was viewed by the principals as part of their responsibility as a principal. These views are confirmed by other aspirants who claimed that the low level of support they received was due to a general sense of disinterest by their principals for their support role in the NAPP.

PRINCIPAL ABILITY TO BOTH CHALLENGE ASPIRANT AND MENTOR THEM FOR DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

In the questionnaire 51% of aspirants felt they were not mentored very well for having difficult conversations. Comments made suggested this was an area of weakness for the principal themselves and was something they avoided. Out of the 53 aspirants who responded only five claimed to be mentored well in the area. This was explored further in the interviews with aspirants and principals. Role playing was mentioned by aspirants and principals as being useful preparation for actual difficult conversations, with critique and feedback on their performance being discussed afterwards. The need for the conversation to focus on the issue and progress it

without damaging the relationship was cited as a specific skill required for successfully having a difficult conversation. Included also was the importance of being direct and not beating around the bush, and being open to the other person's perspective. Principals stressed the need for training the aspirant to steer clear of the personal stuff that gets raised and to rehearse what needs to be said and the different ways of saying things. For the mentoring to be successful it was suggested again by aspirants that it depended on how good the principal was as a communicator and the type of relationship between the aspirant and the principal. One principal said that they attended workshops together for having difficult conversations and that they were both learning off each other about how to be effective in this area.

Many researchers agree that the avoidance of having difficult conversations is a common phenomenon (Argyris, 1990; Cardno, 1998; Crow & Matthews, 1998; Piggot-Irvine & Doyle, 2010). Principals who were involved in a study with Piggot-Irvine admitted that dealing with staff issues and having difficult conversations was often left in the too hard basket (Piggot-Irvine, et al., 2011). The avoidance of having difficult conversations and not dealing with them effectively is described by Argyris (1990) as part of defensive reasoning. Defensive reasoning is used to block any information which we personally feel will create unpleasantness or weaken our control of the situation (Cardno, 1998). The values and strategies for defensive reasoning are: avoid unpleasantness; give indirect messages; do not explain reasoning; and above all maintain control (Cardno, 1998). Defensive reasoning is how some of the aspirants in this study summed up the situation with their own principals who chose to avoid having difficult conversations. In order to deal with difficult conversations effectively, a productive reasoning approach is required. Productive reasoning involves generating information in an effort to increase the possibility of critical reflection-in-action, which is defined by Cardno (1998) as being able to think about what we are doing while we are doing it and being able to change actions mid-way through a performance. Put simply, productive reasoning in a difficult conversation means being forthright, disclosing the reasoning behind the conversation, asking questions as genuine inquiry and sharing control and solutions.

It is about building trust in the relationship and discussing the issues honestly and with a view to jointly solving the problem.

The aspirants in this study who were mentored well in having difficult conversations had trust in their mentoring relationship and both aspirants and their principals talked about the importance of being open in such conversations. It came through strongly in the questionnaire responses and in the interviews that both the aspirants and the principals had mutual respect for each other, reflection was encouraged and it was a shared partnership. For those aspirants responding to questionnaires who did not receive mentoring for difficult conversations, it was evident that their perception of the situation was based on what they saw in their principals as defensive reasoning values and strategies. In this study it would have been interesting to have asked for the principals' perceptions of this situation, particularly from those principals who were being labelled as defensive. However the aspirants who put their names forward all claimed to have supportive principals and this was confirmed when I interviewed the principals.

TIME FOR MENTORING AND AVAILABILITY OF PRINCIPAL

The issue of time, as in time for meetings with their principals or classroom release time to complete tasks for the programme, featured strongly as a problem in the questionnaire results and was identified by two of the three aspirants who were interviewed as being an issue. It would appear that the amount of classroom release time or opportunities for discussions depended on the generosity of their principal. Some aspirants would have liked to have seen a budget provided so they could have had some regular release from their classroom and teaching duties. It was suggested by one principal that a schedule could have been set at the beginning of the NAPP and regular meeting times identified. This suggestion also emerged from responses in the questionnaire where aspirants stated that principals needed to know more about the significance of the role before the programme started and that maybe a combined meeting with the principal, aspirant and facilitator could have been held to outline expectations.

In terms of how the aspirants and the principals perceived the issue of time, it appeared to be more of an issue for the aspirants than the principals. Whether this was due to it being four years since they had been involved with the programme and the principals could not recall it being a problem, or whether the aspirants had never shared the issue of time with them is unsure.

Other researchers, when discussing time, agree that finding enough time for mentoring is often cited by mentors and their protégées as one of the major problems with mentoring programmes (Bolam & McMahon, 1995; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Reyes, 2003; Riley, 2009; Sullivan-Brown, 2002). While the principals in this study who were interviewed did not view time as an issue there is a suggestion in the questionnaires from aspirants that their principals were too busy to effectively mentor them. Sullivan-Brown (2002) suggests that consideration be given to how a mentoring programme structures time and space for mentoring interactions to take place and this was also a suggestion from the interviewed principals.

Neary (2002) states that time is an essential component in a mentoring relationship and claims that neither party should make excessive demands. The writer suggests that setting up a learning contract would clarify the expectations and responsibilities of both the mentor and the protégée and reduce a potential one sided burden in the relationship. As Riley (2009) explains, both are busy people and with a 'time limitation' put in place right at the beginning of a mentoring programme, meetings would be more purposeful and the mentoring process would begin and progress with the end in mind. He suggests that having a time limitation generates an underlying sense of importance of progression leading to time not being wasted by either party. In retrospect it would have been interesting in this study to have sent questionnaires out to principals to find out how more of them viewed the issue of time. As stated earlier the three principals who were interviewed did not have any issues with time.

EFFECTIVE MENTORING PROCESS OVERALL

Aspirants who found the mentoring effective mentioned being given feedback, guidance, being challenged and having a critical friend. Giving critical feedback and being open to feedback, and being reflective in the process of mentoring were important. Being delegated responsibility and offered feedback was viewed as the best way for learning the responsibilities of principalship. The principals interviewed held a similar view and cited the mentor showing a process involving good communication levels, a commitment to the other person's learning, and being open to discussing practice, as well as adding the need to have a degree of empathy for the person being mentored as important. The majority of other researchers agree that the role of the principal as a mentor is crucial for supporting candidates for principalship (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004; Grogan & Crow, 2004; Riley, 2009; Timperley, et al., 2007). As with the aspirants and the principals interviewed in this study, the researchers agree that being given opportunities to discuss ones practice and receive feedback from someone more expert, while practising leadership skills, leads to a better understanding of what is expected in a leadership role. In order to deepen this understanding Timperley et al. (2007) add the need to include discussion on theories of practice. Researchers Stowers and Barker (2010) agree with the aspirants that a mentoring relationship needs to be built on honesty and trust and to maintain it does not simply involve telling people what to do. As well as the skills mentioned previously by the aspirants, principals and other researchers, Crow and Matthews (1998) add the ability to develop leaders who can be creative risk takers with confidence and competence, and include the ability to be reflective. A study by Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2006) found that some aspirants linked their readiness for principalship to the leadership opportunities provided by their principal; as well as the regular interactive conversations that took place on their leadership performance. These findings were mirrored in the NAPP Evaluation (Piggot-Irvine, et al., 2009; Piggot-Irvine & Youngs, 2011) and in this study.

In the next chapter I will summarise the key finds and discuss the implications and limitations of this study.

CHAPTER SIX : CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

INTRODUCTION

This final chapter will provide an overview of the research study, summarise key findings, outline the limitations of the study and make recommendations for further research.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

The overall purpose of this study was to investigate a retrospective view of the role of the principal's support for aspiring principals whilst they were attending the National Aspiring Principals Programme (NAPP) and to suggest how such support could be enhanced. The four research questions which have formed the basis of this study were:

1. What principal support was utilised in aspiring principal development in New Zealand in the NAPP?
2. Four years post-programme, what are the NAPP participant's perceptions of how principal support could have been increased?
3. What are their principal's perceptions of how they could have provided enhanced support?
4. What are the implications for principal support for future aspiring principal programmes in New Zealand?

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

This study has identified eight significant issues which impacted on the success of the support received by aspirants, from their principals, while on the NAPP. The issues being: the existing good relationship between the aspirant and the principal; the suitability of the principal for the role; respect for the principal as a role model; understanding of mentoring or training for principal role; principal support for

development generally; principal ability to both challenge aspirant and mentor them for difficult conversations; time for mentoring and availability of principal and effective mentoring process overall.

The findings of this study and the literature (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004; Grogan & Crow, 2004; Riley, 2009; Timperley, et al., 2007) concur that the role of the principal as a mentor is crucial for supporting candidates for principalship. The pre-existing good working relationship between the aspirant and the principal overwhelmingly emerged in this study as a major catalyst for the success of the mentoring relationship. Mutual respect and a genuine interest in supporting the aspirant in the programme was considered vital. The majority of aspirants perceived the main enabler associated with the level of support they received during the NAPP, from their principal, was due to the good relationship between them, just as the aspirants who did not feel supported by their principals claimed it was due to the poor relationship they had with them. The relationship and the respect held for the principal as an educational leader appeared to determine how successful the programme would be, and it resulted in aspirants feeling they had been supported to grow in their leadership roles. The principals who were interviewed agreed that a good existing relationship was vital for the success of the mentoring relationship and most researchers (Argyris, 1991; Bloom, et al., 2005; Cesa & Fraser, 1989; Crow, 2001; Hodges, 2009; Neary, 2000) support this notion. Therefore this study is suggesting that a good relationship was an essential requirement before starting the programme.

The suitability of the principal for the role of mentor also emerged as a crucial component for a successful mentoring relationship. Aspirants in the study suggested that experience in the role of principalship, in terms of longevity, should not be the only deciding factor in selecting a principal for mentorship. It was the personal qualities of the principal that were viewed as being the key to effective mentorship. Along with experience the aspirants cited the need for the principal to be an effective and credible leader, trustworthy, a good communicator and a good listener. This view is supported by other researchers who agree that a mentoring principal needs

to be an experienced and respected leader in their own field (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2006; Crow, 2001; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Reyes, 2003). Other aspirants in this study who were unhappy with the support they received claimed their principals were just unsuitable for the role of mentor in spite of being in the principal role for many years. They were not viewed as good role models of learning and aspirants attributed this as contributing to the lack of support they received. Good role modelling of leadership from principals was viewed by aspirants as the specific support needed to prepare them for future principalship. It was suggested that there be a screening of principals to ensure that they had the necessary skills and experience to be effective mentors.

It was discussed by aspirants and principals that the mentoring role could have been improved if expectations of the role had been made clearer at the beginning of the NAPP. This is acknowledged in the NAPP evaluation (Piggot-Irvine & Youngs, 2011) and researchers Grogan and Crow (2004) also agree that mentoring would more likely be successful if expectations were made clearer.

This also relates to the theme of 'time for mentoring and availability of the principal' where aspirants claimed that principals needed to know more about the significant of the programme before it actually started, and the principals suggestion that at the beginning a schedule be set for regular meetings. This would assist in the prevention of aspirants having to simply rely on the generosity of their principals for time for meetings and mentoring, which the aspirants did identify as an issue. The issue of time, as in time for meetings with their principals, or classroom release time to complete tasks for the programme, featured strongly as a problem for the aspirants and multiple researchers (Bolam & McMahon, 1995; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Reyes, 2003; Riley, 2009; Sullivan-Brown, 2002) agree that finding time for mentoring is often cited by mentors and protégées as a problem.

The three principals who were interviewed were experienced leaders and feedback from their aspirants confirmed they were effective mentors and committed to supporting them on the programme. The principals viewed their support role for

developing the aspirants as a crucial part of their principal responsibilities. The aspects of mentoring that emerged as being useful for promoting leadership growth in the aspirants were: having regular discussions, being encouraged to reflect on practice, receiving feedback; and from their principals a genuine interest and believe in them as future leaders. Other researchers agree that being given the opportunity to discuss ones practice and to receive feedback from someone more expert, while practising leadership skills, leads to a better understanding of the leadership role (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004; Grogan & Crow, 2004; Riley, 2009; Timperley, et al., 2007).

Role playing situations in order to prepare for having difficult conversations, followed by critique and feedback on their performance, was suggested by aspirants and their principals as good mentoring support for dealing with difficult situations. The need for the conversation to focus on the issue and progress it without damaging the relationship was cited as a specific skill required for having a difficult conversation. It emerged from the questionnaires that this was an area that was often avoided by principals and the information gained in this study, on how to successfully be mentored for having difficult conversations, mainly came from the interviews with the three aspirants and their three principals. Many researchers agree that avoiding such conversations is a common phenomenon (Alcorn, 1990; Cardno, 1998; Crow & Matthews, 1998; Piggot-Irvine & Doyle, 2010).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited in the sense that only three principals were interviewed. Seven aspirants offered to be interviewed, and from this, three were randomly selected for individual interviews, which were then followed by individual interviews with their principals. All of the aspirants I randomly chose to interview had positive mentoring relationships with their principals and were supported during the programme. It is possible that aspirants who had not felt supported did not put their name forward for an interview as they knew their principal would be contacted for an interview too.

Consequently I was unable to follow up on some of the negative issues raised by aspirants in the questionnaires because these issues did not apply to the aspirants who put themselves forward for an interview. Had there been more of a cross section of principals it would have been possible to explore further what the principals' views were on the barriers that affected their mentoring relationship with their aspirant. This may have lead to more suggestions for improving the mentoring capabilities of the principal in order to enhance the mentoring of the aspirant.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The five recommendations suggested in this chapter relate to the eight themes identified in the study. The first recommendation relates the theme of 'the existing good relationship between the aspirant and the principal'.

1. That further research be undertaken on how principals develop good working relationships with their aspirants. From these findings recommendations could be made for a support programme to assist principals to develop their working relationship skills.

The second recommendation relates to the themes of: 'the suitability of the principal for the role; 'principal support for development generally'; and 'respect for the principal as a role model'.

2. That programmes for mentoring aspiring principals, which depend on their own principals to be the mentor, consider incorporating a quality assurance process to ensure that principals are successful role models of leading and learning and are respected in their field.

The third recommendation relates to the themes of: 'understanding of mentoring or training for principal role; and 'effective mentoring process overall'.

3. That the views of the principals in the NAPP be explored, in terms of determining what support they perceived they required in order to become

effective mentors, and also what expectations they had of the aspirants they mentored. From these findings recommendations could be made for a support programme to be put in place where expectations for a successful mentoring partnership could be made clear.

The fourth recommendation relates to the theme of 'principal ability to both challenge aspirant and mentor them for difficult conversations'.

4. That further research be undertaken into how principals mentor aspirants in dealing with difficult conversations, with a view to suggesting what support they require to become more effective in this area.

The fifth recommendation relates to the theme of 'time for mentoring and availability of principal'.

5. That the views of aspirants and principals be sought regarding how to manage the issue of time in order to allow for effective mentoring to take place, with a view to developing a programme which sets out expectations, responsibilities and time limits.

FINAL CONCLUSION

Overall, there were eight themes which emerged in this study: the existing good relationship between the aspirant and the principal; the suitability of the principal for the role; respect for the principal as a role model; understanding of mentoring or training for principal role; principal support for development generally; principal ability to both challenge aspirant and mentor them for difficult conversations; time for mentoring and availability of principal, effective mentoring process overall. It appeared overwhelmingly clear that a pre-existing good relationship between the aspirant and the principal was perceived as the catalyst for the success of the mentoring relationship. The quality of the relationship was cited both as an enabler and a barrier to the success of the mentoring partnership depending on how the relationship was viewed. In turn the principals who were interviewed also believed a

good relationship with the aspirant was vital to the success of the mentoring programme and that if the relationship was right then everything else became easy.

It was clear in the findings that in order to be suitable for the role of mentor the principal needed to be an experienced and respected leader and this was viewed as vital for a successful mentoring partnership. Credibility in their role as a principal and the ability to be a good role model was viewed by supported aspirants as the qualities which led to the successful mentoring partnership that they experienced.

Aspirants and principals believed that the support role could have been improved if a meeting had been held at the beginning of the NAPP where the expectations for principal support could have been made clearer and guidelines for regular mentoring meetings discussed. The availability of the principal and time for mentoring meetings was identified by most aspirants as a major issue.

The study revealed that most of the principals avoided mentoring aspirants for having difficult conversations however those who were mentored well in this area cited role playing difficult situations, being given critical feedback, and being given the opportunity to reflect on their practice, as being good mentoring support.

The aspirants in this study who were interviewed all had a positive relationship with their principal and they cited the fact that their principal recommended them for the programme and was committed to supporting them in their leadership development as being significant in making the mentoring role successful. It is acknowledged that this was not the case for all aspirants in the NAPP, whose responses to the questionnaires tell a different story.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire for all aspirants in the 2007 National Aspiring Principals Pilot Programme

Please note:

Current practice is that your consent is implied by the completion and return of this questionnaire.

Please answer the following question by placing a \surd in the appropriate box that applies to your response and by completing each of the 'comment' boxes

1. What is your current leadership role?

Senior teacher Assistant Principal

Deputy Principal Principal

2. During the NAPP programme what did you understand to be the support role of principals?

Please give your response to the following statements by using the rating scale of 1-6 where 1 is strongly disagree and 6 is strongly agree.

3. My principal had a good understand of the level of support required for me during the programme.

1 2 3 4 5 6

4. How do you know this?

5. My principal took on the role of a mentor really well while I was on the programme.

1 2 3 4 5 6

6. Why do you think this?

7. I found the mentoring offered by my principal to be very effective.

1 2 3 4 5 6

8. Why was this?

9. I was totally satisfied with the amount of time set aside for me to have meetings with my Principal.

1 2 3 4 5 6

8. How could this have been improved?

9. My principal mentored me well in terms of having difficult discussions.

1 2 3 4 5 6

10. Please give an example to explain your response

Comment box here

11. My principal was very effective at encouraging me to reflect on my practice.

1 2 3 4 5 6

12. Please comment further to explain your response

13. The support I received from my principal during the programme had a huge influence on my leadership practice.

1 2 3 4 5 6

14. In what way did this influence your leadership practice?

15. **Only respond to this statement if in a current principal role now:** My previous principal's support prepared me well for this role

1 2 3 4 5 6

16. In what way did the principal's support specifically prepare you for a principal role?

17. I consider the support role of the principal in preparing aspirants for principalship to be crucial.

1 2 3 4 5 6

18. I think it would have been more effective if I had been able to choose my own mentor rather than my own principal being placed in this role.

1 2 3 4 5 6

19. Please comment further on why you think this.

20. Please comment on what you perceive as being the barriers associated with the level of principal support you received?

Comment box

21. Please comment on what you perceive as being the enablers associated with the level of support you received?

22. In terms of principal support for aspirants in the programme, how do you think the support could have been enhanced?

23. Is there anything else you would like to add?

You have now completed this questionnaire. Thank you for your time and response to this questionnaire.

I would welcome your participation in an interview at a later date. It would also involve me contacting your principal for an interview too. If you are willing to do this please send me an email and I will send you an information sheet on this.

janiceborsos@hotmail.com

APPENDIX 2

Interview Questions for Aspirants

1. To what extent did the relationship you had with your principal affect the mentoring process?

- 2a. Assuming that your principal was an effective mentor, what qualities/skills did she/he have that made this role successful?

- 2b. If your principal was not an effective mentor, what do you perceive as being the reason for this?

3. Looking at the issue of having difficult conversations with staff, how did your principal specifically mentor you for this?

4. What support do you think would have been helpful in preparing you to have difficult conversations with staff?

5. When thinking about the issue of time, in terms of time for meetings, discussions, and classroom release time, how do you think this could have been improved?

APPENDIX 3

Interview Questions for Principals

Questions for Principals

1. To what extent were you informed about your role as mentor while your aspirant was on the NAPP?
2. To what extent did the relationship you have with your aspirant affect the mentoring process?
3. What preparation or skills do you perceive as being necessary for the role of mentor to be successful?
4. How did you prepare your aspirant for having difficult conversations with other teaching staff?
5. While your aspirant was on the NAPP how was time made to fit in meetings for discussions concerning the programme?

APPENDIX 4



INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

Title of Thesis: Principal support for participants in Aspiring Principals Pilot Programme in New Zealand.

My name is Janice Borsos. I am currently enrolled in the Master of Educational Leadership and Management degree in the Department of Education at Unitec Institute of Technology and seek your participation in this research project.

The aim of my project is to:

Investigate the role of the principal's support for aspiring principals whilst they were attending a development programme and to suggest how this support may have been improved. The focus of the study is on the aspirants and their principals from the 2007 pilot programme so that the perceptions of the effect of the principal support three years later can be explored. Considered, long term, reflections from the aspirants and selected principals should provide rich data and an insight into the long term effect of the support they received from their principals.

I request your participation in the following way:

I will be collecting data using a questionnaire. Current practice is that your consent is implied by the completion and return of the questionnaire.

Neither you nor your organisation will be identified in the Thesis. You will have the option to withdraw yourself, or any information that has been provided up to ten days after returning the questionnaire. I do hope that you will agree to take part and that you will find this participation of interest. If you have any queries about the project, you may contact my supervisor at Unitec Institute of Technology.

If you are a Maori participant would you like me to email an information sheet to your Kaumatua? Yes/No

My supervisor is Eileen Piggot-Irvine and may be contacted by email or phone.
Phone: (09) 815 4321 ext 8936 Email:epiggotirvine@unitec.ac.nz

Yours sincerely

Janice Borsos
napp@hotmail.co.nz

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2010-1138)

This study has been approved by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee from 26 January 2011 to 26 January 2012. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

APPENDIX 5



CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS

DATE: 23/09/11

TO: Aspirants and Principals for Interviews

FROM: Janice Borsos

RE: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

THESIS TITLE: Principal support for participants in Aspiring Principals Pilot Programme in New Zealand.

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research and I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered. I understand that neither my name nor the name of my organisation will be used in any public reports. I also understand that I will be provided with a summary of findings for checking before data analysis is started and that I may withdraw myself or any information that has been provided for this project up to the stage when analysis of data has been completed.

I agree to take part in this project.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2010-1138)

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APPENDIX 6



INFORMATION SHEET

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I request your participation in the following way:

I will be collecting data conducting an interview.

Neither you nor your organisation will be identified in the Thesis. You will have the option to withdraw yourself, or any information that has been provided up to ten days after returning the questionnaire. I do hope that you will agree to take part and that you will find this participation of interest. If you have any queries about the project, you may contact my supervisor at Unitec Institute of Technology.

If you are a Maori participant would you like me to email an information sheet to your Kaumatua? Yes/No

My supervisor is Eileen Piggot-Irvine and may be contacted by email or phone.
Phone: (09) 815 4321 ext 8936 Email: epiggotirvine@unitec.ac.nz

Yours sincerely

Janice Borsos
napp@hotmail.co.nz

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