

Successful Site and Mentor Selection

Interns either select or are assigned to practicing educational administrators who serve as their mentors. Mentors are experienced administrators who share their professional expertise with less experienced interns to help them get an effective start in their professional careers. The origin of the word can be traced back to the Greek poet Homer. In Homer's book entitled *The Odyssey*, King Odysseus sets out on an adventure to fight Trojans and entrusts his house, possessions, and his son, Telemachus, to the care of his good friend, Mentor. The elderly Mentor taught young Telemachus the knowledge and skills he would need to meet the future challenges he would face; thus the word mentoring.

Principal mentors are asked to work with interns to develop their knowledge and skills regarding effective educational leadership, while allowing their schools to be used as laboratories to provide opportunities for interns to apply and hone their skills and to become effective educational leaders. The intern's experience is greatly influenced by the quality of interaction that occurs with his or her mentor and with others in the workplace (Billet, 1996; Smith, 2003). Feedback on the intern's work from such an expert is extremely useful to the intern. Working alone with little or no feedback is not a favored approach to completing an internship. Therefore, there is a need to give thought to the selection of an effective mentor and to prepare the intern (mentee) for the interaction, assistance, and feedback that occur in high-quality experiences. This chapter focuses on providing interns the structures, understanding, and attitudes that are needed in order to have a high-quality intern/mentor relationship.

There are a number of considerations in effectively engaging the assistance of a mentor. Foremost is the importance of site selection, mentor selection, role assignments, and participant attitudes. One of the primary causes of failure of an effective internship experience is a lack of mutual agreement about mentoring and the mentoring process (Mertz, 2004). It is important, therefore, that mentors and mentees share common perspectives, perceptions, and dispositions about their roles and relationships. Certainly, primary to this is the willingness of the mentor to see that the intern gets real and significant experiences, to provide the time for assistance, support, feedback and all the other tasks so important to completing an effective internship. The mentor will allow the intern to be a part of the administrative team. Problems can be minimized by taking time to understand the roles and responsibilities of all parties in designing, planning, and completing a sound internship experience.

Some internship courses have training programs or an induction process for mentors; however, this does not exist in a majority of the programs (SREB, 2004). It is important that interns know the responsibilities and expectations for their mentors so that they can build important relationships and relay needed information.

MENTORING DEFINED

The mentor is a person who serves as a guide and an assistant as the mentee takes on new roles, new job identities, and school system and university expectations. The mentor helps facilitate the application of knowledge, skills, and behaviors the intern needs to achieve success on the activities for which the intern is responsible (Ashburn, Mann, & Purdue, 1987). Wasden (1988, p. 17) describes mentoring as "The mentor is a master at providing opportunities for the growth of others, by identifying situations and events which contribute knowledge and experience to the life of the steward [mentee]. Opportunities are not happenstance; they must be thoughtfully designed and organized into logical sequence. Sometimes hazards are attached to opportunity. The mentor takes great pains to help the steward recognize and negotiate dangerous situations. In doing all this, the mentor has an opportunity for growth through service, which is the highest form of leadership" (p. 17).

Crosby (1999) suggests that a mentor is "a trusted and experienced supervisor or advisor who by mutual consent takes an active interest in the development and education of a younger, less experienced individual" (p. 13). A more inclusive definition of mentoring (Muse & Thomas, 1988, p. 11) states that, "The primary purpose of mentoring is to prepare a new generation of educational leaders who will enter their first administrative position, confident and capable because of their extensive practical experience with outstanding mentor principals. The mentoring relationship between an experienced principal and an aspiring principal is built upon trust, respect, and caring, allowing the intern to learn how to be a professional administrator in a non-threatening, real-life setting. . . . Mentors provide opportunities for interns to discuss their administrative experience in relation to the classroom theory they learn in a university setting."

The mentor helps the intern to learn his or her new job while promoting socialization into the professional community. Mentors can assist interns in improving on the way they apply their knowledge and experience to problems of administrative practice by encouraging them to reflect on their practice. The mentor is a resource person who can answer the intern's questions regarding activities, skills, and best practice. The relationship between the mentor and mentee works best when it is based on mutual trust and a safe environment.

Regardless of the role description for the mentor, the actual relationship between the mentor and mentee will be as varied as the people who are in the roles. It is just human nature that some unevenness will occur among various internship experiences. The time spent with the mentor will vary greatly, as will the assignments and activities the mentor might arrange or support. Certainly, careful selection and development of a mentor will improve the probability of a quality experience, but there is a little luck of the draw in all of this. Some interns will have better experiences, guidance, and support than others. Some will develop a lifelong relationship, while others may never develop any type of relationship with their mentor.

Obviously, a lot of this will be up to the intern, but some of it will also be controlled by the mentor. Regardless, it is expected that you as an intern will take a great deal of responsibility for creating an effective partnership with your mentor. This means carrying out all activities to the best of your ability and obtaining assistance when it is needed. It means effectively communicating with your mentor, letting your mentor know the progress you are making, and asking the mentor for input. Do not gossip or grumble about your assignments with other interns and always be professional. Respond quickly to any problems and discuss them with your mentor and your university supervisor.

Roles of the Mentor

The role of your mentor is to help prepare you to go into your first professional position with competence, capability, and confidence. How each mentor principal

fulfills this responsibility depends on the commitment, energy, time, and personal style of the mentor as well as the type of relationship he or she establishes with the intern. According to Browne-Perrigno and Muth (2004, p. 489):

Effective mentors give aspiring principals significant responsibilities to perform and opportunities to take risks without fear of reproach (Williamson & Hudson, 2001). They are available to provide constructive guidance, willing to engage in reflective dialogue, and able to communicate honestly and openly about their expectations for their interns (Cordeiro & Smith-Sloan, 1995; Crews & Weakley, 1996; Southworth, 1995). Mentor principals who are committed to supporting aspiring and novice principals are respected for the guidance that they give the next generation of school leaders (Merriam, 1983) and valued for their contributions to the field (Clutterbuck, 1985).

Both the mentor and the mentee are engaged in reciprocal professional development.

The mentor takes on many different roles according to Kram (1985), who includes terms like sponsorship, coaching, role modeling, overseeing, counseling, and even friendship. The mentor does not tell the intern how to do things, but helps the intern learn how to do things as the intern develops and refines his or her own personal knowledge, skills, and style. Other roles of the mentor are teacher, host and guide, developer of skills and intellect, patron, and sometimes even parent. Crosby (1999) added the importance of career-enhancing functions to any definition of mentoring.

According to Muse and Thomas (1988), the role of the mentor is:

Advising: responds to requests for information from the intern.

Appraising: involved in formal and informal evaluation of the intern throughout the internship experience.

Coaching: demonstrates the skills required for good job performance as a school administrator and allows the intern to practice those skills in a non-threatening setting while providing feedback.

Communicating: opens lines of communication through which the intern's concerns, problems, and questions can be discussed honestly and effectively without destructive criticism.

Counseling: provides emotional support in stressful times, giving empathetic understanding and helpful concern to the intern.

Guiding: orients the intern to the unwritten rules, norms, and mores of educational administration.

Motivating: provides the encouragement and impetus for the intern to take action to achieve goals.

Protecting: serves as a buffer for the intern's risk-taking by providing a safe environment where the intern can make mistakes without danger and without losing self-confidence.

Role modeling: serves as a person the intern can emulate.

Skill developing: assists the intern in the learning of skills and tasks of school administration and instructional leadership.

Sponsoring: promotes the intern and advances his or her career. The mentor tells the intern of position openings, writes letters of reference, and recommends the intern for available positions, making the intern visible within the school organization.

Supervising: delegates tasks to the intern and takes time to analyze the intern's performance and provide feedback.

Teaching: instructs the intern in the specific skills and knowledge necessary for successful job performance.

Validating: evaluates, modifies, and finally endorses the intern's performance, goals, and aspirations (1988, pp. 14–15).

Muse and Thomas go on to describe the progression of these roles through the various stages of mentoring presented in Table 7.1. The mentor helps the intern to gain the confidence and skills to become a professional, contributing leader for the

TABLE 7.1 Progression of Roles through the Stages of Mentoring (M = mentor, I = intern)

FUNCTION	BEGINNING STAGE	DEVELOPMENT STAGE	SEPARATION STAGE
Advising	I learns of background, competence, experience of M	I seeks information from M based on M's knowledge, competence, expertise	I adapts advice from M to become effective faster
Appraising	M and I discuss methods of evaluation to be used	M discusses evaluation criteria with I, keeping I informed of M's judgment of I's performance	M provides I with final written evaluation after discussing it with I
Coaching	M demonstrates tasks; I observes demonstration	I practices the skills under direction of and with feedback from M	I is able to perform tasks competently and confidently
Communicating	M puts I at ease by friendly discussion of non-threatening topics	M provides opportunity for open discussion; listens to I and offers suggestions without destructive criticism	I and M communicate openly as professional colleagues
Counseling	Mutual trust and respect established by I and M	I brings problems and concerns to M, who listens, providing suggestions and support	I resolves concerns autonomously
Guiding	M tells I of the most obvious organization norms and politics	M and I discuss politics and professional standards to avoid violating norms	I fits into the organization and meets professional expectations
Motivating	M and I discuss dreams, goals of I	M encourages I to act to achieve goals and dreams	I takes direct action to fulfill goals, dreams
Protecting	M observes I's strengths and weaknesses	M serves as buffer against foreseeable problems and unjust criticism; I performs in safe environment	I is able to take risks in appropriate way
Role Modeling	I observes M's actions as a professional	I consciously and unconsciously imitates M's professional behavior	I adapts M's professional style to own style
Skill Developing	M and I discuss skills to be developed	M assigns tasks of increasing complexity to I	I has achieved competency in assigned tasks and skills
Sponsoring	M and I discuss career plans of I	M promotes I, writes letters of reference, makes I visible, recommends and introduces I	I is selected for professional position
Supervising	M gives direction, assigns simple tasks to I	M gives feedback; M and I analyze I's performance; more complex tasks assigned	I performs complex tasks autonomously; mutual dialogue of practice and theory
Teaching	M instructs I while I listens	I asks questions; M gives more complex instructions	I is able to instruct M and apply knowledge to performance
Validating	M and I discuss I's goals and aspirations	I modifies goals as M evaluates and confirms the goals	I achieves the goals confirmed as worthy by M

Source: Muse, I., and Thomas, G. (1988). *Mentoring: A handbook for school principals*. Provo, UT: Brigham Young University. Reprinted by permission.

school district and education in general. For important professional growth to occur, the mentor challenges the intern and serves as a catalyst for development.

The important understanding between the mentor and intern is sometimes complicated by this myriad of roles, which at times are confusing, contradictory, and require a herculean individual to cover them all. As a result, Mertz (2004) proposed a conceptual model to help unravel the "confusing, conflicting definitional threads" (p. 556) that relate to the mentoring process.

Figure 7.1 presents a continuum of mentor relationships visualized as a pyramid to reflect the increasing involvement and intensity required and the change in primary intent (Mertz, 2004). The level of effort, involvement, and intensity increases moving from the bottom (Level 1) to the top (Level 6) of this pyramid. This point is worth repeating: Congruence of expectations is very important to the completion of a successful intern experience.

Mentor/Intern Planning

After you have been oriented to the organization, policies and procedures, and expectations, you will be assigned to various activities (see Chapter 8). Your mentor may start you doing simple activities that allow the two of you to become acquainted and gain confidence in each other. You will then be given tasks of increasing difficulty. The mentor should include you when any opportunity for learning occurs. There are a number of things that the mentor can do to frame the opportunity so that it will be a high-quality learning experience. As this relationship reaches the

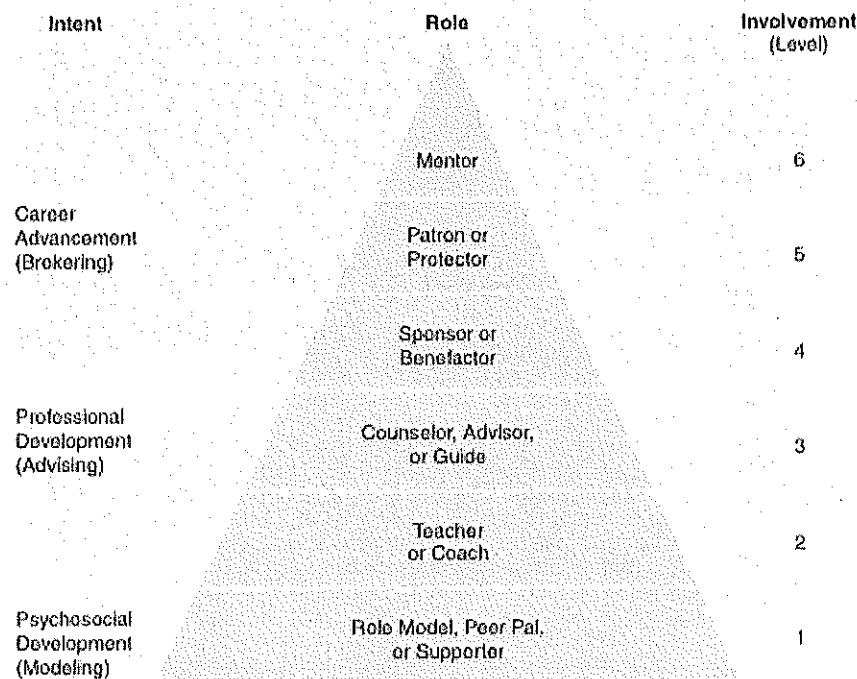


FIGURE 7.1 Supportive Work Relationship Arranged Hierarchically in Terms of Primary Intent and Level of Involvement

Source: Mertz, Norma T. (2004). What's a mentor anyway? *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 40, 4: 551. Copyright © 2004 by Sage Publications. Reprinted by permission of Sage Publications, Inc.

top of the pyramid, the mentor will give you opportunities for increased visibility and assist you in obtaining your first position in educational leadership.

Hopefully, mentors and interns will share learning opportunities, provide helpful feedback, and offer each other a sympathetic and confidential ear. This provides an opportunity for both to reflect on behaviors, to discuss latest research in the light of practical demands, and to influence each other's practice. This can become a very rewarding relationship that has the potential to become part of your lifetime professional network that will be so important to your future success.

Sharing experiences and obtaining other perspectives and new vantage points to think about your work is an essential element for avoiding the stress, chaos, anxiety, and disappointment that often occurs in the swim-or-sink, you're-on-your-own approach to mentorship practiced by some mentors. Therefore, a very important element of the internship process is the creation of a support network in which ideas can be exchanged, the work can be evaluated, best practices can be considered, assistance can be found, and, ultimately, important doors can be opened. You will enjoy and learn much by having an experienced administrator share her or his personal experiences relevant to the work, in a collegial environment.

There are an infinite number of opportunities to have very different internship experiences and it is in the planning phases that the myriad of possibilities are narrowed down to a specific site, mentor, and set of activities. Of course, no plan is written in stone and plans change as new opportunities present themselves.

SELECTING A SITE

For a number of reasons you may not be able to select your site. However, it is valuable to think through the characteristics of various possible sites, and to give some thought to the type of site that would benefit you the most. The selection of a site, however, usually is secondary to the opportunity of working with the most effective mentor. There also are a number of practical issues that emerge for interns who are working full-time jobs while they complete their internship course. It is best to complete your internship with a mentor other than the principal of the school in which you now work. This will enable you to experience another population and school. Experience has shown that principals are more open and have an easier time seeing the intern as a future administrator when the intern has not taught in their school. This, however, may not be possible.

Educational administrative and leadership preparation programs at different universities handle the selection and assigning of mentors in different ways. Some programs have the university or school system staff match up the sites, mentors, and interns. On the other end of the continuum, some programs require the interns to select and make all arrangements for their site and mentor. The SREB (2005) sent a survey to 156 institutions in their region; 61 institutions returned a completed questionnaire. Of the 61 responding institutions, under 50 percent had meetings with staff from the districts in which their interns completed their internships. In these cases, the interns themselves were solely responsible for setting up their internship sites and mentors.

There are some general questions that you will want to consider in selecting an internship site. Of course, the mentor and types of experiences are the primary factors in selecting a site. Some universities require interns to visit at least three different sites before choosing a site and mentor for their internship experience. In high schools, particularly, but also in middle schools you may end up with multiple mentors, as the principal has you work with a number of assistant principals. Your primary mentor, however, should be the principal. What characteristics of a site might be taken into consideration in planning your internship experience? These

may already be spelled out in the university program or even a state endorsement policy; however, they will influence the type and quality of your experiences.

The site must provide the types of opportunities for development and growth that will best prepare you for your work as an educational administrator. There is some debate whether the intern should be placed in one that is most efficient for the intern who works full time, one that allows the intern to experience diversity, or one that fits some other criteria. The idea is that each site is somewhat different and can be best understood by looking at some of its characteristics.

The characteristics of the site itself will influence the types of experiences that you will have as an intern. Form 7.1, General Characteristics of the Site and Administrator, provides an opportunity for you to think about some characteristics of the work setting as you plan your internship experience. You may not have much control over site selection; however, you can use this instrument to think about the characteristics of the site where you will do your work and to think about complementing the experience with activities or visits to sites that are very different. It may be advantageous to select more than one site in which to complete your internship experience so you have an opportunity to experience different settings.

Every organization has a context in which your leadership will be situated. Duke (1998) states "One clear message from the presiding review of recent scholarship is that leadership is situated. It cannot be understood, in other words, apart from context. The context of leadership, however, may be characterized in various ways" (p. 182). You cannot understand what is occurring apart from that context. There are a number of size, gender, race, ideological, social, political, and economic dynamics that will influence the approach that might be most successful. The history, composition, and culture provide an important contextual understanding for the way things are being done. The structure of the organization explains how it is set up to accomplish its goals. There are also a number of instructional indicators, financial indicators, discipline/attendance indicators, guidance indicators, and miscellaneous indicators (see Form 7.4) that have a significant influence on "How things are done around here."

Management style as well as organizational politics will be essential elements about which to learn. When you are looking into politics, you are examining the coalitions made up of different groups and individuals who have power and influence. This type of information as well as much more that you will learn during your internship experience will help you to better understand your placement and to be successful in completing your internship experiences.

SELECTING A MENTOR

The mentor is influential in determining the types of activities the intern will be involved in as well as the productivity of the learning experience. Of course, the intern must work with the mentor to arrange excellent experiences (see Chapter 8), find time to be available to complete activities, earn the trust of the mentor, and be highly motivated to take on greater responsibility. The intern's experiences are greatly influenced by the quality of the relationship between the intern and the site mentor. Poor relationships usually result in poor internship experiences.

In selecting a mentor, you should determine what you most need to learn, then try to pair up with a mentor who has those skills and talents in a setting that provides the characteristics from which you will gain the greatest benefit. It is important that the person who serves as your mentor is willing to support and guide your development through the transition and challenges of becoming an effective

leader. Not all leaders make suitable mentors. However, effective mentors take this role seriously, are committed, and set aside enough time to carry out the role.

Mentors should be experienced leaders who are visible and who maintain a high level of expertise. They should be active listeners who are responsive to the needs of others. Some of the more practical considerations are proximity, feasibility for the mentee, common planning times, and work load of the potential mentor. Mentors who have received training and/or served as mentors in the past are more likely to have the attitudes and skills necessary for effective mentoring.

It is probably best not to choose someone who is overloaded and has very limited time or who wants to pass you on to others for help. Potential mentors should be willing to pre-plan mentoring activities carefully, to follow up and discuss activities you have completed, to complete an assessment at the conclusion of the internship, and to help you in your job search. The person you select should have some interest in serving as a mentor (see Form 7.1).

There should be some level of compatibility between the mentor and mentee. This can be in areas such as personality, values, beliefs, philosophy, areas of expertise, and so on. The relationship will be difficult if the two of you cannot establish some rapport. You will need to be able to converse comfortably and to receive assistance with problem areas. An intern looks to the mentor as an advocate when challenges, needed information, and important problems arise.

Mentors not only can provide good answers—they are also able to ask the right questions of interns in order to help them to find their own right answers. Good mentors are flexible and able to see various effective ways of completing the work and can accept other ways of doing things. They don't require people "to do it their way or the highway." They are interested in pushing their interns to achieve practice beyond their present level of performance. They are also able to help their interns to read the social and political realities of the school division and the site in which they are completing their work.

Characteristics of Mentors

Capasso and Daresh (2001, pp. 103–104) have identified characteristics in the literature and research related to people who are effective mentors:

... Your mentor should match some of the following characteristics, which have been identified in the literature and research related to people who are effective mentors of aspiring and beginning school administrators. Effective mentors:

1. Have experience as practicing school administrators, and they should be regarded by peers and others as effective
2. Demonstrate generally accepted positive leadership qualities, such as (but not limited to) the following:
 - a. Intelligence
 - b. Good oral and written communication skills
 - c. Past, present, and future understanding of the context
 - d. Acceptance of multiple alternative solutions to complex problems
 - e. Clarity of vision and the ability to share that vision with others in the organization
3. Ask the right questions of aspiring administrators and interns and not just provide the "right" answers all the time
4. Accept alternative ways of doing things and avoid the tendency to tell beginners that the way to do things is "the way I used to do it"
5. Express a desire to see people go beyond their present levels of performance, even if that might mean that their protégés are able to do some things better than the mentors can

6. Model the principles of continuous learning and reflection
7. Exhibit an awareness of the political and social realities of life in at least one school system; they must know the "real ways" that things get done

In addition to the characteristics of effective mentors noted above, other skills and abilities are often used to describe ideal mentors. Typically, these individuals demonstrate:

- Knowledge, skills, and expertise in a particular field of practice
- Enthusiasm that is sincere and convincing, and most important, the ability to convey this feeling to those they are mentoring
- The ability to communicate to others a clear picture of personal attitudes, values, and ethical standards
- The ability to communicate in a sensitive way the type of feedback needed regarding another person's progress toward goals, standards, competence, and professional behavior
- The ability to listen to colleagues' ideas, doubts, concerns, and questions
- A caring attitude, a belief in their colleagues' potential, flexibility, and a sense of humor

Mentors must have a willingness to invest time and energy in the professional development of their colleagues. They must have confidence in their own abilities. They must possess high standards and expectations of their own abilities and of the work of their colleagues. They must believe that mentoring is a mutually enhancing professional development opportunity in which both partners will achieve equal satisfaction from the relationship. In addition, there are other important considerations that will need to be made in arranging your field assignment. Pounder and Crow (2005) suggest:

The participating school must agree to or negotiate the nature of the projects and a host of related practical issues—for example, the length of the project; the permission or cooperation of various entities, such as the school site council, the faculty, the teachers' union, the principal, the district superintendent, the school board, and students' parents; ethical principles that might constrain the project; and ways of managing the assignment or project that will not unduly interfere with other school processes. (p. 58)

The mentor must be able and willing to help you make all needed arrangements as well as develop your administration and leadership skills. This requires a willingness to commit time to you, and an understanding that (1) you are an inexperienced person who will need assistance and guidance on challenging assignments, and (2) you should not be assigned only menial tasks or passed off to other people for them to supervise and guide.

Few—if any—potential mentors will possess all of the above characteristics, but as more of these qualities show up in their administrative practice, the more likely they are to make excellent mentors. You may not have the luxury of selecting a mentor who has a number of these positive characteristics. If that is the case, you will observe some things at your internship site that are almost certainly not consistent with your belief systems, core values, or sense of best practice. You can still learn a valuable lesson in such cases, even though it will not be as valuable as observing behaviors and conditions that you want to emulate. Therefore, you will need a critical lens to be able to question what is being done, to ensure that it is in the best interests of all involved and meets standards for appropriate practice. Some interns become downright incredulous at what they see; however, it is a learning experience to be able to handle themselves and recognize what they would do differently.

Regardless of the ability of your mentor, you should always reflect on the way things are being handled at the internship site. Hopefully, you will be in a

position to both observe effective practice and to be able to implement best practice when you are assigned duties at the site. There are times, however, when you may be asked to do something that runs counter to your style, philosophy, or values. In these cases you must balance the knowledge that you are operating in another individual's cultural, philosophical, and values system and you are there as a guest and only temporarily. You can learn from these situations. They may challenge your beliefs and ethics to the point where you feel very uncomfortable. You then must evaluate the ethical and political (your mentor may be able to influence your promotion) considerations to decide what you will do. You should always consult your instructor and other trusted individuals before challenging things that you have been asked to do or approaches you have been told to take, or before doing something you believe is unethical.

Mentor/Mentee Problems to Avoid

Everyone would like their internship experience to be ideal. However, the real world never seems to operate that way. This is often a bitter pill for the intern to swallow. Interns are in a situation where there are many hard-to-control dynamic variables that will influence the type of internship experiences they will have and what they will learn. This is why the internship is so important because the intern is thrown into the real-world environment where very little is a given. Students often find themselves in swampy situations.

Experience suggests that it might be wise to give thought to some possible problems that might develop as part of the internship experience (Milstein, Broff, & Restine, 1991; Smith, 2003; Williamson & Hudson, 2001). These problems do not occur for most students, but you may be one of the unlucky few who do have some problems. As they say, forewarned is forearmed. Here are some issues that have occurred during internship experiences.

Busy Work. Part of what the intern will experience during the internship experience might be described as nuts-and-bolts or busy work. That is not to say that such work is not important to the learning experience or to the school. It is, in fact, a part of the job that the intern must understand. The challenge to the intern is to effectively deal with the routine and recognize its importance to the effective and efficient operation of the school. You will need to know how to operate the bells and clocks, supervise a school activity, even put stamps on envelopes, file papers, and answer telephone calls—as well as how to improve the learning systems and respond to legal and ethical issues. Part of doing routine work is an understanding that the intern will also be assigned some challenging activities that will provide significant learning opportunities. It is the old “If you scratch my back, I will scratch yours.” If I do some of your busy work, you will see that I get some great learning experiences.

Lack of Supervision. Interns work with very busy mentors who sometimes cannot seem to take time to provide for even weekly advisement, formative feedback, or evaluations. In addition, your university supervisor may only visit your site a few times during your experience and does not always understand the unique nuances of each school. Other mentors and supervisors may or may not be trustworthy regarding confidential discussions—and they may not have your best interest at heart. Along these same lines, you may not be kept informed regarding an issue or matter and may be operating with insufficient information. This is not necessarily done purposely, but because there was not sufficient time to share all the information and the intern is out of the loop regarding some of what occurs at the school.

The more you can be involved with your supervisor, the more you attend meetings and are in the loop, receiving systematic and timely feedback and guid-

ance, the better you will be able to perform as an intern. Hopefully, by studying the information provided by your administrative preparation program, advisor, internship instructor, and this text/handbook, you will be able to minimize such problems.

The other side of the coin is for you to make sure that you are not too needy, demanding more attention than can be provided reasonably. Be sure to express appreciation for the time the mentor does provide to you.

School Supervisor Unwilling to Share Duties. Some administrators refuse to allow an intern to have any important administrative role within the school. Perhaps they are unwilling to run the risk of the intern mishandling an activity and negatively impacting students, teachers, and/or the community—getting the administrator in trouble. This may also reflect a quality of their administrative style—perhaps they have trouble delegating responsibilities. They also may lack confidence in the intern's ability to handle more than very routine, minimal tasks and they may feel they are protecting the intern from making mistakes. Or, they might be concerned that the intern's abilities will challenge theirs and it will develop into a competitive situation. (In a few cases, a highly effective intern may actually threaten an insecure or inexperienced assistant principal. Jealousy and other hostile feelings can develop, making for a challenging relationship and menial assignments.)

There are many possible explanations. However, the bottom line in such situations is that interns do not get very good experience. Every intern is expected to perform some routine tasks that are a part of administration, but you should not have a total internship of such tasks. Obviously, it is important to select mentors who are able to delegate and who are secure in their positions.

Poor Relationships. These can develop for many reasons. The intern may simply want to jump through the internship hoop totally unaffected and minimally involved, course credit being the major motivation. The mentor may have a preconceived notion about the intern and exactly how the intern should behave. Unproductive feelings can develop, such as envy, rivalry, disappointment, favoritism, or betrayal—with the end result being that people feel threatened. Relationships may become too close. One person or the other may lose objectivity, resulting in interns placed in situations for which they are not prepared. Another problem may result when an intern becomes so dependent on their mentor that they are unable to progress in their careers or to separate themselves from the mentor. Mentors can be idealized to a point where the intern becomes discouraged at the thought of living up to the ideal. On the other hand, if the mentor does not live up to the ideal, the intern can become disillusioned.

The crown prince/princess syndrome can cause arrogance, inferiority, or expectations of adulation. Problems can also develop around stereotypes regarding male/female intern/mentor relationships, such as when the rumor mill questions the time that mentors and interns spend together. This can result in rumors of favoritism, or sexual or intimate improprieties. Also, stereotyped attitudes might cause male mentors to overprotect female interns. Poor "chemistry" can result in friction if the mentor and intern just naturally do not seem to get along. There are endless reasons for poor relationships. The intern should do everything possible to avoid them.

Teacher Unions. In some school districts, the intern might be an active member within a teacher union. Administrators usually have a different view of teacher unions than teachers and interns themselves. Due to the union's advocacy role for teachers, administrators can find themselves in conflict with teacher unions and therefore resent teacher union involvement. Teacher unions often back teachers against administrators and provide a force that will support teachers in lawsuits

and grievance cases. Unions are often called upon with great expectancy when there are questionable administrative actions.

The intern who is active in a teacher union may be crossing an unseen line that has been drawn and may have to contend with an administrative mentor who is bitter about the intern's involvement in the teacher union. The mentor may have difficulty trusting the intern because of stereotypical concerns regarding people who are active in teachers' unions. This may be a problem that you will have to work out with your mentor, or you may have to think about leaving the teacher union to become an administrator.

Loose Lips. The mentor/intern relationship can be seriously damaged if either person criticizes or compromises the other in any way—in conversation or writing. The mentor particularly may be sensitive to any reflections that might question why they did something or what the intern might have done differently. This can be a problem if the mentor asks to look at the intern's notes or journal, where the intern might have questioned a behavior or an approach taken by someone in the organization, even if it is simply part of a reflection about the activity (see Chapter 3). No one can guarantee total confidentiality for any documentation you might supply or anything that might be said in a class seminar or other setting. Some mentors are more sensitive than others and care must be taken in questioning the effectiveness of a mentor's approach or what might have been a better approach, even though this is an important part of your reflective analysis.

Certainly there are other problems that can develop. Hopefully, however, you will not have to deal with any of these situations. If you do have a problem, your university advisor and the instructor for the observation, practicum, or internship class are there to provide help. Certainly, the probability of any of these problems occurring is significantly lowered by your carefully selecting a mentor and behaving very professionally.

GETTING STARTED ON THE CORRECT FOOT

The most important beginning for the mentoring process is a warm greeting by all involved. A number of steps help the intern get off to a good start. You may use Form 7.2, Getting Started Checklist, to complete the needed steps.

It is very helpful for interns to be included in planning any activity in which they will be involved. One of the problems mentioned is being left out of the loop on something that concerns you. It is important for you to be a part of the decision-making process for issues that you have been assigned the responsibility for implementing. It is more difficult when you think or feel as if others are ordering you around. However, you really have limited control over this, and that is another reason why it is so important to select an effective mentor.

Most interns say they want their mentors to "give me a task, give me direction, and give me room to work." Other statements about how mentors are helpful include, "is a good role model and provides career counseling," "shows support and appreciation for my dedication and hard work," and "encourages my professional development." Procedures and relationships that support good communication and allow flexibility and autonomy are essential. Good communication and access to the mentor are critical factors for success.

Form 7.3 provides a checklist of steps that will help the intern get off to a great start. You will want to discuss these items with your mentor during your initial meeting. Answers to this checklist will begin to predict the level of commitment that will be provided to you and the seriousness that the school district and mentor assign to internship experiences.

Orientation to the Site

It is important to understand the formal organization chart. However, power and authority do not always follow this formal chart. Watch how decisions are being made, who communicates directly with the principal, and who the teachers seem to respect and listen to. Frequently the best way to get things done as an administrator is through the informal channels based on relationships and informal power. A key part of orientation is gaining an understanding of the informal power structure within the school. Who will require stroking, who will need support, and who will require independence? Who will need to be on board if the plan is to ever be approved and implemented?

Another key element in your orientation is to learn how people within the school treat one another and work together to improve the quality of instruction and learning. These are the basic operating principles, work culture, and foundations of behavior within the school. This provides a basic understanding of how the employees within the school do their work and relate to one another. Some examples of the types of questions that will help you to understand the foundational work culture that exist are listed below (Bond, 2004).

- If staff members are having problems with one another, do they complain to others or do they discuss it with the person with whom they have the complaint?
- Do the same few people tend to dominate most group situations?
- Is it fairly common practice for the staff to have gripe sessions?
- Are most of the teachers' ideas and suggestions evaluated based on how successful they will be for all students?
- Does the staff follow up and evaluate the effectiveness of decisions made?
- Does the staff freely share their opinions and input in appropriate ways, and do they listen with respect to ideas of others?
- What are the operating principles that guide how decisions are made and work gets completed?
- What are the espoused official, formal, public mission, vision, values, and beliefs? (To determine this, see manuals, handbooks, newsletters, speeches, and, so on.)
- How do educational professionals get along with parent organizations?
- Are the resources of the organization adequate?
- How clearly are expectations defined?
- How do people get information in this organization?
- How well is the organization achieving its mission?
- Do people contribute their best efforts?
- Do staff receive recognition for outstanding work? (See Chapter 12.)
- How satisfied are most individuals in the organization?

Site Demographics

There is a significant advantage to becoming as familiar as possible with the school prior to beginning your internship experience. Knowledge of the school, students, and community helps you better understand the issues, expectations, and scope of responsibilities that entail the administration of this school or unit. The more you know about the school and community, the technical expertise, school system-specific procedures, and the demographics, the better you will be prepared to deal with the unique challenges of the school. Much of the first few weeks of your internship experience will be trying to learn the ropes.

Although all schools are similar in many ways, each school is unique and distinctive in important ways. You can learn a lot about your site by looking at some

of its demographic characteristic indicators. The demographic indicators provide a portrait of the school as it exists at any given point in time. If you are an administrative intern, you will want as complete and accurate a portrait of the organization as is possible. The numbers may not always be easy to interpret, but they will help you begin to ask the right kinds of questions and to better understand what efforts are needed and why they are important.

Demographic indicators help the administrator to keep both feet firmly planted in reality. You might see that the dollars allocated for instructional materials have increased and assume that more instructional materials are being purchased. After examining the records, though, you might find that much less instructional material is being purchased but the costs of the instructional materials have risen sharply. Even though the dollar amount is increasing, the school is losing ground in this area. Comparisons with other schools will show how your school is doing on these indicators relative to those other schools.

Indicators can also be used to test thinking and plans against demographic indicators, to help determine whether the planned directions seem compatible with the indicators or if the organization is capable at this point in time of moving in the planned direction. Indicators can often be used to clear up any misconceptions that exist regarding the present state of the organization and what might be needed in the future. The data provide a tool to counter many arbitrary, prejudicial, and inaccurate statements that are made by teachers, parents, students, or even other administrators. These indicators tend to be the hard data that present facts that can be commonly known and understood. Form 7.4, *Internship Site Demographic Indicators*, provides an example of the hard data at the high school level that might help to provide an accurate portrait of the school.

Information is critical to carrying out internship activities successfully and providing sound support for what you are doing. Hard, quantitative data is not the only type of information you will want to collect, but it helps. Such data will help to educate you and others about your internship site. The data will help you to get a handle on the size and scope of the site to which you have been assigned. It will allow a way to check and balance beliefs and attitudes with the hard formal data. Interns should not begin their internship until they have collected some hard data regarding their internship site. The time taken up-front can do wonders—improving the quality of intern decisions and decreasing the likelihood of making blunders.

Form 7.1

General Characteristics of the Site and Administrator

Characteristics of the Site

What type of school district? ☐ Urban ☐ Suburban ☐ Rural

What level? ☐ Elementary ☐ Middle School ☐ High School ☐ Special School
☐ Central Administration ☐ External Experience

Educational conditions: ☐ Implementing new initiatives
☐ Monitoring successful school
☐ Turning around failing or problematic school
☐ Other _____

Ethnic mix of attendees: ☐ American Indian or Native Alaskan ()*
 (what percentage) ☐ Asian () ☐ Black () ☐ Pacific Islander ()
☐ White () ☐ Other _____ ()

*() percent of total population

Locate the policies and procedures manual, organizational chart, school improvement plan, PTA minutes, school demographics, district-wide data on the site, census data, and historical description of the site for more information.

Characteristics of the Leader

Distinguishing abilities of the leader: ☐ Manager ☐ Instructional leader
☐ Politician ☐ Visionary planner
☐ Financial expert ☐ Culture builder
☐ Disciplinarian ☐ School and community relations builder
☐ Technologist
☐ Other _____

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Job Experience: ☐ New administrator ☐ Mid-career administrator
☐ Seasoned administrator

Leadership Style: ☐ Autocratic (task focus) ☐ Participate (team building)
☐ Situational ☐ Cultural ☐ Transformational ☐ Servant

Obtain administrator job description, evaluation instruments, memos and directives, and meeting minutes for more information.

Form 7.2

Getting Started Checklist

Date Completed	Activity Description
_____	Have an "Internship Meeting" with the mentor before planning internship activities. This will help in determining the kind of activities in which you will be able to be involved.
_____	Obtain a text/handbook like this one to help to think about how to develop and implement an effective internship experience.
_____	Discuss and think through the timeline (monthly calendar), expectations, and logistics regarding the internship experience.
_____	Develop goals, select activities, and complete needed planning for conducting a quality internship experience. Include a schedule of meetings.
_____	Meet the staff and see that the intern's role is clarified and well understood.
_____	Review ethical considerations like confidentiality, professionalism, written and unwritten policy, rules, procedures, and expectations.
_____	Discuss the role of the university supervisor, the school system, mentor, and fellow interns.
_____	Discuss the evaluation process and documentation requirements.
_____	Discuss office procedures, use of equipment and materials, access to information, and so on (see Form 7.3).
_____	Complete the Internship Site Demographic Indicators (Form 7.4).
_____	Establish procedures for needed followup, reporting problems, and sharing escalating problems (what to do if you get into a jam).

Form 7.3

Preparing for a New Intern

✓ = Done

Activity Description

- ☐ Has office space been made available for the intern?
- ☐ Are keys to the building, office, classrooms, etc., ready to give to the intern?
- ☐ Has a telephone been made available to the intern to use for school business?
- ☐ Have plans been made to give the intern a tour of the school?
- ☐ Will the intern have access to a computer, copy machine, intercom, and be informed of the procedures for using this equipment?
- ☐ Has a plan been made to introduce the intern to the
 - ☐ Faculty?
 - ☐ Custodians?
 - ☐ Secretaries?
 - ☐ Lunchroom workers?
 - ☐ Other staff members?
 - ☐ Students?
 - ☐ PTA and other parent groups?
- ☐ Have tasks been jointly planned with the intern to accomplish the first week?
- ☐ Has a yearbook or other collection of student pictures been arranged to share with the intern?
- ☐ Have a policy manual, organizational chart, teacher handbook, and student handbook been made available for the intern?
- ☐ Has the school calendar been copied to give to the intern?

Form 7.4

Internship Site Demographic Indicators*

Instructional Indicators	Current Numerical Responses
Number of students in school (total)	
African American	
Asian/Pacific Islander	
Native American or Alaskan	
Hispanic or Latino	
White	
Number of teachers (total)	
African American	
Asian/Pacific Islander	
Native American or Alaskan	
Hispanic or Latino	
White	
Number of students held back	
Number of advanced placements courses	
Number of teachers participating in inclusion	
Number of seniors not graduating	
Average number of students in a class	
Number of teachers not certified/endorsed	
Number of administrator's supervising visits to the classroom	
Number of non-returning teachers	
Number of teachers sharing classrooms	
Average years of experience for teachers	
Average age of teachers	
Number of students in AP courses	
Number of students in honors courses	
Number of teachers with master's degree or higher	
Number of special education students	
Average amount of homework given a night in minutes	
Number of days tutoring is available (total for all departments)	
Number of class periods/day	
State assessment test scores	
Social studies	
Math	
Science	
English/language arts	
SAT—verbal	
SAT—mathematics	
Number of students completing SAT	
ACT score	
Number of students completing ACT	
Teacher attendance	
Finance Indicators	
Dollar amount school receives from vendors	
Dollar amount earned from sports	

Amount of money spent yearly	
Number of students on free/reduced lunch	
Dollar amount spent on instructional needs and supplies	
Amount of money spent on school and office supplies	
Amount of money taken in by the school (all programs together)	
Amount of money received from community/business partners	
Amount of money spent for classroom supplies	
Amount of money spent for classroom books	
Amount of money spent for library books, periodicals, other media	
Discipline/Attendance Indicators	
Number of discipline infractions for students (total)	
African American	
White	
Asian	
Hispanic	
Other	
Number of referrals written in the most recent year	
Number of tardies	
Number of absences	
Number of students suspended for more than five days	
Number of dropouts	
Guidance Indicators	
Number of students guidance sees per day	
Number of guidance counselors	
Number of students accepted to college	
Number of students who join the armed forces	
Number of students who enter the working world	
Number of students with no plan for after graduation	
Miscellaneous Indicators	
Number of parents in PTSA	
Teachers	
Students	
Number of faculty meetings/year	
Number of custodians	
Number of security guards	
Number of community/business partners	
Number of technology resource people	
Number of nurses	
Number of secretaries	
Number of school clubs	
Average number of evening events/month	
Number of computers used for	
Instruction	
Administration	
Number of computers with access to the Internet	

*Look at the organization's demographic profile and computerized information provided to central administration and to the state department of education for some of this information.